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AFGHANISTAN

AMBASSADOR PATRICIA HASLACH
Department of State
Director
Office for Afghanistan
Washington, D.C.
(2002–2004)

Born in 1956, Ambassador Patricia Marie Haslach is a former American diplomat. Throughout her career, Ambassador Haslach worked on trade and development and stabilization, serving in numerous countries undergoing transitional periods. She began her work in government as regional Agricultural Attaché in India from 1987 to 1990 under the Department of Agriculture. While at the State Department, Ambassador Haslach served as Ambassador to Ethiopia and Laos and to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. She oversaw all diplomatic aspects of the U.S. transition from military to civilian operations in Iraq until December 2011. She retired in 2017 as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs. Ambassador Patricia Haslach was interviewed by Robin Matthewman in 2022.

Topical Focus - Emergency Loya Jirga

Q: Okay. And they immediately asked you to work on the Afghan desk?

HASLACH:...It was originally set up as the Office for Afghanistan Reconstruction, and it covered just those aspects of the job…Later, Jerry Feierstein came in as the director. Jerry and I would meet each morning with David Johnson, the coordinator, to make sure that our two offices were in sync, and we were working together on cross-cutting issues, for example, on the loya jirga. About a year later, the two offices were combined, and Jerry left for Lebanon. At that point, the Office of the Afghanistan Reconstruction became the Office of Afghanistan. It changed later into AFPAK, Afghanistan-Pakistan. It was initially a separate operation.

Q: Okay. And so, let's talk about the context then. So, you already started with who the leaders were, but you were focused on reconstruction.

HASLACH: Yes.

Q: And so, what was going on on the money front and on the planning? What kinds of reconstruction did we have in mind?

HASLACH: Well, it was everything. We were managing billions of dollars over the course of our time there. The money was used to establish the joint military and civilian Provincial Reconstruction Teams, to support the constitutional loya jirga, to help set up a democratic system of governance, and to provide human rights protections for minorities and women and for people that were practicing different religions. The funds were also used for the Ring Road project. This was a very important project because the road was going to connect people from rural areas to each other and to the central government in Kabul.

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Q: But you were involved, in addition to the recruiting, you were involved in a lot of the discussions on how to get the funding?

HASLACH: Yes. You can imagine we were involved with so many different aspects of the funding process. We were under a lot of pressure to produce. In retrospect, I think we moved too fast, we were too Kabul-centric, and we weren't very choosy in selecting members of the government. We didn't have any ground knowledge because our embassy had been closed for years. As a result, we did not meet local people or business contacts. By not getting out into the rural areas, there was a tendency to focus on the capital.

We knew President Karzai from his time in Pakistan. I met him when he came to the embassy for political discussions. We had a roundtable with Karzai and other potential leaders. We also met Hamad Gilani and Ashraf Ghani. None of them were on the ground in Afghanistan. It became apparent that maybe that's not the best approach. I was reading somewhere, I think it was General McChrystal who said we should have waited a year to start the reconstruction and taken the time to develop knowledge on the ground.

Q: Well, that brings us to the fact that there really wasn't a government in place to rely on.

HASLACH: Right.

Q: So, let's start with the political situation. In December, before you left, there was a meeting in Bonn.

HASLACH: It resulted in the Bonn Agreement, which created the interim administration. Ambassador Dobbins' oral history really covered that well. Thank you for sending that to me.

We worked on the constitutional loya jirga that was held from June 11 to 19, 2002, to elect a transitional administration. That was one of the things that came out of the Bonn conference. There was jockeying for power.

Q: Could you just describe what the emergency loya jirga was and what loya jirga means and why it's important in Afghanistan?

HASLACH: A loya jirga is a traditional gathering of tribal leaders and elders. But there were flaws with it, such as no women or minority participation. In retrospect, it was not perfect and we should not have stopped there. I was glad to see women involved in the latest round of peace negotiations [in Qatar], although you can see how ineffective that was when none of their interests were taken into consideration.

Q: Okay. So, in Bonn in December 2001, Karzai had been selected for a six-month interim government, and then this loya jirga in June of 2002, it set out a roadmap for what was going to happen next to create the new government and a new constitution, is that right?

HASLACH: Yes. It's important to remember the parameters of our assistance and who was responsible for what in the interagency. The overall policy guidance came from the White House. The meetings were led at the NSC [National Security Council] by Steve Hadley. The coordinator would always go to the meetings. I was there on the sidelines. We were responsible for implementing the plan that the interagency agreed upon. The Department of Defence and the Central Intelligence Agency were all present in those meetings. Our office was responsible for helping to staff the new embassy and establish an interagency office at State. It did not work that well because people wanted to spend more time in their own offices. There was also an over-reliance on models such as PERT charts, which are performance evaluation and review techniques. They were used to measure progress on a timeline in all the areas of engagement, the army, the police, the judiciary, education, health, and every aspect of it. We spent a lot of time in the PCs and the DCs at the White House, discussing whether a particular line of effort was red, yellow, or green. I would caution against relying too heavily on models.

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Q: Okay. And then, in terms of the process of writing the constitution, was the embassy involved?

HASLACH: Yes. We influenced the Constitution. There were interagency teams working on drafts, mainly from the legal departments at State and DOJ. There was a lot of back and forth.

Q: This was part of our assistance.

HASLACH: Yes.

Q: And so, a large part of it was involved in that.

HASLACH: Yes.

Q: And from your perspective, was that going well?

HASLACH: Yes, initially. Everything was going relatively well. It was only a matter of time before the cracks appeared. We were focusing on so many things—education for girls and women, health, and sanitation. There was so much that needed to be done.

GEORGE CARNER
USAID Program Officer
Kabul, Afghanistan
(1976-1979)

Mr. Carner was born in New York. He spent his childhood in Los Angeles and attended high school in Barcelona, Spain. He received his Bachelor's from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and spent a year in Paris before pursuing his Master's at George Washington University. He joined USAID in 1971 as an International Development intern and worked in various positions in Morocco, Sudan, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Tunisia, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Washington D.C. George Carner was interviewed by John Pielemeier in 2018.
Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Topical Focus - Political and Societal Tensions in Afghanistan During Communist Takeover

CARNER: The Afghan Government was at that point headed by Prime Minister Daoud who had overthrown King Sair Shah, who was in exile in Rome. Daoud was running the show with his various ministers. In Afghanistan the Kabul government handled monetary and fiscal policy, foreign policy, defense and security but didn't have much authority over local affairs in the countryside. There, the local khans were in charge. There was a very strong patron-client relationship. I say this because it helps to understand Afghanistan. Basically, there was an entente; the central government came to the villagers and said, "We need so many men for the army and so much for taxes." The khans made sure they got that; the central government appointed some local governors, but governance was very much in local tribal hands through tribal councils. Once the central government had its tithe – it's taxes and recruits for the army – the local authorities were free to dispense justice, deal with local affairs, and settle things in very traditional ways.

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Q: George, tell us a little bit about the status of the Afghan Government at that point and its relationship to the United States.

CARNER: At this point, we were close. The Soviets had no influence in Afghanistan. Daoud was very Western-oriented. From the King's days Afghanistan had close relations with both France and Germany. There was a French "lycée" (high school) that had French staff and a quality program that the more affluent Afghans sent their kids to, with a view to ultimately going on to study abroad. Usually in Europe, because it was closer, but they did study at the University of Nebraska which had a participant training program for Afghans. Until April 1978 you had a pretty common government set-up with ministries and basically a good relationship with Western countries, no particular influence either from the Chinese (who were more worried about their own development) nor the Soviets who had their own Central Asian republics as buffers. India was of course nearby with whom it had relations; I think Afghanistan had always been leerier of Pakistan than India, despite the fact they were of the same faith. In its foreign policy Afghanistan was a member of the Non-aligned bloc, as I recall.

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CARNER: While I was in Washington attending DSP, a Communist coup backed by the military took place and overthrew Daoud. They succeeded by mobilizing tanks and taking out the radio station and attacking the palace, by killing Daoud, and installing a Communist group called the Halki Party. At their head was Nur Muhammad Taraki --the figure head, but his general was Hafizullah Amin. The two of them set up a government that was very much Communist in orientation having been trained by the soviets. By then, we had a superb ambassador with Soviet experience, Ambassador Adolph Dubs (better known as Spike Dubs). The new government informed us, "We want to put the AID program on hold. We want to examine everything; we don't trust the West." So for several months the USAID mission was almost incommunicado because we couldn't get the time of day from any of the new ministers.

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CARNER: It didn't take long before these khans were mobilizing the countryside against the government in Kabul as heathen, as Soviet puppets, and as crazy, trying to change traditional life. So the insurrection began. It began slowly, but by the fall of 1978 you had a significant insurrection going on.

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CARNER: For the mujahidin, they just wanted to get some leverage to get some of their freedom fighters released. Instead, what they achieved was tremendous international attention and a polarization of the political situation between Western countries and the Soviet-leaning Afghan government.

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Q: Was there any religious animosity building at that point? CARNER: No. The Afghans were quite devout. At that point I don't think you could have called them

fundamentalists. They certainly were not anti-American. We knew a lot of the rug merchants and there was a street where foreigners used to go called Chicken Bazaar Street; there were little shops where you could buy nuts, fruit and handicrafts. It was a little less hectic than going into the real Afghan market, though my wife and Cathy Crandall went in there virtually every week unconcerned. They dressed appropriately, they wore hats and sleeves and were respectful. They never had any problem buying meat or vegetables.

After the Communist Government took over, we continued on Saturdays to go strolling through the modern part of Kabul. After our Ambassador was killed, merchants we knew would wave and say "Come on in! How about some tea?" They'd sit us down and serve tea and after the ritual of how's the family, what do you want to buy, then they'd say: "Let's get down to business; when are you guys coming to get rid of these bastards?"

The Afghans have a saying – "Vengeance is sweet after 100 years." Many of the Afghans had family in the 'stans'(i.e. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, et al) when the Soviets took over. As a result their families were uprooted and, in many cases, killed. Their descendants still kept track of which grandfather the Soviets had done in. In fact, one of those merchants showed me a rifle he had inherited, a British musket from the Anglo-Afghan wars with notches on it. He proudly announced: "This was my great-grand-dad's; I inherited it and I want to put more notches on because he suffered at the hands of the Soviets."

The Afghans at this juncture were totally anti-Soviet as being ungodly; here is where the religious aspect came in. To mobilize the insurrection, the imams and the mullahs issued a holy war edict against the Soviets. A lot of Soviet civilians were killed. I'm reminded of one case in Herat fairly early on before the Soviet build-up where a bunch of Mujahidin went into a compound where a lot of Russian civilians were housed and butchered them. The Soviets were the target, and Americans were at this point seen as friendlies – and there were high expectations that we would help them in their fight against the Soviets.

WILLIAM HAMMINK
USAID
Mission Director
Kabul, Afghanistan
(2013-2015)

William Hammink studied at the University of Minnesota for both his undergraduate and masters' degrees before entering USAID as an International Development Intern in 1981.
He served in many different positions in several countries, including Swaziland, Senegal, Madagascar, the West Bank and Gaza, Ethiopia, Sudan, and India.
He was interviewed by John Pielemeier in February 2018.

Topical Focus - Government to Government Programs in Kabul

HAMMINK: In 2013, I think our biggest challenge had to do with the pull-out plans of the military. By that time, the military was already significantly drawing down troops and assets after the major surge approved several years earlier by President Obama. I think it had got up to about 120,000 troops. And they had to bring it down to some 10,000 troops before 2015, I believe.

There was a huge number of troops leaving. They were closing bases right and left. They were closing PRTs, all of them were closed by 2015. So, you know, you had this huge surge in ’09 and ’10, and then just as fast, you had a de-surge, both on the military side and on the civilian side.

So, USAID had surged up to over 400 American USAID employees, as I said, maybe 450, depending on what you counted. And by the time I left two plus years later in September 2015, we were down to 100. We had gone from 400-plus down to 100 U.S. direct hires. And, as I mentioned, USAID staff had been in some 70-80 bases around the country. As the military pulled out, the civilians also pulled out, because we couldn’t obviously have anybody out there if there were no military assets to protect them or take them around.

When I got to Kabul, I had three-star and two-star flag officers offering to take us around, because we could use military assets and the U.S. military supported our development mission. After my first year there, because the military was in full scale-down mode, they basically told me, “We just don’t have the assets to bring you guys around anymore” So, it was very difficult to go visit projects and to get out to see things and meet with Afghans outside of Kabul, whether it was to talk to them or whether it was to see roads or schools or clinics, and the like.

So, those were some of the challenges. Because our staff members were declining, we had to do more and more remote and multi-sourced monitoring. By early 2015, we were not only down to, as I said, around 100 U.S. direct hire staff, but they were all in Kabul.

We were forced to pull back our staff, including FSN staff, even out of Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. And so, we put in place a very robust, multi-tiered monitoring system, where we tried to get monitoring information daily from different sources. And then we would triangulate the information so that we were comfortable with the data in terms of how our programs were doing, both on the implementation side and in terms of achieving results that we were tracking. And it’s still the situation today that in 2018, all our staff is in Kabul. But they put in place a robust, multi-tiered monitoring system that is continually revised and improved.

Q: And how? Describe that multi-tiered process.

