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

AMBASSADOR JOHN P. LEONARD

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

US troops
Status of Forces issues
Korean economic policy
Japanese aircraft hijacking
Americans aboard

State Department: Republic of China Desk Officer 1973-1975
Relations with Taiwan
Relations with mainland China
Chiang Ching-Kuo
Secrecy
Charles (Chas) Freeman
US unofficial office in Taiwan
Military weapons
Nixon and Kissinger China initiatives
US military use of Taiwan

State Department: Bureau of Political/Military Affairs 1975-1978
Office of International Security Policy, East Asia
Nuclear weapons and missiles
Military withdrawal from South Korea
President Carter views
General Singlaub
Park Chung Hee
Tony Lake
US nuclear deterrent
Tree chopping incident
Understanding North Korea
Korean history
US intelligence on North Korea
Congressional interest in Korea
Ton Soon Park
Ambassador Phil Habib

Madrid, Spain: Political/Military Officer 1978-1981
US military bases
Government
Adolfo Suarez
Relations
NATO
European Community
Spanish military
US military assistance
Ambassador Terry Todman
Arthur Bryski
Democratic rule

Israel
Spanish navy
Rota
Political parties
King Juan Carlos
Attempted coup d'état
Guardia Civil
General Jaime Milans del Bosch
US training of Spanish military
Portugal/Spain relations
Post-Franco changes
Catholic Church
Todman outreach activities
Socialists
Basque separatists

State Department: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1981-1983
US delegation to committee on disarmament; Geneva
Nuclear non-proliferation treaty
US delegation to the United Nations General Assembly
Reagan policy
Chemical weapons treaty
Nuclear test ban treaty
Nuclear underground testing
Soviet Union membership
Allies' differences
India and Pakistan
China
Vice-President George H.W. Bush
US-Soviet negotiations
Defense department views
Outer-space
Victor Isradiev
Soviet tactics
National Security Council
Agency directors
Agency accomplishments (see also p59)

Asuncion, Paraguay: Political Officer 1983-1985
President Stroessner
Government
Human Rights
Relations

Montevideo, Uruguay: Political Officer 1985-1986
Government

Military forces
Raúl Sendic
Exports
Unemployment
Security
Criminal justice
Dan Mitrione kidnapping
President Sanguinetti
Mixed population
Political parties
Tupamaros
Cuban influence
Soviets
Economy
Elliot Abrams
Transition to democracy
Environment
University
Ambassador Tom Aranda
Ambassador Malcolm Wilkey
Contacts

State Department: Special Office to aid Iran Contras 1986-1988
Contra Oversight Program
CIA program
Operations
Controversy
Morris Busby
Congressional interest
William Casey
Nicaragua
Contras
Sandinistas
Bob Millspaugh
Ollie North
Costa Rica
McFarlane
Oscar Arias
Cardinal Armando
Daniel Ortega
Central America peace plan

Managua, Nicaragua: DCM/Chargé d'Affaires 1988-1990
Ambassador Rick Melton
Sandinista control
Political Parties

Supporting Contras
Contra funding
Contra support
Re-supplying Contras
Sandinista support of revolutionary movements
Elections-Sandinista defeat
    International observers
Violetta Chamorro
Armed forces
Government
Government changes
US military
Ambassador Shlauderman
Chamorro'S dilemma
International support
School system curriculum
Reforms
Neighbor civil wars
Nicaragua
Cuba
International Chamorro support
Senator Helms
Disbanding Contra movement
Local press
University of Nicaragua
Relations with government
US Panama invasion repercussions
    Embassy personnel expelled
    Embassy blockade
Maintaining contacts
George H. W. Bush foreign policy
Replacing staff
US balance of payments support
Chamorro government

United States Ambassador to Suriname 1991-1994
History of Suriname
Ethnic groups
Economy
Minerals
Army
President Dési Bouterse
Coups d'états
Relations
Dutch relations
Dutch aid

Narcotics trafficking
Alcoa
US policy
Organization of American States (OAS)
Relations with neighbors
Promoting return to civilian rule

INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not completed prior to Ambassador Leonard's death.]

Q: This is an interview with Jack Leonard, and is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well then let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

LEONARD: New York City.

Q: When?

LEONARD: July 16, 1940.

Q: OK, you want to tell us something about your family. Let's star from your father's side. What do you know about them?

LEONARD: Well, my father was born in San Francisco. He was the grandson of an immigrant from Ireland. His grandfather came to San Francisco probably in the 1850's sometime. I am not exactly sure. He worked as a day laborer. My grandfather, my father's father, was orphaned at a young age. He was apprenticed to a butcher. Ultimately he came to own his own butcher shop. He prospered at that. He also died young when my father was about 11 years old. So that is my father's side of the family. My father was the only boy in the family. He had three sisters.

Q: Were they all a San Francisco family.

LEONARD: Yes. The other side of his family, my grandmother's family, were immigrants from Germany. Her father owned a grocery store and also sold wholesale liquor.

Q: Did either of your grandparents have a college education?

LEONARD: No.

Q: This wasn't the pattern in those days. Where did your father grow up?

LEONARD: San Francisco. The family was Catholic. My grandmother and grandfather according to the family story, he spotted her one day in church, in the local Catholic church where they attended, and persuaded her family to let them get married, even though her family had their doubts because he was an Irish upstart, a nobody, even though by that time he owned his own butcher store. My grandmother was in her early 20's and starting to get to the point where if she didn't get married, she would be considered an old maid. So anyway they were indeed married. They lived on a street in San Francisco called Guerrero Street, and had a very comfortable middle class living. They were quite lucky in the great San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906. The home they lived in which was a row house. It was not destroyed, either by the earthquake or by the fire, nor was my grandfather's butcher shop destroyed. He actually prospered as a result of the fire because almost all of his competitors within a large area were destroyed. So he was able to buy up a couple of other businesses.

Q: Now your grandparents, they stayed in sort of the food business?

LEONARD: Yeah, my grandfather was a butcher until he died at a relatively young age. Then his widow, my grandmother, she sold part of the butcher business to one of my grandfather's workers who worked with him. I want to talk a little bit about my mother's side of the family.

Q: Please do.

LEONARD: She was from Emporia, Kansas. Her people came to the United States much earlier. Her maiden name was Peach. Her ancestors came to Maryland early in the 1840's or 50's on her father's side of the family. Her mother's side of the family, the name was Makinson. They were Scots Irish, and they came a little later to this country. I don't remember exactly when, but quite early on. My grandfather, my mother's father, was a banker. He worked for a couple of small banks in Emporia, Kansas, and did that most of his life. He was never the owner of a bank although he was a bank officer.

Q: Who moved to San Francisco?

LEONARD: Interestingly enough, my mother and father didn't meet in San Francisco. They both went to New York City. My father graduated from the University of California, Berkley, in 1922, as I recall, and immediately went to New York City. He got a job with the Aeolian Piano Company. He had a great interest in music, had for many years. My mother, after graduating from the University of Kansas in 1933 or '34, also went to New York City. She got a job writing advertising copy for Macy's, the department store, which in those days had its own little in-house advertising office. She wrote advertising copy for Macy's after persuading her mother and father to let her move to New York City about which they were obviously somewhat dubious. But she was a very independent minded woman, and off she went. My mother and father met in New York City through mutual friends, and were married in 1936 if memory serves.

Q: Right in the middle of the depression.

LEONARD: Well that is right. They were both lucky. They worked steadily all through the depression. In the 1930's my father changed careers. In the mid 30's the NBC radio network created a symphony orchestra. NBC asked Arturo Toscanini, the famous Italian conductor, to be the conductor of this orchestra. They also approached my father who as I say had a lifelong interest in music, to direct these radio broadcasts, even though he didn't have any experience in radio. So he directed the NBC symphony radio broadcasts for a number of years and stayed on in radio. For many years he directed soap operas and mystery shows.

Q: Well then he stayed sort of with NBC?

LEONARD: He stayed with NBC for about five years. Then he left them and went to work for a production company whose name I forget. It was a company that had a stable of soap operas and mystery shows which they produced and owned. They had a handful of people who worked for them directing these shows. So my father directed old shows, a bunch of soap operas on the radio and mystery shows as well.

Q: You were born in 1940. Did you grow up as a small kid in New York?

LEONARD: I grew up out in the suburbs of New York. My family moved shortly after I was born to a town called Larchmont about 20 miles north of New York City in Westchester County, and that is where I grew up.

Q: What was the town like?

LEONARD: Larchmont is still pretty much the way it was then. It was a commuter town. Larchmont started to get developed in that way in the early 1900's. It was a town where most of the men commuted into New York City to work. When I grew up there it was full of people like investment bankers and folk like that who would go into New York every day on the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad. Took about half an hour.

Q: As a kid what was it like?

LEONARD: Being a very nice suburban town, it was kind of interesting. There were a lot of Irish Catholics in Larchmont. For one reason or another a lot of them seemed to have gravitated there. I was, however, not raised as a Catholic. My father never practiced any religion at all after he grew up and left home. My mother used to take my brothers and me to the Episcopal Church every Sunday, so I was raised as an Episcopalian.

Q: Was religion an important part of your life or not?

LEONARD: Not really. It was in the sense of giving me a grounding when I was young, but there were always lots of other things I would rather be doing on Sundays than going to church.

Q: I sympathize. Was this a period where the kids were turned loose after school, and you were supposed to be home at a certain time for dinner, and the rest of the time you were sort of on your own. The kids many of them, myself included, were all kind of feral out there playing and having fun and a good time and making our own sports.

LEONARD: That is exactly what we were like. We were not heavily supervised or monitored or anything like that. We did our own sports and played our own games. My parents didn't feel like they had to watch us like hawks all the time. We were very much on our own a lot of the time. We knew there were limits beyond which we couldn't go.

Q: Did the outside world intrude much? Was there a point where you were beginning to listen to broadcasts and news reports and newspapers and all?

LEONARD: Oh yes, very much. My parents were very well read, very interested in politics and world affairs, subscribed to the New York Times and read it every day. I remember on Sundays we would get both the New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune. They were avid listeners to WQXR, the New York Times radio station. They were both avid Democrats which in the case of my mother was a bit surprising because she had been raised in a family in Kansas who were all rock ribbed Republicans. But she outgrew that and she and my father were Democrats. Family heroes around our house were people like Franklin Delano Roosevelt and members of his administration. I certainly well remember in world events things like the Korean War, when it broke out and this was all very much a part of our lives.

Q: What about in Larchmont, was there much of an ethnic mix?

LEONARD: Larch was pretty much lily white. We had a few black families but very few. It was a very prosperous town so for people who didn't have much money there weren't very many places they could afford to buy. I remember there were a couple of black kids in my elementary school, but that is it. It was overwhelmingly white. It was a mix between mostly Irish Catholic and Protestant. There were a few Jewish families too, but that was really about it.

Q: Was there any tension or division between the Protestants and the Catholics?

LEONARD: Not that I can remember. I remember that in my grammar school the Catholic children would be excused one afternoon a week to go to I think it was called catechism classes at the local Catholic Church. Those of us who were not Catholic always used to grouse about how come they get out? Why can't we get out? Of course our idea about getting out, maybe we could get out and just skip the afternoon of school.

Q: What was school like? Take the elementary school, were you much of a student?

LEONARD: Excellent elementary school. I remember all of my teachers. I have to say I was a very good student. I got uniformly very good grades. I have only the best memories of that school. It gave me a very good grounding.

Q: I would like to ask at this point if you would name a couple of teachers that would stick in your mind because there is a certain amount of immortality at least.

LEONARD: I certainly remember my first grade teacher who was a little grey lady. What was her name, I have forgotten. She was very strict but very fair and a whiz of a teacher She got us going on our reading and our arithmetic very quickly. I had an excellent third grade teacher, Miss Edwards was her name. Most of the teachers were single women. A few of them were married but mostly single. Miss Edwards I remember in the third grade was particularly good at teaching us mathematics, getting us through multiplication and long division. But I must say virtually al the teachers I had were very good.

Q: Were you much of a reader as a young kid?

LEONARD: Voracious. I read constantly, discovered very early the local public library which was either close enough for me to walk to or later ride my bicycle to, and was a constant client of the local library. So yes.

Q: Can you think of any either books by title or series that particularly attracted you as a young kid?

LEONARD: Absolutely. I think probably my favorite was Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson, but I also loved The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas. Mostly when I was young books like that, also the whole series of L. Frank Baum series for children.

Q: Oh yes, the OZ books.

LEONARD: Yeah, I was nutty about those for awhile in the third and fourth grade.

Q: Well as I am talking to you here in my office I have a picture which we picked up. It is a framed one where the front piece of N.C. Wyeth's book illustrated for Treasure Island showing the pirates marching toward burying the treasure.

LEONARD: Yes. I have an illustrated version of Treasure Island. It is probably the N.C. Wyeth edition.

Q: Scribner put it out. It is a real classic.

LEONARD: Books like that. I remember I had a wonderful edition of Robin Hood also, a set of Robin Hood stories. Otto of the Silver Hand by Howard Pyle.

Q: As a kid were there any sort of serials you would listen to?

LEONARD: On the radio. Though my father worked in Radio, I must say I didn't listen to that many of his soap operas, although occasionally we would since they put bread on

the table. I liked radio shows such as "Terry and the Pirates." There was another called "Sky King," and "The Lone Ranger." Mystery shows. I remember I liked one of my father's mystery shows which was called "Mr. Keene, Tracer of Lost Persons." As a big treat now and then my mother would take us into New York City and we would go and watch one of my father's Mystery shows being put on the air. They did them all live in those days in the studio. We would sit behind a glass wall and watch the actors reading their parts. My brothers and I were always taken particularly by the sound effects man who would make the sound of people walking and doors closing and so forth. That was always a big treat.

Q: Oh gosh yes. How about movies? Were you into movies?

LEONARD: Absolutely, loved them. The very first movie that I think I ever saw is probably my earliest memory. It was made during WWII, and my mother went off to see it one afternoon and took me along. It was a movie called Rainbow Island. It starred Eddie Bracken and Dorothy Lamour. It was a bit of escapism about a bunch of sailors in the South Pacific during the war who tumble onto an island inhabited by beautiful girls including Dorothy Lamour.

Q: Sarong.

LEONARD: In a Sarong, of course. So that is probably my earliest memory. I would have been four years old. My pals and my brothers and I loved movies. We liked westerns, we liked any kind of an adventure movie, science fiction movies that became popular in the early 50's, we loved those.

Q: Well then as you moved up in school sort of middle school, before you get to high school, were there any subjects that intrigued you and other ones that you sort of weren't wild about?

LEONARD: Well the system we had in the town where I grew up, elementary school went through sixth grade. Then they had what they called junior high school which was seventh, eighth and ninth grades. After that there was high school. In junior high school I started to gravitate toward what I suppose you would call English class. Which I was good at and I liked very much. I was still pretty good at math. We started doing things like plane geometry and that sort of thing, and I was still pretty good at that. The classes I didn't like and wasn't very good at were shop work. Everyone had to take a class in woodworking, all the boys that is, and also in metal working. I was a total bust in both, didn't enjoy them. It is actually a bit ironic since right now I do a lot of woodworking and do enjoy it. I wasn't very good at it while I was back in junior high school.

Q: Well when I was in south Pasadena Junior High, I am 12 years older than you, I learned a great trade and that is print shop. I mean how to set up print, completely useless.

LEONARD: The wood shop was taught by a grouchy old man. He obviously wished he were somewhere else. If you didn't have a natural knack for woodworking he had little use for you. I remember we were supposed to chose a project for the class, and I was going to make a little bookshelf. Actually it would hang on the wall and it had shelves for books. In this class he would cut out the materials for you, rough them out, and then you would get them to the right dimensions first of all using a plane, a hand plane and a file. I could never get the knack of using that hand plane, and I kept planing and planing and my little shelves kept getting narrower and narrower. By the time I finished they were barely wide enough to put a children's book on. In metal shop I made incredibly ugly stuff out of raw iron. I have forgotten what these things were for. But I remember one incident: we had one kid in our class who somehow persuaded our metal shop instructor to let him do a project which involved the use of a very small forge which they had in this class. It sat at the end of our work area. Sure enough this kid got some molten metal which he was extracting from the forge, spilled some of it on the floor, and there was a huge cloud of smoke that rose up in the work room. It burned its way through the wooden floor and the concrete foundation of the building.

Q: Well that is the sort of thing that is pretty memorable.

LEONARD: We could have told this instructor not to let this kid near that forge. He had a way of messing up whatever he turned his hand to.

Q: Did you go to Larchmont High?

LEONARD: No, Larchmont did not have anything beyond a grammar school. I went to a high school called Mamaroneck Junior High School. It was located just on the other side of the town line between Larchmont and Mamaroneck, which was the next town north of Larchmont.

Q: And high school, did you go there?

LEONARD: I went to one year of high school there and then went off to boarding school for two years at Andover.

Q: Well how did you do in high school?

LEONARD: Again I pretty much got top grades in high school. It was an excellent public high school. But my parents had decided when my brother was starting high school, they wanted to get him into one of the Ivy League schools, so after consulting with friends, they took my older brother around to visit a number of boarding schools where he was in the ninth or tenth grade. They visited four schools. I got to go along on one of the trips that my father made to take my older brother, Tony, to visit a couple of schools. We visited Deerfield, Mount Herman and Andover. Andover was the place my older brother settled on. That was the one he liked most and was where he wound up going. I went there myself three years later.

Q: You were at Andover from when to when?

LEONARD: I was there in ’56 and graduated in ’58.

Q: I went to summer school at Andover, this was ’45. I had been going to Kent School, a private school, but I was taking physics so I could get into a brand new field called RADAR because the war was on. Then they dropped the atomic bomb while I was at Andover and that took care of that.

LEONARD: Well your timing was perfect.

Q: I was rooming in Day Hall.

LEONARD: Yes, absolutely. It is still there.

Q: How did you find Andover?

LEONARD: Very tough at first because it was extremely rigorous academically, much harder than the local high school that I had gone to. So I really had to pound the books to keep up. That is where I discovered that mathematically there were a lot of guys who were head and shoulders better than me in subjects like math and the sciences. I learned right then and there I was certainly never going to be a math major. So I got as far as I guess what you would call today first year calculus. I knew that I didn’t like anything beyond that. Andover was very tough academically. Unlike some boarding schools you either sank or you swam in the sense that they didn’t have proctors or teachers hovering over you making you study. You were on your own. You were expected either to make it or not make it.

Q: Well did these things change? When I was going, Kent was an all male school run by Episcopalian monks as a matter of fact, and Andover was not that rigorous but still it was very much a male society.

LEONARD: Very much. There was a girl’s school right down the street form Andover.

Q: Abbot?

LEONARD: Abbot later merged with Andover so it is now co-ed. When I was at Andover it was all boys and very much a male society. Everybody had to go to some kind of religious service either at the school chapel or Catholic kids could go to a Catholic priest who would come in for them. Jewish kids could go to services separately, but everybody had to go. But it wasn’t sectarian. I remember they had a very colorful chaplain they called him who was there my senior year, a guy called Bill Coffin.

Q: Didn’t he end up at Yale?

LEONARD: He was at Yale and later on at Riverside Church in New York City.

Q: Also in Doonesbury I think.

LEONARD: I am sure. He was a colorful character, a good sermonizer. You know he was kind of an advocate of muscular Christianity, but frankly I didn't pay much attention to the sermons. I enjoyed singing in the school choir however. That was more what I had my mind on.

Q: In your school career before we get to college did you go into sports at all?

LEONARD: Oh yeah, everybody at Andover had to participate in sports of one kind or another. I had always loved sports from the time I was a small child. I loved baseball, football, basketball. The only problem was I was terrible at all of them. I had no talent. I was on the swimming team at Andover because actually I was a pretty good diver, not swimmer, although I got injured my senior year so I never got a letter in anything. But oh yeah, I loved sports.

Q: During vacations, was there much of a social life when you went back to Larchmont or not?

LEONARD: Oh yeah, absolutely. I had a girl friend in those days. Her father was an interesting character. Her father worked for Paramount Pictures in New York City. He was one of their money men. They lived in a very nice house across the street from a golf course a few miles from where I lived. When I would go pick up my girl friend Judy for a date, her father would often regale me with stories about what a bunch of idiots the people out in Hollywood were.

Q: Well the classic conflict that you, I am a great Hollywood buff and all, was the fight between the money men in New York and the production men in Hollywood. I mean a classic fight. Usually they were brothers like the Warner Brothers and all. They learned to detest each other.

LEONARD: Well to judge by what Mr. Piper said, that kind of bad blood was very much alive and well in Paramount Pictures.

Q: What was dating like in those days? What did you do?

LEONARD: Well I remember one time I took my friend, Judy, into New York City and we went to Radio City Music Hall to see the movie Around the World in 80 Days.

Q: Oh yes, Todd-AO.

LEONARD: In Todd-AO which impressed us mightily. We used to go to dances. We were members of the Larchmont yacht Club and they would have dances for youngsters. We used to go to those and dance to the music of a bandleader called Lester Lanin.

Q: OH he was a society orchestra.

LEONARD: Lester Lanin had a stable of dance bands that he would farm out to places like the Larchmont Yacht Club and such places. In New York City no debutante party was complete in those days without music by Lester Lanin.

Q: Yes. I never danced to that, but I remember the name always came up.

LEONARD: Well you know the expression "square" probably fit Lester Lanin's stuff to a T.

Q: Well obviously you were headed for higher education. Where were you pointed towards?

LEONARD: In my senior year I consulted at Andover. Our dean of studies was a very interesting and dynamic character called George Grenville Benedict. He was known to the students as G squared. Benedict met individually with every single senior and consulted with them about where do you want to go to college and what do I, Benedict, think would be advisable for you. So when I sat down with G squared, he said, "Look just apply to Harvard and Yale and you can decide which one of those you want to go to." My brother had already been accepted and was attending Harvard. I had visited the campus. I had visited also Yale. I liked Harvard better, and liked the idea of following my brother so that is where I applied and that is where I went.

Q: I take it in those days there wasn't this horrible feeling of competitiveness was there?

LEONARD: Well if you went to a school like Andover, in my senior year we had about 200 seniors. Of that 200 seniors well over half went to either Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. In those days places like Andover and Exeter were pipelines into those schools. So in that sense there wasn't a sense of competitiveness but you knew you had to keep your grades up and you had to score well on the scholastic aptitude test. But to be very frank, Andover's academics were so rigorous that by the time it came for me to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test, they were a breeze. I remember I took what they called advanced placement tests for literature, for history, and had I wanted to I could have entered Harvard as a sophomore because my scores were that good. But I decided I didn't want to do that. I wanted four years. But then the scores on the achievement test as they were called showed that I could take upper level courses at Harvard as a freshman.

Q: Someday, before we leave Andover, did the outside world intrude much. I mean the cold war was on. You were at Andover from when to when.

LEONARD: From 1956 to 1958.

Q: Ok, the competitiveness with the Soviet Union and the Suez crises and all. Did this ring much of al bell with you?

LEONARD: Oh yes. I well remember for example we had weekly assembly meetings as they were called where we would be harangued by this or that expert or personality sometimes about events of the day. We had one person, I don't remember who it was, came in to talk to us about the Suez Crisis when Nasser nationalized the canal and the British, French, and Israelis invaded Egypt. So oh yeah the outside world did intrude on me.

Q: Were you taking any languages?

LEONARD: I took Latin and French at Andover. I had three years of French counting one year of high school, or maybe two years in high school before I got to Andover, and I had three years of Latin and three years of French.

Q: Did the Foreign Service cross your radar at all during this time?

LEONARD: Not very much. I don't recall that it did. Most of us were thinking more about let's get into college. There weren't that many of us who had thought seriously about what we were going to do after we got out of college.

Q: So that came in '57 was it?

LEONARD: In '58 I graduated.

Q: Ok, then in '58, and you were at Harvard from '58 to '62.

LEONARD: That is correct.

Q: What was Harvard like in '58?

LEONARD: Harvard, after Andover was like a huge banquet. I remember you would get a catalog of courses every fall, which listed all the courses that were being offered to members of Harvard college for that academic year. We would chose from that catalog what we wanted to take. That was like a huge banquet that was laid in front of you, and you had to decide which particular courses you were going to take. The other thing that struck me was Andover had been pretty open in terms of they didn't have people breathing down your neck all the time, study, study, study. Harvard was completely, you were completely on your own. You needed a great deal of self discipline to study a lot because there were lots of distractions and things to do.

Q: Did you have to choose a major at the beginning?

LEONARD: You chose your major in your sophomore year. I chose English Literature.

Q: Was the student body more diverse than at Andover?

LEONARD: Much more diverse. Harvard had begun by that time to try and diversify its undergraduate body away from just kids from private schools. There were many more kids from public schools from all over the country. So yes there was a much more diverse bunch of people.

Q: This is when Conant I think he made that basic decision.

LEONARD: Yeah he had started that although the president by the time I had gotten there was a man called Nathan Pusey, who had been head of the Harvard Divinity School before he became head of the university.

Q: What hall were you in?

LEONARD: In my freshman year I was in a new residence hall called Pennypacker Hall. It was not inside Harvard yard. It was outside of the yard. It had been an old apartment building which the university had bought and refurbished. Later, starting my sophomore year, I moved into Lowell House.

Q: Well then were there any sort of notable teachers you had while you were at Harvard?

LEONARD: Oh lots of them. I took courses from all kinds of notables. My freshmen year I took a course from Arthur Schlessinger Jr. called "The Intellectual History of the United States" a terrific course. He was an interesting lecturer. He would rattle away like a machine gun. So you had to take those notes and listen carefully to what he had to say. In the course we studied, as he named it, the intellectual history of the country focusing in particular on currents like for example transcendentalism in American literature, a lot of trends in American political thought. It was a terrific course. I took a course from John Kenneth Galbraith which quite frankly was disappointing. He was a terrific writer. I don't know if you had ever read any of his books.

Q: I read his Ambassador's Journal and that sort of thing.

LEONARD: We can talk later about his Ambassador's Journal which I found unintentionally hilarious. But anyway his lectures were lousy. He was a terrible lecturer. So his course was not that great. As an economist I think he was really more of an economic historian than he was a real full fledged economist. So those were a couple of very interesting classes. I had a philosophy professor by the name of Raphael Dimas, an old Greek gentleman, and I took from him a course on Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Old Dimas he was much loved by the undergraduates because he seemed to like us and paid a lot more attention to us than some of the professors who of course were preoccupied with their research and their graduate students and less interested in the undergrads. But Dimas was not like that. I had a one year Shakespeare course under a professor called Harry Lavin who was a great Shakespearian scholar. I had a terrific course, it was a half year course on Chaucer where we read all of Chaucer's works particularly the Canterbury Tales in old English. The professor who taught that liked to recite great wads of the

Canterbury Tales out loud to us with great vigor and enthusiasm. So I had a lot of good professors.

Q: Did you have any idea while you were there what you were pointing at?

LEONARD: No I did not. I confess, I really didn't have any strong ideas. What happened with me like a lot of people in those days I did have to concern myself with doing military service. I knew that I did not want to do the reserve officer training program that they were offering in those days, where you would go to class and drill once a week and in the summer do summer classes. That didn't appeal to me. But the one program that did appeal to me was a program the Marine Corps offered which was called their platoon leader's course. The reason I liked that one was because you didn't go to any classes or drills during the academic year. You simply went to summer camp two summers out of your four years of college. Then after you graduated you would go on to do some more training and then commissioning. So in my sophomore year I signed up for that, and as part of my signing up I had to take a physical. The Navy corpsman who gave the physical noticed I had a big long scar on my knee, one of my knees where I had been injured several years before. So he sent me down to the Boston Navy yard to see an orthopedic surgeon to check that out, The scar was fairly spectacular. I had broken my kneecap and dislocated my knee. Anyway this Navy surgeon took me in and had an X-ray taken of my knee. And after sitting around waiting for awhile he called me back in and said, "The X-ray negative," and kind of waved it at me and said, "look at this." I said, "Look at what?" So I could see where my knee had been broken in about a dozen places and had knitted itself back together again. His response is, "We don't want you." I had thought well that is that, I probably won't have to worry about military service. But in my senior year I got a letter from my draft board telling me to come in and have a physical. I started to think, well wait a minute maybe the army isn't quite so picky. I couldn't get into any of the officer training programs because of my knee but the army didn't have any problem with either drafting me or allowing me to volunteer as an enlisted man. So I went in right after graduation into what the army called Army Counterintelligence corps. I did three years in the army after that. That is a long way of saying I really didn't know what I wanted to do after college.

Q: Well then you graduated in '62. In the first place how did the Nixon-Kennedy election this sort of engaged a lot of young people. Did this engage you?

LEONARD: Oh absolutely. As you can imagine most of the undergraduates at Harvard were wildly enthusiastic about the idea of Kennedy getting elected. Since I was a Democrat and had no use for Richard Nixon, I was delighted by Kennedy's election We saw a small exodus of Harvard professors going down to Washington to work in his administration. Arthur Schlesinger left, Galbraith left, and there were others as well. That was very much on our minds and we were terrifically excited about having Kennedy in the White House.

Q: Well did Kennedy and his example attract you towards the government or not?

LEONARD: Yes. We were very much taken by his urging young people to serve and we were very much believers that government service was not only honorable but a desirable thing. At that point I didn't have any specific thoughts about the Foreign Service I had thought about journalism and the possibility of working for a newspaper. But I knew by the time my senior year was winding down that I probably was going to have some military service first. Since I didn't want to be drafted and let the army do whatever it wanted with me, I went ahead and volunteered so that I could get into the Army Counter Intelligence Corps.

Q: Did you enlist for two years?

LEONARD: Three years. You had to go in for three. If you were drafted, you were only in for two, but if you were drafted you basically had no choice about what the army was going to do with you. They assigned you where ever they wanted. Whereas if you enlisted you could choose what kind of military specialty you wanted to go into.

Q: So in '62 you went into the army. What was your service like?

LEONARD: Extremely interesting. I did my basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, in the middle of the summer. It was a very interesting mix of people we had. We had a little bit of everything. We had draftees. They had a program in those days where you could join the active reserves and you would do six months of active duty, and then for the next six years you would be in the active reserves where you had to go to meetings every month and every summer you would go to two or three weeks of reserve duty. That went on for six years. We had a lot of kids in basic training who were doing that. We had kids from all over the east coast, rich, poor, smart, stupid, it was a real cross section of the country's young men.

Q: Did you find yourself gravitating towards one part of the operation?