HAMMINK: Sure. So, the tiers— I mean it's changed a little bit. They continued to improve it since I left. But when I was there through September 2015, for example, tier one was where we could get out, mainly in Kabul, and see things ourselves, or around bases where we could get out, where there were still bases. We could fly in, go visit a few places and then fly back to Kabul. So, that was the U.S. government tier. Also, we used some of the pictures that different planes were taking of schools and other infrastructure where we could get that information.

Tier two was where our partners—all our partners through contracts, grants, cooperative agreements had a monitoring and evaluation system that had to be part of the contract. So, we would get information back from them as well in terms of trainings that took place, in terms of visits by their own extension people or in terms of how clinics are doing, for example the number of visits by mothers. Just a whole broad range of different data points.

But we didn't just want to go with that, because we didn't know if we could trust it, because we didn't have any actual USAID employee eyes on all those activities or results like we do in other countries. So, the third tier, for example, was basically trying to get information from the (Afghan) government. Some provinces were better than others in terms of what was happening, what they reported on, and the quality of the reporting.

We'd heard through IDLG— That's the independent organization of the government that was responsible for local governments. We would get the reporting back from that. We also received reporting from the UN and other donors as well. And often, we would get back information on programs that we funded.

The fourth tier was where we reached out to the beneficiaries themselves. And one of the offices came up with a novel idea. Because you had good Internet connections, at least in the towns, the smartphones could basically real-time take pictures of trainings as they were going on, like seminars. And folks in our DG office in Kabul would be watching that to verify, just listening to the conversation and taking notes. That was one example. But also, we did surveys. We did calls to different beneficiaries whom we knew. We would call up local officials that we knew to say, "Did this take place? What do you think? What happened?" So, those were all additional data points.

And then fifth was probably the most expensive but also extremely important. That was independent monitors, where we would hire a firm to send out their own trained monitors to our project sites, whether it was a construction site or training or clinics or anything

else. This type of monitoring wasn't formal evaluations. It was monitoring USAID funded activities and monitoring sites. We used GPS (Global Positioning System) pictures and other latest technologies to ensure they visited those places that they claimed to have visited. And then for each site visited, they had to write a report with date stamped pictures.

So then, our project officers could triangulate these data points, including from implementing partners, independent monitors, and beneficiaries. If it's going on in Kabul, also from our own observation. And so, that's an example of course of the multi-tiered system. We probably knew more of what was going on than we do in other countries, where we might send out a project officer to a town outside the capital once every few months.

Q: Did your program provide program or budget assistance to the Afghans?

HAMMINK: This is in a paper that I wrote when I came back to Washington after my time in Kabul that USIP (United States Institute of Peace) published, so I'd be glad to share it with you.

Q: Yeah.

HAMMINK: But to answer your question, I think it was 2010, at a conference—a political conference on Afghanistan, the U.S. government at the time—and this was supported by President Obama—basically made a commitment to provide 50 percent of our entire development budget for what they call "on budget" programs. President (former President of Afghanistan Hamid) Karzai asked all donors if they could move towards 50 percent on budget.

And for the Government of Afghanistan, "on budget" meant either what we call in USAID government-to-government programs or multi-donor trust funds that also used government systems. There were two multi-donor trust funds that had been set up. One called the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, or ARTF, that was managed by the World Bank. Another multi-donor trust fund was just for infrastructure, and it's managed by ADB (Asian Development Bank).

Q: The Asian Development Bank.

HAMMINK: Correct: the Asian Development Bank. And USAID, since 2004 or so, provided funds to the ARTF. And the government considered that on budget, because the World Bank then used those trust fund funds to support programs that went through government systems.

It was extremely difficult to consider moving to 50 percent on budget with the government that still had very nascent systems. Again, like South Sudan, much of the government was nil, non-existent before the U.S. came back in 2001. And so, it was starting from scratch with a lot of these government institutions, procedures, and staff, and the like. The government systems weren't even close to international standards, especially related to accountability and audit.

And so, our government-to-government programs were very tightly managed. We basically provided funds directly to their treasury if government ministries carried out a certain number of steps towards agreed-upon development objectives. They weren't so much policy steps as they were program implementation steps. We had agreed-upon milestones, like for example, purchasing textbooks through the Ministry of Education. We had benchmarks. And when they met those, we could pay them. So, we could either pay against milestones or benchmarks or we could pay in terms of reimbursement of expenses that the government pays up front for agreed-upon development activities.

The on-budget was tracked closely, and it was very staff-intensive, as you can imagine. Best donor practices in countries includes as much as possible to go through government systems with the idea then it would lead to quicker self-reliance. For us, it made it much harder in USAID at the time. But we did it, because it was a U.S. government political commitment, if you will.

I think now, there may be fewer government-to-government programs, but there are other programs. When I was there, we launched what was called at the time the New Development Partnership, which was a new approach, basically where, because President Ghanī (Mohammad Ashraf Ghanī Ahmadzai) had been elected in 2014 along with Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as the CEO, chief executive officer (Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)—like vice president. But they were true reformers. They supported major reforms. And so, they laid out a reform program, and it was a reform program that the U.S. government could very much get behind. Almost all the government's reforms represented the right actions to take to move the economy, social indicators, justice indicators, democracy, gender.

The Afghan government presented these reforms in big donor conferences in London, first, and then Brussels. And so, the U.S. said, "Wait a second. We think these are the right reforms. We want to help you. We want to incentivize those reforms and help you get these through," whether they're (the Afghan) Parliament or their own bureaucracy.

So, we sat down with them and came up with 40 of those types of reforms and changes.

And we basically said, “We’ll give you $20 million for each of these you carry out.” And some of them were tough. I mean, some of them involved new taxes or new systems to, for example, have customs taxes paid through banks instead of cash. These were important changes but not easy, because there were going to be losers in many of these kinds of changes.

We called this the New Development Partnership. It was basically up to an $800 million incentive program. And if they didn’t carry out these reforms and changes, they didn’t get the money. And they lost out of a lot of money, but they also gained a lot of money. And they used it as leverage with their Parliament and others to try and make sure these reforms were put in place.

I believe the mission is now negotiating—and the embassy of course, with the Ambassador— with the (Afghan) government on a new reform program. The New Development Partnership was viewed as a successful approach and the EU (European Union) basically negotiated its own similar program as did other donors. The ARTF had its own reform program. The IMF had its own reform program. So, we made sure that they were coordinated, so that the government didn’t have to pursue dozens of different reform programs. But they were all linked to the government’s own reform program and agenda.

You and I have been working in development for a long time. In the ‘90s, we saw structural adjustment whereby the World Bank or USAID would come up with a long list of policy changes that we wanted to see, and we’d give them money if they carried out all of the long list of policy reforms. These were dictated from our end. These were from our experts. The difference here is that the reforms we were putting $20 million in for each one, these were their reforms. The (Afghan) government wanted these. So, it wasn’t us telling them what to do. It was us saying, “We agree with these. We’re going to incentivize. And these are so important that we’ll give you $20 million for each one you actually carry out.”

Q: Interesting. You mentioned earlier you weren’t able to travel very much at all.

HAMMINK: Well, interestingly, as I mentioned, I arrived in Kabul in July of 2013. And at the time the U.S. military was in the throes of a major drawdown, in men and materials and bases. But also, the country was undergoing major transition, at the time, moving towards 2014. 2014 was a threshold year in the sense of major security reforms, security changes, whereby the U.S. military and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) were saying to the Afghan security forces, “You’re now responsible. We’re only here to train and assist the mission. You have to do the fighting.” So, that was a major shift.

The other transition was political. There were new presidential elections in 2014 under the (Afghan) constitution, the President could only stay two terms. President Karzai had already been there two terms, so it was a brand-new game. There were many presidential candidates.

So, political transition, security transition, and then economic transition with the billions of dollars that NATO and others spent, especially in these PRTs. Our funding went from $1.8 billion when I got there— I think that was the 2012 appropriation. It went to $850 million the next year. And then it's been steady around that. So, significant changes to the economy too with all the troops leaving and all the money that had been spent in rural areas with PRTs leaving.

Those three major transitions required planning and analysis to figure out how the development community could best support Afghanistan through those transitions. The donors and the government were looking at this in terms of a whole decade of transformation, from 2015 to 2025.

Q: Is that their term or our term?

HAMMINK: I don't know. I suspect it's ours. It sounds a bit like ours. But the World Bank had carried out a significant amount of analytical work on different scenarios—economic growth and the like—from 2014 depending on what happens.

Also, we did good work on the impact of the drawdown and these changes I mentioned on the economy. Frankly, what we saw in '14 and '15 is that I believe the World Bank completely underestimated the impact, and it was much harsher than we all thought it would be, especially on the rural poor and overall GDP (gross domestic product).

Q: You also, as I recall, had auditors on your tail all the time, and there was an office in Kabul?

HAMMINK: Yes, in fact oversight: very important and very expensive, not surprisingly, for our multi-billion-dollar programs. There were four audit organizations. You had the State Department auditors. Well, actually five. DOD (U.S. Department of Defense), GAO (U.S. Government Accounting Office) had an office there. USAID auditors and investigators. And then you had a Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction called SIGAR. And SIGAR was very active. They looked at all reconstruction, not only USAID, but would audit what DOD was doing related to reconstruction, as well as State.

At one point, we did an assessment of how much time the USAID team spent just responding to the auditors, especially SIGAR. A significant number of work days from

my staff were used in responding to requests from auditors and responding to audit findings and/or recommendations. Now, that's just how it is, and we did what we needed to do. And a lot of times, that was useful, because it helped us, as it should. I mean, the *raison d'être* of the auditors should be so that we improve our programs and so that we improve the impact of our taxpayer-funded programs and account for every dollar spent. So yes, there was a lot of oversight from auditors.

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HAMMINK: Correct. I spent November and December of 2015 at USIP. And it was a terrific opportunity. It was the first time in my career, which had been boom-boom-boom-boom for 35 years non-stop, that I took some time to reflect, to think, to read, and to write. And this is this paper I just mentioned that was just published, because when I retired—

Q: What's the name of the paper?

HAMMINK: It's called "USAID in Afghanistan: Challenges and Success". And it's on the USIP website.
https://www.usip.org/publications/2017/12/usaid-afghanistanchallenges-and-successes

Q: Can we link that up to your oral history?

HAMMINK: Yeah, sure. I'll pull the information.

And I was asked by the "Foreign Service Journal" to take that paper -- it's about 10,000 words—and to put it in an article of 2,500 words.

Q: Good, good! So, we can all find it when it's there.

HAMMINK: Hopefully. The article is with the FSJ editorial board now. We'll see what they say.

Q: Well, it probably says what I was going to ask you next: How would you sum up what you learned about USAID in a circumstance like Afghanistan. You were also in Sudan in difficult circumstances. What works best, and what doesn't work well?

HAMMINK: Well, there are many lessons learned. And you'll see in my paper that I have some recommendations. One is, as much as possible, keep to development principles. In Afghanistan, we were pushed as an agency to do things we normally wouldn't do, to go well beyond our comfort zone. I had mentioned that phrase about India. But in Afghanistan, it's even more so, you know, where multi-billion dollar budgets were thrown at us to carry out development and stabilization programs in a war zone. We were told to show development results, as well as to do stabilization with U.S. troops during some of those years. And to show results in a conflict war zone: very difficult charges, right?

And you know, I gave some examples and analyzed what some of the major challenges were. One was this 50 percent on budget political requirement. The other was the major surge. Another was trying to build the capacity of government employees in the Afghan government, when everything was based on patronage.

Q: Oh.

HAMMINK: Early on, we had no support from the (Afghan) government to find and bring in qualified Afghans for these positions. So then, it went to where it was donors—and USAID was just as guilty as others—that supported Afghan technical advisors through projects—time-bound projects-- to do government line functions so that they got done. This was of course a very expensive approach. And instead of building the capacity of civil servants we brought in and paid top-dollar to consultants to carry out key government functions. Because the (Afghan) government systems wouldn't allow the hiring of qualified Afghan civil servants.

Q: Did we end up paying them more than they would've been paid in the Afghan government?

HAMMINK: Oh, yes, much more. I mean, it was nuts. This was before I got there, but at one point, because so many billions of dollars were being thrown at Afghanistan, the salaries of some of the top Afghan consultants were $10,000, $15,000 a month.

Q: Oh!

HAMMINK: Yes, that's crazy. Whereas now, the salaries have come down, but still not to a sustainable level. There's a plan—and you'll see it in my paper—to move beyond that. You'll see one of the recommendations is to, as much as possible, stick to good development principles related to due diligence. USAID needs to be allowed to carry out our due diligence and up-front analytical work.

One of the most important recommendations, I think, is, whether you're sitting across from a four-star general or a presidential envoy, USAID needs to be clear about expectations and risks, what we can achieve and what the risks and costs are. This happened to me and happened to other USAID leaders over the years. And it's hard, because people like the person who worked as the (U.S.) Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mr. (Richard C. A.) Holbrooke, had a mind of his own and told USAID what to do without discussion or analyses. So, whether four-star or whether a presidential or special envoy, or an ambassador, be clear about expectations and risks.

There were times when U.S. political or military leaders would tell you what you were expected to do. On stabilization, we had to move quickly to carry out quick response and quick impact types of stabilization programs, and move money from development programs. However, as part of the U.S. government supporting U.S. national security interests, we would normally salute and do our best.