LEONARD: Well in basic training everybody simply did what you did. It was a lot of physical training, learn how to shoot a rifle, use a compass, that sort of stuff, basic infantry skills. After two months of that you went on to what they called advanced individual training. I got sent to the U.S. Army Intelligence Training Center at Fort Oliver, Maryland. There I went through a class again. It was three or four months of learning. Basically in those days the army counterintelligence corps did things like the background investigations on people who needed security clearances. So one of the attractions of the counterintelligence corps, you might be assigned to a small field office somewhere in the United States. You wore civilian clothes. You went around interviewing people about Joe Doakes who needed a security clearance. Write up your interviews, develop new leads, find out information about the people and their loyalty and reliability. That was one of the things they did. I got sent overseas, and discovered there were lots more interesting things we did overseas. After I finished their basic course at Fort Oliver, I got assigned to the 502nd MI battalion, a military intelligence battalion in Seoul, Korea. In Korea the 502nd had two basic functions. One was to spy on North Korea. The other was to spy on South Korea. We did both with let's say very limited

success. I got assigned to the part of the intelligence battalion to try and spy on the South Korean government, which at that time was a military government which had seized power in 1961 in a coup d'état. What happened was this coup d'état surprised the U.S. military in Korea, surprised the U. S. government as a whole, and made the U.S. military and the U.S. government very nervous because a bunch of young Korean colonels and generals had been plotting under our very noses and seized power and nobody in the U.S. government had a clue as to what was coming. Virtually nobody. We had two army divisions in Korea at the time, about 50,000 personnel. The army decided we better do a better job about finding out what is going on there. So they hired a new battalion commander, brought in a new guy, an army Lt. colonel who was a Korean American who was a WWII vet. Basically they tried to start improving sources of information within the junta that ruled Korea and among the students in South Korea, university students, who were very much a political force and who were very restive under this new government. So I was one of those who inherited a couple of sources as they were called. I had to meet with them periodically, clandestinely, and to debrief them. One of the was a fellow who worked for the Bank of Korea. He really didn't provide us with that much useful information. The most interesting thing I did there, my bosses in the battalion spotted one day an ad in the English language newspaper that was run by the Korean government. It was a little daily English language newspaper. One day they advertised they needed a copywriter. My bosses in our battalion spotted this and told me to go down there and get that job. The idea being to cultivate this or that newspaper man and get them on to our payroll. The thought being that newspaper men are smart fellows. They often know what is going on in a country. So I went down to this newspaper one day after work and got the job. Every afternoon I would take bus into downtown Seoul and work at this newspaper from about 5:00 each weekday afternoon until 10:00 or 11:00 at night. So that was really interesting. I was developing a very good relationship with the man who was the editor of the paper. The idea being that if I could get on the good side of him that at some point I would introduce him to my boss, the battalion commander of this Korean American. He would at some point make a pitch to this guy to try and recruit him as a source.

Q: What was sort of the attitude of the troops there towards Korea at the time. Did you see it as a viable country or what?

LEONARD: I well remember I befriended a family where the husband worked at our embassy. That is how I became interested in the Foreign Service. At a party at this man's house one day I met a man who was an agricultural economist who was working for our AID division. He was bemoaning the condition of South Korea shaking his head and saying "This place is, people are never going to make it." Shows you how much we knew. This was only ten years after the end of the Korea War. I got there in 1963. The armistice that ended the fighting was signed in '53. Korea was still a desperately poor place. You could still see lots of evidence of the damage from the war around Seoul. The country was still desperately poor. So we were not at all convinced that Korea was going to be able to stand on its own feet any time soon. Now the other thing that we felt about Korea, a lot of the GI's didn't like Korea because it was a very poor and very dirty place. Personally I thought it was a fascinating country. A very rich history dating back thousands of years. A beautiful country in many ways, very rugged countryside, but again

you had to accept the fact that it was desperately poor, and a very difficult place for many people to live in. I loved my time in Korea in the army. I thought it was great.

Q: Were there any clouds from Vietnam while you were there?

LEONARD: While I was still at the intelligence school they had thought of sending me to Vietnam; but then they wanted to beef up our military intelligence battalion in Korea and to try and gather more information about South Korea so several of my buddies got sent there instead. In Vietnam in those days we were still in the advisor mode. We had a big military presence there, but at least formally these people were not engaged in combat. In fact some of them were as advisors to South Vietnamese military units, but in theory we were still in the advisor role. But, oh yeah, we were very much conscious in the army about what was going on in South Vietnam, absolutely.

Q: Well then I was just thinking maybe this would be a good place to stop.

LEONARD: Let me just add one more thing, and I will tell you how I got to the Foreign Service. When I was assigned to the 502nd military intelligence battalion in Seoul, one of my pals had become friendly with this family. The husband worked with the American embassy. He was a fascinating guy called Zygmunt Nagorski. Zyg was a Pole. He had been a member of the Polish army in WWII. He escaped when Poland was invaded in '39, escaped to England. He fought with Free Polish forces during the war, came to the United States, was naturalized, and went to work for USIS, the U.S. Information Service. My pal and I met him in Seoul. He was at the embassy there. It was through him that I became really interested in the Foreign Service thinking to myself this is a good way to not only get to live overseas you get to do interesting work. Zyg strongly urged me, "If you come into this business, come into the State Department not USIS. The State Department is where the action is." So it was at his urging that I signed up to take the test that they give once a year. I took it a few months after I returned to the United States from Korea. We can continue that story.

Q: OK, let me just make my announcement. Today is 15 February 2011 with Jack Leonard. Jack, before we move on you were in an intelligence unit in Korea from when to when?

LEONARD: From 1963 to 1964.

Q: What sort of work were you doing?

LEONARD: The most interesting work that I did was to get a job working for the English language newspaper in Seoul. It was a government owned and run newspaper which served as the mouthpiece of the military government that was ruling South Korea at the time. The thought was that maybe some of the newspaper men might be possible informants. So I got a job on this newspaper. They had advertised for a copywriter. It just so happened that one of my summer jobs when I was in college was with the old New York Herald Tribune in New York City. I was a copy boy there so I knew what a copy

writer does. A copy writer is a guy who writes headlines. So somebody in my military intelligence unit had spotted the ad in the Korean Herald as the newspaper was called saying they needed a copywriter. My boss there in the intel unit said, "Get down there and get that job." The idea being as I said perhaps we could cultivate some of the newspaper men down there and maybe they might be ripe for recruiting and sources. So I worked there for a couple of months and was doing well sort of ingratiating myself with the newspaper guys, but then I came down with a case of hepatitis and would up in the hospital for a couple of months so I lost my job. When I got out of the hospital I had to go on kind of limited duty, so I wasn't able to work this part time job. I used to go down to the newspaper four or five days a seek. I would go to work about 5:00 and work until we put the paper to bed 10:00 or 11:00 at night.

Q: What was your impression of Korea and the Koreans at that time?

LEONARD: Korea as a country was still very poor. You could see evidence of the destruction from the war there everywhere you went in Seoul. The Koreans I found very interesting hard working people who seemed very much determined to try and turn things around. They really faced a monumental job. Korea was certainly one of the poorest countries in the world in those days. So that was my impression. I really enjoyed living there. I liked being able to get out and around Seoul and liked this job that I had. So I was very favorably impressed by what I thought were some of the good and interesting things about Korea.

Q: How did we view the Park Chung-hee government at the time. How did we view it?

LEONARD: Well our relations with it were very edgy. Remember that Park came to power in a coup d'état in 1961. He and the group of young generals and colonels who organized this coup and ran the government were not particularly close to the United States. Most of them like Park had originally served in the Japanese army in WWII. There was very little of anything in their background that made them comfortable with the liberal western style democracy that we hoped could evolve in Korea. So relations with Park were very edgy. He was viewed with considerable suspicion also by some because in the late 1940's, when the United States was winding up its occupation of Korea after WWII, there was a communist uprising in Korea. A number of Korean army officers were implicated in it including Park himself. So there were some concerns about Park in the back rooms.

Q: Did you have much contact, you had mentioned the USIA officer, Nagorski, but did you have much to do with the embassy at all?

LEONARD: Not really. Basically with Zyg and his family. An army friend of mine happened to meet Zyg somehow, I don't remember how. And he and his family would invite us to parties occasionally. We went up to visit a summer place outside of Seoul once. But he was about the only person in the embassy I really knew. In the course of my duties I didn't have occasion to meet people from the embassy.

Q: Did you get any feel about how the Koreans you were in contact with felt about the American presence there?

LEONARD: Yeah. It was an interesting relationship. Most of the Koreans whom I met, and I think that is probably true generally of them, they were obviously appreciative of American support during the Korean War. On the other hand, many of them blamed the United States for the division of the country after WWII which was purely an administrative convenience when we were looking for a convenient dividing line between that part of Korea which would be administered by the Soviets and that part which would be administered by us, having already agreed that we would share the occupation of Korea with the Soviets after the defeat of Japan. So, many Koreans blamed us for what had hardened the division of the peninsula into two separate countries. There was always that do deal with. In addition the Koreans had just come out of a very brutal 35 year occupation by the Japanese, and most of them had no experience with democratic government. They had very little understanding of American values. It is a very traditional society which had been flung headlong into the 20th century. All of its institutions had been destroyed. The country had fallen under Japanese rule. The Japanese then lost the war. In came the Americans and Soviets, and the country was divided. It was a really traumatic period for Korea.

Q: They you say you moved on, you left Korea and left the army when?

LEONARD: Late spring of 1964. I was assigned back to Washington to a military intelligence unit in Washington. I got out of the army at the end of June, 1965. I had already taken the Foreign Service exam in November of 1964. I had my oral interviews later that spring of '65 and before I got out of the army had already received an invitation to join the Foreign Service.

Q: Do you want to take about your experience with the oral exam?

LEONARD: Yeah the oral exam consisted of a panel of three Foreign Service officers with whom you met. You simply sat down for two or three hours and they would ask you a lot of questions about yourself. They asked you questions of general knowledge of current events, all kinds of things like that.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions?

LEONARD: The only one I recall was I told them in answer to one of their questions what I had been doing in the army and they said, "Well how do you for example if you had been assigned to do a background investigation on somebody," which in fact I never did, although that was something that many in army intelligence did do, "What kinds of things would you look for?" I said, "Well you would start by getting records of the person's education. You would check police records, FBI records. You would go to the person listed on their form that they fill out for a security clearance. You would go and interview people, develop leads from them about others who knew them. You wouldn't give too much weight to those the subject listed on his application form because

obviously people are going to pick those who think highly of them. You need to develop some secondary sources, people who were not listed but who also knew the subject." So it was a question like that. That wasn't the only one; it is the only one I happen to remember.

Q: Well now, how did things proceed? Did you come in shortly thereafter?

LEONARD: Yeah, I got discharged from the army at the end of June, 1965, and came in to the Foreign Service in October of 1965.

Q: What was your basic officer course like? How was it composed and how did you find the training?

LEONARD: There were about 30 of us in the class, and we were a pretty good cross section of the United States with one exception. There was only one woman officer in the group and she was going into the U.S. Information Agency. Unlike a lot of other countries we didn't try to educate our junior officers in those days, I don't know about today, about the history of American foreign policy, about legalisms of international diplomacy. We didn't feel we were doing any of that. It was assumed that you had a basic understanding of American history and the history of American diplomacy or you probably wouldn't have passed the Foreign Service exam. So we did more about training people about the structure and functions of the department and its various specialties. That is what I remember about the course itself.

Q: It is hard to characterize but did you sort of feel as a budding American Foreign Service officer, I won't say going out to save the world, but you had a sort of a mission?

LEONARD: Oh yeah that was certainly part of the makeup of a lot of us. No doubt we had all been sort of influenced by President Kennedy and his call to Americans to serve their country, in particular overseas. So yes I think there was definitely a sense of pride in being the elite of the United States government. We are going to go out and make our way, help the United States make its way in a very dangerous world. I think definitely there was a lot of that sense among us.

Q: Did Vietnam loom at all while you were a Foreign Service officer?

LEONARD: Did it ever. Because when I came into the Foreign Service we had just recently sent the first combat troops into Vietnam. Big battles were already raging, and so we knew that lots of the junior officers would like to be sent off to Vietnam. Indeed that was my first thought to go off to Vietnam for my first assignment.

Q: How did it work out? What was your first assignment?

LEONARD: Well as a matter of fact it didn't. I didn't go to Vietnam for my first assignment. What happened was I met and proposed to a young woman and we got married. I thought well this is probably not a good way to start off a marriage with me

running off to Vietnam and leaving my wife back here in the United States. So I went to the guy who was running our junior officer course, a guy called Alexander Davit, and I said, you know I am thinking I would like to change my assignment because I had already been assigned to go to Vietnam. He knew I was getting married. I explained to him. Well let me see what I can do. And sure enough he came back to me and said, you know there is another job opening up. It is about as far from Vietnam as you can get. The woman who is our new ambassador in Luxembourg, of all places, is looking for a junior officer to replace one junior officer in that post. Since a lot of the work of that junior officer would be to work for her taking care of her schedules and things like that, she wants to interview the candidate. So be at this restaurant on such and such a date to meet Ambassador Harris, and if she likes you, you will probably get the job. So that is indeed what happened.

Q: OK, in the first place what was the background of the woman you married?

LEONARD: She was the sister of the wife of one of my classmates, a classmate I was particularly fond of. His wife, her younger sister, was going to school in Baltimore and came down one weekend to visit them. It so happened, it was on a Friday evening. They had arranged for our class to attend a diplomatic reception in the Ben Franklin room to begin the process of civilizing us and teaching us about gatherings. My friend and his wife brought his wife's sister along with them. So that is where we met, in the Ben Franklin room.

Q: By the way was there a movement going on, I think it was called JEFSOC or something like that, the junior officers. Was that going at that time or did that develop a little later?

LEONARD: I remember that acronym but I can't remember anything about that movement or organization.

Q: Well it probably wasn't very important then. I think it became more important in the early 70's, sort of this 60's movement. Were you all affected by the 60's movements, civil rights and anti Vietnam demonstrations and all?

LEONARD: That all started to heat up while I was serving in Luxembourg, so we were watching that from quite a distance. We were certainly conscious and read about it and concerned with what was going on back home. At the same time in Western Europe they were having their own student uprisings, which were starting to really percolate up. Although Luxembourg didn't have its own university; all of its students went abroad to go to university. We didn't have that kind of an active student movement in Luxembourg. We certainly did next door in France and Germany, and there were lots of colorful events and colorful characters that we watched with great interest from Luxembourg, especially in France where de Gaulle was really shaken by it.

Q: Well you had the spring of '68 coming up.

LEONARD: That's right. That was extremely interesting to see all of that evolve because the French government was stern and paternalistic. In a lot of ways it still is. So it was interesting to watch how that was changing the French and their government. But we didn't see that directly in Luxembourg simply because they really didn't have a student movement like that. I knew some university students in Luxembourg and to a man they were sympathetic to all of that in France and to a lot of it in Germany.

Q: Well how did this luncheon with Ambassador Harris go?

LEONARD: That went pretty well, She was their with her husband. We chatted about this and that over lunch. I don't recall much of what she asked me about. My capabilities in French; I am sure that was part of it. I had some schoolboy French, but I was also studying at the Foreign Service Institute. So that seemed to go pretty well and she gave me to understand that the job was mine.

Q: Well what was her background now?

LEONARD: She was a political appointee. She was a black woman from Mattoon, Illinois as I recall. She was prominent in Democratic party politics. I am trying to remember what she was doing when she was appointed ambassador. She was the first black female ambassador. They were both lawyers. He a very jovial type, Bill Harris, very easy to get along with. His wife, Ambassador Harris, she was a bit more frosty and difficult to deal with. You had to watch your P's and Q's around her, because she tended to be somewhat suspicious of the staff.

Q: That often happens. Who was the DCM?

LEONARD: The DCM when I got there was a guy called Joe Cunningham. Joe was an officer of longtime experience. He and Ambassador Harris didn't get along very well for whatever reason. So she let it be known that she wanted him replaced. He was replaced not long after I got there by a guy called Dick Boehm. So Dick was the DCM for most of the time.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEONARD: I got there in May or June of '66 and left in June or July of '68.

Q: Now what was the situation in Luxembourg? I mean it is not exactly a revolutionary area, but what exactly was going on then?

LEONARD: Well Luxembourg was in the throes of basically two things. Number one, the old European coal and steel community, which was one of the forerunners of the later common market. The coal and steel communities had its headquarters in Luxembourg. When the treaty of Rome was later signed creating the common market, it was agreed that the new bureaucracy would move up to Brussels. So Luxembourg was losing a lot of people. It later did get, and that was while I was there, the secretariat for the European

parliament to replace the coal and steel community. But the Luxembourgers were having to cope with that, and also having to cope with a future where they could see that they weren't going to be able to rely on their coal and steel industries forever to be the economic backbone of the country. Their government was recognizing this and starting to try and do something about recognizing that increasing world production of steel and the mining of coal was going to put them at a disadvantage. So they were starting to scout about for other kinds of industry or financial institutions to attract to Luxembourg. Also we had a continuing, very small battle with them because we were constantly having to bug them to keep up their symbolic little military unit that was part of NATO. They were always backsliding on that. They had a small army and their contribution to NATO was one infantry battalion. We felt that was important for us to try and keep them to fund that and equip that unit at an acceptable level as a symbolic contribution. Everybody has to pay their way if you are a member of NATO. That was a constant problem because, of course, militarily their one unit meant nothing whatever, but symbolically we felt it was important. So those were a couple of things that we focused on while we were there. We had a very small embassy. We had I think less than half a dozen officers including the ambassador.

Q: Was there a residue of I don't know what you want to call it, but the call me madam and the Pearl Mesta business?

LEONARD: Well actually a lot of Luxembourgers remembered Ms. Mesta fondly because she had in a sense almost put Luxembourg on the map. So yeah, there were still Luxembourgers who remembered her. In general Luxembourgers were very favorably disposed to the United States. Because we had after all liberated them twice in the 20th century from the Germans. And the feeling against the Germans was still very strong. Although it must be said that many young Luxembourgers who wanted to study things like engineering or the sciences would go to German universities. Nonetheless the anti-German feeling was still strong there.

Q: How did Ambassador operate?

LEONARD: Quite frankly there wasn't all that much for her to do. So she had to do a lot of ceremonial and public relations kind of stuff. That simply wasn't to her taste. I suspect that she was bored. So when she left after I had been there about a year or a year-and-a-half I think she was happy to go since the bloom was off the rose. There wasn't all that much to keep her busy of an important nature.

Q: You were there for her replacement?

LEONARD: Oh yes. Her replacement was a guy called George Feldman. George was another political appointee. He had been a big campaign contributor to Hubert Humphrey. He got appointed first as Ambassador to Malta, and he was there for a couple of years. Then he was appointed to replace Ambassador Harris in Luxembourg. He was a very vigorous energetic man in his early to mid 60's. He didn't seem to mind that there was not all that substantive work to do in Luxembourg. He liked the ceremonial stuff. He

liked going out and giving speeches and meeting people and doing a lot of meeting and greeting. I think he was well suited for that job.

Q: How did they use you?

LEONARD: I did a little of everything. In those days, in larger embassies, junior officers on their first tour would spend six months in each section of the embassy. In other words consular, administrative, political, and economic. We had such a small embassy that I simply did a little bit of each of those kinds of work. And in addition I did all the USIA stuff since we didn't have a USIA officer there. For example, I would try to get traveling American cultural presentations. We had a concert there by the Los Angeles Philharmonic that was touring western Europe partly under the auspices of USIA. I used to have to help do the Fulbright program. I would try and encourage people in Luxembourg to apply for Fulbright grants and help them. I sat in on a couple of the interview sessions that we did at our embassy in Brussels to choose candidates. So I got a little bit of everything. I would write an occasional little cable about this and that development in Luxembourg. I was also deputized to cultivate members of the press and labor leaders; so I had my hands full.

Q: I imagine there were commemorative things of Bastogne and all that.

LEONARD: There were indeed. Two big ceremonies we did every year. We made a huge thing out of the Fourth of July reception. It seems like every year we would invite half the country there. The ceremony would start off with a big event at the American military cemetery just outside Luxembourg City which is where General Patton is buried. The ambassador would make some remarks. We would have a wreath laying and have the Marines every year. And American military aircraft from some of the air bases over in Germany would fly over the cemetery. We would have a huge reception on July Fourth itself. The other big ceremonial event was a thing that the Luxembourgers organized. There was a little town called Ettelbruck which organized every year what they called remembrance days. Every summer they would have a fair where they would celebrate Luxembourg's liberation by General Patton's army in 1944. Patton's army liberated Luxembourg and then moved from there to relieve the American units at Bastogne. So remembrance days was a big thing. We had a committee that had Luxembourg government and military officials and people from the little town of Ettelbruck and people from the U.S. military. We didn't have any of them in Luxembourg, but from nearby units in Germany. The U.S. military was always a big part of these celebrations because they would march in parades and always bring one or more bands to play. So there were a couple of days of a lot of fuss, speechifying, and parades. The Luxembourg army would set up huge tents in a field outside of this little town. There would be all kinds of food and beer and wine. This would go on for a couple of days. The U.S. military units that participated loved it because the Luxembourgers were very friendly and there was a lot of beer and food and lots of girls running around. They all loved it. So I was on this committee for a couple of years. We took four or five months to plan these festivities. So that was always interesting and lots of fun.

Q: Did you find yourself just a bit kind of wondering here you were sampling the high life right when you were ready to go off for adventure.

LEONARD: Right. Well it certainly was a switch from what Vietnam would have been. Of course that contrast crossed my mind more than once. On the other hand my wife and I really enjoyed our time in Luxembourg. It was a lot of fun. A lot of sight seeing to do. We would go off on weekends or leave to go places. We saw a lot of western Europe while we were there. But I didn't change my mind about the part of the world I wanted to spend my career in. I wanted to get back to Asia. In those days you would tell the department here are my three choices of countries for my next assignment. The ones I put down were Japan, Korea or Taiwan.

Q: So what happened? In '68 were there any reverberations of the May, '68 in Paris and all?

LEONARD: Not really in Luxembourg. I think that most people in Luxembourg were perfectly happy they didn't have a big student movement there. They didn't have any real unrest there. Because the Luxembourgers were kind of stodgy and were happy the way things were. So we didn't have a ring side seat in Luxembourg for all of that. It was all going on in Paris or Germany.

Q: So June of '68,whither for you?

LEONARD: I got assigned to Korea. I was sent back to Washington in June of '69 for five months of Korean language training, which in those days was all you got. I used to head off to the Foreign Service Institute every day to do my Korean language training. And while we were back there, things were coming to a head in the United States. We got there just in time for the disastrous Democratic convention in Chicago that summer, where Mayor Daley declared war on the protestors. We were there for the election of 1968. then we went off to Korea in January, 1969.

Q: You were in Korea from when to when?

LEONARD: From '69 to '73.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LEONARD: When I first got to Korea the ambassador was William J. Porter.

Q: Oh yes, one of the great names.

LEONARD: A big name, yes. He was a really good ambassador. Park Chung Hee was still in power, and our relations with him and his government were always prickly. Porter had one practice which I found very interesting and participated in once. Porter liked every now and then to go out and travel around the countryside incognito. We would drive around in a big embassy van because most roads weren't that good once you got

outside of the major cities. The idea would be to just drive around and stop at country inns and talk to people. He would always take one junior officer with him to do the driving. So one time he asked me to do it. He would take along somebody who spoke Korean, and although my Korean wasn't great, it certainly was enough to get by with. So on this particular trip we took off from Seoul and drove east. We drove all the way over to the East Coast of Korea, and then headed south on a coastal road that went right along the East coast of Korea down almost all the way to Pusan. Then we turned inland again and went to the city of Taegu. In Taegu he had made some regular appointments. So he had his regular car waiting for him there and I drove the van back to Seoul. We were out on the road for the better part of three days. Sightseeing, picking up hitch hikers which in those days we used to like to do. Koreans of course, in those days, had very few automobiles. Very few people could afford an automobile, so people were always happy if you offered them a lift while driving. So we would do that. We would chat with folks about how they felt about life, how they were doing. Porter always thought that helped him keep his ear close to the ground. So as I say, I did that once with him.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Porter and the commanding general who was an American?

LEONARD: Let's see. Not really. I am trying to remember who was the commanding general at that time. It might have been Guy Meloy. My memory is hazy on that. Generally by that time our ambassadors I thought had pretty much gotten the upper hand in that relationship. This was more than ten years after the war. The Ambassador was generally acknowledged by the military guys there as the primus inter pares, and he certainly had the lead role in dealing with the Korean government. So generally my impression was those relations were pretty good.

Q: Were you on a rotational job, or what were you doing there?

LEONARD: My first year in Korea I had my obligatory assignment in the consular section. I worked in the consular section for a year, and then switched over to the political section and was in the political section for the next 3 ½ years.

Q: Talk a little about consular work. What was the situation?

LEONARD: We had a small consular section. We had the head of the section and three junior officers. One junior officer did all the immigrant visas. Another junior officer did the non immigrant visas, and I did everything else. In other words, I did all the citizenship services, passports, reports of birth, and the thing that took up more time than anything else was doing notarials for GIs who wanted to get married. That took up a great deal of my time. By modern standards this was a tiny consular section. We were badly overworked in that section. By today's standards you would have far more people to deal with the work load. But that is what we had and that is what we survived with.

Q: Well did you get the feeling there were a lot of fake marriages with the GIs?

LEONARD: Oh yes, there was a certain amount of that. The army took a dim view of their GIs getting married. They would get complaints from the folks back home. Why are you letting little Johnny marry this woman. Many girls were from questionable backgrounds at best, and there was certainly some fraud in the marriages in that some of the women who were getting married were just trying to get a visa to go to the United States. My view was that if the GI was of age, i.e. 21, it was certainly his right to marry anybody he pleased. I was certainly not going to stand in the way and join with the army throwing up roadblocks. If he could run the gauntlet of all the things the army demanded of him and get down to my office, that was fine. I would obviously screen people and anybody who was suspected of a totally fraudulent marriage we would not do their notarials for them that would enable them to get married, but there wasn't much.

Q: Did you get involved in protection and welfare cases?

LEONARD: Very rarely because there were so few Americans outside of the military in Korea. There were American missionaries, but they were not the kind who would get into trouble. You would get reports of the births of their children. You would issue them passports. There were a handful of American businessmen but not many. It was mostly the military and thankfully when they got into trouble which they did often, that was the military's responsibility to deal with it. So I didn't have too much of that. We would have an occasional merchant seaman. You know the merchant sea captains would come around and sign this or that seaman off their roster, but not too much of that. I did have one very amusing incident. One time I got a phone call one day from the captain of an American merchant vessel which was at the port of Pusan, which is about three quarters of the way down the peninsula. He said, "You have got to come down here right away. I have got a mutiny on my hands." I said, "Mutiny? What is going on?" He gave me some story about what was going on. I said, "Well sit tight. I will be right back in touch with you and will get down there right away." So I told my boss and quickly did up some orders and I quickly got down there to Pusan to find out what was going on. The phone rings again and it is this same ships captain. He said, "It is OK, now. You don't have to come down. It is all settled." I said, "Are you sure?" because I was kind of looking forward to this. It would be something new. "No, no, it is all set." I suspected that he must have communicated with his bosses, the owners of the steamship line and they said, "What are you talking about. The last thing you want is some guy from the embassy down there involved in our washing our dirty laundry. Turn him off don't let him come down." Anyway I never did go down there to Pusan and never heard back from those guys.

Q: OK, today is 22 February, Washington's birthday, 2011, and an interview with Jack Leonard. During your time in the consular section did you do any visas and that?

LEONARD: No, I did no visa work at all. We had one fellow that did all the immigrant visas, and another officer who did all the non immigrant visas, and I did everything else. I had to do notarials for GI's who wanted to get married. I would help them with the first step of the process of getting their wives immigrant visas. They had to swear out a document in front of me that was the first step in the immigrant visa process for the wife

of an American citizen. I didn't do any visa work myself. All I did was pitch in for both of my colleagues when they were on vacation, so I got a very small exposure to immigrant visas and non immigrant visas. Korea was a very difficult place to do consular work, especially visa work because fraud was a big problem.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEONARD: I was there from 1969 to 1973.

Q: Aha. Did you run into the problem of while you were in the consular section with notarials, where a man, a GI or somebody, in particular not a GI because I think they were vetted elsewhere. But with a civilian who says I am going to marry Miss Kim here," and then you would say, "When did you met her?" Then you would find out he didn't speak Korean and she didn't speak English, and they had met two days before. It was obviously an arranged marriage. Could you stop and not issue this certificate that they were free to get married or what.

LEONARD: Yeah. We could, and there was a certain amount of that kind of fraudulent stuff going on. That wasn't the huge problem. You notarize these documents which the American citizen needs for marriage. They are the ones who had to swear to a document that says they were free to marry. In other words that they were not already married or if they had been married, they were properly divorced. They had to do that before the Korean authorities would register the marriage. So there was a certain amount of that, but it was not a huge problem. The GI's who got married had to go through endless circles set up by the army under pressure from distraught family back home who were constantly badgering the army saying how dare you let little Johnny get married. On the other hand my theory and my practice always was look if they are 21 years old they are certainly old enough to decide for themselves. It is none of the army's business about who they marry. So if they want to marry some girl who had a police record or who has been registered as a prostitute, whatever, hey they knew what they were getting into for the most part. My only concern basically was fraud. The more common kind of fraud you would come across the Korean girls if they had worked as prostitutes, they would almost always have a police record. The Korean national police kept pretty close tabs on these women for reasons of their own. So often girls would use an assumed name to get married hoping that their police records would not thereby come under our scrutiny. We and the army both would do some investigation of the girls if we thought there was some fraud going on.

Q: Well after you did the visas, the consular work, where did you go?

LEONARD: I moved over to the political section and the last three years I was in Korea I worked in the political section.

Q: What part? Did you have a particular slice of the pie?

LEONARD: Yes I did. I was the junior officer, the lowest ranking guy on the totem pole. I would do day to day liaison with the Korean foreign ministry. There was a lot of that work to be done because Korea at that time had two divisions of their army in Vietnam. So we would provide the foreign ministry with a lot of information produced by our embassy in Saigon to keep them informed about the progress of the war and to try to make sure that they saw things the way we did. Which is to say they thought the war was going better than it really was.

Q: How did you find your connections at the foreign ministry?

LEONARD: They had some extremely able people in their foreign ministry. It was a relatively small bureaucracy. The head of their North American bureau was a very able young man. He was in his mid to late 30's by the name of Kim Dong Wee, who had served in the United States. He spoke excellent English. He was a protégé of either the foreign minister or the deputy foreign minister, the vice foreign minister. Very brash and lively young fellow. His office was obviously the most important one in the ministry given our relations with Korea and their dependence on us. We had a lot of dealings with him and the people that worked for him.

Q: Was there much exchange at your level about how we saw events in China or how we saw the Soviet Union or Japan or what have you?

LEONARD: In the case of Japan in particular, yes. The second most important office that they had in their ministry was their office that oversaw relations with Japan. The military government had normalized relations with Japan, a very controversial step. They did that several years earlier. It was highly unpopular with many people in South Korea given the nature of Japan's relations with Korea, the Japanese occupation for 35 years. So many people in the general population and the political opposition lost no opportunity to criticize the military government for relations with Japan. The foreign ministry had one of its very best officers, a man named Bon No Myen who was their desk officer for Korea. We talked a lot, mostly about Korea's relations with Japan, how they were going. What the current problems were, because there were always problems, and how serious they might be. So yeah, I had a lot of discussions with this man about relations with Japan. Relations with China, dealings with North Korea; in those days South Korea had no relations with China, and officially at least they still had a very antiquated view of China's position in the world. Publicly and officially at least they would portray China as still being subordinate to or almost a satellite of the Soviet Union. They had a much clearer understanding of China's place in the communist world. When I was in Korea the Nixon administration had put out its feelers to Korea. Henry Kissinger traveled there. That was held extremely tightly. No one in our embassy up to and including the ambassador knew anything about that. When this was revealed publicly, that Kissinger had traveled to China and we were in the process of a rapprochement with China, the Korean government was stunned and angered by the fact that, as they saw it, we had pulled the rug out from under them. As suspicious as they were, they were of course very worried at any discussions we might have had with China about Korea. They reciprocated themselves. Within a year of the time that Kissinger's trip to China and our efforts to

normalize relations with China became public, the military government of Korea had put out feelers to Pyongyang. They had their own secret travel to North Korea. One of President Park Chung-hee's trusted lieutenants, Lee Hu-rak, who was head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, made a secret visit to Pyongyang. All of this was done without our knowledge. So there was a little bit of tit for tat.

Q: Did they have the equivalent to China Watchers? I am sure they had North Korea Watchers; that would be completely intelligence, but were they absorbing information from other embassies about what was happening in China?

LEONARD: Yes they did, but I don't recall that the foreign ministry had much of a hand in that. Like the function of monitoring, keeping an eye on, spying on North Korea, as I recall that function with regard to China resided mostly in the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. And the liaison with them fell of course to our own intelligence agency.

Q: How did you find, Korea some embassies and missions in the American Foreign Service have reputations of being AID dominated an others CIA dominated like the Congo and Korea. For a long time we had declared people who were head of the CIA. How did you find relations with the Agency at your level?

LEONARD: Well the two ambassadors under whom I served both had a very firm grip on everything that went on in their embassies, both over our AID mission that was still very large and over the CIA station. The first ambassador that I served under was Bill Porter, a very able guy. He was then replaced by Phil Habib who also was an extremely able guy. He brooked no funny business about not being informed about what was going on. He was a dominating personality. He dominated our relations with Korea including our military relations. Habib knew the station chief in Korea from before he came to Seoul. The U.S. military commander in Korea at the time was General John Michaelis. He deferred to Phil in all matters dealing with the Korean government.

Q: Well then what were our prime interests in Korea at that time. This is obviously the Park Chung-hee government. How did we view it?

LEONARD: We had a very difficult relation with that government. Park and his lieutenants were no fans of western style democracy which of course we wanted to see evolve in Korea. They were very authoritarian by nature, and we were constantly at loggerheads with Park and his government over the flawed direction of where that country ought to be going. For example, under considerable pressure from the United States, Park had agreed in 1971 to run for president. He ran against Kim Dae-jung who later himself became president. In a closely contested campaign that was pretty fair and open, Park narrowly defeated Kim Dae-Jung. I well remember that campaign because I and others in our embassy would go out to election rallies all over the country and listen to the political speeches. We were trying to gauge how the election would come out and see how fairly it was being conducted. Things that embassies traditionally do. In any event, Park narrowly defeated Kim Dae-Jung in that election. My own feeling was that

having gone through that experience he was determined that he was not going to take that chance again. So within months of that election he declared martial law and set about altering the constitution to make sure that he would have a much firmer grip on power and that he would not be effectively challenged. That created a considerable problem with his relations with the United States. Habib sent a message to Washington asking Washington how should we react to this? What can we do about this, and what does this imply for our relations with Korea. We had a very large stake in the success of South Korea. After all we had fought a very bloody war there. We still had about 50,000 U.S. troops in South Korea.

Q: We still had both divisions then.

LEONARD: We had both divisions, the second and the seventh were both there when I was there. The military threat from North Korea was seen as very real. That is certainly the way we saw it and the way the South Koreans saw it. Having invested so much blood and treasure in preserving the South Korean state, we were very much concerned with its future. We were convinced that as Korea matured and began slowly to prosper economically that it would be possible for Democratic roots to be put down and for things to evolve in a more democratic way. Park and his government often made that very difficult, because that was a totally alien thing for him and for so many of those around him. They were brought up under the Japanese occupation and were very authoritarian by nature.

Q: Well did you see any of sort of in your fairly junior position, any of the interplay between our military and people, our generals and all, and the Korean military?

LEONARD: I saw something a little different. My second main task in the political section was to deal with what we called status of forces issues.

Q: Oh yeah.

LEONARD: These were issues and problems arising between the U.S. military and the Korean government in the course of our having these 50,000 GIs in Korea. One of the problems that constantly was an irritant in our relations was that of the relations between our U.S. military bases and the local towns near them. Near every U.S. military base would spring up these camp towns which were full of bars and whore houses. The relations between these local communities and our military personnel could often be extremely difficult. The military of course always wanted to clean up these camp towns. Too many of our GIs were getting venereal diseases. Too many of them were getting sick on rotgut liquor. For the Korean government the problem was a little different. These towns were really dependent on our military personnel and their spending some money in them. So Korea being a very poor country at the time, they wanted to protect the ability of small merchants, bar owners and such, to be able to make money off the GIs. So we had a committee which served as a clearing house to deal with problems like this between the U.S. military and the local authorities. On the committee were people from the Korean foreign ministry, the U.S. military, from our embassy, occasionally from local

authorities like the Korean national police. We would travel around visiting bases and local communities organizing meetings to try and help the Koreans and the American military get along better and deal with their problems. Very interesting work.

Q: Well did you see sort of an end to the Park government or more or less another military person would take it. Did you see any indications they were getting ready for an eventual turnover?

LEONARD: Quite frankly no. Especially after that election in 1971 in which Park had come very close to losing it was very clear he never wanted to repeat that experience. He therefore sought ways to consolidate his power. He declared martial law shortly thereafter. He started re-writing the constitution to make it possible for him to stay in power. So this was exactly the opposite direction from where we wanted to see Korea going. So it was a very difficult time in our relations. We didn't see it as likely that Park would ever willingly give up power. That simply was not the direction he was going. Our dilemma that we put to Washington, that we tried to advise Washington on, was how do we react to this situation given our broad interest in Korea. Can we disassociate ourselves, distance ourselves from his government without jeopardizing our serious long term interests in South Korea. There was a very fine line that one had to walk.

Q: Yeah this often is a dilemma we are caught in. Often, I don't want to be pejorative, but the do-gooders will announce that we are against everything and yet maybe we have oil or a strategic line. Obviously we had a strategic line in South Korea. You just didn't have the room to maneuver in.

LEONARD: Well that is right. Essentially we found ourselves in Korea. So what we tried to do was distance ourselves from Park's government, try and push it around the edges to be more respectful of people's fundamental rights but understanding that as long as Park was in effective control there were real limits as to what we could do. Park was still a relatively young man at the time so we were not looking for beyond him, who is going to come after him. As it turned out of course, he was later assassinated. He was succeeded by another military man in fairly short order. A man by the name of Chun Doo-hwan. That all took place after I left Korea.

Q: Was there a certain amount of comfort with Park Chung Hee as regards his economic policies and management of the economy?

LEONARD: Yes. I think that to many in our economic section he was attempting to move too quickly. It was really almost like a breakneck drive to economic growth. But he perhaps understood better than we did what his people and what his country were capable of. Our concerns were that they were attempting to move too quickly rather than with the general direction in which they were going. It was clear that they were attempting to model their economy on that of the Japanese, an economy that would be export driven. That certainly made very good sense at the time, given the lack of natural resources in South Korea which was an agrarian society. Those were almost all in the northern half of

the country, which had an extremely hard working industrious people. As we came to understand there was no reason that they could not emulate what the Japanese had done.

Q: Well you left there, were there any crises? I can't remember when the, Oh God the ship that was taken.

LEONARD: The Pueblo Crisis.

Q: Yes.

LEONARD: The thing about serving in Korea you could be sure that at least once a year there would be some horrendous crisis. The Pueblo Crisis may have come after I left Korea. I don't recall. There was the issue that erupted in our relations when Park Chung Hee declared martial law after those elections that he almost lost.

There was another crisis that arose of a very different nature. A bunch of Japanese lunatics, communist fanatics, hijacked an airplane at one point. They wanted to fly to North Korea of all places. The pilot of the aircraft landed in Seoul at Kimpo Airport instead. There was a long standoff with this aircraft sitting at the end of the runway for a number of days. It had a couple of Americans on board. These fanatics, the aircraft hijackers were in control. Ultimately they let the passengers off the plane. I was sent out to Kimpo to keep an eye on things, to see how the Korean government would handle it on the spot. Their defense minister came out and he directed the negotiations conducted over the radio between the control tower and the people in the plane about letting the hostages, letting the passengers off the plane. The Korean government had to decide whether they were going to let this plane subsequently take off and fly to North Korea. This is what these hijackers said they wanted to do, and they were holding the crew of the plane hostage to get that done. After several days the South Koreans agreed to let this plane take off. It did fly after arrangements were made to have an air corridor to fly into North Korea from South Korea. I spent the better part of three days up there at the airport watching and trying to see what was going on. We were particularly concerned of course about the American passengers who were aboard that plane.

We got a report one day that a bunch of armed military personnel were heading for Seoul. They were apparently South Korean deserters, defectors, military personnel of some kind and they were heading for Seoul. They had somehow escaped from an island off the west coast of Korea. So the embassy immediately sent me out to our military headquarters in Seoul. It was in a compound area of Seoul known as Yongsan. Our commanding military general at the time, John Michaelis, was in his office giving orders about securing the Yongsan compound, about getting some extra security down around our embassy, and trying to get hold of the South Korean military to try and find out what in the hell is going on and who are these people. It was an interesting case. The people were indeed South Korean military personnel. They had been on this island for a long time, training to be infiltrated into North Korea. They were unhappy with their situation. They may or may not have been volunteers for their mission, but they mutinied. They commandeered a boat. They were armed and they got to the port of Inchon. They hijacked a bus. They

were driving towards Seoul to demand the South Korean military authorities improve their conditions or let them out of the military, whatever the case might be. So that caused a brief flurry of excitement. You have these armed rebels, whatever you call them, who had commandeered a bus and were on their way to Seoul. Life was like that in Korea in those days.

Q: Well then you left there when?

LEONARD: I left Korea in '73. I was assigned back to the State Department to the old Republic of China desk. Kissinger and Nixon had just made their trips to China. We had committed ourselves to creating what we then called a liaison office in China, but we still had normal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan. We hadn't broken those relations yet. But we had committed ourselves to gradually eliminating our small military presence on the island. Although it wasn't said, we didn't say so as I recall specifically. It was clear that we were going to ultimately break diplomatic relations with the Republic of China and establish them with Peking. My particular task was to work with others in the State Department to come up with a menu of steps for withdrawing our military presence on Taiwan. Each year we would present this menu of steps for each interagency committee principally of course the Pentagon, in effect saying look here is what we think you ought to take out of Taiwan this coming year. It was a painful time for our military people because of course they had built up long relationships with the Republic of China and its military. They had convinced themselves that the small military facilities that we used there were very important to their overall posture in the Western Pacific. So it was somewhat painful to them to have the State Department coming to them every year and presenting to them proposals for what they ought to get rid of in Taiwan. I remember at one point hearing that the Secretary of Defense, James Schlesinger, blew up supposedly once upon looking at this memo from the State Department with proposals for how we should whittle down our military presence in the coming year. He reacted by shouting to no one in particular, "I will not have the defense policy of the United States decided by a bunch of clerks in green eyeshades." So we took to calling ourselves over on the Republic of China desk the clerks with green eyeshades.

I got to the Republic of China Desk in 1973, and I worked there for two years, and then I had another two years in the bureau of political and military affairs again working on Asian issues.

Q: I would have thought that your China thing the Republic of China say Mr. Leonard we have got the ship call of the Titanic and I wonder if you would check on the deck chairs or something, It must have been a…

LEONARD: It was clear we were going to remove all of our military ties, or at least our military presence from Taiwan. Or at least we were going to break diplomatic relations with them. But it was also clear we needed to stay in touch with Taiwan. We didn't want them to feel they were so deserted and cast adrift that they might run off and do stupid things like developing nuclear weapons. We can talk about all of that next time.

Q: Ok, today is1 March 2011 with Jack Leonard. We are discussing 1973.

LEONARD: That is right. I left Korea, and I returned to Washington and was assigned to the Republic of China desk.

Q: And the Republic of China at that time was essentially Taiwan.

LEONARD: That is correct. By way of background you will recall that at the end of the civil war in China, 1949, the communists were triumphant. They chased Chiang Kai-shek's government out of mainland China. Chang and many of his followers went to the island of Taiwan off the coast of China. They re-established themselves. They still called themselves the Republic of China They still claimed to be the legal government of all of China. To this day some of them still do. So there were two Chinese regimes, one on Taiwan and a communist government ruling all of mainland China. When I went to work on the Republic of China desk, President Nixon had made his trip to China to open up his relations with the mainland government. He did not have with Peking, the communist government, full diplomatic relations, but we set up what we called a liaison office in Peking staffed with American diplomats. We still had our embassy on Taiwan. We still had diplomatic relations with the government on Taiwan. It was evident to everyone that at some point we were going to break those relations and establish full diplomatic relations with the Government in Peking. So our job on the Republic of China desk was to oversee the winding down of our diplomatic relationship and military relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan. My particular job was to work on the military aspects of our relationship with the government on Taiwan. We had for many years access to military bases on Taiwan. We had for many years both sold and given the government military equipment. When we established our new relationship with the communist government in Peking we agreed that we would gradually end our military relationship with the government on Taiwan and that we would stop using military bases there. So one of my jobs was each year we prepared a memo from the State Department to the Department of Defense proposing the military facilities that we would stop using over the course of the coming year. As you know our use of military bases there was not terribly extensive. We used support facilities. Our U.S. Navy did. There were air bases that occasionally we would use. We had things like weather stations and radar facilities which we used, but it wasn't a huge military infrastructure. Each year we would go over with the Pentagon what we thought they should probably wind down over the coming year. We would put that in the form of a memo to the defense department from the state department.

Q: Well how were the officers you were dealing with, military officers feeling about this whole thing?

LEONARD: There were mixed feelings in the Pentagon about all of this. Of course this was still during the cold war. Any communist government of course was looked on as an enemy. So people in the defense and the uniformed services, many of them were not all that enamored of the idea to establish relations with the government in Peking, the communist government, and jettisoning our ties with Taiwan. Over the years we had a

long relationship with Chiang Kai-shek and his government. I was working on these matters. Chang had died. His son Chiang Ching-kuo was the prime minister, president. I am not sure which term they used. Nixon and Henry Kissinger of course were running things so there wasn't much the Department of Defense could do about all of this.

Q: Relations with the Republic of China's embassy in Washington must have been rather difficult in those days.

LEONARD: They were. It was a difficult relationship. We had a lot of dealings with the embassy. It was civil, but it was clear they were bitter about what had transpired. Perhaps bitter that it had all been done without their knowledge. Kissinger and Nixon of course were bound and determined to keep all of this secret because people that were opposed to what Nixon wanted to do might in some way sabotage it by revealing it publicly and seeking to build up opposition to opening up relations with the communist government in Peking. Now there was one additional matter, very interesting, that we had to deal with. We knew that even after we broke diplomatic relations with the government in Taiwan we wanted to stay in close touch with them. We wanted to deal with that government, and we wanted to have some kind of an American presence there and stay in touch with it. A very bright young guy in our office, Charles Freeman, Chas Freeman for those who knew him, was asked to come up with some kind of scheme whereby we could maintain a quasi-official American presence in Taiwan after we had broken relations with that government. He was the one who dreamed up the operation which remains to this day. We had a non-official American office, which we still have to this day, in Taiwan. Staffed by Foreign Service officers, who before they go out for that assignment, formally go through the process of resigning their commissions. After they serve their tour of duty in Taiwan, they once again are sworn back in as Foreign Service officers. There are a lot of legal niceties that had to be worked out. Chas was the one who did the basic work to propose this arrangement that we set up with this unofficial U.S. office on Taiwan, which remains to this day.

Q: How was this proposal by Chas Freeman received in the bureau to begin with?

LEONARD: Within the State Department his ideas were put in the usual bureaucratic fashion into memos. They were well received within the department. We ultimately had to go to the Congress to seek some legislation. That became somewhat more tricky because there were still some die hard supporters of Chiang Kai-shek and his son's regime on Taiwan in the Congress. So that was not the easiest thing in the world to get the legislative authority we needed to set up this unique office on Taiwan, but it eventually was done. We were somewhat concerned in the case of Taiwan as we increasingly were in the case of Korea that these two governments, both the government in Seoul and the Republic of China government on Taiwan, might be tempted to embark on programs to develop nuclear weapons and systems for their delivery. When I was working on the Republic of China desk, we kept a very close eye on any signs that either might be attempting to develop a covert nuclear weapons program or a program to develop missiles to deliver such weapons. I don't recall all the details of our efforts on the nuclear weapons program. I believe there was a time when they were flirting with that

idea, and we have information both from our embassy which we still had there and from intelligence services that they were flirting with this. We also began to get indications that they were interested in developing longer range missiles that could deliver such weapons. So we kept a very close eye on the kinds of products for military use we would license for sale to Taiwan. In those days, and I am sure it is still the same, in order to export military weapons or certain materials used to make certain weapons, you must get a license from the Department of State. The state department has an office called munitions control. That is what we called it then, which is the office which would license or not license as the case may be, sales of military equipment or materials used to make military equipment. So we were keeping a very close eye on what kinds of things either the government or private entities on Taiwan were seeking to buy in terms of military equipment and materials to make them. We would sometimes block certain kinds of things. Working with the office of munitions control we blocked a number of sales of materials which could be used in the development of missiles because we were much concerned about the possibility of them developing longer range missiles which could be used to carry nuclear weapons. We even went so far as to intervene once with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. We were somewhat unnerved to find out that there were one or two students from Taiwan who were studying solid fuel rocketry of all things at MIT. As I recall we sent a letter to the authorities at MIT drawing this to their attention and expressing our concern that this was not something that we looked kindly upon. As I recall the two students withdrew from MIT. So these were the kinds of things we were doing in those days in that particular office.

Q: Well then while we are at it, what was happening in Korea?

LEONARD: Well I wasn't following Korea in those two years since I was working on the Republic of China desk. However, during that period people in Washington and in our embassy in Seoul became increasingly concerned at the evidence that the government of Park Chung Hee had embarked on a program to develop both nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems of such weapons. Indeed there erupted several years after I left Korea a full blown crisis in our relations with Park Chung Hee's government. Essentially we forced them to stand down from those programs and abandon them because we told them very candidly that they were putting our relations with the Republic of Korea at risk. After two years working on the Republic of China desk I switched over to a job in the bureau of political and military affairs in the department. There I did work on that whole effort to push the government in Seoul to abandon its nuclear weapons program and its missile delivery program.

Q: Well now back to Taiwan. What was that embassy doing because they had over the years with good money and strong friendship ties a very powerful lobby. Did you find yourself up against that?

LEONARD: No, we were quite frankly shielded from most of that by the fact that it would have been very difficult for anybody to accuse Richard Nixon or Henry Kissinger for that matter, although some did, of being soft on communism. Nixon's past history shielded the government to a great degree from that kind of pressure. Of course there

were die hard supporters of the Republic of China in Congress. By this time they simply didn't have the political clout to seriously interfere with what Nixon and Kissinger wanted to do. Our embassy in Taiwan was in a much more difficult position because they had to deal every day with the government there. For the first few months that I was working on the Republic of China desk our ambassador in Taiwan was Walter McConaughy who had been an assistant secretary of state for East Asian affairs back during the Eisenhower administration. He was well liked in Taipei because he was closely identified with our support for that regime during the years of the Eisenhower administration. McConaughy retired and Leonard Unger was given the thankless task of replacing him knowing that he was probably going to be the man who was ambassador in Taipei when we finally made the break with them and ended our diplomatic relations. Unger was a professional, a man of long experience in East Asia. As I say he had a very difficult job. We would draw up our plans each year for drawing down our military presence in Taiwan and ending our use of bases there. We of course would consult with our embassy in Taipei very closely. How are the Chinese in Taiwan going to react to this. Are they really sensitive to all of this? Our embassy of course was very helpful as you might expect. They were well qualified to judge the way folks in Taiwan were going to react. There was a fatalistic attitude in the government of Taiwan once Kissinger showed up in Peking, and when Nixon made his trip to China. They saw the handwriting on the wall and they knew they weren't going to be able to stop us in making these changes in our diplomatic stance.

Q: Well then was there a lot of dismantling of our bases and our facilities there or was a lot of it just turned over to the nationalists?

LEONARD: A lot of our military presence there was relatively modest. We would use from time to time for example airfields for this or that purpose. Our warships would make port calls. They would occasionally have maintenance done on ships in Taiwan, but there wasn't a huge structure of bases on the island the way we had for example in Japan or South Korea. So it wasn't a huge project to wind down this military infrastructure. Psychologically of course that was very important because, in addition to our diplomatic relations with the Republic of China, we had a mutual defense treaty with them that dated back to the 1950's. That, too, went by the boards once we broke diplomatic relations with them, so we were no longer formally by treaty committed to their defense in the event of external attack. So because of all of this we felt we had to proceed quite carefully. We didn't want to do anything to encourage the government in Peking to imagine that we would sit by idly if all of a sudden they decided to invade Taiwan. In addition we didn't want the government in Taipei to become so concerned that it would get serious about developing nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. So we felt all in all that this was something that required careful handling.

Q: Well did you have much confrontation with foreign relations staff in the House and the Senate?

LEONARD: I personally did not, and I am trying to remember who carried most of the load of that function. I am sure that kind of confrontation went on but down on my level that was not my job.

Q: Well then this is about '75 you moved over to…

LEONARD: In 1975 I moved to the bureau of political military affairs in State. There was an office there called the office of international security policy. The office director was a very bright fellow named Les Brown. I looked at our security policy in East Asia. These things had quickly started to take up a great deal of my attention with our relations with South Korea and the problem of the South Korean secret program to develop nuclear weapons and the missiles to carry them. Working with the State Department's office of munitions control was key because we wanted to make sure that the South Koreans were not able to buy from us either weapons or weapons components that would be useful to them to develop nuclear weapons. We used to consult at great length with people in the intelligence community to learn, for example, if you were going to develop, say, medium range missiles, what kind of things are you going to be in the market to buy. We knew that the South Koreans probably were not capable of producing a lot of the things they would need to develop the nuclear weapons or the missiles to deliver them. They would have to purchase considerable amounts of materials from overseas. So we wanted to know what are they going to be out looking to buy. So in reviewing applications for licenses for material to go to Korea, where are the red flags. What are the things that we need to watch out for to make sure that we don't sell. I spent a lot of time consulting with experts in things like rocketry and over in the intelligence community to find out what do we need to keep an eye on. What are the products that we don't want sold to the South Koreans. So that took up a great deal of my time. I worked in that office for about four years before I went overseas again. After Jimmy Carter became president I got involved in Carter's efforts to dramatically reduce our military presence in South Korea. Carter came into office determined that he wanted to cut way back on our military presence in South Korea. He wanted to make sure that all our nuclear weapons there got removed. And he wanted to reduce our army ground troops and our air force presence there dramatically. There was a long and very bitter battle between Carter and the bureaucracy over this, in which he ultimately lost the battle with the bureaucracy. He was forced to accept what I would call token withdrawal, simply because it was judged, and I think quite rightly, that an abrupt withdrawal of our military presence in South Korea would have been extremely destabilizing, and would have led North Korea to do something rash, invade again perhaps. It certainly would have convinced the South Korean government that it would have to go all out to develop its own nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. So this was a very bitter battle between Carter and the bureaucracy. One that he eventually did not prevail on. He eventually, very grudgingly, cut way back on his plans for military withdrawal from South Korea.

Q: I was consul general in Seoul from July of '76 until July of '79. I know we were extremely concerned because we felt it uncorked the bottle and let the genie out.

LEONARD: Exactly. We had a pair of ambassadors who were there during that period. First, Dick Sneider and then Bill Gleysteen who was there under Carter. They had a very difficult time dealing on the one hand with a very stubborn and nationalistic government under Park Chung Hee, and on the other hand with a government back in Washington which seemed at first bent on drastically cutting back our military presence in Korea with what we would felt would be extremely serious consequences. So it was a very difficult period.

Q: Yeah, and also we even within the ranks of our military we had General Singlaub who was not supportive of the program at all. I think he had to be pulled out.

LEONARD: Yes, I recall Singlaub. He made some very loud public statements against the president's policy. He was relieved as I recall. But even though many of us deplored Singlaub's behavior and didn't share some of his views, most of us felt that Carter's efforts were very ill advised, would be very destabilizing to the situation in that quarter of Asia.

Q: Yeah. It was all a result of our involvement in Vietnam and this is sort of a reaction against getting involved, but it was a completely different situation.

LEONARD: That's right. I don't recall what the genesis was of Carter's fixation on our military presence in Korea, but I think you are probably right. A great deal of it had to do with his reaction to our failures in Vietnam.

Q: As I recall it in the campaign he talked about it, we will get completely out of Asia and all that.

LEONARD: He made some rather rash statements during that campaign I do vaguely recall. He came into office, of course, with a whole new cast of characters. The new head of the bureau of political and military affairs, I watched that changeover, was Les Gelb, by background a reporter for the New York Times, later a columnist, and later a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Tony Lake came in as the new head of policy planning in the department. I went to a meeting Lake had convened which was to discuss the notion of withdrawing all of our nuclear weapons from South Korea. That was something that I thought ought to be done with the greatest care. If we decided to absolutely do it, to take all of them out, I felt we needed to do things which would reassure the Government in Seoul of our continued support for them against the threat from North Korea. They attached a great deal of importance to our nuclear deterrent. As you well know we are still wrestling with nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula. But in this case the meeting didn't make any decisions. Those were way above us, but I do recall arguing very strongly that we needed to exercise extreme care in how we handled any withdrawals of weapons from South Korea. Physically I mean because they had been there for many years.

Q: Well one of the things too as I recall you all worked up a system as far as withdrawing troops where we withdrew some sort of outmoded missile battalions or something like that.

LEONARD: I recall the details of the withdrawals that did go forward from Korea. There were some units withdrawn. We ultimately did indeed withdraw all four nuclear weapons that had been stored in South Korea. Those things were done ultimately. So Carter was successful in implementing at least part of his ideas. But it was all done in such a way as to try and reassure the South Koreans particularly.

Q: Were you there during, I think this would have been in August of '76 when we had the tree chopping incident?

LEONARD: Yes. At that time I was still working on the Republic of China desk, but I well remember the tree chopping incident. In yet another bizarre example of reckless North Korean behavior. But at the time I was not directly working on Korean affairs.

Q: Well while you were dealing with Korean affairs, I wonder if you could sort of characterize your outlook towards the North Korean leadership and what their intentions were and maybe the people around you. Because this is a bizarre country. It remains a bizarre country. How did you feel about them?

LEONARD: The North Korean regime certainly was one about which we were acutely aware of our lack of good understanding and knowledge. Personally I always felt that to understand the North Korean regime you had to understand that they were always Koreans first. A lot of their somewhat bizarre behavior made more sense once you understood the history of Korea. Its extreme nationalism was the result of Koreans having to struggle and fight to maintain their national identity while surrounded by large and often predatory neighbors. You had to also understand that the regime in North Korea, I always felt this, resembled in many ways the traditional Confucian style kingship of the kind that Korea had up until the early 20th century. If you looked at, for example, the grooming of the son of Kim Il Sung which had begun long before he died, clearly this was a regime which, consciously or not, resembled in many ways the old Korean dynasties. And not just in the family succession. The Koreans were an extremely regimented and hierarchical government. That was clear then and it has become even much more clear today. So I always felt that North Korean actions and North Korea itself became a lot more understandable if you took the trouble to read a little bit into Korean History and understand that they were always Koreans first no matter what kind of stuff they would spout about their version of communism. It made more sense if you understood them as Koreans first.

Q: Was there much intelligence coming from within about who these people were in North Korea or is it guessing?

LEONARD: I was never a North Korea watcher as such. In my day there were very few people in the United States government who were full time North Korea watchers. There

were a few in the intelligence community. We had maybe one person in the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research who would follow North Korea full time. So I don't know that much about the full extent of our knowledge of that regime. My impression always was, however, that the great weakness was the lack of what the intelligence community calls human intelligence. We had plenty of signal intelligence; we had plenty of satellite imagery, that kind of thing, but my impression was that we had virtually no human intelligence. No North Koreans who were secretly spying for us. So we had to rely to a tremendous degree on trying to read between the lines of the public output of the North Koreans. You know, monitoring their broadcasts, their broadcast information service for example. That was heavy going because you would read this incredibly stilted often gibberish stuff and try and read between the lines. Foreign embassies in Pyongyang were few. Communist countries of course all had embassies there but obviously they didn't share readily with us what impressions they had of what was going on. The few non communist embassies there were extremely restricted as to what they could do and gather, so it was extremely hard for us to gather good information about the North Koreans. It still is.

Q: What about the Korean embassy in Washington. How effective was it, and did you have much contact with them?

LEONARD: That brings us to another subject: the cultivation by the Korean government of American members of congress. That started while I was still serving in Korea. The Korean government discovered very early on that although it might be difficult for them sometimes to deal with the executive branch in Washington they could often find sympathetic ears in the U.S. Congress. So they made a major attempt to cultivate members of Congress. They would pay for trips for them to go and visit South Korea. They would wine and dine them while they were there. There was a young man named Ton Soon Park who studied as a young man at Georgetown University. He stayed on in the United States for a time, became a businessman and opened up a restaurant and a bar or a club as he called it, the Georgetown Club. This Ton Soon Park had successfully sold himself to the Korean government as someone who could cultivate members of Congress. Indeed he did, and many members, mostly of the House of Representatives traveled to South Korea at Korean government expense, invited and wined and died by this fellow Ton Soon Park. It ultimately all blew up in their faces because Park was in effect trying to bribe members of Congress. The South Korean government was doing all sorts of favors for them. For example, members of Congress from rice growing states like Louisiana. The Koreans had to import rice in those days to feed their growing population. They couldn't grow enough rice in South Korea. So they cultivated better relations with several members of Congress from the state of Louisiana. I don't recall all the details of the wheeling and the dealing, but I do recall that one and probably more members of Congress went to jail over all of this. That whole effort of Ton Soon Park blew up. Our ambassador in South Korea at the time, Phil Habib decided Park was persona non grata to us in the embassy. Phil was constantly annoyed with members of Congress who would come over for a visit and would spend as much time being wined and dined by Ton Soon Park as they would going out on programs organized by our embassy. So this was one of the more colorful aspects of our relations with South Korea.

Q: I had a little piece of the action in this. At one point, this was around '77 or so, they did an interrogation of Park. The U.S. attorney for New York or New York City came over, Rudolph Giuliani. As consul general I stepped up and had him swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth and then I was dismissed. There was a girl called Suzy something or other.