Q: Sure.

HAMMINK: So you know, all those considerations. The other thing in my paper, you'll see is I talk a lot about stabilization. There's been some good analytical work done by different researchers on the impact of the stabilization programs in Afghanistan. Most of the large USAID stabilization programs happened in 2009, '10,'11 during the major military surge. Most of our stabilization programs were under the counter insurgency, or COIN, approach, related to clear, hold and build, and following the troops, which was extremely dangerous. Because with clear-hold-build: The U.S. military might clear. But they would only hold this if they're there. Then when they left, the bad guys would come back and kill our development workers. That's why we lost a lot of Afghan development workers.

Flexibility is another recommendation. I think that, you know, USAID has its quiver of different approaches, mainly contracts and grants.

Q: Right, right.

HAMMINK: But in places where we work that are conflict zones, typical contracts and grants don't work. And this is why OTI does so well. Because they have an approach that requires flexibility and to be able to move quickly in these kinds of quick-changing situations. Not only on the ground, but in terms of our own security and political objectives, strategic objectives for the U.S. government.

HILDA ARELLANO

United States Agency for International Development [USAID]
Coordinator for Economic Affairs and Development Assistance
Kabul, Afghanistan
(2012-2013)

Ms. Arellano was born and raised in Westfield, New Jersey. She received her Bachelor's at Cornell University and pursued Master's degrees at UT Austin and the Antioch Putney Graduate School of Education. She volunteered in Bolivia before entering the Foreign Service as an education officer in Washington D.C. She worked for USAID in Ecuador and Guatemala and has served as a USAID Mission Director in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Iraq, and Egypt. She has also worked in Hungary, Afghanistan, and Washington D.C. Ms. Arellano was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2016.

Topical Focus - Leadership Tensions in Afghanistan During Development

But everybody working there also knew that this was a moment when they had the attention of the world, particularly after the U.S. was transitioning out of Iraq and moving back into Afghanistan with the resurgence of the Taliban in 2008-2009. I guess everyone knew that the level of attention and money and international presence might not continue for the indefinite future. And the Afghans are smart enough to know, particularly specific people who were in leadership positions at the time, that this take decades to achieve and basically they were building a government, building a society, building a development culture, building an economic culture, and that simply was going to take decades but they might not have that funding and that attention for much longer. So there was very much that urgency. A lot of this was captured in a way a month after I got there. That's when I went to Tokyo for an international donors conference, a seminal event, and a follow-up of sorts to an earlier one that took place in Munich. It was seminal for the very high-level of participation. The secretary of state was there. Many others were there and President Karzai was there, but Afghanistan's presentations were basically led by the minister of finance.

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Q: When you arrived, was most of the country at that point under NATO control or were there key areas that were still considered Taliban and really out of reach?

ARELLANO: There were key areas of continued Taliban influence. They were wellknown. They've been that way for a long time. But for the most part it was trending in the right direction and as a result of that a number of the NATO countries, and this I think has to do with political will on the part of some of these countries, started to pull back and pull out. Spain left ahead of time. France left ahead of schedule. You had these either in response to their internal elections in their countries or other things. But I think part of that was driven by a sense that it also wasn't that necessary for them to be there anymore. They left their assistance programs behind but they removed their troops so there was a trend in that direction. I think at the level of NATO, at the level of NATO leadership, they were less sanguine. They really felt they needed, particularly the

negotiation with the Afghan government and the building of a defense capability that was at the level that would be needed knowing how tenacious the insurgency is.

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Q: And that was because of security?

ARELLANO: And because of roads. The infrastructure just isn't there. But pretty much I got out to everywhere I… I was actually able to travel… I was charged with traveling to a number of the provinces as they transitioned out of NATO, they turned the defense responsibility over to the Afghan Army, and so I was able to go to a number of those events and then remained. That part was very interesting and as I said, that accelerated while I was there. Provinces that were supposed to be transitioned much later were 51 suddenly transitioning so you saw a very interesting challenge and one that both the tribal leaders and the provincial leaders talked about very openly. They said, okay, we're transitioning but don't abandon us kind of thing. In sum, the accelerated, rigid timeline for the troop drawdown coupled with unrealistic expectations on the time it would take for the Afghans to assume full responsibility for governance and security, led to serious tensions with Karzai. And to complicate matters even further, an often unspoken issue for leaders of underdeveloped countries -- the importance of pride and saving face when under public scrutiny -- was seriously underestimated. The results were heightened tensions in the bilateral relationship at a very critical moment.

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And I think there was a real question as to how much the Afghans wanted it and then the election came after I departed but you know Karzai was starting to get extremely difficult to deal with. He was under tremendous pressure from his very own to pull things in a different direction. I think a lot of this had to do with the fact that we were sending signals that we wanted them to step up much more quickly than he knew the country was not capable of stepping up given the incredible level of underdevelopment. I can't stress that enough. So I think all of that built into a very tense relationship. By the time I left that tension was really palpable.

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Q: As you're getting ready to leave, what was the sense of the country that you felt after spending a year there?

ARELLANO: I would say three things. Number one, I think there was a nervousness because Karzai was reaching his end and he had said he was going to call elections so that was the big one. Was he going to leave? Was he going to stay? And so Karzai was the big driver. In some ways it was less about us than it was about the Afghans which is always important for us to realize. Once we say we're leaving a place, we're no longer that important. Once the military drawdown was set, factors such as tribalism and political/geographic strife became increasingly dominant and even more divisive.

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And the third thing I would say was a desire among them which brought a lot of kind of, not conflict but very intense dialogue and discussion, as to how ready they were, particularly… You know they had relied on a high-level of leadership was that usually English-speaking, fairly international, you know the Afghans had had so many people out of the country for so many years, there had been a very large diaspora that had come back and assumed high-level positions. But then how deep did that go? Would people stay? Would things continue? Because so many of those people had their families out of the country. So at the level I was dealing at at that time, those were kind of the three primary… The nervousness about what Karzai was going to do and then would these levels of leadership… Part of that leadership issue, which was the one that I think 56 concerned a lot of us the most, was the fact that they had brought in a very talented group of young people, many of them educated abroad. Most of them financed with international donor money. Their salaries… These were not people who were on the regular salary scale and for Afghanistan. That was becoming a political issue. That you had these very-well paid functionaries who basically had been brought back to run a government. Many of the Afghans saw that as very artificial and something that we all knew, not just them, we all knew was unsustainable over time. So nobody was very sure what that was going to look like. Again, a moment in time that you know, desperate times require desperate measures but was this the right desperate measure? Because you developed a bureaucracy that really depended on people that might not stay, or probably would not stay, were they to earn the normal Afghan salary?

LAWRENCE K. CRANDALL
USAID
Democracy Officer
Kandahar Province, Afghanistan
(1975-1977)

Mr. Crandall was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. He received his Bachelor's and Master's at the University of Colorado. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Guinea and taught at a school before entering the Foreign Service. He worked in various positions for USAID in Vietnam, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Washington D.C., Pakistan, Haiti, and Iraq. Lawrence K. Crandall was interviewed by John Pielemeier in 2017.

Topical Focus - Afghan Political Parties and Leadership

CRANDALL: After the Soviets invaded in late 1979 he had to leave. He went to Peshawar where he joined one of the seven political parties we and the GoP supported,

Hezbi-Islami, which means the party of Islam. Its head, was the infamous Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He became a notorious member of the seven parties we supported because he fought as much against the other parties in Afghanistan as he did against the Soviets. That was always very problematic for the U.S. Government because we were providing arms and ammunition and other things to help. He was quite effective. He certainly wasn't always doing the things we wanted or expected. Dashtagir worked for him as a political advisor and he offered to take me to meet him. I knew that he hated Americans and I knew that he hated to meet with Americans and I knew he didn't want to be in mixed meetings with Americans. I knew all that. Still, Dashtagir was one of his political advisors and I thought if he is a political advisor and he takes me in to see him that should be worth something.

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CRANDALL: To end this long answer to your question about the leaders, until this past year Hekmatyar remained on the outs with both the Afghan and U.S. Governments. He was on our most wanted terrorist lists to the point we tried to kill him twice with drones but missed. I heard Special Forces went after him but they missed too. I guess his age finally caught up with him. He is something and probably tired of living in caves and being chased around. He lied about his willingness to cooperate with the Kabul Government and he was allowed to return to Kabul with some of his armed henchmen with the promise that he would cause no trouble. But as soon as he got back, trouble ensued though he denied involvement The Ashraf Ghani Government put the screws to him. He slowed down but I don't think he stopped. Julia met one of the Presidents.

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CRANDALL: As I said, every three months there would be a new president. They called him the interim president. Once the AIG building was open and I started going there for meetings, I realized the place was not going to function well unless office equipment of various kinds was installed. I asked the President for a wish list which he provided and I added 10% to it and asked my logistics guys to go buy it. When the trucks started showing up with their stuff these guys went nuts. Suddenly they had business machines whirring all over the place and they started feeling proud of themselves.. The functional offices gave them a sense of pride. That is how we began to develop the interim government. Then we started taking CODELs to them and placing stories in the local newspapers saying CODEL this and CODEL that visited or STAFFDEL this and STAFFDEL that visited. Other governments started visiting adding more credibility to the Afghan Interim Government. We created this aura of reality around it even though the ability of the Afghan Interim Government per was limited because the parties were so narrowly defined along tribal and other lines. It was difficult for them to cooperate. The rotating presidency every three months didn't help. We made sure that the Soviets knew about the AIG in Kabul by constantly referring to it.

Q: Was there a Tajik as one of the leaders.

CRANDALL: Yes, there was Rabbani and his more famous commander Ahmed Shaw Massoud He belonged to Rabbani's party. He was a guy that during the war, absolutely refused to come to Pakistan. He was in the north in the Panjshir Valley. So, I knew his representatives in Peshawar who worked with Rabbani but I never knew Masood. He was killed by a two Tunisian al Qaeda operatives They went to the Panjshir posing as newsmen. They had a camera with a bomb in it. They arranged an interview with Masood and they let the bomb off and it killed one of the so-called journalists and badly wounded the other. Massoud was badly wounded and was helicoptered out for treatment but he didn't make it. He was very effective in fighting the Soviets even though he commanded a local force. He didn't have his own party but he acted like he did. French newsmen referred to him as the "lion of the Panjshir". Because Masood had attended the French lycée in Kabul "Lycée Istiqlal" and could speak French, they loved to interview him and travelled to the Panjshir to do so. One of these journalists was also a medical doctor and worked for our program for three years. Extremely competent.

Q: This relationship went on for how long?

CRANDALL: The parties lasted for the duration of the Soviet period from roughly 1980 when the parties started forming in the refugee camps to 1989 and beyond in changing configurations until the Taliban took over in 1993.

Let me give you a bit of history about how these parties were formed. After the Soviets invaded Christmas Eve, 1979 they overturned the government in Kabul that was communist in name but not communist enough for Moscow. The two communist factions were called the Khalqists and the Parchamites. At this point, people started getting scared and began heading for either Pakistan or Iran. They were pouring across the borders in large numbers and the Paks were doing the best they could to organize camps with water, food and shelter. Afghan political parties began springing up in all in these camps. At one point, there were 84 independent political parties. In early 1980, President Carter signed the first national security finding which gave Langley $15 million to start a covert program against the Soviets. This put them in contact the resistance through the parties but it was impossible to deal with 84 of them. ISI, forced the number down to seven. The seven chosen by ISI were the ones the USG cooperated with throughout the War. The Carter "finding" contributed to the reduction in the party numbers.

New, small parties appeared at times but they wouldn't last or would flounder because ISI wouldn't tolerate them. So that is how we got to seven. It wasn't the best of situations but the parties represented a good swath of both Pushtun and non-Pushtun tribes. It was good enough to force the Soviets out with USG and other help with exceptional GoP cooperation. The Soviets agreed to leave because they were over powered politically with the things AID was doing with and through the AIG and because of the successful covert program. As I learned later when I met Soviets in my NIS role, the Soviets never understood the omni-presence and political impact of the cross border program. Of course, a great equalizer was the introduction of the stinger ground to air missile over which there was a long fight between Congress and the DoD to make them available to the Afghans. But that is another story. It is not my subject anyway.

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Q: We didn't open an embassy in Kabul after the Soviets withdrew in 1989?

CRANDALL: It was chaotic. Until '93 there was a titular communist head of government in Kabul. His name was Najibullah. The Afghans called him Najib-i-Gao which means Najib the cow in Dari. He was a big man. The resistance managed to overrun Kabul in 93 and take him from his hideaway in a UN office. They hanged him from a nearby light pole. Pictures of the event were widely circulated in the media. As the Afghans the USG had supported took over the Country they started fighting each other as we had predicted and much of the Country became a war zone. Of course, this gave rise to the Taliban. I don't want to get into the specifics of how the Taliban came to power. Several books have been written on the subject. But after 9/11, it became very clear that that the USG would get seriously involved once again.Two officers I knew in the other agency called to talk.