LEONARD: Ah yes, there was always a girl called Suzy. I had one congressman, I don't remember which one. I went out to Kimpo Airport to meet him when he flew in. And of course also out there was Ton Soon Park. I got out there to meet this congressman. As we usually did I had with me his per diem that he was entitled to for however many days he would be spending there. He made it clear to me that the only thing he was interested in from the embassy was to get his per diem. He was then whisked of by Ton Soon Park to I am sure very pleasant several days there in Korea in the company of Suzy this or Suzy that. Phil Habib was absolutely furious over this. But you know if the Congressman didn't want to do anything with the programs we had prepared for them there wasn't much we could do about it. If they preferred to run around with Ton Soon Park there wasn't much we could do about it. Some of them did prefer to run around with Park.

Q: Did you have much contact with the Korean embassy?

LEONARD: No. I never served on the Korean desk in Washington. So I didn't happen to have much contact with them. The Korean desk folks, I know they did. But I personally did not.

Q: Well then you were there this would be '76 to '78 or so?

LEONARD: Yes. And in 1978 then I went overseas again.

Q: All right this is probably a good place to stop. Where did you go?

LEONARD: I went to Madrid.

Q: Oh that was quite a change.

LEONARD: Yes indeed. And what happened was that there were two jobs opening up that year. In 1978 they wanted an officer to do political-military work. One was in Madrid where we had very broad access to military facilities there dating back to the early 1950's and Franco. The other job was in Tokyo. I took the job in Madrid because it would have kept me closer to Washington. I had just gotten divorced, and I wanted to be where I could get back to see my children more easily. Tokyo was a bit further away. That is how I happened to go to Madrid.

Q: All right. Today is 9 March 2011 and an interview with Jack Leonard. All right Jack we are in 1978 and we are off to Madrid. You said you wanted to be in Madrid because that is closer to where your kids were.

LEONARD: Right. They were staying in the Washington area with their mother. We had recently gotten divorced, and so a job was opening up in Madrid that I was able to land. This was a job working in a two-man section that dealt with the implementation of our treaties we had with Spain under which we were allowed to use military bases there.

Q: OK, this of course is a very important area. Now in 1978 could you say what was the situation in Spain per se, and then we will talk about our relations.

LEONARD: In 1978 Spain was less than two years from the death of General Franco, the long serving dictator. He had died in 1976. Spain immediately began a process of changing very dramatically its government and making a transition to a democratic government. By the time I arrived in 1978 that process had been completed. Spain had new institutions, a revitalized parliament. The first post-Franco democratic Spanish government was in place. It was headed by Adolfo Suarez, a moderately conservative politician who had served for many years in Franco's regime. So as I arrived the Spaniards were feeling their way to democracy.

Q: How did you find the relations with the United States at that point?

LEONARD: Many Spaniards, especially those who were on the center left and the left of the spectrum resented the fact that for many years we had relatively good relations with Franco and his government. Those relations were based on the fact that we found it expedient to seek to use military bases in Spain in order to support our military operation in western Europe. The threat of the Soviet Union was very much on our minds. Our military people, the navy and the air force in particular, said that the use of military facilities in Spain was essential to their force posture in Western Europe in support of the NATO alliance. Well, many Spaniards resented the fact that we had given support to Franco as the price we had to pay to use bases in Spain. On the other hand there was no question that for many Spaniards there were aspects of democratic life in the United States that they found worthy of emulation. In general though, our relations with the new Democratic government were delicate. Public opinion on Spain was always ready to give the United States the benefit of the doubt. We had to tread rather carefully in our dealings with the Spanish government.

Q: Vietnam was not that far behind us. I realize when you got there it was over, but how did it play? I mean were there any aftermaths to that?

LEONARD: Certainly on the Spanish left. The Vietnam struggle was very much held against the United States. There were many Spanish left wing politicians who were extremely suspicious of the United States and its motives, in part because of our long war in Vietnam. So yes that did certainly play a part. For our part, out broad objectives in Spain were to try and encourage the Spanish government to become a member of what we then called the European Community. In other words the Treaty of Rome; The Common Market and also members of NATO. The first objective was certainly one that was shared by, I would say, the majority of Spaniards with the exception of those on the

extreme left and the extreme right. Membership in NATO was much more controversial in Spain. There were many Spaniards, especially those on the left but also those on the right, who viewed NATO with great suspicion as a tool of American imperialism. They were not at all enamored with the idea of Spain becoming a member.

Q: How did you find our relations with the Spanish military?

LEONARD: The Spanish military were not all of a piece. Relations, for example, between the United States Navy and the Spanish Navy were excellent. The United States Navy under our treaty with Spain had the use of a large naval base at Rota in southern Spain. They got along extremely well with the Spanish. The U.S. Air Force had access to a number of air bases in Spain which in fact we had built under earlier treaties with Franco's regime. But for some reason the air force was much much less successful in keeping up good relations with the Spanish Air Force. There were always frictions of one kind or another. The attitude of the American Air Force generally seemed to be one of get out of the way Spaniards and let us use these bases. The Spaniards being very nationalistic, that did not work at all. The Spanish army, which was the predominant service in Spain, was the most conservative, hide bound and least developed and sophisticated of the Spanish services. It had had virtually no relations with the U.S. Army simply because unlike the air force and the navy, the U.S. Army had virtually no interest in using any military facilities in Spain. And hence the Spanish army looked with considerable suspicion on the relations with the U.S. government and the U.S. Army. There was one particular project which unfortunately had poisoned those military to military relations between the U. S. Army and the Spanish Army. The Spanish Army was in the market for a new communications system. Under our military assistance program the U.S. Army was the lead agency for a communications system that the Spanish decided to buy. The system did not work very well. The Spanish Army was very unhappy due to various glitches and problems, and this proved to be a real thorn in our side in our relations with the Spanish Army.

Q: I see. Well in the first place who was the ambassador when you first arrived?

LEONARD: When I first arrived there the ambassador was Wells Stabler. He left a month or two after I got there. He was replaced by Terry Todman.

Q: How did Terry Todman look at the military relationship?

LEONARD: Todman was trying to improve the military relations. All of us at the embassy felt that it was essential to try and modernize, especially modernize the outlook of the Spanish military and in particular the Spanish Army which under Franco's regime had been an extremely important force in Spain. Franco relied heavily on his army to maintain him in power. So we felt that it was extremely important to Spain's transition to Democracy to modernize not simply the professional capabilities of the Spanish military and particularly the Spanish Army but to also broaden their outlook. Many professional Spanish military officers were extremely dubious of the transition to democracy. This

certainly showed when about a year and a half after I got to Spain there was an attempted coup d'état in which the Spanish Army played a major role.

Q: Were there people that you dealt with? Were you dealing with the ministry of defense or the ministry of foreign affairs?

LEONARD: The task of our small, two person office was to oversee the implementation of our treaty with Spain governing the use of military bases. So both the Spanish foreign ministry and the Spanish ministry of defense had important roles on the Spanish side. The Spanish professional diplomats with whom we dealt tended to be somewhat more sophisticated and more of a liberal democratic outlook. But they shared often the suspicions of many Spaniards about the U.S. military, which because of the war in Vietnam, among other things, was held in considerable suspicion by many Spaniards. The normal pattern in our dealings with the Spanish government was that the American military would come to us and seek our support in trying to expand their use of the military bases in Spain. For example, our U.S. Air Force was constantly wanting to have greater use of a bombing range in northern Spain that they were given access to under the treaty. The U.S. Navy was constantly trying to get them to agree to allow nuclear powered warships to call in Spanish ports, something that the Spanish government was extremely reluctant to agree to. So the general patter as I say was our military wanted this unfettered use of military facilities as could be obtained and the Spanish government was extremely leery about granting that kind of use.

Q: When you got there it was a two man section, where were you in the section?

LEONARD: I was the number two. My boss when I arrived was a man called Arthur Bryski. He was an officer of long experience, an extremely capable officer who had been recruited by Ambassador Wells Stabler to do this particular work. He was extremely good at working with the Spaniards. He was very shrewd in his insights. Into the best way of trying to get the Spaniards to go along with as much of the desires of the American military as the traffic would bear. He could be very tough and abrasive with his dealings with the U.S. military. Many of them did not like him although it must be said he was extremely good at getting as much of their desires as the traffic would bear in Madrid. Art left after about a year. He was replaced by a fellow called Ron Woods. Ron had considerably less experience than Art in dealing with the military issues, dealing with the U.S. military or foreign militaries. Ron tended to rely on me a lot more heavily than Arthur had.

Q: Was there sort of a running dialog between both of you and the political section as far as at the top because obviously we had all sorts of other fish to fry. I suspected that their military was our main interest at the time.

LEONARD: Well our military was very near at the top of our interests. On the other hand we were very much interested and very much wanted to see a consolidation of Democratic rule in Spain. So our political section certainly was very deeply involved in monitoring political events in Spain and keeping Washington informed on how this

Democratic transition was going. Looking back on it today, that transition almost seems inevitable. But that wasn't the way we saw it in Spain at the time. Indeed the attempted coup d'état was a very serious attempt about a year-and-a-half after I got to Spain.

Q: That was when the Guardia Civil officer came in

LEONARD: That attempt showed the transition to democracy was anything but certain. So that transition was also part of our calculus in dealing with the Spanish government. What we, of course, didn't want to see was any backsliding in this transition to democracy. Indeed we worked very closely with our political section, but they pretty much left us the often frustrating job of dealing with the Spanish military and with the side of the Spanish government that dealt with our use of military bases. It was viewed as kind of a thankless job because the Spaniards could be difficult. They could be great sticklers for form. They would often refuse seemingly innocuous requests from our military to do certain kinds of things, simply in order to make the point that these places were Spanish and that the privileges that they granted to us were ones that could be given or withheld at any time.

Q: Well, I think communism obviously all pointed at the Soviet Union, but at the same time the Spanish bases, we had interests in the Middle East which were mainly Israel. They represented an excellent transit point didn't they?

LEONARD: That is very correct. Certainly this was one of the most neuralgic issues that we had with the Spanish. They did not like or want us to use the facilities in Spain to support Israel. The Spanish government imagined it had an independent foreign policy with regard to the Middle East. It was very distinct from that of the United States. They at the time did not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Spain therefore would not permit us to use their military bases to directly support Israel. So that whenever a crisis would erupt in the Middle East involving the Israelis, The U.S. Air Force would seek to try to get us to get the Spaniards to allow us to use bases there for such things as refueling transport aircraft. The Spaniards were determined that they were not going to allow that.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEONARD: I was there from 1978 to 1981.

Q: So were there any particularly high or low points in this political military relationship?

LEONARD: I would say rather than high or low points, it was simply a long and difficult process of trying to bring about a modernization in the outlook of the Spanish military services. As I said earlier not all the military services were alike. The Spanish Navy had a very broad and sophisticated outlook on the world. Their relations with the U.S. Navy were extremely good. We rarely had problems of any kind centering on our use of the big base at Rota. The U.S. Air Force and the Spanish Air Force, their relations were much more dicey. The Spanish Air Force was much broader in its outlook than the Spanish

Army but those two services, the Spanish and the U.S. Air Forces, just seemed to rub each other the wrong way on most occasions. The U.S. Air Force was constantly asking for things that either the Spanish Air Force or more broadly the Spanish government didn't want to grant. Finally the Spanish Army, that was a real work in progress. They were conservative and hide bound. They were attached to the past, to a past where they had gotten pretty much what they wanted under Franco. Now they found themselves responsible to a democratically elected government, to a government which had in it all kinds of people whose politics they found absolutely loathsome. The Spanish parliament of course had a small number of communists. The Spanish socialist party when I got to Spain was the second largest party in the parliament. Shortly after I left the Socialist party took over. This was unimaginable to many Spanish Army officers. They simply found it hard to believe that this was happening. That their society, which had been closeted for so many years by Franco, was suddenly opening up to all of the winds of change that are blowing in from the north, from Western Europe. So again I would say it was not a matter of high points and low points. The attempted coup état, that certainly was a low point. Fortunately the king of Spain, Juan Carlos, played a heroic role in putting down that rebellion which was backed primarily by officers in the Spanish Army and in the Guardia Civil. So that was successful. But really our efforts were concentrated on trying to figure out ways to expose the Spanish military to the winds of change by trying to get them to train in the United States, by organizing contacts between them and our military authorities. In Western Europe we organized, for example, extensive tours to NATO facilities in northern Europe for members of the Spanish military, for Spanish politicians, for Spanish journalists. A great deal of our work centered on that kind of activity.

Q: Well were we able to get our people to act as guest lecturers at the military academies and that sort of thing.

LEONARD: That we never at least while I was in Madrid we were never successful in doing the Spanish armed services were very leery of having any kind of outsiders come in and talk to their military students. You couldn't even get Spanish civilians into a lot of their military facilities much less foreigners. The Spanish military was a closed society when I got to Spain, and they were only very slowly opening up. They were more inclined to deal with our military people than they were to deal with their own civilians, whom they often treated with great suspicion.

Q: Where did the Guardia Civil, I am not sure if I am pronouncing that correctly. Where did that fit in the Spanish context?

LEONARD: Guardia Civil were like a national police, similar to the kinds of the national police you have in many western European countries.

Q: Carabinieri and that sort of thing.

LEONARD: Yeah. They were ubiquitous throughout Spain. There were no local police in a lot of towns. Some large cities had their own local police forces but the Guardia Civille were throughout Spain. The manned the border checkpoints, and they were a real hotbed

of loyalty to the old regime of Franco. They had been a key part of his support fighting the civil war in Spain, and they were a very key element in his maintaining a grip on power after the civil war.

Q: Well it was the Guardia Civil that performed the coup wasn't it?

LEONARD: No the coup was actually organized by a number of Spanish military officers who had the support of a number of Guardia Civil personnel. The reason the Guardia Civil were so prominent in that attempted coup was because they were chosen to seize control of the Spanish Parliament, and they played that very visible role. But the ring leaders of the coup were Spanish army officers. The number one being a very senior army general named Jaime Milans del Bosch. When King Juan Carlos sought to put down this attempted coup, he personally telephoned dozens of Spanish military officers not only army but the other two services as well, and members of the Guardia Civil. He personally talked to Milan del Bosh and persuaded him ultimately to abandon this effort.

Q: How did you all and also the embassy react, I mean where were you and what was our immediate reaction on this?

LEONARD: At the time the coup was launched, I happened to be traveling with a group of Spanish parliamentarians. We were on a trip to NATO facilities in north Europe which our embassy had organized. We at the time were in Brussels. We had been at NATO headquarters and were getting ready to travel over to Germany. We were at a hotel in Brussels getting ready to go to dinner that night at the home of the Spanish ambassador to Belgium, and one of the parliamentarians knocked on my door as we were getting ready. He said, "Turn on the radio. Have you heard what is going on in Madrid?" I said, "No." He said, "There is a coup d'état being attempted." We turned on the television and sure enough. We immediately tried to get through to people in Madrid. I was able to get through to our embassy. A couple of the parliamentarians were able to get through to their contacts, and we all decided there is nothing we can do here. Let's go on to dinner. We went to dinner with the Spanish ambassador and a very lively dinner as you can imagine and stayed there until the wee hours of the morning talking over the telephone lines to people back in Madrid to monitor the telephone lines, to monitor the progress of the coup d'état. Once King Juan Carlos late in the evening went on television to tell the Spaniards that all was going to be well, people breathed a sigh of relief and the coup very quickly collapsed. Had it not been for King Juan Carlos, there is no telling what might have happened. Only he had the loyalty and influence within the Spanish military to cut the legs out from under that attempted coup.

Q: What were we telling our troops, just stay out of the way at the time or what?

LEONARD: Indeed our message to the U.S. military was stay where you are; keep your mouth shut, and don't say or do anything regarding this coup d'état. If you are asked, the answer is we support the government of Spain and the King of Spain.

Q: The coup was over rather quickly but were you all dealing with the residue of this for some time?

LEONARD: We were indeed. This was something again where we had to walk very carefully. On the one had we made very clear both publicly and privately that we fully supported the legitimate government, the freely elected government and the democratic process in Spain. At the same time, the Spaniards being very nationalistic, we didn't want to do anything which would suggest in any way that we were going to interfere in any way. One of the things in the aftermath of that coup though that we wanted to do was to underline in sort of dramatic ways our support for the democratic process. Terry Todman being a clever fellow. One of the ways that he wanted to do this was to give an American Medal to the Spanish minister of defense who had played a rather heroic role during the coup attempt. The minister of defense was a retired Spanish army officer, and when the Guardia Civil took over the Parliament building at the beginning of the coup, one of their number fired shots into the air into the parliament itself. The Parliamentarians as one might expect hit the ground in a hurry as the shots were fired up into the roof. All with the exception of the minister of defense, this old army officer. He was infuriated. He was in the parliament at the time as was most of the government, it being a parliamentary system. He stalked over in the direction of the ringleader of these Guardia Civil officers and was about to remonstrate with him when he was physically restrained by another member of the cabinet who was afraid that the Guardia Civil would shoot the old man. All of this became well known in Spain. Todman decided we have got to give this old guy a medal. So he prevailed on the U.S. military back in Washington to come up with a suitable decoration for this old general. Todman, several months after the coup d'état, had gotten the medal in the diplomatic pouch, Todman organized a lunch for the old guy in which he was the guest of honor, but he didn't tell him that he had this medal and was going to present it. So we had this lunch. We had a number of luminaries invited to this lunch, Spanish military officials, a couple of members of the cabinet. Todman, the day of the lunch, tipped off the Spanish media what was afoot. So after we had all had a nice lunch and talked about how heroic the general had been in his defense of democracy, lo and behold there is this nice leather case with the medal. He drapes it on the general who stands rock solid at attention the tears streaming down his face as Todman waxed eloquent in Spanish about his heroic performance. It was a great scheme by Todman which got a great deal of publicity in Spain and quite frankly earned us a lot of Kudos for very clever public relations. So that certainly was a high point after the low point of the attempted coup.

Q: Did we have units of you know run by a sergeant or so our a couple of other men under him training or bringing the, particularly the army bringing them up to NATO standards?

LEONARD: We did not do very much training in Spain. We had a military planning group which was provided for by the treaty we had with the Spaniards. The idea here was to give the Spanish military experience of drawing up broad military plans for the defense of Spain, How Spain might work in conjunction with western militaries and other militaries in the event of a crisis. How to best face threats to Spain, this kind of thing. A

number of Spanish military officers rotated through this planning group to give them exposure to the kind of planning militaries have to do. We had mobile training teams occasionally come through Spain. But most of the training the Spanish got was in the United States. The Spanish Air Force did a lot of training in the United States. They were slowly but surely becoming better in the use of their inventory which was exclusively American aircraft. The Spanish Navy did a lot of training with the U.S. Navy at sea. Again the Spanish Army was the laggard. We had to move much more slowly with them. They too were sending people to the United States to do things like airborne training, to train in various military specialties, communications and so forth, but that went much more slowly.

Q: What about the Spanish military or their ties to their neighbors the French or even the Germans or the British? How were these ties?

LEONARD: They were very distant at best. There was no other military that had anywhere near the relationship the Spanish military that we had. The British, because of the dispute between Spain and the UK over Gibraltar, had virtually no ties with any of the Spanish services with the exception of a little bit with the Spanish Navy. The French, virtually nothing. The same thing for the Germans or the Italians. We were the only ones.

Q: How about the Portuguese? How stood things? Now the Portuguese by the time you had arrived had just gone through a very rough time. They had almost gotten kicked out of NATO. That was when Frank Carlucci was there and it was a dicey time. This was around '74 or '75. but how stood things between Portugal and your connection to this problem?

LEONARD: The Spanish traditionally, and when I was there it was no exception, looked down their noses at Portugal. They considered the Portuguese to be provincials and country bumpkins. There were very few relations between Portugal and Spain. They had diplomatic relations but even during the heyday of Salazar's regime in Portugal, relations with Franco's government were never all that close, and between the militaries, virtually non existent.

Q: Was there much desire would you say on the part of the various services in Spain to get into NATO? I mean was there something in it for them?

LEONARD: Yes, the Spanish Navy and to somewhat lesser degree the Spanish Air Force, they were keen to get into NATO. They saw this opening for both of them to have access to better military equipment, to better military relations with other countries of Western Europe. They were keen to get into NATO. The Spanish Army on the other hand were more hidebound and conservative. I would say in general that the majority of the Spanish military saw membership in NATO as something desirable although they were far from unanimous on that. Many in the Spanish army for example were very leery of Spanish membership in NATO.

Q: Why?

LEONARD: Because they were conservative. They were hidebound and they had been anathematized for years by Western Europeans. They did not like the idea of Spain becoming like the other Western European countries, modern liberal democracy.

Q: Particularly the army what was the situation in Spain. Did they have a universal draft or not?

LEONARD: They did have a draft. It was widely resented by Spanish young people. The Spanish young people would go through the military, going through the motions. It was something you had to get out of the way. Highly unpopular.

Q: I would have thought my impression was that youth had really taken to getting rid of Franco. They were sort of bubbling over weren't they?

LEONARD: Oh yes indeed. Spanish society in general went through a sea change. Spanish society opened up. Censorship, which of course had been practiced under Franco, was lifted. The winds of change were blowing all through Spanish society. The police state that existed under Franco was dismantled. People opened up. Generally society became much more open and many in Spain found this very unsettling. The Catholic Church, for example, which was tremendously powerful under Franco, was very unhappy with the secularization of culture and society under the new democratic system. There was a new stress on human rights, of cutting off federal government support for the Catholic Church. These were things that many older Spaniards found extremely unsettling. Society became much more open. As I say censorship, both political and moral was abolished. All of a sudden Spain became flooded with all kinds of new anti-conservative Spaniards, dangerous ideas and they found this very unsettling.

Q: How did you find social life there for the embassy, because Spain had the reputation at one time of sort of the aristocracy which really didn't count for very much, but sort of was able to have undue influence on our embassy because of the social functions and all of that. By the time you arrived there had that changed?

LEONARD: Oh that had certainly changed. Terry Todman was a demon for socializing. His time there in Spain was an endless series of receptions, dinners, luncheons. In fact it seemed at times that Todman was trying to see that every single Spaniard got invited to the embassy for one thing or another during his tenure there. So he was extremely active socially. It certainly was not limited to the Spanish aristocracy or what I would call the pseudo aristocracy because under Franco what remained of the Spanish aristocracy was much diluted by his efforts to consolidate support among conservative Spaniards by making them part of the aristocracy. That was all gone. Our embassy was wide open. We had all kinds of people constantly being invited, and we maintained the widest possible contacts with Spanish society.

Q: How were we viewing the socialists? They were sort of the major left wing group wasn't it?

LEONARD: Right. The Spanish socialists we cultivated very carefully. They were when I got there the second most powerful political party in Spain. Not long after I left under Felipe Gonzales they took power in Spain. We had good relations with the Socialists. We certainly didn't see eye to eye with them on every issue. They tended to be much less suspicious of the Soviets than we were, although they certainly had no reason to love the Soviet Union. They were very skeptical about the idea of Spain joining NATO, although ultimately it was under Felipe Gonzales that they did so. But generally we had good relations with them. When I got to Spain there was a young officer in the political section named Ray Caldwell, who was a brilliant officer and very bright guy. Ray was our principal point of contact with the Spanish Socialist party. He knew Felipe Gonzales very well. So we had good relations with them.

Q: What about the communists Party? Were they legal and were they a player?

LEONARD: They were legal but they were a minor player in Spanish politics. So we had very little dealings with them, but they were certainly a player. They had played a key role in the transition to democracy after Franco died. Basically what the Spaniards did was to agree among themselves that all political parties would now become legal, that they would compete for power in Spain under democratic rules. One rule that was unbreakable was they were never again going to fight, physically fight among themselves, and that nothing would be allowed that would lead Spain to slide back into civil war.

Q: Well what about the Basques?

LEONARD: They were a problem while I was there. Their terrorist campaign for Basque independence was certainly alive and well. Occasionally there would be terrorists bombings or assassinations. The Spanish government was certainly much preoccupied with them. They were angry at the French government because the French had Basques on French soil. The French would not crack down on those Basques despite requests from the Spanish government. This was a hangover form the days of Franco, when the French, because of their dislike of Franco's regime, were very loathe to crack down on any organization which was anti-Franco including the Basque separatists. That later changed.

Q: All right, today is 16 March 2011 with Jack Leonard. Jack, we have reached 1981 and you are moving over to the arms control agency. How did that come about?

LEONARD: Well when I was getting ready to leave Madrid I was trying to get a job either back in the Asian bureau, which I still considered to be my home bureau, or in the European bureau. I was not able to get jobs in either of those bureaus at that point. There was a job available in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency so I took it.

Q: All right. You took it how long were you in that job?

LEONARD: Two years.

Q: That was '81 to '83. What was your job?

LEONARD: It was to work on two basic arms control matters. One was to participate as a member of the U.S. delegation to what was then called the committee on disarmament, which met in Geneva. This was the international body which had negotiated the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and which continued to work on other arms control agreements. It met in Geneva. There were about 25 or 30 countries that were members of the disarmament committee. Among the principal disarmament agreements that were under discussion or negotiation in Geneva were a treaty to ban chemical weapons, a comprehensive nuclear test ban, and the committee was just beginning to look into possible treaties to control or prohibit nuclear weapons in outer space. So there was a big plate full of possible disarmament agreements under negotiation there in Geneva. Work on them was extremely slow. The other body that I served on was the U.S. delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. Each fall the General Assembly meets every year in September. One of the committees of the General Assembly dealt with disarmament matters. It being the general Assembly it didn't have any real powers to negotiate treaties or do anything like that. It would simply pass resolutions expressing the will of the general assembly, the views of the general assembly on, in this case, disarmament matters. Because a lot of the issues that the General Assembly expressed its opinion on were among those that were under discussion by the committee on disarmament in Geneva, a portion of our delegation to the General Assembly each fall was made up of people who worked on these matters in Geneva, and were therefore familiar with them. So we had a group from the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency who would go up to New York every September, and we would work on the General Assembly's first committee, the committee that dealt with disarmament issues, where a raft of resolutions would be produced and we would work on those.

This being 1983 and the Reagan Administration, the administration looked with considerable suspicion on such bodies as the committee on disarmament at the UN General Assembly. We used to joke sometimes that our task in these two bodies was to make sure that disarmament didn't break out. So the work on the committee on disarmament on such things as the chemical weapons treaty, this work went very slowly. The administration was extremely suspicious of the committee on disarmament taking on any role whatever in pushing for agreements on banning nuclear weapons from outer space for example, doing things like banning warlike activities in outer space. All of this was seen as possibly interfering with such stuff as anti ballistic missile programs which were being enthusiastically pushed by many in the administration at that time. The nuclear test ban treaty was looked on with great suspicion. There was of course already in existence a treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union which banned nuclear tests in the atmosphere, but it did not ban nuclear tests underground. A comprehensive treaty which would ban underground testing as well was looked upon with great suspicion by the Reagan administration. There was virtually no progress toward that in the two years that I was working on the committee on disarmament. The committee itself, headquartered in Geneva, used the facilities of the old League of Nations there. The committee would meet for sessions every spring and every autumn. Those sessions would

run for several months at a time. The committee was very interesting in the way that it worked.

The Soviet Union, of course, was a member of the committee on disarmament. Most of the Soviet satellite countries were also members. They worked as you might expect, as a bloc. They marched basically all in lockstep, and the Soviet ambassador to the committee on disarmament, it was his job to divvy up work among the satellite countries there and make sure that they were all singing from the same score. Many of our closest allies were members of the committee. Most of the major NATO allies for example. Australia was a member. But unlike the Soviets we had very little power to enforce discipline among our allies. Often there were considerable differences among us over this or that particular issue for the committee. Many of our allies were much more enthusiastic on trying to make progress on some of the agreements that were under long standing negotiation by the committee. For example, the chemical weapons treaty which was trudging along and moving very slowly. Many of our allies were interested in seeing that move more quickly. Many of them were interested in some movement on treaties which might been military activities in outer space, and certainly many of them were much more open to the idea of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, one that would ban underground testing as well as testing in the atmosphere. Many of them were much more anxious to see progress on a comprehensive test ban than the Reagan administration was. So generally I would have to say that our assignment was to slow things down, to try and move as carefully as possible in Geneva to make sure that the interests of our defense establishment were preserved.

There was another very interesting aspect of the committee on disarmament. Both India and Pakistan were members of the committee. Both of them, of course, had active nuclear weapons programs. Both of them had conducted nuclear weapons tests and because of the great rivalry between those two they were constantly in the committee each seeking to undermine the credibility of the other. They would posture at some length as being champions of such things as disarmament. They were constantly attempting to keep the focus of the committee on the Soviet Union and the United States. They were constantly seeking to undermine the public positions of each other. So that was a very interesting sidelight in Geneva.

The Chinese, of course, were members of the committee. They were mostly invisible and inscrutable. They said very little; they did even less. They were perfectly happy as were the Indians and the Pakistanis to see the spotlight constantly focused on the United States and the Soviet Union, but not on themselves, especially on nuclear disarmament issues. So all in all it was surprising that the committee was able to get anything at all done. It did make some progress on some matters. As it happened, Vice President George H.W. Bush was an enthusiastic proponent of progress on a chemical weapons treaty. He took that us as a personal issue. He came over to the committee one year that I was there and made a speech in support of a chemical weapons ban. It was a speech, as a matter of fact, that I wrote for him. During his own presidency after the Reagan administration, the negotiations on a chemical weapons treaty were completed and we signed it. So it wasn't all just smoke and mirrors.

Q: How did you feel about the process when you came in there? What was the mood?

LEONARD: Well there was an understanding in the arms control and disarmament agency that these were not the best of times for those who believed in international efforts to promote disarmament. The Reagan Administration certainly looked on such things with great suspicion. Apart from Vice President George H.W. Bush, the most powerful figures in the administration were quite frankly rather suspicious of all of that. At the time that I worked in the arms control agency, George Shultz had by then become Secretary of State after General Haig blew up after a year or so in office. Shultz had his hands full dealing with other matters. Of course the real focus of disarmament in the Reagan administration was on the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union for reductions in our nuclear weapons and delivery systems. The negotiations which of course had begun years before during the Nixon administration. This was where the real bureaucratic infighting in the administration went on. Although it cannot be said that anybody in the administration was an enthusiastic proponent of more forthcoming positions on disarmament matters, there were some who were much more flexible than others, mostly in the State Department and to some degree in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, as opposed to the Defense Department under Caspar Weinberger and his underlings and the uniformed services who were very much opposed to any real movement on arms control issues. So that was the atmosphere that I walked into. My impression was of almost continued bureaucratic warfare between or among the various foreign policy agencies over disarmament issues, primarily of course bilateral issues between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, but also to some lesser degree the multilateral disarmament matters that I was dealing with.

Q: How did it go between say you and the Pentagon? Did you feel you were carrying on a lonely battle with the Pentagon?

LEONARD: It was clear that the Pentagon had the upper hand in the inter agency discussions on disarmament matters. They in effect had a veto over virtually everything that we would do. If the Pentagon or the uniformed services didn't want something to happen, it wasn't going to happen. So you worked around the edges. The Pentagon wasn't completely intransigent. They were prepared to see some movement for example on the chemical weapons treaty, because there were many in the Pentagon who were anxious for us to get rid of our own stocks of chemical weapons which they found not very usable and very costly to continue to protect. There was also some Pentagon flexibility on the notion of an international agreement to ban biological weapons, germ warfare as it is popularly known. This was a kind of weapon which they didn't find terribly useful, but it was felt at the time that because the Soviet Union did a lot of work and research and was believed to have fairly large stockpiles of biological weapons that we had at least to have some kind of comparable capability, and certainly needed to do work on defenses against such weapons. So although the Pentagon could stop any policy or any particular activity that they didn't like, they weren't totally intransigent.

Q: Did you feel that the same push-pull was going on on the Soviet side between the foreign office and the military?

LEONARD: We would only get glimmering hints of that sort of thing. The basic Soviet posture was always to try and position itself to make it look like a champion of disarmament. On paper and in public the Soviets always proclaimed their willingness to take new disarmament measures. They always sought to portray themselves as champions of disarmament, knowing in effect they could hide behind our opposition to what we considered to be measures that would threaten our interests. So the Soviets in terms of multilateral disarmament matters, that was their basic posture. They felt they didn't have to really worry that much about any serious negotiations about many of these things because they felt that the Reagan Administration, which doesn't like the notion of multilateral disarmament, they will take care of things. They will oppose anything that looks like it is going to hamstring us. One area where the Soviets were a bit skittish, they really wanted to see some kind of progress, movement on limiting military activities in outer space. They were convinced that we were ahead of them in that area, and they wanted to hamstring any efforts that we might have, for example, to build anti-ballistic missiles. They were afraid that we were ahead of them and that we might be able to make real material progress in this area which would undermine their ability to threaten us with nuclear weapons. But for the most part the Soviets were simply content to kind of masquerade as the great champions of disarmament knowing full well they could count on the Reagan Administration to oppose most disarmament issues.

Q: Did the Soviet civilians play much of a role?

LEONARD: Well their diplomats did in the sense that they had rather clever fellow who was the head of their delegation to the committee on disarmament in Geneva. His name was Viktor Israd iev. He was very good at this game of trying always to make the United States look like we were the opponents of nuclear disarmament. In that regard he got a lot of help from the Reagan administration which opposed things which many in the U.S. government thought we ought to be supporting. But nonetheless he was very good at organizing the satellite countries, making them pull all together in the same direction and sing from the same script. Where you saw on the Soviet side the primacy of the Soviet military was in our bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on things such as limiting nuclear weapons and delivery systems. But one should not in the Soviet system overestimate the authority of the army. In the end it was the communist party of the Soviet Union that called the shot. The military of course were tremendously powerful, but it was always the party that was in charge. That was most evident certainly in their negotiations with us over nuclear weapons and delivery systems. It was always the party and people who came from the party hierarchy who were the primary figures in all of that.

Q: Was the party selling off its, well this would have been early years. It was before the dissolution and creation of the oligarchs. This would come much later.

LEONARD: That would be right. That came much later. This was the period of Andropov and I am trying to remember the name of Khrushchev's immediate successor (Brezhnev). Anyway this was before the advent of Gorbachev. Well the Soviet Union

was still outwardly at least powerful and the Reagan administration never lost any opportunity to portray the Soviet Union as a tremendously powerful and threatening country. But the fact of the matter was things were decaying fast in the Soviet Union in those years, and it wouldn't be long before the real problems began to become very apparent and very public. One of the key reviews of the Reagan administration was that the Soviet Union was tremendously powerful and that they could spend almost unlimited sums on their armed forces. A judgment which certainly as we later discovered was far from true.

Q: Did you have much contact with the SOV desk at this point?

LEONARD: No, I did not. Not a great deal. Of course they were among those who would have to clear off on proposed positions that we might take with regard to negotiations with the committee on disarmament. But I didn't have a tremendous amount of contact with them, no.

Q: Was there much media attention over what was going on?

LEONARD: Sometimes there would be. For example we would get two or three stories every year in major news media about things that were going on with the committee on disarmament. Mostly having to do with things like a comprehensive nuclear test ban. You recall news stories on the chemical weapons treaty, news stories also on some of the proposals that were put forward on the committee on limiting military activities in outer space. But there wasn't a tremendous amount of publicity given to these matters. The press paid much more attention of course to the bilateral U.S. Soviet negotiations. These were much more widely publicized. The press paid much more attention to the perennial fighting going on within the Reagan administration over disarmament issues highlighting feuds between the State Department, the Pentagon, the Uniformed Services and the antic s of some of Caspar Weinberger's underlings in trying to insure that nuclear disarmament didn't break out. One of the problems that we had was the national security council system under Reagan simply didn't function very well. He had a series of very weak and not very talented national security advisors: Richard Allen, Lt. Col. Bud McFarlane, Admiral Poindexter. The National Security Council was staffed more with ideologues than it was with experts. Of course the most famous example being Lt. Col. Oliver North. The National Security Council simply didn't function well. It didn't resolve disputes among the various departments over national security issues. Many of these issues would either languish for long times without being resolved or they would go all the way to the President himself to try and resolve. That was something that Reagan was quite frankly not terribly good at. He much preferred it when his advisors could reach consensus among themselves on important national security issues and then come to him with a recommendation. But that often proved very difficult to achieve, or impossible to achieve. His National Security Council staff simply didn't function very well. At the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency when I first got there the director was Eugene Rostow. Gene was a former dean of the Yale Law School, brother of Walt Rostow who had served as President Johnson's National Security Advisor for a time. Gene was one of the very early what we would now call neo-conservatives. He had been a Democrat. He

abandoned the Democratic Party, mostly over national security issues. So when Reagan was elected Gene was appointed to high office. Gene was constantly fighting with George Shultz and with Caspar Weinberger. Ultimately his fighting became so open and public that he got fired. He was replaced by a young guy, Ken Adelman. Ken had been number two at our delegation to the United Nations. So these were fairly turbulent times.

Q: How far did you get?

LEONARD: How far did I get?

Q: Yeah.

LEONARD: Certainly the Reagan administration accomplished what it wanted to in terms of multi lateral diplomacy in that committee on disarmament. It slowed things down. It prevented the committee from taking up anything or accomplishing anything that it thought might threaten our national security interests. We did make progress on a chemical weapons treaty to the point where when George H.W. Bush became president, during his tenure a chemical weapons treaty was signed and has been in place to this day. So it wasn't a complete loss. At the United Nations that was something that was quite frankly less important. The United Nations general assembly resolutions don't have the force of law, they are just expressions of the majority opinion of the member states. We often had what the administration considered noxious resolutions passed by the general assembly but they didn't commit anybody to anything, so they were certainly less important than having, for example, a multilateral treaty agreed to. We would work on these resolutions at the General Assembly every autumn for a couple of months and sometimes we would be successful in persuading other countries not to support this resolution. Sometimes we wouldn't. For example, every year the General Assembly would pass a resolution by a wide margin urging member states to reach agreement on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, but these resolutions were not something that in any way committed us to anything. So we didn't like them, and we would vote against them. They certainly didn't have any impact on our policies toward a nuclear test ban treaty.

Q: Well then in '83 you moved on.

LEONARD: Yes. In 1983 I was approached by the executive director of the Bureau of Latin American affairs. He had been our administrative officer in our embassy in Madrid when I had served there. He approached me and asked me if I would be interested in a job in one of our embassies in Latin America. First he mentioned a job as deputy chief of mission in one of the very small countries in Latin America, in this case Belize, in Central America, former British Honduras. But he very quickly had to withdraw that offer because the ambassador there had somebody else that he wanted for that job. So he then asked how about a job in Paraguay, which wasn't exactly the site of my dreams, but it was a job as the head of a small two man political section. So I said, "OK, I will do it." So off I went in the summer of 1983 for a two year assignment in Asuncion, Paraguay. Paraguay was still then ruled by a dictator named Stroessner. He had ruled the country since the late 1940's. He saw himself as president for life. He would go through the

motions every six years of holding sham elections, but it was a very creaky, old fashioned Latin American dictatorship. So I saw that government up close. This was a place where we really didn't have many interests. Stroessner wanted always to stay on the good side of the United States, so he would support us in places like the United Nations. He was very loudly and vocally anti-communist which of course endeared him to the Reagan administration. But, on the other hand, since he was viewed as a disreputable dictator, the Reagan administration could afford to posture against his human rights record. Our assistant secretary of state for human rights was Elliott Abrams. I think he probably looked on Stroessner's regime as just the kind of old fashioned Latin American dictatorship that we could be seen as trying to push towards greater human rights without it really costing us much of anything. Stroessner wasn't going to go anywhere. He certainly wasn't going to all of a sudden become cozy with the Cubans much less the Soviets. Therefore we, the United States, could be seen as trying to push him in the direction of greater human rights without any real risk. So that is what our little embassy in Asuncion did for the two years I was there.

Q: How did your colleagues in other parts of the State Department view you, the job and all? Did you find it was sort of ho hum and that sort of thing?

LEONARD: The job was ho hum in one sense, but on the other hand it was the chance to be the head of a political section. I was a political officer, so that was good. I had one young officer working for me. Although the work was certainly not earth shaking, it was interesting. We would do our bit trying to foster the opposition parties in Paraguay such as they were. They were essentially powerless. We would do our part to try and push for greater respect for freedoms such as freedom of the press. What I really wanted to do was to get closer to where there was more action and more attention and that was Central America. Central America was heating up. El Salvador was in the middle of a civil war. Nicaragua had been taken over by the Sandinistas. So I wanted to get closer to where there was some real action. I had to bide my time in Paraguay, which was seen as a pretty out of the way place.

Q: After leaving how did the arms control negotiations work out even after you left?

LEONARD: Under the administration of George H.W. Bush we did ultimately negotiate under that committee on disarmament a treaty banning the use, manufacture and testing of chemical weapons. That treaty was signed by hundreds of countries including the Soviet Union and the United States and it remains in force to this day. That really was certainly the most tangible achievement of that committee on disarmament. There may have been a treaty banning biological weapons as well. I am trying to think if that treaty ultimately was signed. I think that it was. Of course those treaties did not prevent some countries like Iraq from developing chemical weapons, developing biological weapons, but I think most people would agree that those treaties were useful. They enabled the international community to hold regimes such as that in Iraq to account for those activities. So there were tangible multilateral agreements coming out of those very difficult negotiations at the committee in Geneva.

Q: Today is the 22nd of March, 2011. As I have it here you left Paraguay and are off to Uruguay.

LEONARD: That's right.

Q: In '85 was it?

LEONARD: Yes, I believe that was the year.

Q: Ok, so what were you doing? What was your job?

LEONARD: I was the embassy political officer in Uruguay. We had two of us; I was the head of the section.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEONARD: I was there for only about a year and a half from '85 to about the middle or later part of '86.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LEONARD: When I got there he was just leaving. He was a political appointee, Thomas Aranda. He was followed by another political appointee, a retired federal judge, Malcolm Wilkey.

Q: All right, well in '85 what was the situation in Uruguay?

LEONARD: Uruguay had just recently gone back to a democratically elected government. It had been ruled for a number of years by a military junta. The junta relinquished power a few months before I got there, so they were busy re-establishing their democratic system.

Q: What had caused the junta to take over Is this the Tupamaros?

LEONARD: Yeah, exactly. There arose in Uruguay a somewhat bizarre left wing terror organization. They went around killing and kidnapping a few people and destabilizing the government to the point where the military stepped in and took over and engaged in widespread arrests, the kind of thing you would expect.

Q: Well what was the Uruguayan military like?

LEONARD: Very small. Very small.

Q: I think it would have to be pretty small.

LEONARD: Very small. They had a very small army, a tiny little air force. The navy was their biggest service. They were very small, but they were certainly big enough to round up and pretty much wipe out these left wing guerillas.

Q: Were the left wing guerillas intellectuals or workers or what?

LEONARD: I am trying to remember. There was a man by the name of Raúl Sendic. He was one of a generation of Latin American left wing people who engaged in violence of one form or another inspired primarily by the Cuban example. All of this is ironic because for many decades the Uruguayans had a fairly well functioning democracy. Far from perfect, but certainly by any standards a reasonable government. There were plenty of things for people to complain of. Uruguay was going through a difficult period economically, mainly because by the 1970's their principal exports on which the country relied heavily, beef and wool, the market for these exports was rapidly diminishing. The European countries, which were their principal export partners, as their economies had recovered form the war they were able to produce plenty of their own beef and wool. So Uruguay's economy was going through a rough patch. There was widespread unemployment in Uruguay, and this is the kind of situation especially in Latin America that often breeds the rise of left wing ideologues and in this case people who were perfectly happy to resort to violence. They went around kidnapping politicians. I remember they kidnapped and/or murdered an American official who worked for the DEA I think, my mind is a little fuzzy on that, a guy called Dan Mitrione. Conditions in Uruguay in the late 1960's early 1970's were difficult. But Uruguay has a long tradition of democratic rule. It had been a relatively prosperous country for a long time, certainly by Latin American standards, but their institutions were weak enough that when these people started engaging in acts of violence, the military stepped in and simply took over the country and wiped out the terrorist organization.

Q: Well then were you around, what were you seeing within the country at that time?

LEONARD: By that time when I got there, the military who had seized power had concluded that it was time to let the civilians rule the country again. We, the United States had put a lot of pressure on the military there and in other countries where they had seized power to relinquish power and return power to democratic rule. When I got there the big issue was the conditions under which that return to civilian rule would take place. Obviously the military wanted some kind of amnesty, some kind of assurances that they would not be prosecuted for crimes they had committed while they were in power. There was a very lively debate in Uruguay going on as to whether to turn the page on that whole chapter in Uruguay's history as part of the price for allowing a return to civilian rule, or whether there ought to be some kind of process by which at least the worst offenders among the military would be brought to justice or at least their crimes would be brought out into the open for everyone to see and to discuss. That whole debate was going on during the year-and-a-half that I was in Uruguay.

Q: Well you still had Argentina and the disappearances and all that. And then you had Pinochet in Chile. In Uruguay in comparison, how bad was it there?

LEONARD: The crimes committed by the military regime were not on a scale equal to those in Argentina or Chile. Much smaller country, but at the same time they didn't have anywhere near widespread abuses such as occurred in Argentina and Chile. Nonetheless, there were disappearances; there were cases of the military going after people who were in exile.

Q: What were the parties in Uruguay when you got there?

LEONARD: The president was Sanguinetti, of Italian descent. Uruguay was a very interesting mixture of Europeans, lots of Spanish, people of Spanish descent. Lots of people of Italian descent, but a good mix of all kids of other people. The principal opposition party was, I am trying to remember what they were called, liberals, or Blancos. They had a number of strong figures who were anxious to run for president in the next election. There was a senator named Luis Lacalle, and another senator, Wilson Ferreira, The parties basically were both moderate centrist parties. Sanguinetti as I recall he was a little more conservative than the liberals Lacalle and Ferreira. There was also the beginnings of a third party further to the left which today is the ruling party in Uruguay. I don't recall what they called themselves, but they were more a bunch of social democrats that included people who were at least sympathetic to some of the more extreme left wing views of people like the Tupamaros.

Q: Was there any Cuban influence there?

LEONARD: There certainly was Cuban influence over the Tupamaros. The Cubans were a model for most extreme left wingers in Latin America. How close those ties were between the Cubans and the Tupamaros I don't really recall. Certainly they had contacts and at a minimum drew inspiration from the Cubans. To what extent they got money or other support form the Cubans I don't recall. There were a lot of left wing people in Latin America including Uruguay who admired the Cubans for what they thought was Cuban self sufficiency. They weren't self sufficient by that point at all. They were totally subsidized by the Soviets. But they were admired because they were seen as having stood up to Uncle Sam, the colossus in the north, who was always apt to throw his weight around.

Q: Did we have any real concern there except to see them come back to democracy?

LEONARD: Our biggest concern there was to do what we could to help them schmooze their way back to democracy. We didn't have a resident AID mission in Uruguay because they were prosperous enough so that it would have been difficult to justify that. But we tried to urge on them various ways in which they could try and make their country more stable and democratic. That was in the period when we were urging countries to open up their economies more in the name of free trade, and we certainly did a lot of that with the Uruguayans. We urged them to diversify their economy as well, because it was clear that you couldn't really rely on beef and wool exports forever to be the backbone of your economy.

Q: Were we using Uruguay an example for Argentina and Brazil or had both of those countries moved toward democratic governments by then?

LEONARD: I am trying to remember if Argentina was still ruled by the junta. Brazil was under civilian rule again. I think in Argentina the Junta had been ousted as well. Uruguay we were pushing them as an example.

Q: Yeah as I remember this is about the time when Ronald Reagan made his talk about how a new age had come to Latin America.

LEONARD: That was the brain child of Elliott Abrams who by that time was the assistant secretary of state for Latin America. He moved over there from the bureau of human rights. Elliott's idea was we had to try and push the idea of democracy wherever we could. It was a counterweight to the insistence that we had to also oppose regimes such as that of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua by force if necessary. So the administration wanted to show that it wasn't simply reflexively against any left wing government. It was also prepared to get tough on military regimes as well where that was appropriate. Certainly it was easy for us to beat up on Paraguay's aging dictatorship. It was also pretty easy for us to support a return to democracy in a country like Uruguay because our interests there were so modest.

Q: Was there much congressional interest in developments there?

LEONARD: Not quite frankly in Uruguay. We did get one visit from Ted Kennedy who was mildly interested in the transition back to Democracy in Uruguay. He stopped by in the course of a little swing through South America, but we didn't have a great congressional interest in Uruguay. Uruguay is a very comfortable place. It has a large middle class. You didn't have tremendous extremes of wealth and poverty. They are fairly homogenous. The indigenous population of that area had been fairly well wiped out by early European settlers. In short Uruguay was a very comfortable, very quiet little place, which didn't attract a great deal of attention apart from its misfortune to have fallen victim to this left wing terrorist organization, the Tupamaros, and the military junta that followed.

Q: What about the universities or university?

LEONARD: Yeah they had a university there. It actually produced a fair number of well educated young people. Although many of them would go elsewhere for their educations. They might go to Argentina; some would up in the Untied States. But it wasn't a hotbed of opposition or anything like that. Uruguay was a very placid and comfortable place by the time I got there because they had put their days of excitement behind them.

Q: Did Uruguay pay much attention and did Brazil and Argentina sort of keeping their hands in there or was it more for was it engaged in smuggling or what?

LEONARD: It was not at all like Paraguay which was a smuggler's paradise because they had historically always indulged in that kind of activity. Not Uruguay. Uruguay obviously felt the economic power of its very large neighbors. When I was in Uruguay, the southern cone economic common market was coming into being. Uruguay always felt that it had to defend its interest against these very large neighbors. Uruguay basically was an exporting country. Their exports were beef and wool. They were a small enough country that they weren't big competition to Argentina for example which exports huge amounts of those two commodities. So the Uruguayans were constantly looking for new places they could sell their beef and wool, and at the same time think about what they could do to diversify their economy. There were many in those days who were talking about trying to turn Uruguay in to a banking center for Latin American especially for the southern cone. Many Uruguayans were of European origins, some relatively recently. They felt very much akin to the western Europeans. They identified with Western European political parties. They felt kinship with them. They were less comfortable with us because they found our politics somewhat confusing. And through organizations like the Socialist international and a comparable organization among western European Christian Democratic political parties, they had ties to those people much more than they did to the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States.
So anyway I was there for about a year and a half. Then I returned to Washington to work in the department.

Q: Well before we leave Uruguay, how did you get along? They had a political appointee coming out there which sounds like a rather interesting time. How did he work out with that?

LEONARD: The first guy was Tom Aranda. He had political ties to the right wing of the Republican party. He was much supported by Senator Jesse Helms. When he was told by the State Department that your three years are up and it's time to move on, and when he wasn't offered another ambassadorship, he was reluctant to leave. He was hoping I think that Senator Helms and others could help him get another ambassadorial appointment. So he kind of hung on beyond the point where he should have. It became a little unseemly. I don't know the details of who exactly laid down the law to him, but it was finally made clear to him that, sorry, it is time for you to go, so the next fellow could come in. Aranda did leave of course, and his replacement, Malcolm Wilkey, was a retired federal judge. He was a bit sedentary in his ways. Basically what you wanted in that job was someone that, if you were going to be a political appointee, you didn't have all that much of a background in Latin America and its politics. You probably wanted someone who would be pretty good at the ceremonial and social aspects of the job. He was not terribly comfortable with that. His wife was Chilean and he did speak Spanish so that helped some. It was like so many cases of political ambassadors. You had to try and help them as much as you could to be the best ambassador they were capable of being. So we did try to push him as much as we could to be more social, to reach out, knowing of course that Uruguay wasn't going to be looming large on Washington's radar scope because this was a time when Central America and its problems were front and center.

Q: Were we calling on Uruguay to provide police training or anything like that?

LEONARD: No. We didn't try doing any of that.

Q: How did you find you were received in political circles there?

LEONARD: I was welcomed with open arms. I knew all of the major political figures in the country. I didn't deal with the president of course, that was up to the ambassador and our number two, Rich Brown. The rest of the political figures and their parliament, I dealt with them. I found them relatively easy to deal with. They welcomed the support of the United States for their return to power.

Q: Did Senator Helms or his crew play any role while you were there?

LEONARD: Apart from trying to help Ambassador Aranda get another ambassadorship, I don't recall they had much interest in Uruguay. I don't recall they had any axes to grind on any of the stuff we were doing.

Q: You said that Uruguay had a substantial middle class. Did you find them sort of socially, you and the embassy fit fairly well into it?

LEONARD: Oh absolutely. Life was very comfortable in Uruguay. The Uruguayans were very outgoing, very welcoming of Americans, so socially it was a delightful place to be. The dream of every Uruguayan was to become a gentleman rancher someday. The myth of the gaucho was still strong in Uruguay and owning a ranch and raising cattle on it. A lot of people who made a little money actually did do that. I knew one family who had a little ranch a couple of hours outside of Montevideo. It certainly wasn't anything huge or luxurious, but it allowed people to live out their dream of being a prosperous rancher. I found life there in Montevideo delightful. In terms of career advancement, however, it wasn't a place where you were going to be noticed by anybody in Washington.

Q: Yeah, I can imagine coming back out of a perfunctory how is everything down there and move on to other subjects.

LEONARD: That's it. I knew very well that Central America was where the action was. Before I went to Uruguay, while I was still in Paraguay, I had applied for political counselor jobs in the three Central American countries where those jobs were opening up when I was due to leave Paraguay, specifically Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. I had to the extent that I could lobbied and pushed and contacted people, and didn't get any of those jobs and wound up going to Uruguay instead.

Q: I can't remember was the Nicaraguan president Somoza in.

LEONARD: He was in Paraguay. That is where he was assassinated by a bunch of Argentine terrorists who were hired by the Sandinista government to bump him off. That happened though before I got to Paraguay.

Q: Well now you are back to Washington in '87?

LEONARD: It was either '86 or '87. I was in Montevideo worrying if I stay here this is not going to be great for my career. One day I got a telephone call from an old colleague of mine who was working as one of the deputy assistant secretaries in the Latin Bureau for Elliott Abrams. Things had gotten complicated in Washington over the Iran-Contra project, which of course had been on the receiving end of a great deal of U.S. aid both military and non lethal. When the Iran-Contra scandal blew up, the Congress put some heavy strings on any further aid to the contras. They said the aid that was being provided by the CIA to the contras, that program of AID to the contras, had to be overseen by the Department of State. In other words we had to oversee a covert program of the CIA. Although to be frank about it so much of it had come to light that it was no longer covert any more. Anyway this old friend of mine, Morris Busby, was tapped by the powers that be in the department, specifically George Shultz and Elliott Abrams, to create an office that would oversee this covert program. The office was to be there in our Latin American bureau, but it was to operate both in Washington and in the field down in Honduras where the camps that had been set up by the contras were, and where the CIA did its work in the field supporting the contras. So Busby called me up and said, "I need your help. If you say yes, I want you back here in Washington to be my deputy in setting up this office and overseeing the CIA's program of aid to the contras, to make sure that everything is above board and that the funds are spent in accordance with the wishes of Congress. So I immediately said yes. As I mentioned I had been trying to get to Central America, and hadn't been able to. Here was my chance even though this assignment was back in Washington. So I cut short my tour in Montevideo and within the span of a couple of weeks I was back in Washington.

Q: So you had this sort of an overseer job from when to when?

LEONARD: It was from about mid to late '86 until '88. It was about two years.

Q: Coming from outside obviously, I would have thought that by this time almost that whole Central American situation in Washington would be almost poisonous.

LEONARD: Yeah. If not poisonous it was saturated with politics of a very partisan nature. I mean the battles between the Contra supporters in the administration, and the congress, those really were poisonous. Indeed the battles within the administration between those who were very strong Contra supporters and those who were not. Those were very difficult.

Q: How did you play the game?

LEONARD: First of all we had George Shultz's support. Anybody able to say yes to coming to work for this particular office in the department we could get them assigned to us. How did we deal with all the political ins and outs? We simply had to sometimes wave the law in front of people, the Congressional law that set up the department to do

this task. I remember my friend Busby, who started out as the head of our little office, he early on went over and had a meeting with William Casey who was still head of the CIA and had not yet fallen ill. Casey in so many words told Busby in effect I don't care what the law says, don't think that you are going to be running things around here in my agency. That was more or less the way Busby described his one meeting with Casey. Casey shortly thereafter became ill and when he was effectively out of the picture things loosened up somewhat. His people who were running the contra program varied in their willingness to be forthcoming about what was going on. It didn't take me long to discover that the CIA was far from running day-to-day operations of the Contra fighters inside Nicaragua. Once those guys crossed over the border from Honduras, where they had their camps, and into Nicaragua, they were out of basically anybody's real control, and they did pretty much whatever they wanted to do. So the CIA dealt with the training and the equipping of these guys but had really little control over their operations once they were in country. The Contras also had a political arm. These guys, the politicians, they sat around in Miami, but the relations between the Miami Contra politicians and the actual guys who were fighting inside Nicaragua were tenuous at best. The fighters were mostly rural people, small farmers, people like that, who had quite frankly very little in common with the much more slick and westernized politicians who purported to speak for them in Miami. Anyway, within the department we were pretty much left alone. By that time the Iran-Contra scandal had blown up. The Reagan administration was in its closing couple of years, and most of the real bad battles between the administration and the U.S. Congress had been fought. They had been lost and won, so that by the time I got to Washington and you had this program, we were pretty much left alone to do what we thought we could to insure that the program was properly run and that we stayed within the law. With the exception of Casey, who shortly was removed form the scene by a higher power, we didn't have people telling us you can't do this or you can't do that. Those days of fighting were over because the Iran-Contra scandal had blown up and so the big political battles were over. We had an office of six or eight people, and in addition one of my officers was fully integrated into the CIA and its contra operation. This was a guy who had worked for me in Uruguay, Bob Millspaugh, and I recruited Bob to come back and work for us in the Contra oversight program. He was seconded literally to the CIA. All CIA employees had to take lie detector tests, which was something the State Department had never done and still hasn't done. George Shultz was quite adamant about never allowing that in the State Department because he didn't trust the machine. But the CIA insisted that Bob had to undergo a polygraph exam. What we did was say, "OK, but there have to be some restrictions on this. For example, unlike the CIA, no what we called lifestyle questions." In other words you can do a polygraph and ask questions like are you a communist, a secret agent of the Cubans, this or that. But you can't ask questions about a person's personal life except for finances. So that was kind of interesting. Anyhow, Bob ended up staying over there even after our contra oversight program closed down. He may have retired from there. We also had a number of people stationed in our Embassy in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. They worked very closely with the station there that was actually running the Contra program in the field. Basically that consisted of supporting the camps in Honduras where the Contras were trained and equipped. I made endless trips to deal with the political side of the Contras in their offices down in Miami which were supported by the Agency.

Q: Well now Ollie North was out of the picture by this time.

LEONARD: Long gone. He made his famous appearance before the Congress, or that might have happened after I got back, but all of his stuff was shut down.

Q: Well was there a long shadow of what he had done?

LEONARD: Well there certainly was in our embassy in Costa Rica. Busby and I had to travel down there shortly after we took on this job. I remember we traveled through several of our embassies down there. The embassy in Costa Rica, through which Ollie North operated in his activities in support of the Contras, the ambassador had already left. He had been tainted with this because he was part of North's network, as had been the chief of station. Busby and I got there, and I remember commenting to him privately as we were leaving, this embassy is like a ghost ship. And it really was. The ambassador was gone. The number two, his DCM whom he had never trusted and kept totally in the dark about his Contra business with North, he couldn't wait to get out of there. It was a place that was totally demoralized. So in that sense North's shadow was very evident in that embassy. In Washington and in our operations, much less so.

We can talk more about all of this Contra stuff which was quite interesting next time.

Q: Yeah, could you sort of the next few days make some notes of points you might not have covered and we can pick it up there, cleaning up after the Contras. I have to tell the one story I have about whoever at one point was DCM in Honduras. The ambassador had left and they got a telephone call form the port, the secondary port there and it said, "Your boots have arrived." He thought, boots, I didn't order any boots. Well maybe somebody sent me a pair of boots. "What shall we do?" He said, "Well deliver them." He said, "All 5000?"

LEONARD: Yeah, that sort of thing went on for sure. It could happen.

Q: Ok, we left off when we were talking about aid to the Contras. You were in where, Guatemala?

LEONARD: No, I was in Washington DC for this specific event.

Q: The last time was some time ago. We made a note that we had a lot of stuff to talk about. We may repeat ourselves a bit, but do you want to tell me what you were up to?

LEONARD: In '86 I was stationed in Montevideo. During 1986 and before, Washington was much seized with supporting the Contra movement in Nicaragua. Efforts of the Reagan administration to get aid to the Contras were badly damaged by the revelations about Oliver North and the National Security Council and efforts to keep money flowing to the Contras during periods when legislation to support them had expired. The administration and the Congress were at loggerheads as to whether to appropriate more

money for them. No sooner had the administration been successful in 1986 in getting the legislation through Congress for more aid to the Contras then revelations about North's activities began. Ultimately of course he was forced to resign. Various other administration figures had to leave including McFarlane, the National Security advisor and others. When those revelations came out the State Department felt it had to strengthen its role in overseeing the contra movement. It was one of the provisions of the renewed aid to the Contras that managed to get through the congress. So the department created an office in the Latin American bureau to oversee the CIA's program of aid to the Contras. That effort was headed up by a friend of mine called Morris Busby, who called me while I was in Montevideo. He asked me if I would come back to Washington and be the deputy in this office, which I agreed to. So in January of 1987 I returned to Washington and Busby and I set about setting up this office. There were two parts to that effort. There was the military aid to the Contras and their bases in Honduras. And there was support for the political side of the Contras that had a CIA funded group of directors. There were five of them for a time. It was later expanded to seven. They then worked in Miami. There was also a rubber stamp Contra assembly which would periodically meet in Miami to go through the motions. So I set up an office in Washington within the Latin American bureau with about ten officers. That was including one officer who was permanently seconded over to the CIA to work on the Contra program directly. He also had an office in our embassy in Honduras, Tegucigalpa. That office had to work closely with them overseas and keep the State Department informed of progress of aid to the Contras.