MARK SILVERMAN
Peace Corps Volunteer
International Development Intern
Afghanistan
(1973-1974)
(1977-1979)

Mr. Silverman was born in Boston, Massachusetts and moved to Los Angeles in his childhood. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1965. He was educated at San Fernando State College and Ohio University. He volunteered for the Peace Corps in Afghanistan before entering the U.S. Foreign Service in 1976. He worked in various positions for USAID in Afghanistan, Egypt, Peru, Washington D.C., Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Mr. Silverman was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus - Development Efforts and Coup D'États

SILVERMAN: We worked for the Ministry of Public Health in Kabul. During our assignment, we experienced our first coup d'état which fortunately was a relatively bloodless coup. The King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, was in Rome for surgery and his cousin, Prince Mohammad Daoud, led the coup and set up the first Republic of Afghanistan with Daoud as its President. Visually Afghanistan was a magnificent place. Flying into Kabul you would see the Hindu Kush Mountain range that on average had a height of roughly 15,000 feet. Many women wore traditional clothing that covered their faces and bodies. People were quite friendly, especially when you were able to speak to them in their language. Afghanistan's history was fascinating, never conquered by any

foreign power. However, it was a society based on family and tribal relationships and there wasn't much of a feeling for a national state or links to national level agencies. It was all about families and relationships between tribes and protection amongst members of the tribes, often led by tribal leaders. The idea of trying to help the Afghans succeed in a national development process was a significant challenge because of cultural issues, the fact that everything was local and trying to promote national level services like health, education, agriculture and transportation to function was really difficult.

Q: Where were you assigned?

SILVERMAN: At the Public Health Institute which was part of the Ministry of Health in Kabul. Q: In Kabul?. SILVERMAN: Yes. Our job was to teach public health doctors, and students hoping to become laboratory technicians, pharmacists and sanitation specialists technical English. In theory this was a good idea since relevant materials available in English were valuable resources for the students but the politics with the Soviet Union in Afghanistan complicated things. We were caught in a kind of sensitive political challenge where the Soviet Union had deep relationships with the GOA, and the government was desperate for resources. In Peace Corps we were trying to help by teaching students a skill that would help them in their careers and by providing the students access to resources and knowledge through published materials that would enhance their own knowledge. Unfortunately, local government decisions were highly politicized, and management skills were in short supply. It wasn't about us as individuals but rather as Americans with limited resources trying to improve student skills while the Soviets and eastern bloc countries provided training resources in country and were also training Afghans in the Soviet Union in many different fields. It turned out to be a complicated Peace Corps experience. The Public health leadership was trained in Soviet and Eastern European approaches and while they agreed to have Peace Corps instructors at the Institute, they provided limited support for our efforts. Even though we taught a full load of classes each week and set up a resource center with technical English materials that were donated from Asia Society for student use, the institute's leadership wouldn't let the students borrow books any of the books or use the center for student benefit, as they were concerned that books might be stolen and the instructors wanted to use the center for meetings. This was rather frustrating to us as it appeared that the management approach was to focus on control of assets rather than let the students benefit from them. Other members of the faculty who taught science classes would often continue their classes into our time slots and we weren't able to get management to adhere to reasonable schedules.

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Q: Let me comment that you are not the first person I have interviewed that had challenges upon entry. On Halloween of 1977 I was supposed to start in three weeks and was informed the program had been canceled. I just point this out because there are many stories of challenging entries into the AID and the IDI program.

SILVERMAN: I believe administration was not a strong point of the USAID Washington personnel system which was confirmed to me many times over during my foreign service

career and after retirement when I carried out multiple short-term assignments for different bureaus. To get ready for the trip to Washington D.C. I filled the back seat and trunk of my Toyota Corolla with our things, and we set off across the country. After several months of general training for the IDI group I learned that I was to go to Afghanistan as an IDI in capital development. By that time, I was working in the Near East bureau on various programs. I hadn't planned to return to Afghanistan, but the Near East Bureau leadership felt that the mission in Kabul could use someone with my skill set, even though the mission went on record requesting an engineer. While being in the middle of a bureaucratic disagreement wasn't what I desired [it wasn't about me personally] I arrived in Kabul in January 1977. I offer an important point. I had a solid knowledge of Afghan Persian which turned out to be helpful in my effectiveness with USAID in Afghanistan.

In my view one of the big issues with USAID has been the lack of language training opportunities, especially in countries where there were difficult languages such as Persian or Pashto, Arabic or Urdu. The State and Defense departments invest significantly more resources in their people to be trained for assignments. In my early years with USAID intensive language training in Spanish and French was offered before assignments to Latin America and West Africa but not to countries with hard languages. It turned out that in Kabul I was one of few USAID officers who could communicate in Persian.

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SILVERMAN: To give you a little background on the conditions in the 1970s, Afghanistan was identified as one of the twenty-five least developed countries by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. A small number of Afghans were literate and in the rural areas the numbers were even smaller. Basic health services were largely unavailable and maternal and infant mortality rates were high. Finally, because of droughts, availability of food was a challenge for many. USAID's small assistance program was focused on helping the people have access to and be able to grow food, promoting education and improving access to very basic health services. When I arrived, Embassy Kabul had a terrific career Ambassador in Ted Elliot who spoke Persian and was quite supportive of USAID's efforts in Afghanistan.

By 1977 USAID Kabul had a relatively large staff compared to its modest program. In my home office of Capital Development and Engineering, for example, we had four U.S. direct hire [USDH] engineers and most of them were placed after the fall of Vietnam. The office chief was an experienced and well liked officer by the name of John Standish who had thirty years of government service and was about to retire. He took me under his wing and shared valuable knowledge and experience, including a welcoming approach to work and a great work/life balance. He encouraged me to take advantage of this time to rotate through the mission offices. I was the youngest USDH officer in the entire mission. Most of the USDH staff were at least twenty years older than me and that situation created challenges. Director Vince Brown left just before my arrival and Fred Sly was the Acting Director. Imagine a mission with 400 staff made up of fifty USDH officers,

twenty third country nationals and a really large number of Afghan staff in a country like Afghanistan.

One of the major local development efforts was to promote irrigation in the Helmand Valley in the south of the country. The U.S. government [USG] had worked in the south of the country for almost forty years investing in roads, dams and electricity projects at a time when USAID was providing low interest loans. USAID also managed a successful program with Kabul University helping develop their engineering faculty which was critical for Afghanistan's future technical workforce.

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The mission had considerable management responsibilities to maintain a large compound that was built many years before. To give you some insight, the USAID compound contained buildings for staff, a cafeteria, a small medical unit, a swimming pool and clay tennis courts, a movie theater where embassy staff and families used our facilities to watch films on the weekends and a large motor pool. The mission had a small fire house with its own fire engine that was used to support local government needs every now and then. Clearly, with a modest program and a large and costly operation, USAID was under the microscope in Washington.

USAID/W's answer to these issues was to bring in a new director and deputy director for Afghanistan. Chuck Grader became the new director, and his deputy was Owen Cylke. Chuck and Owen brought new energy and commitment to the mission. The task Washington gave Chuck Grader was to reduce the USAID presence in Afghanistan by reducing its operating expense needs while looking to see if a new strategy was possible. While change was required, it was not a positive time for the staff to have to deal with reductions in force and retrenchment. It was unclear to me whether Chuck Grader was given instructions for such a large reduction or whether he went beyond the general framework provided by USAID/W.

On top of this painful process, in April of 1978, Afghanistan was rocked by a bloody transformative coup d'etat. Left wing officers in the Afghan military and the left-wing political parties coordinated a bloody overthrow of the Daoud government and murdered him and his family. As I understand it, a leftist leader was killed, and his killing was blamed on the government which served as a rallying cry for the left. Daoud ordered the arrest of certain leftist leaders, and the coup began. The outcome was a left wing government headed by a known communist politician named Nur Mohammad Taraki who was a founding member of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. I believe he once worked for the U.S. Information Agency. He was Chairman of the government's Revolutionary Council from 1978-79 before he was murdered and replaced by another leftist politician.

Soviet influence in the military was significant because many officers in the Afghan military were trained in the Soviet Union. They were sent for a year of language training, and six years of technical training. That background along with a strong set of left-wing

political parties in Afghanistan and unhappiness with the Daoud government created the conditions for a coup and it was a bloody one. My introduction to the coup was as I drove home from carrying out errands, I saw fighter jets speeding across the sky and what looked like missiles flying over the city of Kabul. I thought to myself that this was not a movie set and wondered what in the world was going on? Upon arriving home, I immediately called Post One at the embassy where the marine guard usually worked and Ambassador Elliot answered the phone. That was something that had never happened before. He said to me, "Mark, the embassy is under attack. I suggest you fill up your bathtub with water and cover your windows and hold on." The U.S. Embassy was not far from the presidential palace which was under attack by military fighter planes. In 1978 the embassy didn't have security radios for staff and there was no way to stay apprised of developments, other than listening to our short-wave radios for BBC news or hopping on one's bicycle to try to find out what was happening on the ground. We lived five minutes from the Soviet Embassy in a section of the city called Carte Char.

We placed mattresses in front of the second-floor windows where the bedrooms and den were located. Early the next morning I heard outside noise which sounded like heavy equipment nearby. I crawled to our den window peered out at the compound and street only to see a massive Army tank in front of our compound. All of a sudden, the turret turned towards me, and I was convinced that my short foreign service career was just over! As the tank tried to turn around, it crashed into our compound wall. We later learned that it was in our neighborhood looking for snipers who may have been operating in a nearby mosque but fortunately it only left a hole in our wall. This was an experience I won't ever forget.

Q: Mark, can I make a comment? I have been particularly interested in Afghanistan -- the period up until the coup had been a period of some attempts to establish a more open society. Is that correct or am I wrong?

SILVERMAN: I was not aware of those attempts however in the 1960s under King Zahir Shah, women had a lot of personal freedom and in Kabul many wore western clothing, enjoyed music and worked outside the home. Some described that time as Kabul's golden era when the city was a blend of both modern and traditional. I was told that some women even wore miniskirts! The movement toward a more conservative society was clearly underway in the late 1970s and for that reason the left-wing political philosophy behind the coup didn't mesh well with many Afghan citizens who were rural dwellers, focused on family and tribe and were quite traditional and conservative. The Taraki government flew red banners with socialist slogans over buildings and actually promoted the idea of girls education everywhere, rejecting the tribal and family linkages in Afghan society.

Q: OK, go ahead.

SILVERMAN: The coup was an interruption of great significance to the country, and we have seen what has happened since. USAID had some talented staff who tried but couldn't put programs together that would be approved by both the Government of

Afghanistan [GOA] and by USAID. The Taraki government announced plans to promote food, housing and education but in fact what they really wanted was to do away with the many traditions that existed and promote an urban socialist framework. Urban leftist philosophy did not mesh in a country where ninety percent of the population weren't literate, where poverty levels were high, with limited healthcare services available. Most of the population lived in simple mud houses and relied upon the extended family for food and shelter. I worked on a project designed to promote rural primary education and help with the implementation of a more effective primary healthcare system which was underway. When it came down working with the new GOA we had limited success.

USAID's Assistant Administrator [AA] for the Near East, Joe Wheeler, visited Kabul to test the political waters and when he met with the Minister of Health to talk about our cooperation in the health sector, the Minister's request was that the GOA wanted us to build a hospital in Kabul. The mission had been working on preventive health care initiatives with the Afghans for several years, helping the Ministry of Health develop a model to decentralize basic services, improve the quality of those services and reach a larger number of people in the rural areas. The idea of building a tertiary center with one hundred beds seemed inconsistent with Afghanistan's needs. There was no meeting of the minds.

We tried working with the Ministry of Education to promote rural primary schools where they were needed through school mapping and to improve the overall quality of teaching. I helped design that project working closely with our education staff and the technical staff of the ministry. Many of USAID's staff were experienced and impressive development thought leaders like George Carner (program officer), Ray Fort (agriculture) Larry Saiers (program economist) and Stan Handleman (education). They launched an effort to develop an appropriate USAID strategy for Afghanistan by bringing out the Development Studies Program leader to work with staff and to carry out multiple strategy sessions to look for ways to address economic and social challenges in Afghanistan.

The real question was how could the United States work in such a highly charged political environment? It wasn't just a difficult living environment but between language challenges and international politics we weren't able to create a program that would meet Afghan needs and be consistent with U.S. government policies. USAID couldn't help a country after a coup with a communist government but was the government communist or nationalist or socialist? There was a continuing interest to work in southern Afghanistan, in the Helmand Valley, where the U.S. had been working for almost forty years in a complex irrigation and resettlement effort, with the last investment helping to address major drainage and salinization problems. I helped put the project paper amendment together in 1977. I believe the project ended in 1979-1980 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The idea of promoting a USAID supported rural poverty strategy for Afghanistan after the 1978 coup and the assassination of our ambassador was not going to happen.

During my tour in Kabul, I learned a lot about how a USAID mission functioned, as I worked in all the principal offices and was able to participate in all of the mission functions. During that time a major reduction in force took place; I believe around 300 local employees and USDH staff were directly affected. It wasn't a positive time to be in the mission, but it seemed that something needed to be done to address the lopsided nature of the mission structure and program. My time at USAID Kabul was a valuable part of my early USAID learning experience and the adversity faced during that time made me more resilient. Since our attempts to develop a strategy and a program to work with the "new" Afghanistan didn't pan out, it was decided that I should complete my tour and move on. There appeared to be little chance that the program would continue, even though the mission had developed a reasonable strategy, but the overall political situation wouldn't permit forward movement. It looked like program and staffing levels would be further reduced. Fortunately, USAID Cairo, at the time the largest mission in the world, was interested in my joining their staff and that was the next important step in my USAID experience.

Q: What were the political dynamics in Washington from State, the White House, congress in terms of when this coup took place? What was their attitude?

SILVERMAN: Well, this was the time of President Carter and given the basic human needs strategy that USAID/W promoted, I thought there was hope in Washington that perhaps something could be done in terms of working with the new government to help the rural poor. They let us try but given the political situation in Afghanistan and the various legal constraints they wouldn't support a rural poverty strategy in Afghanistan. Ambassador Eliot departed post and Adolph "Spike" Dubs, came in right after the coup. Dubs had been the Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé in Moscow. I remember he once told me that the Soviets were not going to be helpful and were not our friends. Three weeks after we departed Kabul, on February 14, 1979, Ambassador Dubs was assassinated. He was traveling in Kabul with his driver and was stopped by a police car and told to follow the car. The driver followed instructions and ended up at the Kabul Hotel. My understanding is that the men were not police officers but Mujahideen terrorists. It would have been impossible to nab the Soviet Ambassador as he had a significant security detail, so they took the American Ambassador instead. The embassy learned the Ambassador was being held captive in the hotel.

The story from unclassified sources is that the Soviets, who provided substantial security assistance to the government, were advising the Afghans. Our political counselor spent three hours trying to have discussions with Afghan authorities, demanding to talk to the Ambassador to be sure that he was alive and safe. It appears the security forces paid little attention to the embassy's request as they went in guns blasting and everyone in the hotel room where the Ambassador was held captive was killed. After that horrible experience I believe the embassy operated with a Charge until 1989 when the embassy shut its doors before the start of the long civil war followed by the Taliban takeover.

Q: So, from 1979 to 2001 there was no embassy.

SILVERMAN: No. My understanding was that after the Ambassador's assassination the embassy functioned with a Charge (the Soviets invaded in December 1979). From 1989 to 2001 the embassy was formally closed due to safety concerns, but the U.S. continued to have Foreign Service National staff [FSNs] on the ground in a caretaker capacity and that a regional security officer and team visited the embassy several times a year to ensure that the FSNs were paid, and that the embassy was in decent condition. Apparently, there was no attempt by the Afghan government to try and enter the embassy during that period of time. What more can I say about Afghanistan except to look at what's happened ever since. In the early 2000s USAID asked me to consider returning to Afghanistan as its mission director but after two different work experiences over a four year period, and the fighting and turmoil in the country, I asked to take my name off the list.

Afghanistan is still one of the least developed countries in the world; the Taliban is now firmly in control; women have lost their right to work and to go to school beyond early grades and many of the gains from 2001 to 2021 have been lost. For more than twenty years I have supported efforts to promote education for girls and strengthen traditional craft businesses through the Friends of Afghanistan organization that is made up of 125 former Peace Corps volunteers who served in Afghanistan of which I am a proud member.

TOM NICASTRO

Tom Nicastro began his career in international development following various volunteer work experiences in Latin America with the Peace Corps (Bolivia, 1965–1968) and Save the Children (Peru). Mr. Nicastro's first assignment with USAID was in Bolivia from 1978–1980, cut short by various coups d'état. Following this, Mr. Nicastro held multiple successful assignments around the world in the Dominican Republic (1980–85), India (1985), Afghanistan (1990), and Chile (1993–1995). He served in a variety of technical and leadership roles, including AID/Washington combined Asia-Private Enterprise Bureaus, USAID Representative in Chile, AID/W Bureau Newly Independent States in Europe as Director of the Office of Democracy and Social Reform, and AID/W Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau as Acting Assistant Administrator. Following his retirement from USAID, Mr. Nicastro developed a working relationship with Justice O'Connor, advocating for judicial reform. He continues his commitment to international development as a USAID Alumni Association member with his wife, Peggy. Tom Nicastro was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2023.

Topical Focus – Post-Soviet Afghan Democratic Development

Q: Tell me about USAID Afghanistan/Pakistan

NICASTRO: In 1990 I was with Asia Near East (ANE) and sent to Pakistan to assess the capacity of the democratic forces of Afghanistan to be part of a government that was going to be formed as the Soviets were leaving. This was part of the Democratic Pluralism Initiative. ANE started Open Markets/Open Societies programming premised on the assumption that governments needed open markets as well as open societies to have successful economic and political development. For ten days, between Quetta and Peshawar, a State Desk Officer, a St. Louis University professor and I interviewed mullahs, NGO leadership, private sector and public sector people to try to identify what was needed in this new Afghanistan as the Soviets were leaving.

Q: Oh, the beginning of transition to open markets.

NICASTRO: Open Markets/Open Societies was a packaging concept for USAID as we moved into Eastern Europe and parts of the former Soviet Union. The Berlin Wall had just fallen in November of 1989. We came up with a 47-page post-Soviet Afghanistan document that was historical as well as prescriptive. I was looking at it the other day as I prepared for this interview and saw that in 1990 one of the people we interviewed was Hamid Karzai. He later became as. Many know the president of Afghanistan when the United States invaded in 2001. But at that time, he was the representative of the Afghan interim government and participated in some of the interviews that we had.

One meeting with Shia mullahs should have given us a better view of what was to happen to Afghanistan. Shia mullahs told us that Sunni leadership did not believe that democracy as we knew it was going to be successful in Afghanistan. They gave us a pamphlet that allegedly had come from some Sunni group that said that democracy in Afghanistan would never work for three reasons. The first reason was that in elections people who were mentally unstable could vote. The second reason was that in elections women could vote. The third reason was that in elections Shias could vote.

Q: Okay. So, you're still in Pakistan, you're looking to create this program, the Taliban essentially are blocking this, and you're having these talks with potential leaders of Afghanistan who could go in I guess after the Taliban have been defeated? Was that the understanding?

NICASTRO: Well, at that juncture the Taliban were not an organized group. The Afghan Cross Border Mission in Quetta began to fund some of the open society activities that we recommended. They wanted to give money to the Asia Foundation who would sub grant to Afghan NGOs looking at issues of voice, choice, and governance. That program never really took root due to civil unrest. During our stay the assassinations of western-oriented NGO leaders were becoming commonplace in the streets of Quetta. As the Soviets pulled out, the anti-Soviet alliance of about eleven groups fell apart and civil war broke out. The Taliban emerged from Kandahar as the one force that controlled all but northern Shia Afghanistan, effectively ending the civil war until 2001.

JAMES KUNDER
USAID
Asia and Near East Bureau Assistant Administrator
Afghanistan and Iraq
(2002-2004)

Mr. Kunder was born and brought up in Rochester, Pennsylvania and came from a Serbo-Croatian and Italian background. After receiving his Bachelor's from Harvard University, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps before pursuing his Master's at Georgetown University. He worked as a staffer for various offices across the Senate before joining USAID. He worked in various positions in the USAID Bureau of External Affairs, Asia and Near East Bureau, and as Acting Deputy Administrator. He also worked in the private sector. Mr. Kunder was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2022.

Topical Focus - Civilian - Military Cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq

KUNDER: That's a really great question and a complex question. Let me do a couple of different quick observations. Number one it wasn't nearly as bad as it was in Vietnam. Where armed USAID personnel were out on patrols. Most of the names of people, USAID officers who died in the line of duty in the lobby of the Ronald Reagan Building are from Vietnam. I think in historical terms, I think a lot of people perceive it that way. But in my view, USAID had done more than that, in terms of integration with the military. On a second topic. As I mentioned earlier, civil military relations have been a part of what I've done for a long time. And so, my view and certainly Andrew Natsios, his point of view, was that USAID should be part of the National Strategic picture, we should not be an isolated NGO within the U.S. government. Integration with the military is something that we both advocated in the sense of, again, not to bring USAID under the military because we consciously resisted the military put forward a number of very interesting proposals to create at each geographic combatant command U.S. Pacific Command U.S. Africa Command and so forth a military led team that essentially made a lot of sense, organizationally. What DoD proposed was that each headquarters would have essentially a small U.S. government integrated team. Somebody from Treasury, somebody from Commerce, somebody from USAID, somebody from State Department. And they would then help the commander plan operations, taking into account both civilian and military capabilities of the U.S. government. Organizationally, we thought it made a lot of sense. But Andrew and I resisted that tremendously in the interagency, because we thought it was unconstitutional, you're essentially bringing the civilians under military control. And unless it was a wartime situation, we didn't think that made any sense. We resisted some of those. But in terms of integration, I had a lot to do with creating what's now called the Office of Civilian and Military Cooperation at USAID, because I wanted to place, just like the State Department places POLADS, political advisors, in the front offices of each of these four-star generals and admirals scattered around the world. I wanted Senior AID Foreign Service officers sitting there as well. So that military official could be informed by a development perspective. In terms of the

generic linking of the two into strategic planning purposes, so development would be integrated into military planning that was going on on a separate track from Iraq or Afghanistan, and I think it was just an accident of history that you happen to have two people well actually had three people in the top ranks of USAID at that time, all of whom had military background, Andrew Natsios, Mike Hess, and I.

Q: Mike who?

KUNDER: Hess, he was head of the DCHA (Disaster, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance) Bureau, at that time and a former army civil affairs officer. He really was into this civilian integration stuff. And we created this office of civilian military cooperation. That was going on separate from Iraq, it might have been reinforced by Iraq and Afghanistan. But then the military and again, they're always thinking about how to bring all the—more than State and USAID. They're thinking about how to bring all the elements of civilian power into play, when there is a conflictive environment somewhere. And so then they came up with the concept of—how can I forget the term, these teams that were in the countryside—

Q: It'll come to you.

KUNDER: It'll come to me in a second. Creating an integrated team in each of the hotspots in Afghanistan and Iraq. And that was a tremendous pressure. Send us a couple Senior Foreign Service officers for each one of these teams. That is CERPs, that was the Commander's Emergency Response Program. They created money to do their own development type work, handing out money to civilian organizations, that was the CERP program, which was a real challenge to USAID. Because these guys didn't have a clue, right? Somebody would come and say, we need a school in our village. And the U.S. military officer in charge would say: Here's some money. Good. That's great. What about teachers? What about revenues? What about community support? What about the location of the school? What about where the girls are gonna be? I mean, they didn't know enough to ask, they didn't know what they didn't know. Right? So yeah, great idea we need a school. Great. Yeah, here's some money. By the way, we'll be patrolling your village. If you see any bad guys, let us know. That was going on, a tactical military quid pro quo for development assistance. Then they created these Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs provincial reconstruction teams. To their credit, they wanted USAID officers, we didn't know that, it would have taken several hundred Foreign Service Service officers just to staff their request for Iraq and Afghanistan. And we didn't have them and that became a source of enormous frustration. We ended up hiring contractors, washing them gently through USAID training. And then they represented USAID in Kandahar, or Mosul, or someplace. It was a structural disaster. Some general would see me at some National Security Council session and tell me, your guy in Mosul, in northern Iraq, he told me that this and this didn't seem to make sense about how AID works. And yeah, because the General was right. The guy didn't have a clue how USAID works. We just hired him somewhere. A lot of times we hired ex military guys, because how many people are ready to go to Mosul? Right and be under shellfire. And I would say that's a very good question you're asking about civilian military integration, cooperation. I look

at it as a bi-level issue. On one level, there's a sort of a need, in my view, for systemic integration of the two at the strategic planning level. And that's what I think we're accomplishing now by sending AID Foreign Service officers to U.S. Pacific Command headquarters in Honolulu. So that right there in their planning office, they've got an AID person who can inform them of a development perspective. And there we are sending career Senior Foreign Service officers to those important positions. But then, at another level, during Iraq, Afghanistan, where there was this chaotic need for hundreds of officers to serve in these provincial reconstruction teams, and that was a chaotic, counterproductive type of civilian military integration.

AFRICA

AMBASSADOR PRINCETON LYMAN
Department of State
Office of Inter-American Affairs
Washington, D.C.
(1980-1986)

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

Topical Focus – Democracy and Elections in U.S.–Africa Policy

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LYMAN: South Africa and the independence of Namibia were hot issues. Don McHenry, who was our UN representative, was trying to settle the Namibia independence issue. Dick Moose, who was the assistant secretary in the final year of the Carter administration, was heavily involved on those issues as well as the Horn.

I worked on Nigeria policy – what should be our policy towards that country? How much did we support democracy in that country? Shehu Shagari had been elected in the previous year. His government was however shaky (it would be overthrown in 1983).

There were issues about our labor program in Liberia that came to my office. But most of my time was focused on security assistance questions – what kind of military assistance should we be providing in Africa, which included the development and justification of a military assistance budget. We worked with various regional offices on a host of issues including Congressional relations.

Q: What were we trying to do with our security assistance programs?

LYMAN: At the time, we did not have the major emphasis on democracy that we have today. We more or less accepted military dictatorships as a fact of life in Africa. The fact that the Africans spent a lot of money on their own military was of concern. But we were still in the Cold War era; we were very concerned about the shift that had taken place in the Horn of Africa. We were establishing a relationship with Somalia in lieu of the one

we had with Ethiopia. We provided military assistance to Somalia who were fighting the Ethiopians.