Q: Who was the officer?

LEONARD: There were about half a dozen of them in the embassy in Honduras. I can't right off the top of my head recall who was the head of that small office. We also had with them for a time one of the U.S. military officers who had worked directly with the CIA on the contra military effort. The oversight efforts had several objectives. One was to try to insure that money was properly spent, not siphoned off into private pockets. We also made a major effort to vet the Contras for involvement in drug smuggling. There were at the time allegations that some of the contra military people had been involved in narcotics smuggling to raise money. We made a particular effort going to the Justice Department in Washington to get the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration and their files to track down any evidence of Contra involvement in drug smuggling. We came up pretty much with a blank as just a few minor cases of this were found. There was never anything approaching the considerably exaggerated claims of the newspapers in the United States that the Contra movement was a hive of narcotics smugglers. So those were the kinds of things we tried to do on the military side.

On the political side, the Contra political movement was very closely overseen by the CIA. They gave them money for salaries and a per diem so they could live. The CIA was heavily involved in advising them, holding their hands and trying to keep down to a minimum the constant bickering that went on among these Contra politicians. Of course we were a world away there in Miami, not inside Nicaragua. So that was what Busby and I did for the better part of a year and a half. During that whole period there was intense

pushing between the administration and Congress, between the administration and especially certain of the countries of Central America over the future of Nicaragua. The thrust of all of these efforts on the parts of Central American presidents was to seek a negotiated end to the fighting in Nicaragua between the Contras and the Nicaraguan government -- the Sandinista government. The Reagan administration had an intense suspicion of negotiations as a way to bring about an end to the conflict and a determination or conviction that the Sandinistas would only relinquish power if they were pushed out at the point of a gun. This often put us greatly at odds with certain governments in Central America particularly the government of Costa Rica. Its president, Oscar Arias, was leading an effort to bring about a negotiated end to the conflict in Nicaragua. Our office worked with the Contras with possible regard to negotiations with the Sandinista government. This was part of Oscar Arias' effort to bring about peace. He actually succeeded in 1987 in getting the Central American presidents, including Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, to agree on a peace plan. This was signed at the town of Esquipulas in Guatemala in 1987. The goal was to bring an end to conflict in Nicaragua.

One of the aspects of that plan which Arias pushed for most strongly was direct negotiations between the Sandinistas and the Contras. The Sandinista government was very loathe to agree to that because it felt, quite rightly, that it would strengthen the legitimacy of the Contra movement. At first they would only agree to indirect negotiations with the Contras. The peace process mediator was the Archbishop of Nicaragua, Archbishop Armando, later Cardinal Armando. Later on in 1987 they agreed to direct negotiations finally with the Contras. All of this was against the background of the Reagan administration trying to get renewed additional funding to support the Contras. So the administration felt it had a very strong interest in any such negotiation. I think it is fair to say the Reagan administration believed that negotiations wouldn't work because of its intense distrust and dislike of the Sandinista government. The conviction of hard liners within the administration was that the Sandinistas, as a communist regime, would never negotiate in good faith. When the contras started direct negotiations with the government of the Sandinistas, much to the surprise of many people, after a few days of negotiations the two sides actually signed an agreement on implementing a spotty cease fire and how to implement a final agreement on putting an end to the conflict. In the negotiations that took place one of the jobs of our office was to make sure the Contras kept us informed of the progress of these negotiations, so that Washington could decide what it thought about them. The status of these negotiations would be factored in to the U.S. Congress over possible continued funding for the Contras. One of the objectives of President Arias of Costa Rica was that in implementing his peace plan for Central America, of course it included Honduras, which was where the Contra camps were located. Arias was a steadfast opponent of aid to the Contras. He didn't believe in the Contra movement. He didn't believe it held out the prospect of ever unseating the Sandinistas, and he was determined to put an end to outside assistance to the Contras. This consistently put him at odds with the administration. I well remember the rancor and the anger with which people in the administration spoke about Arias and his activities. The Reagan administration simply did not believe that a negotiated settlement was feasible because the Sandinistas would never negotiate in good faith and would never honor in the end the agreement anyway. The Reagan administration kept hoping that aid

to the Contras would somehow bring about the downfall of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

In the spring of 1988 the Administration named a new Ambassador to go to Nicaragua, Rick Melton. Rick had been the director of the ARA bureau's Central American Affairs office, and in the late spring of 1988 he went off to Nicaragua. Rick had originally approached a friend of mine, his deputy in the office of Central American Affairs, Ron Goddard, to be his deputy chief of mission. Ron for various reasons wasn't able to accept that offer, so Rick came to me one day and asked me if I would be interested in going as his DCM. It took me about half a second to say, "Yes, I certainly would," because this was a very plum assignment. Rick went off to Nicaragua in late spring of 1988. One of the first things that he did when he got there was to focus on the chaotic and very much put upon domestic civic opposition in Nicaragua with the aim of trying to revitalize that. The Sandinistas as an avowedly Marxist regime were very loathe to tolerate any political opposition. For various reasons, however, they didn't outlaw these political parties. The kept them under constant harassment and assured them they had no real power. Nonetheless, they were always worried about them. They worried that these 12 or 15 little parties, some of them traditional parties of Nicaragua that traced their histories back 100 years or more, would be able to affect the attitude of foreigners towards Nicaragua. That was one of the reasons why the Sandinistas were loathe to simply abolish them and outlaw them. Rick set about trying to revitalize these parties and to help them to stand up as best they could to the Sandinista government. The Sandinistas did not like that at all and within a couple of months of Rick's having gotten to Managua, there was an opposition rally which was participated in by most of the opposition parties in the town of Nandaime in upper Nicaragua. The Sandinista police monitored such activity very closely. In my view they themselves provoked a confrontation with the opposition sympathizers who were at this rally. Fighting broke out. Upwards of a hundred people were injured in the fighting. The Sandinistas used that event as a reason for jailing seven or eight presidents of these opposition parties and for expelling from Nicaragua Rick Melton, who had just arrived, and six or seven other key members of his staff including most of the political section saying that they had conspired to stir up the Nicaraguan opposition. I was back in Washington wrapping things up. I had finished my work with the Contra office. I had gone out to California to San Diego where my wife is from. We were there on vacation when the phone rang one night in July of 1988. It was the office of Central American affairs saying get back here to Washington right away. "What is the matter?" "Well Rick Melton has just been expelled from Nicaragua, and we have got to get you down there right away" because the old deputy chief of mission had already left the country. So my wife and I hurried back to Washington, got caught up quickly, and within 48 hours we were on a flight down to Miami and then on to Nicaragua where we arrived in July of 1988. Rick Melton had already left, and hadn't gotten back to Washington before I left so I never got a chance to talk with him about the state of the Embassy and the events that had led to him being declared persona non grata. I did talk extensively with the folks in the office of Central American Affairs, talked to Elliott Abrams in the ARA front office. He was the assistant secretary. I hurried off to Nicaragua. I arrived there to what I later learned from my years in Nicaragua was a pretty typical scene at the airport. It was night when our flight came in. At the airport almost

nothing worked. The baggage carousel had broken down, and so my wife and I sat around with the embassy's administrative officer. We sat around in the very musky VIP office waiting for the bags to be taken off the plane and tumbled down on the floor there in front of the baggage carousel because it wasn't working. So that was my welcome to Nicaragua. Off we went to the DCM's residence where my wife and I got settled in. I didn't realize it at the time but I was to spend almost two years as chargé since the Sandinista government refused to agree to a new American Ambassador. The Reagan administration proposed one but the Sandinista government refused to agree to him. So I wound up spending about two years as chargé d'affaires.

Q: I want to go back to the Contra thing. Were we trying, I mean what was the sort of leitmotif that you were working under? To keep it going; to boost it up a little; to lower it, or what?

LEONARD: Well all of that depended on getting the money from the United States Congress. The Reagan administration and Congress were utterly at loggerheads over that, particularly after the Iran Contra Scandal. So most of the time the effort in the administration with the Contras was to hang on and try and get support out of the Congress to keep the Contra movement more or less alive and able to bring pressure against the Sandinistas. That was a constant struggle. Now our little office was not involved in that Congressional struggle. Our effort was to oversee, to monitor, to collaborate with the CIA on its program of support, both on the military side and on the political side. Money was very tight. They were constantly worried about running out of money because of the difficulties of persuading the Congress to renew Contra funding. The administration was very much concerned with efforts by the Central American presidents, notably the president Arias of Costa Rica to bring about an end to the conflict.

The administration The hard liners were basically the President himself, the Assistant Secretary for Latin America, Elliott Abrams, certain members of the national Security Council staff including the National Security Advisor, Admiral Poindexter. People like that were very much opposed to the negotiated end to the conflict in Nicaragua.

Q: How was the battle being fought in Nicaragua?

LEONARD: I learned when I served in Managua that in fact there were large parts of rural Nicaragua where the Contras had considerable popular support, because among many small farmers there was a great deal of resentment against the Sandinista government which was authoritarian, which had rigid ideas about collectivizing agriculture. So the Contras did have considerable support in certain rural areas of Nicaragua. Basically the way their effort worked was they had camped inside Honduras. That is where they would for the most part get their supplies. To re-supply the Contras inside Nicaragua they were using very old and antiquated cargo aircraft. That effort was never terribly successful. So the Contras, who were organized into relatively small units, would use their bases inside Honduras to rest, to recuperate, to get re-supplied, to train. Then they would go inside Nicaragua. There were large areas inside rural Nicaragua where they had considerable popular support where they would be sheltered, hidden, and

where they could operate reasonably freely. These were sparsely populated regions where it was pretty easy for these small Contra formations to blend into the local populace. But they never were able to mount large scale operations where they might, for example, seize a town of any size for any period of time. The Contras were never able to develop to that extent. That is what their military movement was like, and it would be wrong to dismiss them as simply creatures of the foreigners, the Americans. When I served in Nicaragua I would often talk with farmers and others who lived in rural Nicaragua. Many of them were very sympathetic and gave support of one kind or another to the Contras.

Q: How did you feel about the Contra movement? Did you feel this was the way to take care of our concern about the Sandinistas and their form of government?

LEONARD: I never believed as many of the hard liners in the Reagan administration believed. I never believed that the Contras were going to be capable of overthrowing the Sandinista government. That being the case I always believed the administration should look for a negotiated settlement of some kind in which we had to accept the fact that Nicaragua might remain under the thumb of the Sandinista movement. I never believed that the Sandinistas were any kind of a serious threat to the United States. Actually there were signs by that time that the Soviet Union was having trouble supporting them. That became very evident once Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and started making his very serious efforts at reform. I always believed in what the Bush administration, when it came to power in 1989, tried to do. Although they had no love for the Sandinistas, they made it clear they were prepared to live with a Sandinista regime in Nicaragua provided the Sandinistas would stop trying to stir up trouble elsewhere in Central America. One of the main things that the U.S. government objected to by the Sandinistas was their constant support for revolutionary movements elsewhere in Central America notably in El Salvador. There was no question that the Sandinistas were providing aid of their own and providing a channel for Cuban and Soviet aid to the FLMN movement in El Salvador. Well my feeling was that if you could get the Sandinistas to seriously curtail or end that kind of support, that we had to be prepared to live with them. There was no support anywhere in the United States for us to invade. The only thing that could have gotten rid of the Sandinistas by force was a U.S. invasion. So that was how I felt about the Contras.

Q: Well you were there for how long?

LEONARD: I was in Washington from January, 1987 and left in July of 1988. That is when I went to Nicaragua.

Q: And you were in Managua from when?

LEONARD: I was in Managua from July of 1988 until December of 1990.

Q: By December of 1990 how stood things?

LEONARD: Well by December of 1990 there was no more Sandinista government. In the summer of 1990, the Sandinista government agreed to elections. Elections that would be monitored and overseen by outside observers. The United States had agreed that whoever won these free and fair and well observed elections, whoever won them fairly, we would recognize and acknowledge and accept the outcome of these elections. To many people's surprise, and to the surprise of the Sandinistas, Violetta Chamorro, the opposition candidate, thoroughly drubbed the Sandinistas in these elections. They were observed by everybody from the UN and the Organization of American States to all kinds of people. In any event Mrs. Chamorro won and the Sandinistas were forced to accept those results. Nicaragua was crawling with outside observers. The UN was there, The Organization of American States was there. Jimmy Carter was there, all of them watching this election. On election night and on the following day when it was clear that the Sandinistas had lost and that Mrs. Chamorro had won, Jimmy Carter went and had a meeting with Daniel Ortega. The upshot of which was, well, the ballot box has spoken and now it is time for you to step down. So Jimmy Carter, who sometimes was like an old testament prophet, he was there and he told Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista President, what was expected of him. The Sandinistas who were in a state of shock basically had no choice but to accept this outcome which they did. By the time I left Nicaragua, Mrs. Chamorro's government had been in power for the better part of six to nine months. They were struggling away trying to govern Nicaragua in the face of all kinds of efforts by the Sandinista to give up real power. The Sandinistas from their years in power controlled the army and police forces and they were not about to give up their effective control of them. You had Sandinista officials who stayed on as head of the armed forces, head of the police. There was a new interior minister, a non-Sandinista. He had a great deal of trouble exercising power, because as a Marxist regime the Sandinistas had totally suborned those organizations and turned them into instruments of their own power. They were not about to let another party or group of parties come in and effectively take over those institutions. Mrs. Chamorro's government had a very difficult time in effectively controlling key parts of the government.

Q: Why was that?

LEONARD: The Sandinista Marxist regime had created a totally new armed forces, a totally new security apparatus that was responsible to and were effectively arms of the Sandinista movement or party themselves. Similar to any communist regime. Although the Sandinistas were forced to accept their electoral defeat, they did not give up effective control over key parts of the government specifically the armed forces, the ministry of the interior, and the police. Mrs. Chamorro's government was very loathe to challenge that Sandinista control simply because they were afraid they might get overthrown in a coup d'état at some point.

Q: Well, how did we feel about this? Were we trying to do something to strengthen Chamorro?

LEONARD: Absolutely. We very quickly instituted a major aid program. I well remember a meeting I had with Mrs. Chamorro and her principal advisor who was her

son-in-law. I told them, "Look, you are going to face a very difficult situation if you allow the Sandinista officials to maintain control over those institutions, the army and the police and the ministry of the interior. I realize you may be very loathe to confront Sandinistas right out from the start by removing, say, the defense minister," who was Roberto Ortega, the brother of Daniel Ortega who had been the Sandinista president. "I understand the problems that you would have in trying to sack Roberto as defense minister, and in trying to embark on serious reforms of the armed forces to get them out of the control of the Sandinista movement. You are probably going to have the same kind of problem with your interior ministry and your police. But if you don't do those things, your ability to effectively govern Nicaragua will be severely restricted." Well Violetta and her son-in-law listened to all this very carefully. They made non-committal noises. They also listened to others including the then-President of Venezuela who was a great supporter of Violetta and the anti Sandinista political movement. This was Carlos Andres Peres. He advised them, don't try and move against the Sandinistas in the army, the defense ministry, the interior ministry. You are going to have to accept them because if you try to move against them, they may well try to overthrow you. In the end, Mrs. Chamorro decided to take the advice of Carlos Andres Peres, so they left control over those institutions, the military and the police/interior ministry, under the effective control of the Sandinista movement. You had a Sandinista who was actually defense minister. They did replace the interior minister, Tomás Borge, one of the key Sandinista leaders. He did retire as interior minister but he and his underlings maintained effective control over that ministry and over the police. So that was the situation which the government confronted. We did what we could to try and help Mrs. Chamorro's government. Interestingly enough, the Sandinista armed forces had long wanted to improve relations with the United States military. They looked upon and respected the U.S. military as the pre-eminent military force in the world. They were anxious to try and develop more contacts with our military. So we were able to at least begin a process by which over the long term Sandinista armed forces were somewhat more professionalized and made somewhat more apolitical. In the long run that did start to work. We had less success with the interior ministry and the police; still, over time, under three non-Sandinista governments, the Chamorro and the two regimes that followed hers, all of whom were not Sandinista, progress was made in that area too.

Q: Today is 17 October 2011 with Jack Leonard. The last time you were talking about discussing with Mrs. Chamorro the concerns that you had over the defense ministry and internal security and all to be very wary of trying to deal with the Sandinistas there. Then you said I need to sign off now, but I need to talk to you a little bit more about my time in Nicaragua. Do you recall anything you would like to talk about?

LEONARD: I wanted to make sure we are clear on what we recommended to Mrs. Chamorro. During their period in office the Sandinista government had established very firm control over both the armed forces ministry of defense, and the security services, the police and the secret police and the ministry of interior. Those two ministries were under control of two of the Sandinista movement's most power figures. The defense minister was the brother of the Sandinista president. The brother's name was Umberto Ortega. The minister of interior was Tomás Borge, again one of the most powerful figures in the

Sandinista movement. Like most authoritarian regimes and certainly most communist regimes, the Sandinistas were determined they would exercise complete control over those two ministries because they were essential to keeping the Sandinistas in power. When they lost the elections in 1990 they faced a real dilemma. How to prevent a new government from dismantling their control over those two ministries which they saw as essential. They obviously were afraid that any new government would use controls over the ministry of defense and the ministry of the interior to work against the Sandinista movement. In the end the Sandinistas on paper relinquished those two ministries. Actually they didn't relinquish both ministries. They relinquished their leadership of the ministry of the interior under Tomás Borge. He was replaced by a person who was from Mrs. Chamorro's movement. On the other hand the Sandinista defense minister Umberto Ortega remained in power. Before all of that happened, shortly after Mrs. Chamorro was elected, I talked with her on instructions from Washington, with which I agreed, urging that she carefully but firmly start to work to get those two ministries under the control of her movement. In particular that she not permit Tomás Borge or Umberto Ortega to remain in these two positions as the Sandinistas were pressuring her to do. And I advanced all the familiar arguments about why this was necessary. But in the end Mrs. Chamorro and her advisors decided she had to move very slowly and carefully to try and gain control over these two ministries, and that in particular it was important to leave Umberto Ortega in place as minister of defense. They did replace Tomás Borge but over the course of Mrs. Chamorro's time in office the fact was the ministry of interior remained loyal to the Sandinistas and key officers in that ministry including the man who headed up the secret police, Lenin Sera, they remained under Sandinista control. So there was very limited progress made especially in the case of the ministry of the interior in cleaning out that ministry and getting people loyal to Mrs. Chamorro into positions of authority there. The new minister of the interior whose name escapes me, quite frankly he was a minister in name only. That ministry remained loyal to the Sandinista movement rather than to the duly constituted government of Nicaragua. Now in the case of the defense ministry the situation was much more complicated. Umberto Ortega, the brother of Sandinista president Daniel Ortega, was a very clever fellow. He, over time, ingratiated himself with the new government under Mrs. Chamorro. He appeared to be ostensibly loyal to Mrs. Chamorro's government. In addition, the Sandinista military establishment which had grown up during the years of Sandinista rule had very mixed feelings about relations with the United States. Many of the officers in the Sandinista army, while obviously very bitter over American support for the Contra movement, were great admirers of the United States military. They went out of their way to try and keep up contacts with our military even during periods of very tense relations between our two countries. Many of them were disillusioned with the kind of support they got from the Soviet Union in terms of military assistance and training. So over time the Nicaraguan army became more and more independent of the Sandinista regime and became more and more of a professional force rather than just a force which was simply loyal to the Sandinista movement. So in the end Mrs. Chamorro's government did not entirely follow our advice. In particular, they never really gained control over the ministry of the interior, the police and the secret service during Mrs. Chamorro's time in office, but they did make some limited progress there. In the case of the Sandinista army and the ministry of

defense, they were somewhat more successful in turning those institutions into more professional institutions rather than just simply arms of the Sandinista movement.

Q: You were there for how long after Mrs. Chamorro took over?

LEONARD: I was there a little less than a year after she took over. We had a new ambassador come in not long after she came into office, a very distinguished retired Foreign Service officer called Harry Shlaudeman, who was persuaded I believe personally by Jim Baker and by President Bush to go down to Nicaragua. So I served as his DCM for about nine months. It was a thankless job for Harry given the complexities of the situation in Nicaragua and the difficulties confronted by Mrs. Chamorro's government. But he agreed and served very ably there as ambassador and for about nine months I was his deputy.

Q: Well now you know you have described probably the most complicated situation with the ministry of defense and ministry of interior, the two key elements in any dictatorial situation, and to sort of go to bed with them seemed sort of an impossible situation.

LEONARD: Yeah, in some sense it was a very messy situation for which there was no good solution. Mrs. Chamorro was persuaded by people like Carlos Andres Peres of Venezuela that it was too risky to move quickly to try and get control over those two ministries, that this might provoke a Sandinista coup d'état. The Sandinistas did have, on paper at least, the wherewithal to carry out successfully such a coup d'état. They had control over the armed forces. They had control over the security forces, the police and the secret police. Mrs. Chamorro's government didn't have real control over either of those two institutions. Still, it never seemed a realistic possibility that having made the decision to respect the results of this election, in which they were defeated, that the Sandinistas would early on turn around and overthrow that government. The international community had been very much involved in overseeing these elections. It would have been very easy for the United States to move public opinion and the opinion of other governments against any such move by the Sandinistas. A new Sandinista government brought into power by a coup d'état would have had near universal opposition form the international community. Remember also it was during this period that the Soviet Union was going through its slow motion collapse, and a Sandinista coup d'état would have been supported only by a handful of countries such as Cuba which had virtually nothing to offer to such a government by way of support. Personally I always felt that the threat of a coup d'état was exaggerated; but, of course, other means existed short of a full fledged coup d'état that the Sandinistas threatened Mrs. Chamorro's government with: assassinating any new leaders put into place, new ministers put into place and the like. I always felt her government would have been better served if they had moved quickly against Sandinista control, taking into account the dangers of doing so but setting about cleaning out those two ministries slowly but firmly. In the end it didn't happen, especially in the case of the ministry of the interior. The ministry of defense, the Sandinista military did evolve slowly, but not so the interior ministry. It remained loyal to the Sandinista movement all through Mrs. Chamorro's rule.

Q: You mentioned in consultation with the Department of State you were giving advice to Mrs. Chamorro. Who was advising, advice coming from 2000 miles away.

LEONARD: It wasn't advice coming from 2000 miles away. These were recommendations our embassy, headed by me, made back to the department. So it wasn't a question of advice coming form 2000 miles away. Most of the positions which we wound up taking with Mrs. Chamorro's fledgling government, these were things that were recommended by our embassy.

Q: Well were there elements of her government where there had to be a considerable switch. For example if you have a socialist government which essentially takes over all sorts of property and all, then you move away from that, what was happening?

LEONARD: This was an area where there the new government faced serious problems. Over time the Sandinista government had collectivized agriculture. It had done the kinds of things that communist governments especially do to ensure their grip on power. Again we recommended things and, quite frankly, with most of Mrs. Chamorro's advisors and colleagues in Government, a lot of these areas they didn't need any advice. They were bound and determined to try and dismantle as much of the Sandinista apparatus as they could to try to move toward a free market economy. They had some success in this over time. They got a lot of good advice form us on how to go about this, but many of those things they were determined to do themselves. Nicaragua was at that time and still is a heavily agricultural country. The Nicaraguan farmers, especially the larger ones who still existed, they were determined to try and dismantle as much of the Sandinista controls over the economy as they could. So they set about that with considerable enthusiasm. Now this proved very controversial in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas had a die hard following of about 1/3 of the voting population who were true believers in their movement and their policies. So it was very difficult for this new government to try and move ahead. Nicaraguans were polarized. Many of them were certainly loyal to the Sandinistas. So Mrs. Chamorro's government had a very difficult time to try to move ahead, but they were determined in terms of the economy to do whatever they could to re-establish a free market economy. Those efforts certainly moved forward fairly quickly.

Q: What about the School system?

LEONARD: There were endless fights over reforming the curriculum in the school system. Like most communist regimes, the Sandinistas had set in place a curriculum in their schools which was Marxist Leninist inspired. The new government set about a program of curriculum reforms. This also proved very controversial because there was a hard core minority in Nicaragua which was loyal to the Sandinistas and who were easy for the Sandinistas to mobilize in protest movements and activities to try and block the new government. The overall objective of the Sandinista movement in opposition was to try and prevent the new government from being able to govern effectively. They did their utmost.

Q: Were you getting curriculum advisors and things like that

LEONARD: No, if I remember we did not do much in terms of advisors on the curriculum. We did provide a certain amount of aid to their efforts to reform the educational system. A great deal of our aid went to balance of payment support to the new government, which faced a very difficult internal situation. So we didn't provide them with that much in the way of aid for curriculum reform in their school system.

Q: What about the army. They had a substantial army, and technically they wouldn't need that much of an army anymore. A bunch of guys with guns, what were they going to do with them?

LEONARD: Well you make a very good point. If you have got a big army and especially if it is an army that is not loyal to your government, you better be very careful about what you do with it. Fortunately for Mrs. Chamorro's government, there were many in the Sandinista army who were admirers of the United States military and who were anxious for our advice and assistance. So very slowly we expanded contacts with the Sandinista armed forces. The first priority was to try and professionalize the Sandinista armed forces and turn them into an institution which was loyal to the Nicaraguan government whatever its complexion might be rather than loyal to the Sandinista movement. Certainly our first priority was not to urge the government of Mrs. Chamorro to throw a bunch of guys with guns into the streets and tell them, look, you guys no longer have jobs. That was not a high priority, that was something we would not recommend at all.

Q: Were there people released from prison and was there sort of a liberation within the society?

LEONARD: A number of people were released from jail. That was not a major feature of the change from the Sandinista government to Mrs. Chamorro's government. There were not a large number of political prisoners at that time.

Q: What about relations with some of the neighbors, neighboring countries?

LEONARD: Nicaragua's neighbors in Central America had been negotiating for years with the Sandinista government to seek an end to the civil war in Nicaragua. The Costa Rican president in particular, President Arias, had been the major figure in this effort. So Mrs. Chamorro came to office with good relations basically with her neighbors. The government in El Salvador, for example, were also trying to end their civil war. So she got good support from her neighbors basically all of whom were sympathetic to her and had been unsympathetic to the Sandinista government. Some of the neighboring countries were quite frankly in turmoil. Panama, for example, had been invaded by us only shortly before Mrs. Chamorro was elected. The government in El Salvador was going through a very difficult period in trying to end its civil war. But generally she had very good relations with her neighbors who welcomed her ascent to power and welcomed the end of the civil war in Nicaragua. The contra movement slowly but surely wound down. Large support for the contras was quickly phased out. A serious effort was made to try to integrate the contra fighters back into Nicaraguan society. Now not all of them were

interested in that. Because the security forces remained essentially under Sandinista control, many contras were very leery of giving up their guns and returning to Nicaragua. The head of the contra military movement, Enrique Bermudas, ultimately did, a couple of years later return to Nicaragua. Not long after that he was assassinated, a crime which was never solved. Nobody had any doubt that it was the Sandinistas who had bumped him off. So re-integrating the contras into Nicaraguan society was a very difficult process.

Q: What about the Cubans?

LEONARD: The Cubans had so many problems of their own after the fall of the Soviet Union that they were certainly in no position to provide the Sandinista movement with a lot of help and support. Before Daniel Ortega had decided to agree to have new elections under UN and organization of American States monitoring, the Sandinistas went to Fidel Castro and asked, "What do you think? Should we agree to this as a way to get rid of the contras once and for all." The Sandinistas were very confident that they could win a fair election. Fidel Castro's advice was, "Don't do it. You never know what may come out of the ballot box." The Sandinistas decided instead that they would go ahead, and agreed to these elections. Mrs. Chamorro won.

Q: What about all the Sandalistas?

LEONARD: Yeah, young Americans who were sympathetic to the Sandinista movement. Most of them had become disillusioned with the Sandinistas by the time the elections in 1990 took place. There were still a fair number of them around but their bloom was pretty much off the rose. Once Mrs. Chamorro's government came into power, all of that international support pretty much faded away.

Q: You didn't have sort of the socialist governments of Scandinavia and France and all wading in there.

LEONARD: No, by the time Mrs. Chamorro won the election, and the fairness of the elections was certified by the UN and by the Organization of American States, by Jimmy Carter and his movement. Those people all accepted those results and supported Mrs. Chamorro's government. The Soviets in the meantime were in the middle of their slow motion collapse. They had no time to support the Sandinistas. Indeed they had agreed with President Bush that look we can't afford to support these Sandinistas anymore. If you guys will just agree to abide by the results of any fair election in Nicaragua we will certainly go along with it too. So the steam went out of the international support for the Sandinista movement once they lost that election and once the end of the contra armed movement became inevitable.

Q: OK, you have got Mrs. Chamorro trying to set up a new government and all, sort of the focus was away from Nicaragua where the action had been. But for a diplomat this is where the hard work starts.

LEONARD: I told Mrs. Chamorro's government that there was a time limit on how long they could expect to get a great deal of attention and support out of the government in Washington. Once the armed struggle in Nicaragua ended and Mrs. Chamorro's government took over, there was only a matter of several years that they could expect to get strong financial support form Washington. Inevitably other problems would arise in other parts of the world. The attention of our government would shift, so they needed to try and work as quickly as they could to do whatever they could with the amount of aid that we would provide initially to make that aid effective. It was inevitable that fatigue would set in, in Washington, so they needed to move as quickly as they could to make the most of the Aid we would provide and did provide in the first few years of her government.

Q: You were the DCM weren't you?

LEONARD: Yes I was. Harry Shlaudeman was a wonderful man to work for. He knew that I had been for two years the boss at the embassy. It was difficult for me to relinquish the chair after playing a key role in the transition there from the Sandinistas to Mrs. Chamorro's government. He was scrupulous in respecting my role there and making sure that the transition to his being ambassador was as smooth as possible. He always consulted me on virtually everything we did at our embassy, and he was scrupulous about giving my opinions his due consideration. He was a wonderful guy to work for.

Q: How about congressional support, Senator Helms and all this. Were they sort of mucking around or were you left alone?

LEONARD: Well the conservative side of the Republicans, people like Senator Helms, were extremely suspicious of Mrs. Chamorro's government. They would have much preferred a situation where the Sandinista movement would have been overthrown by force. From these elections arose a very fluid, very confused situation with Mrs. Chamorro's government in power but its authority was limited in many areas by the obstructionism of the Sandinistas. Conservative Republicans did not find that to their liking at all. So they were suspicious of Mrs. Chamorro's government and especially of her decision that they would not immediately move to oust the Sandinistas from those two key ministries I mentioned.

Q: Well then how did this play out as far as their people from the Senate advice, visits, and all for you?

LEONARD: We continued to get a lot of Congressional visits, but after Mrs. Chamorro was elected, the numbers went down. Congressional visits peaked during the elections themselves. It seemed like almost every week we had a new congressional delegation coming through. That tended to diminish after she was elected. I don't recall the details of visits by conservative members of congress or their staffs once Mrs. Chamorro was elected, but I do remember their extreme suspicion of her movement. Many of them did not particularly like Mrs. Chamorro being the candidate. They would have preferred a

man by the name of Enrique Bolaños who was a much more conservative opposition leader in Nicaragua. But he had his chance at the presidency a number of years later.