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Q: How did Chet Crocker operate?

LYMAN: Chet was brilliant; working for him was one of the finest professional experiences I had. I often told Chet that it was one of the finest but also most exhaustive periods of my life. We rarely left the office before 9 p.m. Chet had a brilliant conceptual framework for dealing with southern Africa. It was pilloried by many and it did have some shortcomings. But Chet felt very strongly that he had a framework for dealing with the Angola- Namibia-South Africa nexus. Namibia was under a South African mandate, voided by the UN. South Africa refused to cede control, fighting an independence movement there as well as using Namibia as a jumping off point for support of the UNITA rebels in Angola. The Angolan government in turn was supported by the USSR and by Cuban troops brought in to help against UNITA. Chet focused on getting a solution to the Angola situation which included the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. He felt that this was the only way to get South Africa to go along with the independence of Namibia as well as getting the support of a Republican administration and Congress for an active policy in the region.

As I said, he was pilloried by many quarters because some people thought that the Cuban withdrawal was an unnecessary condition for Namibian independence that he had thrown into the mix. People who had been working on the issue in the previous administration were very angry. Furthermore, his concept involved what he had termed as "constructive engagement" – more open engagement with South Africa because he felt that they had to be a partner in any final settlement. People misunderstood Chet to some degree; he understood that once the South Africans were out of Angola and Namibia, they could no longer claim that apartheid was an external problem. South Africans viewed themselves as surrounded by communist regimes which fostered the domestic liberation movement – what they called the "Great Onslaught." So the South African military and security institutions were determined to fight the opposition as far away from their country as possible – even up to Kenya if necessary, they used to say. Chet knew that if the South Africans left Namibia and if there was a settlement of a similar civil war in Mozambique, they would then have to face apartheid as an internal issue.

WILLIAM HAMMINK
USAID

Africa Bureau
Office of Project Development
(1990-1991)

William Hammink studied at the University of Minnesota for both his undergraduate and masters' degrees before entering USAID as an International Development Intern in 1981.
He served in many different positions in several countries, including Swaziland, Senegal, Madagascar, the West Bank and Gaza, Ethiopia, Sudan, and India.
William Hammink was interviewed by John Pielemeier in February 2018.

Topical Focus - Early Pan-African DRG Program Development

HAMMINK: Anyway, we stayed in Senegal for four years. And then, because our kids were around five to seven at the time, we thought it's important for them to live in the States for a while, and to go to school in the States. I applied for jobs in Washington, and I was assigned to the Africa Bureau Office of Project Development, or "PD" at the time. And I was the Assistant— I think, what's it called now— The Assistant Division—or Deputy Division Chief in the Central and Coastal West Africa division of PD.

And at the time, Carol Peasley was the Office Director. So, I had the wonderful opportunity to work with Carol then. But there were big changes going on in Africa at the time, and elections were happening in many countries, some more free and fair than others. At the time, in USAID and in the State Department there was a lot of interest in how America and the U.S. government could support not only elections, but broadly good governance, democratic governance, political process reform, independent media, judiciary, and the like.

And so, I was asked by the AA (Assistant Administrator) to work with a team to put together a new division in the Office of Sustainable Development on elections and governance. So, with several other people, we established the first Africa bureau democracy and governance division. It was the first USAID group to focus on support for democracy and better governance in Africa, with a small budget.

Q: What year was that?

HAMMINK: That was in 1991. And not surprisingly, there was a large amount of pushback. Most people in the Africa Bureau, both in Washington and in the field, thought that USAID shouldn't touch anything political. We do development. We do economic development. You know, economic and social development. But we worked on making the case that economic and social development depends on good governance and citizen

voice and choice. We brought in well-known academics. We developed white papers and policy papers on why the political economy is so important. And the importance of the elections, and why we need to support that. We put together some Africa-wide programs with the likes of NDI (National Democratic Institute), IRI (International Republican Institute), and IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems) that missions could buy into.

So, that was an exciting period, because I led the division and was responsible for starting brand new programs in this area. I was working with some terrific folks such as Jennifer Windsor and Anne Williams. We made some mistakes in the early days. We once had a meeting with several State Department Africa Bureau colleagues. We discussed what needed to be done and how we could work together. You know, I look back now, and realize that we should have been more open to working collaboratively and even jointly on programs. Mistakenly, we just said, "Oh, we can do this. We're not going to give you any of our money." And I think, looking back, we should have said, "Hey, how can we work together to achieve common objectives here?" Luckily, that came later.

We established the importance of these DG programs (democracy and governance programming) from an academic point of view and we also showed the conceptual linkages to the rest of our development programs including the need to support elections. Everybody understood that elections do not a democracy make. So, we tried to make the case that USAID also needed to get involved, where we had a chance to make a difference, in all areas of democratic governance, including financial accountability, independence of the judiciary and media, and a strong advocacy civil society representing the interests of citizens and not just those NGOs doing social programs.

This type of DG work for USAID was around in Latin America before that. But I think in Africa, it wasn't until the 1990s that development people started to see the need for USAID to support civil society that advocated for citizens' rights and improved transparency. Those who are there trying to hold governments accountable for what they promise.

As I mentioned, that was an exciting time but also a lot of work. And then after about a year in Washington—or a year and a half—George Carner, with whom I had worked in Senegal where he was Deputy Mission Director, was at the time the Mission Director in Madagascar. And he— I was kind of ready to get back overseas—

Q: Pretty quickly!

HAMMINK: —as was my wife. So, he recruited me to bid to come out and head up a new combined program and project development office that they had set up in Madagascar. My family and I went out to Antananarivo in the summer of 1992.

CAROL A. PEASLEY
Deputy Assistant Administrator African Bureau
Washington, DC
(1985-1988)

Topical Focus – Africa Bureau Democracy and Governance Programming

Q: What about democratization programs?

PEASLEY: Yes; this was a high priority for Brian Atwood, and so we were doing a fair amount. But, earmarks in other areas, such as basic education and child survival, didn't leave as much for programming in this area. We did actively support electoral efforts in a number of countries, certainly including South Africa and Malawi's elections in 1994. I know that USAID was very active in Ghana, especially in helping the Ghanaians develop a strong voter registration system. I believe that work in Ghana was very important – and its positive effects are still being felt.

Q: Absolutely. Absolutely.

PEASLEY: That was a success story in Ghana. I believe that some in Washington criticized USAID for devoting the bulk of its resources to the registration activity, but that the field stood its ground. And, the field turned out to be correct; Washington was wrong. Barbara Sandoval was the USAID Director then in Ghana and she has frequently reminded about this.

PEASLEY: USAID was also supporting parliamentary strengthening in a number of countries, as
well as political party strengthening. The latter often included efforts to expand the roles of women in political life. I recall visiting a parliamentary strengthening project in Namibia; we were working on the development of committees and open hearings. There was considerable focus on transparency and opening up the political processes. More generally, civil society strengthening was a key element of almost all USAID mission democracy-promotion activities.

PEASLEY: USAID was also part of the broader U.S. Government dialogue with African countries on governance issues. When talking about my work in Malawi, I mentioned the World
Bank-led Consultative Group process and the meetings that, at that time, were primarily in Paris and then increasingly began to be held in country. In those days, USAID was designated as the interagency leader for consultative group meetings. As the Deputy Assistant Administrator overseeing southern Africa and then as Acting AA/AFR, I often chaired the U.S. delegation at those meetings. As the meetings became more political, it became even more important that the USAID representative be as senior as possible. The U.S. position would be carefully worked out in Washington prior to the meetings. The field – both USAID and the broader embassy – would send in their proposed positions and talking points, including and linkage of USAID funding levels to human rights or governance actions. They would then be finalized in Washington. The chair of the U.S. delegation was to be the sole spokesperson, at least formally during the meetings. As the U.S. talking points became more political, there was obviously increased resistance to having USAID be the speaker. In order to manage this, I worked with the World Bank, asking them to organize side sessions focused on political or governance issues, thereby providing an opportunity for any U.S. ambassador who came to the CG meetings to Speak.

PEASLEY: Consultative Group meetings that were most interesting and most memorable to me
were on Mozambique and Zambia, both of which were in the midst of political transitions and with very robust USAID programs. I can still remember consultative group meetings for Mozambique when Dennis Jett was the ambassador. Dennis had been the DCM when I first got to Malawi, so I knew him well and we had a good relationship. But Dennis was often not very unhappy with the final interagency position and talking points crafted by Washington. Dennis often came to the CG meetings, and other donor colleagues told me that he would scowl when I was speaking our Washington-approved talking points at the meetings. That prompted me to ask the Bank to set up a meeting beforehand so Dennis – and other attending ambassadors – could give their views prior to the formal meetings. Dennis felt that the Mozambicans were not performing as well on its economic reforms as we donors gave them credit for; he thus thought we were way too easy on the government officials. During the CG meeting, the donors would talk about "putting the host country in the driver's seat" of the reform process. Dennis would then say that we "shouldn't be asleep in the backseat." In retrospect, I am not sure who was right. Certainly, Mozambique in the late 1990's was a budding success story as it came out of war and reintegrated a million plus refugees back into the country. Economic growth was quite remarkable. We in the donor community were also very impressed by the public

servants who led the Mozambican delegations. The Portuguese had not been very enlightened colonists; there was a relatively small cadre of trained Mozambicans, but the civil servants we encountered at the CG meetings were committed and impressive. But, it is hard not to be a bit discouraged when looking at Mozambique today. So, perhaps Dennis did have a better feel for the situation.

PEASLEY: Zambia was a more complex set of issues related to governance and economic performance, including debt levels, privatization, and government expenditures. And so those meetings were always very contentious. The Zambians themselves were very tough
negotiators at the consultative group meetings. The donors would raise difficult issues; the Zambians would counter with responses to our criticisms and then offer pointed comments about issues in the donor countries. For example, I recall once raising an issue about corruption allegations; they responded by citing examples of public corruption in the U.S. They obviously did a lot of homework prior to the meetings.

I suspect that there was a lot of wasted efforts and too much theatre at these consultative group meetings. As they began to be held in the countries themselves, they became much more useful. It also provided for more realistic dialogue and greater transparency within the countries.

ANGOLA

AMBASSADOR FRANK G. WISNER
Department of State
Office of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Washington D.C.
(1976-1979)

Ambassador Wisner was born in New York on July 2, 1938. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University. His career in the foreign service includes posts at Tangier, Algiers, Saigon, Tunis, Bangladesh, Cairo, India, and Vietnam. In addition, he was ambassador to Zambia and Egypt. Ambassador Wisner was interviewed by Richard L. Jackson in 1998.

Topical Focus - Conflict and Governance in Angola and Southern Africa

WISNER: With the Clark Amendment, we were out of business in Angola. We had not succeeded in isolating the MPLA diplomatically in Africa, we had not gotten the American oil companies to cut off payments to the MPLA government, we even came close to getting serious retaliation from the Nigerians. We hadn't stopped the Cubans from arriving. It had been a pretty dramatic setback for American diplomacy to be matched in a separate track with success that Kissinger began to engineer further to the east in Rhodesia. But to stick with the Angolan story, there was a period from about 1976 until early in the 1980s where the MPLA regime consolidated itself in Luanda, FLNA ceased to be a real fact of life and the Cubans remained in Angola. UNITA began to go from strength to strength and intensify its association with South Africa, receiving South African support to oppose the MPLA, on the one hand, and, on the other doing South African's bidding by keeping a bit of a clamp on SWAPO. This interregnum or this period lasted until, as I say, the early 1980's when in 1980 Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States and came to office bringing Al Haig to the Department of State, Deputy Secretary Clark with him and Chet Crocker, after a brief and unwanted debate over Crocker's qualifications, as Assistant Secretary. Now Chet, in my experience, is one of the more remarkable foreign policy minds that I've known and been associated with in my career. Chet sat down and began a fundamental reconceptualization of American foreign policy in Africa. He was a deeply committed Africanist. His wife is of Zimbabwean origins, born in Bulawayo. Chet had devoted his life to teaching, thinking and writing about Africa, and Chet believed that the United States had an enormously important role to play, not only for geostrategic purposes of making certain that we were not outflanked by the Soviet Union with the Cubans at their sides in the Third World, but had a mission in Africa to carry out. That mission included dealing with Africa's conflicts, bringing justice to Southern Africa, and stimulating economic growth. The cutting edge of what decisions would have be to made was in Southern Africa, for apartheid was coming under increasing pressure inside South Africa. America's effective involvement-- committed diplomacy with high level support-- began during the Kissinger