Q: Well what was your impression of Mrs. Chamorro when she took over?

LEONARD: She recognized her own limitations. She was not a great politician or a great government leader. She relied heavily on her advisors primarily among them her son-in-law. She was often criticized for that. She had a very fractious coalition of small parties who had banded together with her to win the elections, but who were certainly not at all united in their support for the new government and its policies. So it was a very difficult and fractious set of little parties supporting her. She was extremely good at one on one meetings. She was charming, and although she did not have a profound understanding of the mechanics of politics, she had a kind of instinctive feeling for the way people in Nicaragua felt. She understood that her job, and especially during the election campaign, was to be a symbol to the Nicaraguans of resistance to Sandinista rule. I well remember her campaigning. She insisted that she would always dress in white. She would travel around in a motorcade. They had a special vehicle rigged up for her. She had injured her foot during the campaign so she was on crutches for a time. But they had a special vehicle rigged up for her and that had some hand holds to hold onto. She and her entourage would come into some little town and sweep in almost as if she were the Virgin of Nicaragua. Nicaraguans tend to be very religious people. Many of the average Nicaraguans identified with her and she understood this instinctively. She knew how to appeal to the average Nicaraguans especially those in the countryside, who looked on her as a symbol and had an almost sort of religious attachment to her. She understood all of this, and she was very good at appealing to these people in her speeches. She was very good also when she became president at one-on-one private meetings with people where she could be extremely charming and could often sway people to her way of thinking. She was not terribly good at the day to day business of running a government. She relied heavily on her closest advisor, her son-in-law.

Q: Did you find that you and Ambassador Shlaudeman had to be careful that you didn't appear to be behind her and whispering in her ear all the time. In other words you know the colossus to the north being too intrusive.

LEONARD: We were always aware of that and we tried as much as we could to avoid that kind of image. But we also understood that no matter what we did and no matter how discrete we were, the Sandinistas would accuse us of precisely what you suggest. There were many in Nicaragua who would believe it, and so we couldn't let discretion prevent us from arguing forcefully for our positions.

Q: Well what about the Contras? You can set something like that in motion but I wouldn't think you could turn it off very easily.

LEONARD: It was not an easy matter to disband the Contra movement. We had people from my old Contra office in Washington who were very much involved in an orderly disbanding of the movement and winding down military assistance and collecting up

weapons and in trying to make sure that the contras were being treated fairly as was agreed between the contra movement and the Sandinista government in the period leading up and through the elections. That was a very difficult business. It was very hard to insure that contras who reintegrated into Nicaraguan society would not be the target of reprisals by the Sandinistas. And those things did happen. The Contras had widespread support in the Nicaraguan countryside where there was a great deal of bitterness against the Sandinistas because of their efforts to collectivize agriculture. There were large areas in the hinterlands where the contras had widespread support because they were very much part of the countryside. That is where their roots were. So it was a difficult process to get the Contras integrated back into Nicaraguan society and to protect them from reprisals. It was not always successful. There were many cases, and Enrique Bermúdez, the contra military commander, his was the most prominent case, where reprisals were taken against the contras. He was assassinated in Nicaragua not long after he returned.

Q: What about the media? Had the media been pretty well suppressed during the Ortega regime? Was it blossoming or what?

LEONARD: The media was an interesting case. Opposition newspapers, opposition to the Sandinista government, was personified in the person of Mrs. Chamorro and her newspaper, La Prensa. Her husband had been a very active, very bitter opponent of the Somoza regime, and he was assassinated; many people believe by the Sandinistas although others say it was by Somoza's government. Mrs. Chamorro became a symbol of opposition, in many ways almost as strong as the Sandinista opposition to Somoza, in many ways almost as strong as the Sandinista movement itself. So it was difficult for the Sandinistas to move too strongly against her and her newspaper. They closed it down at various times, but she had a great deal of international support. Her paper was able to stay open throughout the period of Sandinista rule, but they were under all kinds of handicaps. They found it very difficult often to get money to buy newsprint, and the Sandinistas tried to sabotage her paper at every turn. But they never went so far as to close it down permanently. They would close it down for weeks at a time but then because of international pressure they always felt they had to allow her to re-open. So after her government came into power there was a flowering of re-opening newspapers and newspapers changing sides. La Prensa obviously flourished under her government.

Q: Moving to one of the other sort of centers of political turmoil, how about the universities and all. How were they, what was happening there?

LEONARD: The Sandinistas had made a particular effort to try and get the University of Nicaragua under their control. There was a very strong Sandinista student movement there; the faculty was under the thumb of the Sandinista movement. When I remained in Nicaragua after Mrs. Chamorro came to power there was only the beginnings of opening up the university to became a really open and free institution instead of an arm of the Sandinista party. When I left, the university was still a bastion of Sandinista support both in terms of student movements and the faculties. The process of change had only begun.

Q: Well could our officers go to the university?

LEONARD: Yes, even under the Sandinista government we could go to the university although we were certainly not welcome there. You would often be confronted with mobs and student protesters. Generally under the Sandinista government our people were not welcome at the university. That began to change obviously when Mrs. Chamorro came to power.

Q: Do you remember where we left off?

LEONARD: Yeah, I was in Nicaragua.

Q: OK, can you carry on from there?

LEONARD: There are a couple of things I wanted to just touch on before I left Nicaragua. They have to do with our relations with the Sandinista government, which of course were extremely difficult during the whole time I was there given the ongoing conflict between the United States and the Sandinista government centering on our support for the contras. While I was in Nicaragua there was a major peace effort underway spearheaded by the other Central American governments, particularly the government of Costa Rica, to bring about a peace settlement. This involved putting an end to the civil war between the Contras and the Nicaraguan government. That was something the Reagan administration was extremely reluctant to do. When the George Bush administration came to power they concluded that the troubles in Nicaragua and the fights that they had caused with the U.S. congress were something that they wanted to avoid in the future. So George Bush's government, including Jim Baker who was the new Secretary of State, sought an end to the conflict in Nicaragua on terms that might be acceptable to us. Although they were still suspicious of the efforts of the central American presidents to bring about a settlement in Nicaragua, they were much more prepared to take the whole matter of Nicaragua off the front burner, and at the same time pursue a resolution of the civil war in El Salvador next door. So although relations on paper might have improved a little bit, we didn't see much of that reflected in our embassy down in Managua. There wasn't any, for example, basic improvement in our access to the Sandinista government. We were still held very much at arms length by their government. Our embassy, myself, were restricted in the level of officials who would receive us in the foreign ministry. Basically I was never able to get to higher level officials in the ministry, was restricted to doing what business I had with working level people at the ministry.

All of this changed dramatically when the Bush administration decided to invade Panama for reasons that had nothing whatever to do with Nicaragua. But Panama being fairly close to Nicaragua, it was felt in Washington when we launched our invasion of Panama that we would at the last minute re-assure the Sandinista government that this was a military operation aimed not at them in any way, but rather at the government of Manuel Noreiga. So on the night that the invasion of Panama took place I got an instruction from the State Department to approach the Nicaraguan government at the highest level I could get at to tell them of our invasion of Panama. We want to assure you that you will quickly

become aware of a lot of U.S. military activity in the region, but none of this is aimed at you This is aimed solely at the government of Manuel Noreiga. So very late one afternoon, having gotten this instruction, I called the foreign ministry and told them I had a message of some urgency that I needed to deliver under instructions from Washington to the highest ranking available officer, hopefully the foreign minister. In fact I was hopeful that the foreign minister would not be available. He was a very excitable individual, very difficult to do business with because he became excited and got carried away with shouts and moans. It was hard to do business with him simply because he would often become so emotional. Luckily for me, I got a call back saying that the deputy foreign minister could receive me right away. I went over to the foreign ministry and was ushered in to see the deputy foreign minister. He was a young named of Hugo Tenoco who was notable for his level headedness as opposed to the behavior of his superior the foreign minister. Tenoco was somebody you definitely could talk with, was reasonable, and although he was a devoted Sandinista, he was not prone to excitable speeches. You could talk with him very candidly and sensibly. So having typed up a very brief message which I took from my instructions, because I wanted to make sure that the Sandinista government had this notification we were giving them in writing, I gave this piece of paper to Tenoco so he could show it to his colleagues. I had some assurance that they would get our message exactly as we had formulated it. That message was that the invasion of Panama by the United States is underway as we speak. This is a military operation aimed at Panama. It is in no way aimed at Nicaragua. There is no reason for your government to become alarmed or draw any conclusions about this invasion being a threat to you.

So Tenoco read this message very carefully. He asked me a few questions about it. I told him I couldn't provide him with any details about this military operation but undoubtedly the Nicaraguan government through its own means would shortly become aware of this operation if it hadn't already done so. So Tenoco and I went over again the message to them. He said it was clear and that he understood it, and after about half an hour I took my leave of him and went back to the office and reported back to Washington my meeting. Actually I had our embassy on alert, and we were monitoring our own communications as well as the international media to gather what we could of what was going on in Panama. So the invasion took place and the U.S. forces in Panama quickly ousted Noreiga's government and they began a search for Noreiga himself who had gone into hiding. In the search for Noreiga they also were searching for weapons which Noreiga might have tried to put in the hands of his followers because our military were much concerned about militias trying to resist our invasion. A couple of days after the invasion, while our forces were still in the midst of seizing control of Panama City and searching for Noreiga, one morning I got an urgent call from the Nicaraguan foreign minister. This was highly unusual. I had almost never had any access to the minister who was a former Maryknoll priest named Miguel d'Escoto, who had been educated in the United States. Mr. d'Escoto called me and asked me to come and see him in his office immediately. So I went down to the foreign ministry. As I was ushered in to the building I noticed there was a lot of the Sandinista press evident. That immediately put me on my guard. I knew that after talking with the foreign minister that undoubtedly the Sandinista media, their newspapers and their television, would be waiting outside and be demanding

statements and information from me in their usual aggressive manner. Anyway I went to see d'Escoto. I was only kept waiting for a few minutes. In his usual emotional tones he said that a terrible problem had arisen in Panama and that U.S. forces in Panama had broken into a Nicaraguan diplomatic residence there. This was of course a violation of International law. He said it was a very serious provocation and could have serious ramifications for relations between our countries. After getting him to calm down I was able to extract from him what details I could about when and where exactly this alleged intrusion occurred. In other words the exact location of this Nicaraguan diplomatic residence and what was the nature of the residence, who was there, what were the names of the officials who allegedly lived there so that I could appraise my friends in Washington about the details of these accusations and find out if there was any truth to this. So I went back to the embassy and was able to get on the secure phone to the department while at the same time our officers listened to me on the secure phone to take down the details of what I said so that we could prepare a message to follow up the phone call. I called the office of Central American affairs in the department. I told them of this complaint, and asked them to look into it as quickly as they could and find out what was going on in Panama and had there been any break-in or seizure of a Nicaraguan facility there and to get back to me as quickly as they could so that I could get back to the foreign ministry.

In the meantime, just before making my telephone call, I had advised our embassy staff that this sounded like trouble to me. The Sandinistas were working themselves up to something, and that we should reduce our holdings in the embassy of classified material to bare minimum so that we could get rid of them within five minutes. So all of the people in our embassy set about doing that. I was told from Washington that a U.S. army patrol in Panama City had gotten information that there might be an arms cache at a house in the city. They had gone to the house, knocked on the door seeking entry. There was no response from anybody inside. They had therefore broken in and had found a few weapons inside, not a sizable cache, and that they were unaware that this house was the residence of Nicaraguan diplomatic personnel. I sought more information from the State Department about this incident, but with a military operation still going on it was difficult. I also decided against trying to approach our embassy in Panama City directly since I was sure that they had their hands full. It was probably advisable for me to get all of my information on this incident from one source i.e. the Department getting what it could from the U.S. military establishment in Washington.

Not long after I got off the phone with Washington and was getting ready to seek another appointment with the foreign minister, I got a call from the Marine guard on duty at the front gate, the entrance to our little compound where the embassy was located which was right off a fairly important street running into the city of Managua. We were just outside the center of the city. The marine guard said, "Mr. Leonard you better come out; there is something you need to see out here." So I walked out the front door and down the driveway. Around our chancery we had a wall about ten or twelve feet high. It had one main entrance to it. It had a large gate, and we had a Marine guard out there. The gate was not an open gate. It was metal doors which opened or closed. There was enough room for maybe one or two cars to come or go at a time. The gate had a little guard post

built into it and a window which could be opened so that you could see outside. It was normally closed. So the Marine said to look out that window. I did so and found myself looking down the barrel of a tank which had pulled up right in front of the entrance to our embassy and had its main gun aimed directly at our front gate. The Marine told me he had just seen a couple of others and a couple of armored personnel carriers pulling around to station themselves around the side and back of our embassy chancery compound. There were a couple of armored personnel carriers across the street from our embassy and they were in the midst of dislodging armed soldiers who were taking up positions in front of and surrounding out embassy. So I had a look at all this, went back inside and got on the secure telephone line to the state department to let them know. I told my number two in the embassy that everyone should redouble their efforts to complete the destruction of any classified material so that we could get our burn time as they called it down to no more than a couple of minutes if I so instructed. After quickly telling Washington what was going on at our embassy. I got on the phone with the foreign ministry and sought an immediate appointment with the foreign minister both to tell him what I could about what had happened in Panama at the residence he referred me to and to protest in the strongest terms the surrounding of our embassy by military personnel.

No sooner had I gotten off the telephone with the foreign ministry than my wife called me. She told me that a couple of armored personnel carriers and at least one tank had pulled up in front of our residence as well and that they were stationed across the street from the residence where we lived. So armed with that information I went over to the foreign ministry. I was able to get in and see the foreign minister. We had a long and somewhat heated discussion about all of these developments. The gist of which was that I gave him the information about what we had about the incident in Panama noting in particular that our troops had not been aware that this residence was supposedly occupied by Nicaraguan diplomatic personnel. And then I turned to the business of them surrounding our embassy and protesting this in the strongest terms and reminding them of Nicaragua's obligations under the Treaty of Vienna to protect diplomats. I then after this conversation went back to our embassy, and brought Washington up to speed on all of this. I wound up that night spending a very uncomfortable night trying to sleep on my sofa in my office at the chancery because I didn't want anything to happen and not be there. So I spent an uncomfortable night there. The Sandinista military settled in around our embassy. They blocked traffic off in several blocks in each direction so that it couldn't go past our embassy. The only people who could get through were members of our embassy to get in and out of our chancery building. No one from outside, Nicaraguan or American or anyone else, was able to get into our embassy. That situation continued for the better part of a week or more. Eventually things calmed down and it was determined that indeed the house in Panama City that our troops had gone into was the residence of a Nicaraguan diplomat. But I was never able to determine what if anything our troops found in that residence beyond a few weapons. The Sandinista government did maintain its little blockade around our embassy for the better part of a month. They finally grudgingly pulled out their military personnel and allowed business to resume normally, allowing the public free access into our embassy. While they had troops around us, after a few days, they would let American citizens come in and out of the embassy on foot. They still prohibited Nicaraguans and foreigners from coming into our embassy

until they finally withdrew their troops after about a month. So that was the end of the siege of our embassy in Nicaragua.

However, the Nicaraguan government expelled virtually every officer from our embassy except me. They declared persona non grata our entire political section, our economic section, all of our intelligence personnel. The only people who they left in our embassy were myself and my wife, my general services officer, a very able young officer named John Sherbourne, and the members of our military attaché office. Everyone else, all of our other American personnel, was expelled. This put us at a considerable disadvantage in doing our work. It put a considerable crimp in our operations at the embassy for a period of many weeks because the Sandinista government took its time in agreeing to let new diplomatic personnel into the country as replacements. For a considerable period of time we were somewhat lonely in the embassy: me and my wife and our general services officer who had a tremendous task to ship out the household effects of all the people who had been expelled. We were a pretty small operation for many weeks. So I just wanted to get that whole experience on the record because it was very interesting and somewhat stressful.

Q: What was your feeling about our time there, I mean did you think we had a chance to go anywhere with this? Was this a holding operation?

LEONARD: The Bush administration, when it came into office, had a clear idea that they wanted to get Nicaragua off the front burner of our diplomacy and they were very successful in that. The vehicle was, number one, to agree with the Central American presidents in particular President Arias of Costa Rica that the United States supported his efforts in trying to reach a peace settlement in Nicaragua. Number two that as far as we were concerned they key to that was to have free and fair elections for once in Nicaragua, and that if the Sandinista government agreed to international observation of those elections that the United states would respect the outcome of such elections. That is precisely what happened and that is how Mrs. Chamorro came into power. The Sandinistas were caught in their own trap, they having assumed that they were so popular in Nicaragua that they would win even a free election and in fact they did not. So in the end George Bush's policy succeeded brilliantly. Ronald Reagan's policy of relying on the contra movement trying to overthrow the Sandinistas, or at least put sufficient military pressure on them, that policy failed simply because the Reagan administration was never willing to accept the idea that it might have to accept a Sandinista government in power if it were popularly elected in a free election George Bush was prepared to accept that judging that the risks of a continuing Sandinista government in Nicaragua were sufficiently small to be worthy of risk taking. He was absolutely right, especially when you consider that at the time all of this was going on the Soviet Union was in the midst of a slow motion collapse. So a Sandinista government without any support from the Soviet Union was certainly no threat to us.

Q: OK, today is 31 October 2011. During this time were you recommending say screw it, let's cut off relations or suggesting to Washington that they cut off relations.

LEONARD: No we never suggested that and I didn't want to do that. I was sure that nothing would have pleased the Sandinista government more than to have all of the Americans our of their hair in Managua. Our own interpretation of these events was that the Sandinista government was preparing itself for the inevitable elections they were going to agree to, and did. New presidential elections and they didn't want a lot of Americans in our embassy around as they saw it causing trouble and snooping around while these key elections were going forth. Therefore they wanted to cut our embassy down to as small a size as possible in anticipation of these elections which they thought would possibly occur during the coming six months. With this in mind it was in their view better to get rid of as many Americans as they could. From my point of view and from the point of view of the embassy we wanted on the contrary as many Americans officers as we could in Nicaragua observing these elections, helping the opposition parties in the run up to these elections. We genuinely believed that if one could assure the Nicaraguan public that elections would be free and fair, that there was a reasonable chance that the Sandinistas might lose those elections. So we wanted as many officers as we could get in Nicaragua in this run up to the elections. As it turned out we were right. It took us a long time to get our embassy back up to full staffing because the Sandinista government dragged its feet in agreeing to let us have new people come in. This re-enforced our belief in the embassy that what they were doing with this incident was trying to take advantage of it in order to hamstring our embassy. They wanted us to have no effective role in these elections which were under discussion at that point with the Sandinista government to see if they would agree to properly supervise the elections for president. So they dragged their feet, and it was a number of months before our embassy could get up to the point where we were the semblance of full staff.

Now I have never been able to prove it; I have never seen any evidence to confirm my suspicion, but my feeling was the incident in which our American forces went into this diplomatic residence in Panama that belonged to the Sandinistas, my feeling has long been that this was something that the Sandinista government had itself in effect arranged for. U.S. forces in Panama were very active at that time searching high and low both for Manuel Noreiga and for any weapons cache. I was later told by a colleague in Washington that the reason this small group of American Military had gone into this residence in Panama City was because they had gotten a tip from somewhere, from someone, that this house might be the location of an arms cache. My feeling has long been that tip probably came from the Sandinistas themselves. As I say I never have seen any evidence to this effect. I certainly couldn't prove it, but my guess was that once the invasion began in Panama, the Sandinista government once they had determined that it indeed was aimed at Noreiga and not at them, that they sought a way to perhaps capitalize on what had just occurred. Perhaps they had been thinking about expelling members of our embassy and were looking for a suitable pretense for doing so. So anyway that is what happened in Panama and how it affected our embassy. I don't think that the Sandinista government ever really considered breaking into our embassy, but they certainly put up a good show, and we couldn't take any chances about being wrong in that judgment. We destroyed a lot of files. I destroyed a whole batch of stenographic notebooks in which I kept notes about my everyday business around the embassy, all of my meetings and so forth. Those notebooks were a gold mine because they included my

thoughts and impressions about what was going on in Nicaragua, notes about all the meetings that I held. I was determined that they should not fall into the wrong hands, so I had to destroy them. Which is why I can't be a little more precise about all of this than I have just been, but such was life in the Foreign Service, in Managua, Nicaragua in those days.

Q: Why were not the defense attachés and their staffs particularly hit?

LEONARD: I think again that was part of the Sandinista government's attempt to signal to us that it didn't want to break off relations with us entirely and that their intentions at bottom were not hostile. In addition the Sandinista military valued having a line of communication with our military. The Sandinista military, although they got a great deal of equipment and training from the Soviet Union, most of them if not all very quietly and privately were much more admirers of the U.S. military. They valued what limited contacts their government permitted with our own military representatives in Nicaragua.

Q: Well with this limited staff, how did you carry on?

LEONARD: With great difficulty. I told Washington that I would be on the secure phone to them regularly to report on developments. That I would have telegrams prepared to report developments, but I wouldn't be able to send out those telegrams until we got new communications personnel in, and it was a couple of weeks before that happened. I kept up my normal contacts as much as I could with Nicaraguan people, with opposition politicians, for example. My wife did what she could to help around the office, but it was a very difficult time and very difficult for us to keep up work. I warned Washington that until we started to get new political and economic officers in, that the volume of our reporting was obviously going to go down considerably. But it was extremely busy as you can imagine, trying to keep up my own work and trying to keep Washington informed over the secure telephone.

Q: Were you getting I mean assuming it would be to a certain extent in contact with your normal government contacts and with the general population. What sort of reactions were you getting from them?

LEONARD: Our contacts with the Sandinista government were by the choice of that government quite limited. From our contacts in the foreign ministry we got simply the usual Sandinista line about things generally. My wife and I and the four or five in the defense attaché office were the only ones who could still maintain contact with the public. The Sandinista government cut off access to our chancery for a couple of weeks. So it was up to us to get out and move around within the community to reassure our contacts that we were still there, that we were still in business, and that sooner or later we were going to be getting new staff in. Among the Sandinista followers I am sure that they pretty much adhered to the government position that it was necessary to expel this nest of Americans out of the embassy because of the threat that we posed to Nicaraguan security and because of the incident in Panama. I found among our other contacts in the Nicaraguan public that they were quite sympathetic to us and we were never more

popular in terms of being invited out to lunch or dinner. People wanted to re-assure us that they were still friendly to us.

Q: What about say the British, the Canadian, the French embassies were they able to help pick up some of the slack in some ways?

LEONARD: Not really, because the western Europeans had a very small diplomatic presence in Managua. They really did very little in the way of in-depth reporting on events in Nicaragua. It was really up to our embassy to pick up the slack. One of my closest diplomatic colleagues was the Costa Rican ambassador. He undoubtedly kept up a steady flow of reporting back to his government in San Jose. The Costa Rican ambassador was a close friend of then-Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. So he was a very good and valuable contact and a good friend. I found myself working probably more closely with them than any of our other diplomatic colleagues. Most of the rest of the diplomatic community would look to me and ask me what was going on in Nicaragua. So it was a nice position to be in because I certainly had an influence on the way other foreign diplomats reported back to their capitals about what was happening in Nicaragua. I took full advantage of that and met regularly with many of my diplomatic colleagues to brief them and thereby try to influence what they were reporting back to their governments.

Q: Well were there attempts to bring out the university students to demonstrate against the embassy and all?

LEONARD: No, there was none of that. For a period of a couple of weeks we were simply blocked off. The public was prevented from having access to us. That lasted for a couple of weeks, but slowly and gradually the Sandinista government backed down. First they started letting foreigners get access to the embassy for consular purposes. After awhile they started letting Nicaraguan people have access to the embassy for visas or whatever the case might be. There wasn't any effort to mobilize the local population to demonstrate against the embassy. The Sandinistas were not anxious to have anything like that which could conceivably have gotten out of control.

Q: I was wondering whether hanging over this whole thing was if you mess too much with the American embassy we might come in with our military.

LEONARD: Well, that is right. And the Sandinistas undoubtedly knew that because of our experience in Iran, that we had some very clear and tangible limits to our willingness to accept certain kinds of behavior. Our embassy was probably sacrosanct and they were not going to cross that line.

Q: What sort of reaction were you getting from Washington. Were they sort of going along with what you were doing or were you getting pressured to do more or do less or what?

LEONARD: I had very good support out of the department. I found that pretty much they would take my advice on how to deal with this situation. We weren't pressured in any way to do more. The people in Washington knew that with only a tiny staff there, there were real limits on what I could be asked to do. They quickly lined up people to replace the officers who had been expelled. We tried to push the Sandinista government as much as we could to agree to sending in replacements. Over time, over a period of several months we were able to build our embassy up again, but it took time.

Q: What about your staff who were kicked out with their families and all of that. How were they treated back in Washington?

LEONARD: They were actually treated quite well. They got good onward assignments, so we certainly didn't have any complaints about the way those who had been expelled were dealt with by the department. I tried to insure that they got the best onward assignments possible. I can't think of any cases where the department didn't take good care of someone.

Q: What was happening with the situation to deal with the contras and all during all of this. Had you sort of stopped waiting for the elections or what?

LEONARD: All of this happened against the backdrop of the long and very difficult negotiations between the Nicaraguan government and the contras, negotiations which were brokered by the other countries of Central America. It was clear by this time that the contra movement was going to be winding down, and that George Bush's administration had different ideas about bringing an end to the conflict in El Salvador than the Reagan administration. So those discussions were still going on. The object of U.S. policy was to get the Sandinista government to agree to new presidential elections which would be under strict international observation. That object was finally achieved. The U.S. side of that bargain was we would accept whatever government came to power in Nicaragua as a result of those free and fair elections. We would abide by them, and we would accept a peace settlement that was fairly negotiated in Central America among the Central American countries. So that is what was going on in the background when the invasion of Panama took place. Now Sandinista acceptance of basically this deal to go ahead with internationally observed elections, that was a few months in the future. It didn't happen until a little bit later, but it was clearly what we were pressing for, and that seemed like the direction that things were going. With a view toward that, I think the Sandinistas felt that they would be more comfortable with the U.S. embassy reduced to as small a size as possible in the run up to those elections.

Q: Well what about things such as I know Jimmy Carter's organization came in and observers from all over.

LEONARD: That's right.

Q: This isn't what they wanted is it?

LEONARD: What isn't what they wanted?

Q: Real international attention on the elections.

LEONARD: No, obviously the Sandinista government would have much preferred not to have to go through this process.. But they were convinced that they could win the elections even if they were closely observed by the international community. They also saw that their principal supporter (the USSR) was in the midst of a slow motion collapse. So they felt they really needed to first of all get rid of the Contras and second get the United States off their back. If having another round of elections this time closely observed by the international community was the price they had to pay for that, they were willing to pay that price. They had an inflated notion of the amount of popular support they had in Nicaragua. They clearly did not understand how widespread the anger was against their government. Among the people the Sandinista government consulted about cutting a deal with the United States over new elections was Fidel Castro. He told them in no uncertain terms not to agree to internationally supervised elections. They chose to ignore that warning, much to their later dismay.

Q: You mentioned how the Sandinistas felt. Were you at all confident it wouldn't go the way they were thinking?

LEONARD: You mean about their elections for president?

Q: How they would turn out.

LEONARD: A few days before the elections were to take place I had a visitor at our embassy. A man who specialized in public opinion polls. He was a Costa Rican with a great deal of experience. He had learned his trade in the United States, and he had wide experience traveling and doing public opinion polls in Central America. He had done a fair amount of polling in Nicaragua in the period particularly leading up to these elections. He led off by saying, "Well that's it. I have done my polling now and I know how these elections are going to come out. Mrs. Chamorro is going to win." I said, "Well that is interesting. That is pretty much the way our embassy comes down, although we have cautioned the folks in Washington that it is not inconceivable that the Sandinista government could win." He said, "No, that is it. Mrs. Chamorro is going to win." He shared some of the results of his last polling with me and said that he was going elsewhere in Central America to do another job. So I reported this to Washington right away. Naturally we had given Washington a steady stream of reporting about the electoral situation and about the campaigning by the Sandinistas, by Mrs. Chamorro and her supporters, and an exhaustive amount of information about all that. We felt Mrs. Chamorro would win provided a couple of things. Number one, that the international community had to be very visibly present in Nicaragua. Two, the Nicaraguan people had to be convinced that their vote would be protected, would be secret, and that the Sandinistas would not be able to find out how individuals were voting. Under those two conditions we thought Mrs. Chamorro would win. We had been sending this message to Washington for some time. One message was titled "Can the Sandinistas Win a Free and

Fair Election?" We said that we didn't think that they could, but that if people were afraid to turn out, if voters were convinced that the Sandinistas could somehow figure out what their vote was, and the turnout was very low, then the Sandinistas could win. But that if people saw there was plenty of international observation and that their vote would be secret, then enough people would turn out that Mrs. Chamorro would win. So that was our basic line. Well, most people in Washington simply couldn't accept this. A night before or two night before, I got a secure phone call from our assistant secretary for Latin American affairs, Bernie Aaronson. "Jack, who is going to win?" I said, "Bernie, Mrs. Chamorro is going to win. I just had this pollster from Costa Rica here. His work is well respected in this part of the world, and I just sent up this message." "Yeah, Yeah I know. But who is going to win?" "Violetta is going to win." So he grudgingly took that aboard. In the end that is what happened.

Q: Ok, so next time we will talk about the election and sort of your impression of the role of international observers and sort of how the thing went and from there on. How is that.

LEONARD: All right, that is fine.

Q: Today is February 3, 2012. We left it off when the Chamorro election came about. I want to ask what is your impression of the Carter group and other groups that came in to monitor the election? Did they keep everybody honest?

LEONARD: They did exactly what they were supposed to do. A key factor in getting everybody to agree to support yet another election in Nicaragua was that any election had to be free and fair, and the only way of achieving this would be to have international observers observing every step of the way. In the United States, of course, people found it extremely difficult to believe that the Sandinista government would ever accept that and many among the Republicans were highly dubious that that could be accomplished. On the other hand, within Nicaragua itself, our embassy pointed out many times that the key to a fair election in Nicaragua was that there had to be lots of foreign observers to keep an eye on things. That only in this way would the people of Nicaragua be prepared to vote the way they really felt; if there were not plenty of foreign observers most Nicaraguans would assume that their vote would not really be secret or that the tally would be manipulated by the Sandinistas who controlled all the levers of government. So it was quite an achievement to get the Sandinistas to finally agree that yes there could be lots of international observers in Nicaragua for this election. There were two reasons. Number one, they wanted very much to get rid of the contra movement. They wanted very much to hold the United States to its pledge that we would respect the results of elections in Nicaragua as long as they were free and fair. This was the new George H.W. Bush administration policy. And without good reason, they were supremely confident that they could win an election even if there were lots of foreigners around. They felt they had tremendous advantages. They controlled all the levels of government. They had piles of money at their disposal with which to campaign. And probably most of them, including the leadership, had a very misplaced confidence in their popularity among the Nicaraguan people. In our embassy on the other hand, we believed the Nicaraguan people were fed up with the Sandinistas, but that they weren't about to take the risk of voting them out

unless they were confident that voting against the Sandinistas would be safe, and they wouldn't be subject to a lot of reprisals. The only way they could be sure of that was if the country was full of foreign observers. In that we were correct. The Carter foundation and tons of other organizations came down to observe the elections, from the OAS (Organization of American States), from the United Nations, from all over the place. They played an essential role in making that election as fair as it could be.