period -- the events in Soweto, the pressures domestically in the United States to bring our influence and weight to bear on the South African equation. Rhodesia had moved into independence and was now Zimbabwe. And the Russians and Cubans were strongly present in Angola, on the one hand, the Russians more so than the Cubans in Mozambique, on the other. Crocker's concept, in the briefest word, was to try to negotiate, between South Africa and the peripheral states of the region, a set of understandings that would calm the region down, create a greater degree of security. Security would serve American interests, but would also create an atmosphere for South Africa within which change away from Apartheid and toward a pluralistic, multi-racial society and democracy could take place. That was the core of Crocker's view. Now, when it came down to the practical reach of it -- and we're on to Angola looking at the Angolan dimension -- Crocker could see no way in which, by simply beating on South Africa's door as had occurred ever since the end of the Kissinger period, throughout the Carter period under Secretary Vance and in Andy Young's time and his successor's time in New York, simply banging on the South African door and passing more UN resolutions and having contact groups come together and urge and create more elaborate structures of transition, that it was going to convince South Africa of the political logic in giving up Namibia and allowing the transition that the UN foresaw to take place. These habits of the past just weren't going to do it, and so Chet came up with the singularly important notion that everybody's interest would be served, on the one hand, by convincing the Cubans to withdraw from Angola and the South Africans to withdraw from Namibia, turning Namibia over to the UN and allowing Angola to settle down to the equally tough job of internal reconciliation between the UNITA southern-central, Angola-based tribal elements and the MPLA's more northern reach. This was a bold idea. It really caught the South Africans off guard, hoisted them on their own petard. It hoisted them on their own petard because they claimed in part that they were facing foreign aggression, foreign intervention, that they were carrying the banner of the West. This gave them a way out. The Cubans would leave and South Africa would have to retread. It also gave the Africans something to work for, though they didn't like it and protested vigorously, American diplomacy now linked South Africa’s withdrawal to an internal decision taken by one African government -- the MPLA -- to invite the Cubans to leave. Yet in private, African governments found it difficult to deny the inherent logic of the matter, but wouldn't admit to it. They protested. But for the first time in years, we had a formula for unblocking the diplomacy that the United States, Germany, France, Britain were involved in. For a while, the French went along with it and then, seeing no particular movement and not liking to find themselves side-by-side with the United States in Africa as a general matter and involved in a proposition that wasn't moving and over which they would have very little say and for which we would call the shots --the French eventually dropped us. The Germans were never were comfortable; the Canadians, who regarded their UN commitments as of a higher priority than their sense of geostrategic purpose, also were not very comfortable, and the Contact Group as a result became less and less effective as an institution, less and less coherent as an institution. The British gave us, throughout, strong understanding and effective support. The Angolan matter was, therefore, an issue of putting before the Angolan government a set of proposals that would ease the Cubans out and before the South Africans a set of proposals that would force them out and bring the UN into Namibia. And the hardest part was, of course,

getting the Angolans to buy this package for they didn't like the linkage. They were under terrific pressure from the Cubans, they had support from the Russians, and they certainly didn't like having to bob and weave and dance to our tune. They were fundamentally distrustful, at the end of the day, that they would be caught without their Cuban shield while South Africans would still have an ability to intervene on their front and that we wouldn't be able to keep -- wouldn't intend to or be able to keep -- our word on both ends. The Cubans saw our success at the end of their revolutionary messianic movement in Africa. So the history of our diplomacy over the next several years took place in a series of stages and has been brilliantly written about. Chet Crocker's own book, High Noon in Southern Africa, is an adequate chronicle of the events that followed, but let me just touch a couple of headlines. In the first instance, we presented our ideas to the Angolan leadership, the President and thenAngolan Foreign Minister and his deputy, Venancio da Moura -- Paulo Jorge and Venancio da Moura. But after reflection, the Angolans retreated, went inside their shells, and it took a couple of years to get out. The Mozambicans, Cape Verdeans helped us talk the Angolans back to the negotiating table. In this interim period and more precisely, of '84, we were probing the Angolans from about every direction. We worked with the Portuguese, I visited Lisbon frequently, we worked closely with the Cape Verdeans, we were able to get the Angolans to come and meet us in Cape Verde and exchange positions there in the Cape Verde Islands. We were able, as well, to engage the Mozambicans, who wanted some American sympathy and support, as their own internal rebellion was rising very fast and the regime was under cruel pressure in Maputo from RENAMO, backed by the South Africans. The Mozambicans wanted help from the United States, so they, too, undertook to put us together with the Angolans and explain our logic to the Angolans. The Angolans regarded them as something of the poor cousin and weren't entirely sensitive to their point of view and, certainly, to being pushed by the Mozambicans. Our relations with Mozambique led down a different road which was towards Nkomati, and trying to stabilize another Southern African front and reduce the tensions in the region.

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WISNER: But returning to the Angolan story, diplomacy resumed really through much of '85 and in '86 it was interrupted when we were forced to provide military support for Savimbi. In time the MPLA moderates were able to regain their voice. The pressure of our coming back in on the Savimbi side strengthened the hands of those in Luanda who said "look it's time to go on and make this deal. The Cubans can't end the war on our side, we need to get the South Africans out and then face UNITA one-on-one." The present ambassador here, Ndalu, then chief of staff of the army, was an advocate of that position.

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WISNER: There was finally an agreement. There was a structured withdrawal of the Cubans, a structured withdrawal and turnover to the UN in Namibia, and Namibia went on to independence, the Cubans went home, opening the way to the last chapter of the Angolan story, which is the struggle for supremacy inside Angola and again the UN's reinvolvement in sorting out between the MPLA and UNITA. As it now stands, UNITA

is contesting once again -- wrestling once again with the force of fate and their ability to withstand the pressure of the MPLA government, which has the support of Africa, as well as the understanding of the UN, the United States, all of us who believe that Angola's 30 years -- nearly 40 years now -- of civil war, liberation war, it's time to bring it to an end. My role during these fascinating years with Chet, as senior deputy in the Bureau of African Affairs from 1982 to 1986, was principally as his arm in negotiations in Southern Africa with the Angolan government, to carry out a lot of our liaison with the government in Zaire and to be able to open up channels of communications with the Mozambicans and to deal with them and the South Africans over Nkomati (a different story and one that I'll let you come back to).

HERMAN J. COHEN
Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C.
(1989-1993)

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

Topical Focus - Angolan Independence Politics

COHEN: It was going pretty well. We had to constantly reverse crazy decisions by Mobutu. For example, the main transit route for the export of copper was through Angola on the Benguela railway. Of course Angola was ruled by the Portuguese; it was a colonial power that refused to give independence. Mobutu and his people were very upset about that. He kept badgering us: Why don't you force Portugal to give Angola independence? Once they got so angry with Portugal they decided they were going to rip up the tracks that lead to Angola as a protest against Portuguese colonialism. So we went to see them and said, you realize you need these tracks for the export of copper. You had better think twice before you rip them up. So they did.

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COHEN: The Cubans had come to Angola in 1975 in order to install a communist government there. They were kind of stuck there. They were sort of bogged down because their action immediately created a civil war in Angola that was supported mainly by South Africa. If the Cubans left, the government would have collapsed. So, the Cubans were stuck there from '75 until 1991 when the treaty went into effect, and it was costing a lot of money to the Soviets who were financing all of that. The Cubans didn't like being in Angola. For awhile they thought it was great helping a communist regime.

After a while they started getting AIDS and all sorts of problems, so they were very anxious to get out, but in an honorable way.

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COHEN: That was one of the paradoxes. But, the reason I was acceptable was during the negotiations between Angola and South Africa and Cuba with my predecessor, I was accompanying him to all these visits to Angola. I got to know everybody and was friendly. When he started it took months and months before they would talk to him. They would say to him don't talk to us until you stop helping the rebels. But, since I had been a regular visitor, they were willing to see me. So, I met with the Foreign minister and the other national security advisors and all that about what the next step would be. It was clear that the next step was to find a mediator who was acceptable. We were not considered acceptable even though we were the mediators for the previous negotiation, they said we don't want the United States because in this one you are really too much involved on one side. That's reasonable; let's find someone else. From Namibia, we flew to Zaire where Baker met with Savimbi. He said, "Look you didn't want to work on this other peace deal because you said you wanted free and fair elections. Now it is going to be possible. I want you to agree to a negotiation." Savimbi said, "That is always what I wanted. I didn't want to be given a fait accompli and just take me into this Marxist government. I'm ready any time." With him also we discussed potential mediators. We set up a checklist of acceptable countries. Portugal was on that list. We went back to the government and they chose Portugal. The Portuguese were just delighted because it was their former colony. They wanted to be in on the ground floor of any settlement.

Q: They had also by this time about 15 to 20 years of non-colonial type rule in Portugal. It was a moderate leftist government.

COHEN: That is who gave independence to Angola. The leftist government gave them independence, but made sure that the Marxists won. But they left power and the government in power there was conservative at that moment in 1990. They were delighted to be the mediator. At the same time, Baker took advantage of his presence in Zaire to have a long meeting with Mobutu, of course to inform him because Mobutu was so heavily involved in Angola as well. But he took advantage of his time to have a private meeting with Mobutu with nobody there except interpreters. I was not even there, to talk about starting a democratic system in Zaire because he still had the one party dictatorship. Mauritania said look all over Africa now, multiparty democracy is breaking out. You have to do it too otherwise you will be dragged under. You will be thrown out of office by revolution. We like you. You are an old friend of the United States. We want you to stay in power, but the only way to stay in power is to lead democracy rather than be dragged into it. So Mobutu said okay. A month later he made his famous speech of April 24 where he said Zaire is now open to multiparty democracy. He suddenly allowed newspapers to publish freely, and other parties to exist. So, we thought that Baker had pulled off a real good diplomatic victory there, and we were all quite pleased. Negotiations under the Portuguese began in June in Lisbon. They spent the first few negotiating sessions insulting each other, yelling at each other and that sort of thing. Then

they got down to serious business between June and November, meeting about once a month for about a week. Of course the Portuguese continued to keep us informed and the Soviets informed because we were very anxious to know what was going on. In November I was called to Houston, Texas, because at that time there was this very intense diplomacy between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They were having ministerial meetings about every three months. It was very intense activity. Each time they met, the Assistant Secretaries would meet with their Soviet equivalents. It was a whole ballet that was going on. The next scheduled meeting after this Angola negotiation started was in Houston, Texas. One agenda item was an update on Angola. After all, one of our objectives was to get the Soviets out of their Angola commitment because it was very expensive for them.

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COHEN: Then I found that the UNITA people had become frightened. They had been fighting either the Portuguese or the government for 30 years, and they were suddenly faced with the idea of peace. War was a way of life for them, guerrilla war, so they were suddenly frightened. I had to go there and talk to them and say give me a list of all the things that bother you. So we went over it one by one and spent a couple of days. Finally, we worked out every last point. Then we had a final plenary session where I was present to hammer out the final points, and we find out it was bogged down over the issue of police. They were going to deal with the army, but the police was totally in the hands of the government. UNITA suddenly said, oh my god we can't let them control the police. We will be at a disadvantage during the transition and the run up to an election. So, I worked out a compromise at the last minute. The UN would have police on patrol with the government police to protect the interests of UNITA. That was the final point and they agreed. Then we suddenly realized there were no points left and we had a total agreement. We looked at each other and all of a sudden, the office director for Angola was there, Richard Roth, a Foreign Service officer who is now DCM in Tel Aviv. He suddenly screamed, jumped up and started doing a jig, and the champagne started flowing. It was a great feeling to finally get through it. A cease-fire was immediately declared.

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COHEN: Yes, I think that is the great strength of the State Department and the U.S. Foreign Service is that we are so well endowed. We had an office of Southern African Affairs which was so important because we had South Africa and the apartheid problem and the Angolan war and there was also a war in Mozambique, so it was our most important office. Not only did we have a director we had two deputy directors, one for the Portuguese colonies and one for South Africa. Then we had a desk officer for Angola. Plus in our office of regional affairs, we had a military advisor on loan from the Pentagon to help us with the military aspect, and we had an assistant legal advisor. So we had all this talent there, and so as soon as we realized that the solution did not lie in just coopting UNITA into the government, which was our first tactic. We thought it was the easiest. Since we didn't consider Savimbi to be a democrat anyway, we said why not? They just

join forces, a co-dictatorship. We didn't think democracy was a big issue in those days. But, when that failed, we said we have got to think in terms of what is a logical solution where both sides would be willing to feel that they have won. So, when we got down into the details about how do you deal with two competing armies, merging the armies, downsizing the army, demobilization, how do you handle that. We had to bring AID into that and the office of refugee affairs because you had a lot of refugees. How do you feed people who are in transition? We had to get people who are expert on election systems because it is a vast country, totally devastated, how do you pull off an election where there is no infrastructure. We were constantly holding interagency meetings on dealing with the end game, not the end game but the implementation. We also had to be discussing all the time the issues of the negotiations. For example, what size would the new army be? Who should contribute what number of people, so we were constantly brainstorming and advising the Portuguese mediator. So, really the Portuguese were the mediators but we were the drivers of that negotiation.

DENNIS C. JETT
National Security Council
Africa
(1993)

Ambassador Jett was born in Massachusetts and raised in New Mexico. He received degrees from the University of New Mexico and the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa). After a year at the US Naval Academy, he joined the Foreign Service in 1972 and was posted to Buenos Aires. Several assignments at the State Department in Washington DC and Miami were followed by tours of duty at Tel Aviv, Lilongwe and Monrovia. In 1993 Mr. Jett was named United States Ambassador to Mozambique, where he served until 1996, after which he served as US Ambassador to Peru from 1996 to 1999. Following retirement, the ambassador has pursued an academic career, as professor, at the Universities of Florida and Penn State. Dennis C. Jett was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Topical Focus - Failed Elections and Renewed Conflict in Angola

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JETT: One other NSC experience is worth mentioning for two reasons. It gives you an idea why presidents distrust the State Department and also an appreciation for what the media responds to in Washington. One thing Clinton had apparently said during his campaign was that he was going to extend diplomatic recognition to the Angolan government. Jonas Savimbi, the rebel leader trying to overthrow that government, was a

darling of rightwing Americans because he professed to be anti-communist. We had supported Savimbi for years because of that, even though he was just another thug. Elections had just taken place in Angola, which he lost but refused to accept and so he restarted the civil war there.