Q: Did they get a fairly good European socialist delegation, because this is a group that had been very dubious about what we were doing there.

LEONARD: Lots of Europeans came to Nicaragua to observe the elections. Jimmy Carter's group was among the most active and spent the most time there. He, himself came down several times to observe the election. It is hard to overestimate Carter's role. And of course he was there on election day and into the night and the next day. He and several others, including Colin Powell, went to visit Daniel Ortega the day after the elections to hold him to his promise that he would respect the results of the elections. Undoubtedly with great reluctance and feelings of great bitterness, the Sandinistas were forced to turn over power.

Q: Well were you at the embassy at any point concerned that the people in power would say oh my God this isn't going well, screw it.

LEONARD: Call all this off? No, we were not. We sensed that the Sandinistas believed that they were going to win. I don't recall what kind of polling they were doing. There was polling done by an American company, Greenberg and Latham. They did polling which showed them, they thought, that the Sandinistas were going to win. The Sandinista polling, such as it was, undoubtedly showed them the same things. Nicaraguans were not about to confide either in pollsters who were clearly affiliated with the Sandinistas or with Americans, outsiders. They were not about to confide in them how they were really going to vote.

Q: I think this is something we have found in various places where we have had these elections at a time of great stress, is the remarkably high turnout even under gunfire people have turned out.

LEONARD: Well that is true. In Nicaragua there was plenty of rough and tumble campaigning. One day well into the campaign a group came including Mary Matalin, the Republican activist. They came and linked up with a group of observers led by Allen Weinstein, who later became head of the National Archives. He and his organization were observing. They were in a little Nicaraguan town when a terrific brawl broke out. As a Sandinista mob attacked an opposition rally. Mary Matalin was taken aback by the brutality of this attack and by the bravery of the Nicaraguan opposition types and the bravery of Allen Weinstein and his observers who were caught in the middle of a big fight with machetes. It was a real eye opener for that small group of observers about how rough and tumble Nicaraguan politics could be, and how the Sandinista supporters were

not averse to terrorize the opposition. But that became increasingly difficult as more and more foreign observers came in.

Q: Looking at Violetta Chamorro and the people around her, if you thought she was going to win, I mean this is before it actually happened. What sort of government did you think would come out of this?

LEONARD: Well, one that was full of good intentions, but was very short on any kind of experience on how to govern, and would need a great deal of help both moral and financial. Because, after all, Nicaragua had been ruled for the better part of 40 years by the Somoza family, and then after them came the Sandinistas. So, for half a century, moderate democratic minded people had been shut out of any real experience of governing that country. So we knew exactly how difficult it was going to be for very well meaning people to learn how to govern. Of course it was going to be even more difficult because the Sandinistas, we knew, would hand over power only grudgingly and would do everything they could to make life impossible for this new government.

Q: Well did we have the feeling can we get somebody else but Americans to come in and help because Americans are tainted in that sort of thing.

LEONARD: We knew exactly how important it was to have not just the United States but other Latin countries be willing to help Mrs. Chamorro. Fortunately some were willing to help her. Carlos Andres Peres was president of Venezuela at the time, and he was perfectly happy to help Mrs. Chamorro. He helped them during their campaign with money. So they had plenty of help from democratic governments elsewhere in the region. I mentioned Venezuela and Costa Rica specifically because they really were very helpful.

Q: All right, we have reached the elections there. Were you pretty confident that there would be a peaceful turnover?

LEONARD: There were so many foreign observers, so many organizations in the country, that, yes, I was confident of that. I got interviewed by the Today show, the NBC television program, the morning after the elections. One of the questions from the interviewer was precisely that one. Because the Sandinistas had made a lot of noises during the campaign that they were going to win so it seemed Mrs. Chamorro couldn't win. My answer was that this was a lot of campaign talk, and that yes I was confident that the Sandinista government would do its duty and turn over the reins of power to Mrs. Chamorro, because she had won. That indeed is what happened, although very grudgingly, and the Sandinistas did everything they could to undermine her government and make it impossible for her to rule.

Q: How was the embassy organized to watch this turnover? Were we looking at places where there was undermining and pointing it out and trying to get somebody to do something about it?

LEONARD: We didn't have to do that. Mrs. Chamorro's government knew very well what they were facing. We did not have an AID mission. We hadn't had an AID mission in Nicaragua for years. So we had to get that up and running very quickly. We had a good defense attaché office. The Sandinista army, political as it was, many of them liked and respected the U.S. military and wanted to keep contact with them. Many of them were disillusioned with the Soviets and their assistance. In any event the Soviet Union was at that very moment putting itself out of existence. So that was a key factor in our gaining new influence with the Sandinista army. And, in addition, once Mrs. Chamorro came to power, the contra movement shriveled up and went away. So the Sandinista army took great comfort in that.

Q: I mean you didn't have sort of Contras wandering around the countryside beating their chests.

LEONARD: No. the Contras had already been negotiating with the Nicaraguan government for months over what was going to happen with them, over whether or not they would give up their arms, and so the contra movement was already well on the way out.

Q: I mean were there restraints on our getting out and reporting. For one thing we didn't want to appear triumphant and that sort of thing. This is a real problem sometimes.

LEONARD: No, that was not a real problem. Even during the period of the election we were perfectly able to get out and around and report on what was going on. At our embassy there was certainly no air of triumphantism or anything like that.

Q: As this new government was forming were we able to give help? What sort of help were we doing?

LEONARD: Within a month of Mrs. Chamorro taking power, I gave them the first tranche in a very sizable injection of aid in the form of what we called balance of payments support, which in effect is a very large deposit into their treasury that they were free to use in whatever way they thought was most important. So we embarked on a very large economic aid program to them. It was obviously restricted by the fact that this was a government which had very little experience in governing and this was something that takes time. How do you provide assistance to a government that is only learning how to govern. So balance of payments support is certainly one way to help them. We could certainly pay the bills for the imports that the country needed. One of the things that they needed to do most was to get their agriculture sector moving again because it had been badly beaten down by Sandinista mismanagement, by the contra war, and by bad relations between the United States and Nicaragua. They had plenty of people who were good at growing sugar, and cotton, and the things that Nicaragua traditionally grew. What they needed was for the private sector to be given its head and for the agriculture sector of the economy to start exporting to its traditional market which quite frankly was the United States.

Q: Did you find that you or others within the government both in Washington and elsewhere were working on the people who would normally have gotten supplies saying come on in and start doing business with Nicaragua?

LEONARD: There was a lot of effort to do that and to try to re-establish business relationships between American and Nicaraguan companies. We did spend a lot of time trying to help the Nicaraguan private sector. They had a lively private sector. It had long been anti-Sandinista. They were perfectly happy to work with us and to seek out help in trying to put them back in contact with their traditional American markets. So, yes, we did spend time doing that.

Q: I would thing that you had benefited greatly by the fact with the collapse of the Soviet Union it meant that Cuba was certainly in no position to exert any authority at that time. It was really looking for survival.

LEONARD: Well, that is right. The Cubans were much preoccupied with their own survival. The Soviets were on the way out, so, in effect there was only one place that Nicaragua could turn and that was to us.

Q: How did you find the ministry of foreign affairs or whatever it was called, because often in the various contacts this is often one of you might say anti-American group in that this is sort of one place you can show your independence without screwing things up too much.

LEONARD: The Sandinista foreign ministry was headed by a former Maryknoll priest named Miguel d'Escoto. He had his complexes and was extremely difficult to deal with. But also they had a handful of people who were more professional in the sense that instead of launching into ridiculous harangues, you could discuss business with them. This is not to say they were any less devoted Sandinistas or less critical of our policies. So Mrs. Chamorro's government, when they came into power, their foreign ministry at the beginning was quite ineffectual. But over time they seemed to come around a little bit. But a great deal of our business had to be done directly with other parts of her government because the foreign ministry was not up to the task of coordinating foreign policy for awhile.

Q: One more question. This is a Republican administration, and you had sort of your fire breathing Republicans as we always have in every administration out there. Did you find the George Bush administration was having to keep some of its right wing elements under control?

LEONARD: Yes. But when the shift was made from the Reagan administration to the Bush administration, policy toward Nicaragua changed. George Bush did not want to endlessly feud with Congress, and this includes the right wing Republicans in Congress or with the democrats in Congress over our relations with Nicaragua. He wanted that problem settled, and he was willing to abide by a Sandinista victory in a free and fair election if that was what it required. The victory of Mrs. Chamorro was certainly a

welcome surprise. We had plenty of harassment from the diehards on the Republican side who seemed to convince themselves that nothing would change in Nicaragua with Mrs. Chamorro's victory. But the president got that issue under what I would call firm positive control, and Mrs. Chamorro's victory gave him the opportunity to in effect to say, "OK, we will help this new government. We will do whatever we can to support them, but Nicaragua doesn't need anymore to be the subject of partisan political fighting in the United States," which is what he wanted most, and he got it.

Q: Well he was really a deft hand at foreign affairs.

LEONARD: Absolutely. His handling of foreign policy was among the best of any president in that century.

Q: All right the next time we do this we will pick up Suriname.

Today is February 17, 2012. I think we left off you were on your way to Suriname was it?

LEONARD: When I finished up in Nicaragua, this would have been in 1991. I had already been informed they were going to put me up for ambassador to Suriname. It didn't overly thrill me given the relative obscurity of Suriname, but nonetheless you don't turn down an ambassadorial appointment. I went back to Washington because my time in Nicaragua was up. The Assistant Secretary for Latin American, Bernie Aaronson, said, "Jack, I just wanted to let you know Suriname wasn't what we had in mind for you. The Bureau put you up to go to Bolivia. It got as far as the Undersecretary for Management. He had his own guy, so his guy is the name that went over to the White House from the State Department. We had to put you up for Suriname. Suriname was what we thought the bureau would give you if Mrs. Chamorro lost the election." I had actually gone back to Washington several months before that because I had been told that I would have to go up for a confirmation hearing. That was an interesting process in itself. The Bureau had been having trouble getting hearings for its nominees because many Republicans, including Senator Helms who was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, were not happy with the change in our policy towards Nicaragua even though Mrs. Chamorro was elected. When I got back to Washington there was a confirmation hearing. I was told there were three of us going up for a hearing. Myself, and our nominees to go to Guyana and one other country. The person in that case was a nominee called Philip Hughes, a political appointee. Senator Helms had been holding up Hughes and a nominee to go to Guyana, George Jones, because he wasn't happy with Jones. Jones had previously served in Chile and Senator Helms was not pleased with our policy towards the Pinochet government in Chile. George had been DCM there. Hughes had been sitting around for months hoping to get a hearing before the committee and never had one. Then the committee told the department that within a few days there would be a hearing and please send up Leonard and Jones and Hughes. When I got to Washington these two were all excited because they had been waiting a long time for this hearing. I hadn't been waiting at all. We got there on the duly appointed hour in the hearing room of the Foreign Relations Committee. We sat around for awhile waiting to begin. Finally in came Senator Helms and Senator Dodd who was the ranking Democrat on the committee. Senator

Helms called the proceedings to order. He swore us all in and then he proceeded to ask me half a dozen questions, almost all about my experience in Nicaragua. The whole matter took about half an hour at which point he gaveled the proceedings closed. That was that. Poor Hughes and George Jones never got a word in edgewise. They had never been asked a question. And the committee then later let the Department know OK for Leonard but not for Hughes and Jones. They still had to wait. By that time I was already back in Nicaragua wrapping things up and getting ready to leave. Poor Jones and Hughes did ultimately get hearings several months later but they were forced to cool their heels waiting and waiting. Meanwhile I went on to Suriname.

A word of background about Suriname. It became a Dutch colony in the18th century after one of the endless European wars, this one involving the UK and Holland, as a settlement of the war in one of the treaties. Suriname which had been a British Colony became a Dutch colony. The Dutch ceded holdings to the UK, in this case the island of Manhattan, and part of the colony outside of Manhattan. So Manhattan and the Manhattan colony became British and Suriname became Dutch. At the time probably the Dutch thought they had gotten the better of it because Suriname, or what then became Dutch Guyana, was a sugar colony. Very profitable for the European mother country. The whole history of Suriname from the time of its European settlement up until the 20th century was a history of the Dutch bringing in labor to work the sugar plantations. First it was black slaves from Africa. They were emancipated in 1865, and the Dutch brought in indentured servants. They hired people from India who were brought to Suriname on contracts and worked on the plantations for a specified number of years. Virtually every single one of them, once their contract was up, fled the plantations and became merchants and small farmers on their own. When those contracts were up, the Dutch authorities hired people to come to Suriname from the island of Java in the East Indies. So the ethnic makeup of Suriname was very interesting. About 40% to 45% of the ethnic makeup when I was there were descendents of the African slaves. This group dominated the civil service and the small farmers. About another 40% were from East India. They dominated the Surinamese economy. About 10% or so were people from Java. They were mostly small farmers. The rest was a very eclectic mix of a handful of native American people, Chinese, and a handful of Dutch who stayed on in the colony. So it was a fascinating place ethnically. In the 1970's there came to power in Holland a socialist government which found the notion of having colonies a huge embarrassment. They sought to divest the Netherlands of its remaining colonies which were few in number, Suriname being the largest. Their holdings included the islands of Curacao and Aruba in the Caribbean. They tried to persuade these places to become independent. Suriname already had a great measure of local autonomy. It had its own parliament. Foreign affairs and security matters were handled by the Dutch in The Hague, but Dutch Guyana had a great deal of local autonomy. It was well known that if there were a plebiscite for the people of Dutch Guyana that independence would probably fail. So the Dutch decided there would not be a plebiscite on independence but instead they would leave it to the little local parliament to decide whether or not the country would become independent. The Dutch government had already made it clear that it favored independence. In Suriname public opinion divided along ethnic lines. Almost every member of the black community wanted independence. Virtually every member of the Indian community wanted to remain a

Dutch colony and the Javanese were kind of all over the map as were the other very small ethnic groups in Suriname. In the end in the parliament, the vote for independence was won by one vote.

Q: Ouch!

LEONARD: The story which was told numerous times in Suriname, I can't swear that it is true but it was certainly well believed by most, was that this one vote was that of an Indian parliamentarian, an Indian member of the local parliament, who was bribed and voted for independence. So that was how Suriname became independent. This was in about 1975. The Dutch were prepared to be very generous with Suriname. It was a prosperous colony and on paper at least showed every prospect of continuing to be a prosperous independent country because it had the great advantage of having a well developed aluminum industry. There were bauxite mines in Suriname, plenty of them. They produced a high grade quality bauxite. There were smelters to produce what is called alumina which is the first step on the way to making aluminum. And in addition a fair amount of finished aluminum was produced in Suriname. All of this was controlled by two companies, Alcoa and a large company called Billiton. Although there were always wide variations in prices of bauxite and alumina and aluminum itself, depending on the condition of the world market, this was a very prosperous industry. So on paper at least the newly independent Suriname should probably be able to do quite well. Unfortunately the Surinamese went to the Dutch with one particular request as independence was approaching. That request was that the Dutch help them establish a Surinamese army. Well you might ask, what on earth would Suriname need with an army. I don't know how much thought anybody gave to that. Suriname had its own police force, a colonial police force that would become the police force of the newly independent country. Certainly there weren't any particular enemies to Suriname they could hope to do much against in the event of a war which seemed then and seems still today to be so unlikely as to be almost unthinkable. Who would go to war with Suriname? The Surinamese insisted that they wanted an army. I have always felt that what they really wanted was to have an army which could be brought out to go and march down the street for parades on independence day every year. If they really were concerned about security matters then an expanded police force or territorial police force, something along the lines of what Costa Rica has, would have done just fine. But the Dutch were anxious to see independence quickly so they agreed to help them set up an army. What they did was go around to members of the Dutch armed forces, who were of Surinamese descent, of whom there were quite a few, although none were officers. They went to these guys and canvassed them and said, "Look, anybody who would be willing got go back and became the basic cadre of a new Surinamese army, we will help to set up the army, we will help equip it. We will support your pay allowances in this new army and so forth." So they were able to attract a fair number of Surinamese non-commissioned officers to serve in this new army, to leave the Dutch Army and become the officer cadre of this new army. Among those who agreed to this was Dési Bouterse. The new government in Suriname didn't pay much attention to its new little army. It didn't have much for them to do. It pretty much ignored the army because I think what they pretty much wanted was the ceremonial force to march up and down the street. So

within five years the inevitable happened. There was a dispute between the army and the Surinamese government over pay and conditions. So the army staged a coup d'etat, overthrew the government and sent them packing. This was in the early 1980's. I say the inevitable happened because in my experience in the Foreign Service, I have always felt that rule number one, especially in a small country, of having an army is you better pay attention to them and you better take good care of them, lest they turn their guns on you. This little fledgling government in Suriname did not do that.

The Dutch government and the U.S. government and a lot of others were displeased in the extreme at this turn of events in Suriname. We and the Dutch put a great deal of pressure on this military junta to cede power and allow a return to civilian government. They ultimately did so, but not before there had been a number of unpleasant happenings in Suriname, among which was the murder of a number of politicians who had been imprisoned by the military when they seized power. Those murders sent a real chill of fear through the hearts of many of the Surinamese politicians. Bouterse, who installed himself as the head of the junta, was widely blamed for these killings, although they do remain somewhat murky. I don't think anybody has ever been able to get all the particulars about how these killings came about and who was ultimately responsible for them. But Bouterse was certainly up to his neck in the midst of it all. The army ceded power and things continued apace in Suriname. The economy unfortunately deteriorated as Surinamese politicians found it impossible to maintain any kind of fiscal discipline. About a month or even less before I was to arrive in Suriname, a second coup d'etat occurred again fomented by the same people in the Surinamese military, let by Bouterse. This was a bloodless coup. It was often referred to in Suriname as the telephone coup. Bouterse, who was no longer head of the army, who had retired, still maintained control over the army through his military friends. Bouterse once again became unhappy with the performance of the civilian government. He picked up the telephone one day, called up the president and in effect said you are out! That was all it took for the president and his cabinet to resign from office and to cede power to a bunch of politicians who were all loyal to Bouterse and were members of a political party that he had founded.

To show our displeasure with this event, my arrival in Suriname was delayed. Bouterse's people took over control of the government. When I arrived, there was a façade of civilian government, but it was totally beholden to Bouterse although he had no official role in it. So I was told to do everything I could to try and help bring about a return to civilian government. The Dutch suspended aid to Suriname. We had a very small AID program. It didn't amount to much, but we did the same. We were also speechifying in the Organization of American States and generally trying to help raise opposition to this illegally installed government.

Q: Did we have any feel for sort of the position the government had because this still was this leftist? Was this Rightist, what was it?

LEONARD: No, this was a government which aligned itself whichever way Bouterse wanted. Bouterse had flirted for a time in his first period in office in the 80's with a lot of left wing rhetoric. But he was basically an opportunist, somebody who was out to make

money. While he was out of office in the 80's word came that he was starting to get involved in narcotics trafficking. By the time of the telephone coup there was a whole lot of information suggesting that he was indeed deeply involved in narcotics trafficking. So the ideology really was a minor factor. He was much more an opportunist who would occasionally unburden himself of left wing rhetoric, but whose real interest was in power for himself and in making money. A major concern was that Suriname was a glaring exception to the general trend toward democratically elected governments in the area that the Bush Administration was very proud of and wanted to see continue. Even in as small a country as Suriname it was disturbing to us to see this kind of backsliding. Because as inefficient and incompetent as the civilian government has been it at least had been elected freely and was a legitimate government whereas Bouterse was simply an adventurer.

Q: I have interviewed somebody who was a very much earlier ambassador to Suriname, who said that at one point when Cuba was flexing its muscles around in the area, we were concerned about Cuban influence and sort of a military team had come down and looked around to see what it would take to take over the country if the need came. It didn't happen but it showed some of our thinking at that time.

LEONARD: You have to remember at the time of Bouterse's first coup the Soviet Union still existed, and there were considerable worries about Cuban influence in Suriname because Bouterse and a lot of the people around him spouted a lot of left wing rhetoric. By the time of Bouterse's telephone coup the Soviet Union was on the verge of collapse, so there was a great deal less worry about the kinds of things which you are describing.

Q: But we have maintained relations all along.

LEONARD: Yes. We did not break off diplomatic relations with them. We treated with the government in power although not with Bouterse. The Dutch were the real power because of the aid money they held over the government's head. We had to deal with these fellows because they were in power. We did not break off relations. We simply did not recognize this new government as being the legitimate one even though we of course had to deal with it. We drew a distinction between having to deal with them and having to deal with Bouterse. My policy was from the day I arrived I did not want to deal with him. I would not talk with him or treat with him in any way, simply because I did not want to do anything that would legitimize him. Particularly because of the increasing information about his involvement in narcotics trafficking.

Q: Well as ambassador you come and you present your credentials as chief diplomat. How did all this work?

LEONARD: I had to present my credentials to the chief of state even though we didn't recognize him as legitimate. This was simply a detail we chose to gloss over.

Q: It must have been kind of awkward for you.

LEONARD: Not really. I was used to dealing in awkward situations. I mean I had been in Nicaragua where I had to deal with a government that we were waging a proxy war against. So I didn't find anything at all unusual about it.

Q: Did you have a reputation for being able to deal in ambiguous circumstances?

LEONARD: Well I don't know if I did or not but as it turned out my experiences in Nicaragua were good training for what I wound up dealing with in Suriname. So there you have it. I don't know whether I had that reputation or not.

Q: Well let's take a couple of things. One what were American interests in Suriname?

LEONARD: On the political side was the concern that Suriname had fallen victim to an illegal seizure of power. The Bush administration and before that the Reagan administration had worked diligently to encourage the rise of Democratic regimes in Latin America. When Reagan was in power a great many regimes were under control of the military. To his credit Reagan set out to change that, and had considerable success as did George Bush in changing that situation and fostering the rise of more democratically elected governments in Latin America. Even though Suriname was unique in many ways in Latin America, a Dutch colony as opposed to a Spanish one, language differences, its unique ethnic makeup and whole history, still there was concern about any backsliding anywhere in Latin America away from democratically elected governments. Secondly we were concerned economically about the well being particularly of Alcoa which was the larger of the two aluminum companies in Suriname. Billiton was a Dutch or English company. We certainly did not want to see any threat to Alcoa's operations and we did not want a government in power which would even flirt with the idea of expropriating Alcoa. So there was that kind of hovering in the background. Those were our two paramount interests in Suriname.

Q: Did the OAS play any role in there?

LEONARD: Not a large one, but there was indeed condemnation, and we pushed the OAS for a condemnation of this illegal seizure of power in Suriname. We also brought that up at the UN. The idea was to convince this government in Suriname, which was basically installed by the former military dictator, that the world community was watching them, was against them, and very much wanted to see a return to real civilian rule in Suriname through new elections. That was our tried and true formula. New elections under international supervision. The OAS did play a relatively small role. The bulk of the pressure on this government in Suriname had to come from us because we were of course the big dog in the pound, and from the Dutch because they had control over very sizable economic assistance funds for Suriname. These had been increasingly important because the Surinamese had mismanaged their economy very badly and the country was starting to suffer from very serious inflation. The Dutch were in a position to make a real difference in Suriname. Of course they were not prepared to provide aid, except the humanitarian kind, to this illegitimate government in Suriname.

Q: OK, now when did you arrive there?

LEONARD: Let's see, It would have been 1991.

Q: And when did you leave?

LEONARD: 1994. I was there for three years.

Q: What were you up to?

LEONARD: My marching orders from Washington were to work with the Dutch to bring about a return to legitimate civilian rule in Suriname. The Dutch did this by withholding the bulk of their aid funds to Suriname. We lent our weight by trying to bring pressure against Suriname in international bodies such as the UN, the OAS, by publicizing the illegitimacy of the de facto government in Suriname. Both of us did this by going in and jawboning the leaders of this de facto government and telling them that they had to cede power. We went around very visibly, very publicly trying to encourage both public opinion in Suriname and the legitimate political parties, those who had their representatives ousted, to join us in demanding a return to legitimate rule. This was often difficult because the former dictator Bouterse, the real power behind the de facto government, was in may ways like a town bully in a little town in the wild west in the United States. People were very much afraid of him because of the killings that occurred when he was head of his military junta and because of his reputation as a very ruthless man who would certainly not stop at killing people if that were seen to be to his advantage. It took a great deal of our trying to reassure these politicians that it really in the end was up to them to step forward and demand the return of civilian rule in Suriname. It took the better part of a year to bring about that transition but ultimately it was agreed. As I recall it was agreed that the de facto government would agree to new elections in Suriname.

Q: Well OK here you are, in the first place why did they accept you? What was in it for the people who had powers of control to have the American ambassador screwing things up for them?

LEONARD: Well perhaps they thought I wouldn't screw things up for them. Perhaps they thought they would ingratiate themselves with me. Perhaps they were afraid that any refusal by them to accept me as the American ambassador would result in more serious pressure from us against them. I can't speak to the whole range of calculations that went through their minds, but I think they understood that refusing to accept an American ambassador would not be a wise move on their part.

Q: Go back to the American side. I mean this is not a normal assignment saying OK it is Suriname or something. They sent somebody who is known as being hard nosed and dealing with difficult situations. I mean there was a task to be done.

LEONARD: Right. On our side we had not anticipated the telephone coup. Indeed I had been confirmed as ambassador before it happened. It serendipitously turned out I was probably as well qualified as anybody to deal with this unusual situation of having a government which had seized power and illegally ejected the legal government. This wasn't something that struck me as being a strange situation but rather as a challenge. Here was another problematic small country that had gotten itself into a huge mess and with some luck and some smoke and mirrors maybe we can help them find their way out of this mess one way or another.

Q: Well did you see any other country or element in other countries wanting to profit by this? Well again I am thinking of Cuba.

LEONARD: The Cubans by that time were focused on their own survival. They didn't have time to offer any kind of aid or comfort to this government in Suriname and neither did the Soviets of course who were in the process of collapsing. They were alone.

Q: Venezuela of course, this is way before Chavez and all.

LEONARD: Long before Hugo Chavez. So they were alone and that probably played a role in their sudden realization that perhaps it might be just as well to cede power back to a legitimate government because they had no one to turn to. They tried to ingratiate themselves with the government of Brazil. The Brazilians are notoriously reluctant to get involved in the affairs of other countries, but certainly the Brazilians were in no position to offer them any great comfort. The Brazilian attitude at that time was: we can be comfortable with any kind of government in Suriname and we aren't going to raise a fuss over this usurpation of power, but on the other hand if other countries want to make an issue over it, we are not going to make a fuss over that either. So this de facto government in Suriname really had nowhere to go.

Q: Did the French have any influence or anything like that?

LEONARD: The French, of course, being right next door in French Guiana, they were always quite interested in what was going on in Suriname but they didn't feel any great concern over matters. They were never going to be as active as we or the Dutch were in trying to bring about a return to legitimate government. Their main concern was their own hard little piece of France there in French Guiana. Their calculation was whoever is running Suriname is not going to pose much of a threat to us; they were quite relaxed. On the surface they would occasionally join in the criticism of the illegal seizure of power in Suriname. It wasn't something they were going to make an issue of.

Q: Now you had that vast hinterland in Brazil and all. Did that, I mean did anything sort of come through the borders or go out of there. you mentioned drugs. How did this work?

LEONARD: The only thing that went across that very isolated border were Brazilian gold miners. They would filter across the border into the hinterlands of Suriname and pan for gold in some of the rivers in the jungle. That was the only activity in that part of the

jungle. There was no road from Suriname into Brazil. I traveled into the hinterlands of Suriname a number of times and believe me there was very little out there.

Q: Were there indigenous people in the area, or were they, how were they treated?

LEONARD: There were a very few Amer-Indians left in Suriname. Their numbers were literally in the thousands and not the tens of thousands. There was one group in the hinterlands that was very interesting to me. These were the so called bush negroes. They were the descendants of African slaves who had escaped from plantations in Dutch Guyana and fled into the jungle and had managed to evade recapture. What they did was to set up villages and recreated their old life in Africa. In the 20th century many anthropologists in Holland became very interested in these people who had managed to recreate and preserve their traditional way of life deep in the jungles of Suriname. They were darlings of the Dutch government which felt very protective about them and took pains to support them and provide them with economic support so they could maintain their traditional way of life in the jungles of Suriname. This was not a large population, 20,000 or 30.000 people at most, but they were fascinating. They had managed to recreate and preserve their traditional way of life in Suriname. It was fascinating. They would welcome visitors. You had to fly in. That was the only practical way. You could go in up the rivers but that took forever. You could fly into one or more of their villages, and they were happy to have a small number of visitors come in and they would explain their traditions and their way of life.

Q: Did we have a Peace Corps there?

LEONARD: We had no Peace Corps while I was there. We were always on the lookout for opportunities to get the Peace Corps in again. As I recall they had been in Suriname for a time, but after the first coup d'etat in the 80's they had left.

Q: What were you and your embassy doing during those three years?

LEONARD: My first year was almost entirely taken up with working with the Dutch embassy to bring about a return of civilian rule. That involved endless jawboning with the de facto government and endless trying to prop up and reinvigorate the figures in the government which had been overthrown, and to persuade them that they had to become more active in demanding a return to civilian government. I had a very small embassy. I had a number two who was the DCM. He was basically also our economic officer. He did all of the usual stuff. He had a junior officer to help him to do the mandatory reporting on Suriname's economy. Basically following the aluminum industry. I had a one person consular section and an administrative officer who also served as the GSO. I had a miniscule station as well. They proved useful in many ways which I can generally refer to. It was a very small embassy. The consular section didn't have a tremendous amount of work. We had the usual visa work. We would occasionally have to deal with was an American who washed up who was running away from the French Foreign Legion. The French Foreign Legion had a detachment in French Guiana. Once or twice a year we might get a deserter from the Foreign Legion who managed to get across the river that

formed the border between Suriname and French Guiana and would show up at our embassy seeking repatriation back to the United States. We usually tried to do whatever we could to help these guys when those occasions, arose. We also had one military attaché, army, who was resident in Suriname. He proved to be absolutely invaluable. He was an American Lt. Colonel who was of Dutch extraction so he spoke fluent Dutch. He had been born in what is now Indonesia when it was still a Dutch colony, before it got independence in the early 1950's. He spoke fluent Dutch. He was army so he proved invaluable in our efforts to reach out and influence this little Surinamese army and help the legitimate government, once it was restored, to help them get control over their old armed forces. Those armed forces were still very much under the thumb of the former dictator.

Q: We will put here various incidents that happened during the time you were there.

LEONARD: Talk about the return to civilian rule and the struggles of the civilian government to try and get control in particular over its own security forces.

Note: This interview was not completed prior to Ambassador Leonard's death.

End of interview