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Q: Were the people in Mozambique saying, “Gee, we don’t want to have that happen”? Was this a theme that you were aware of?

JETT: It certainly was a theme from our perspective because we saw what happened in Angola when they failed to demobilize the troops. They went ahead with the election with both sides having considerable armed forces. Savimbi, like a lot of politicians, defined a free and fair election as one that he wins. If he didn’t win it, then by definition it wasn’t free and fair. He had the means to go back to war and he did. He had something like 500 million dollars a year coming in from diamond sales and the government had three billion dollars at the time in oil revenue so both sides had plenty of money to buy weapons. That money gave them plenty of incentive to keep fighting and it also gave the neighboring countries the incentive to get involved and to get a share of the diamonds so you had a lot of the neighboring countries involved in negative ways.

ARMENIA

JOHN M. EVANS
U. S. Ambassador
Armenia
(2004-2006)

Ambassador Evans was born and raised in Virginia and educated at Yale University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971 and became a specialist in Soviet and Eastern European Affairs. His foreign posts were Teheran, Prague, Moscow, Brussels, St. Petersburg, Chisinau (Moldova) and Yerevan, Armenia, where he served as Ambassador from 2004 to 2006. In his assignments at the State Department in Washington, the Ambassador dealt primarily with Russian and former Soviet states' affairs. Ambassador Evans was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Topical Focus - Problems of Governance and Democracy in Armenia

Q: What was your impression of the government?

EVANS: I had been warned by Ed Djerejian already that there was a kind of an old Middle Eastern/Oriental/SemiDespotism that was still gripping Armenia and I think that was true and to some extent is still true. Armenia has been ruled one way or another for centuries by small groups with antidemocratic inclinations and indeed President Robert Kocharian, who was a war hero from the struggle with Azerbaijan over Karabakh, was a rather fearsome, tough character, though perfectly decent to deal with and intelligent. I dealt with him almost exclusively in Russian. But he was a kind of a tough guy, a sort of a…almost to the extent of being a bully as President of Armenia. People did not cross him lightly.

EVANS:...And the economic structures of the Republic of Armenia are very, are too closely intertwined with the political structures. So what you really had was a kind of a tight oligarchy with a parliament that was not more than really a rubber stamp, largely.

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EVANS: I mean the three ambassadors and accompanying staff. We had a conference about the Caucasus in Tbilisi, and it was very good to meet my opposite numbers, the ambassadors in the other two capitals; Dick Miles at the time was ambassador in Tbilisi, Reno Harnish in Baku. But then I discovered that the attitude of the embassy in Baku was starting very much to resemble the attitude of the Azerbaijan government. The government of Azerbaijan was trying to isolate Armenia in terms of trade and other kinds of contacts. So whenever a NATO exercise was scheduled to take place in Armenia the Azerbaijanis would boycott it. I had an army major on my staff who was doing a program at Garmisch, an area familiarization program. He requested permission to go to Baku to broaden his knowledge of the Caucasus and the embassy at Baku turned him down, saying "we don't want anybody from Armenia to come to Baku." And it struck me that this was an American, an American Army officer and why should an American Army officer, not in uniform, not be given country clearance to visit our sister embassy in Baku? And my defense attaché called to question this decision and was turned down again, saying "we don't want to talk to anybody from Armenia." So there was a bad case of localitis in Baku. They were applying the standards of the Armenian government to our embassy.

Q: Yes.

EVANS: I mean the Azerbaijani government. So there was a problem there. I tried very hard to be absolutely neutral on the Karabakh issue. We, of course, never thought of visiting Karabakh, which can only be done through Armenian territory, but our legal position is that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan and it's…the United States along with France and Russia has been trying to mediate the conflict. But this sense of impartiality apparently didn't apply, so far as I could tell, to our sister embassy in Baku.

I should add, probably, that the mediation effort was carried out totally independently of our embassy. Steve Mann at the time was the United States co chairman of the so called Minsk Group, and would fly into Yerevan from time to time, along with his Russian and French colleagues, to conduct talks with the Armenians, but we were scrupulous about not inserting ourselves into his business. His was a separate operation; we simply supported his visits.

AMBASSADOR HARRY JOSEPH GILMORE
U. S. Ambassador

Armenia
(1993-1995)

Ambassador Harry Joseph Gilmore was born and raised in Clairton, Pennsylvania in 1937. He attended the Carnegie Institute of Technology (Carnegie Mellon University) for a year before transferring to Pittsburgh University, where he graduated in 1960. From there he went onto graduate school at Indiana University's school of Russian and Eastern European studies. While applying to a National Defense fellowship, Gilmore took and passed the Foreign Service exam and was accepted into the Foreign Service soon after in 1962. He served in the United States and at posts abroad including Ankara, Turkey; Budapest, Hungary; Moscow, Soviet Union; Munich, Germany; Belgrade, Yugoslavia; Berlin, Germany; and Armenia, where he served as Ambassador. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in February 2003.

Topical Focus - The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Q: May, 1993, when you went out there, what was the situation that you were facing in Armenia at that time?

GILMORE: Grim, indeed. Armenia was in the throes of a deep and steadily worsening economic crisis. Many factors contributed to the crisis. Let me begin by outlining the ongoing impact of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan. As a result of the Karabakh conflict, Armenia's border with Azerbaijan had been closed since before Armenia declared its independence in 1991. On March 27,1993, shortly before I arrived in Yerevan, Armenian armed forces, primarily Karabakh-Armenian forces, but with some support from the armed forces of the Armenian Republic, captured Azerbaijan's Kalbajar region. The Kalbajar region borders on Armenia but unlike Nagorno-Karabakh, which is an enclave inside Azerbaijan, Kalbajar is part of Azerbaijan proper. When Armenian forces captured Kalbajar, Turkey formally closed its border with Armenia, stating that it was acting in response to the Armenian forces' occupation of Kalbajar. In fact, Turkey had de facto closed its border with Armenia several years earlier. So, when I arrived in Armenia in May, 1993, the only borders that Armenia had open were its border with Iran in the South and its border with Georgia in the North.

Landlocked Armenia's most direct access to the sea is via Georgia's Black Sea ports of Batumi and Poti. George declared its formal independence from the Soviet Union in April 1991, but Tbilisi's authority in Georgia didn't go far. In May 1993, Georgia was still in considerable disarray. With the overthrow of populist leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia in January 1992, the authority of the central government in Tbilisi virtually collapsed while that of regional potentates and private militias expanded to fill the power vacuum. Among these regional potentates was Aslan Abashidze, the authoritarian leader of

Adjara whose capital was the key Black Sea port city Batumi. Georgia had disintegrated into what might be characterized as a series of fiefdoms, with no overriding central control from Tbilisi. And to get any kind of aid shipment from the U.S. to Batumi or Poti and thence onward to an intended destination in the interior of Georgia or Armenia, was an extraordinarily difficult process. Typically, humanitarian aid cargoes from the U.S. or Europe destined for Armenia and Georgia would be landed in the Georgian ports Batumi and Poti where they were to be transferred to trains for onward shipment to their destination. Often the ships carrying aid stood at anchor for weeks in Batumi and Poti before being unloaded. Once the trains departed the Black Sea coast area they ran a strong risk of being flagged down and stopped by armed men who would quickly climb aboard and examine the cargo. If it was, for example, wheat, they would seize and unload a portion of it as a tax in kind. Trains from the

Georgian ports were held up frequently in the 1993-4 period, and the criminal gangs who perpetrated the thefts were well-organized and efficient. So Armenia's basic life lines from the U.S. and the European community, both of which were anxious to provide assistance, ran through a very fragmented Georgia. Mr. Shevardnadze was working to consolidate Georgia's unity, but it was a difficult process and in my first year there the process was only beginning.

Meanwhile President Clinton and President Bush before him were determined to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to Armenia and Georgia. Accordingly, the State Department's Coordinator for Assistance to the Newly Independent States took the lead in developing Operation Winter Rescue, a coordinated concept of operations aimed at demonstrating the viability of surface shipments of containers of humanitarian assistance to Georgia and Armenia via Georgia's Black Sea ports Batumi and Poti. A key element of Operation Winter Rescue's ultimate success was the decision to employ two-person teams from the U.S. On Site Inspection Agency to work with shipping contractor Sealand and local officials in Georgia and Armenia to monitor the shipment of containers of emergency humanitarian assistance from their arrival in the Georgian ports, through their transfer to railroad cars and shipment by rail to Yerevan or Tbilisi and ultimately their delivery to consignees in Armenia and Georgia. We should remember that OSIA was established in 1988 to meet the on-site inspection requirements of our INF treaty with the USSR. In view of their experience working in the former USSR, OSIA personnel were also tasked with assisting with the distribution of Project Hope shipments.

Armenia is energy poor. Its most important source of energy was the nuclear power plant in Metsamor which had been closed as a result of Armenian Green activity in the wake of the devastating earthquake of December 1988. So, with the border to Azerbaijan closed, the natural gas supply from Russia via Georgia threatened by pipeline closures, and "mazut," the heavy fuel oil widely used in district heating plants in the Former Soviet Union, in short supply, Armenia was desperate for energy. The winter was frigid and schools were closed for lack of heat. Also many of the countless blocks of apartments in Yerevan were frequently without water as the water pumps

were powered by electricity.

So, our top priority was to expand our already extensive assistance program. The embassy was run, I think, quite ably for my year or more, by Thomas Price. When I got there, though, Armenia was in a humanitarian crisis. My key task, in the early part of my tenure, and in fact throughout my 26 months there was assistance. We did very well in the end. There was no lack of funding on the U.S. side, in part because of the very active advocacy by the Armenian American organizations. There was plenty of assistance money. The question was how to get the assistance there because of the fragmentation of Georgia. Of course, we would never try to get assistance in through Iran, because of our Iran policy.

But, in any case, the centerpiece of our humanitarian assistance program my first year in Armenia, and through my second as well was our Winter Warmth program. The idea was to distribute kerosene and kerosene heaters for home heating needs for the particularly vulnerable living in these huge apartment blocks, particularly in Yerevan. And, I add here that Armenia, like a number of smaller highly industrialized countries, is kind of like a tadpole. The head is bigger than the body. Yerevan had half Armenia's population and was the location of virtually all the important governmental and cultural institutions. In any case, in parallel with Charles Aznavour, the renowned French-Armenian crooner and composer, and also in parallel with the European Union, we focused initially on humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable elements of the population. We carefully designed a targeted kerosene home heating program for several categories of people deemed especially vulnerable. They were: nursing mothers, invalids, the elderly, and families with small children. We also put kerosene heaters in the schools.

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GILMORE:...I remember vividly the president, Levon Ter-Petrossian, a very distinguished scholar turned independence movement leader, telling me that he wouldn't know how to justify his continued role as president if the Armenian government could not provide enough bread to feed its people. We focused on humanitarian shipments of wheat, and by heavy persuasion and by a lot of work with Georgia, and making sure, by the way, that the Georgians had enough assistance that they weren't sorely tempted to take assistance destined for Armenia from the trains. We finally got an important, consistent aid pipeline working. On balance, I think it's fair to say that we saved people from malnutrition, and in some cases from near starvation. So that was the fundamental focus of my stay in Armenia.

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GILMORE: Before the Karabakh conflict reached the phase where Armenian forces occupied the area between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian border, the so-called Kalbajar region of Azerbaijan, we were able to send some humanitarian assistance to Armenia through Turkey. At one point in 1992 Turkey ran a train loaded with wheat up

to its border with Armenia where the cargo was transferred to the broader gauge Armenian railroad. Turkey and Armenia have different railroad gauges. Turkey has a European gauge railroad, and Armenia has the wider Soviet gauge. But after February of 1993 Turkey closed its border with Armenia and no more humanitarian assistance came through Turkey. Even before that, any U.S. cargo for Armenia that came via Turkey was subject to inspection. Armenian-Americans were up in arms about the inspection requirement, saying the Turks were unduly delaying the delivery of urgently needed assistance. But there was also another issue. After Turkey closed its border with Armenia, it also closed its air space to flights to and from Armenia for a lengthy period. So any flight to or from Armenia had to avoid Turkish airspace. This increased Armenia's isolation.

GILMORE: …Since 1994 there has been a cease-fire. The cease-fire left the Armenian forces in occupation of about 17% of Azerbaijan. Areas around Karabakh, including the entire region between Karabakh and the Armenian border, and from Karabakh down to the Iranian border are occupied by Armenian forces. The Armenians say that the reason they occupied those areas is to get Stepanakert out of artillery range. And there is some logic to that. In any case, the Azeris, pointing to the fact that the OSCE has recognized the borders as they existed when the Soviet Union collapsed, say that their territorial integrity must be restored. The Armenians say that Karabakh was never a part of a truly independent Azerbaijani state and note that there are negotiations on a compromise solution underway with the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States, Russia and France. There were times when there appeared to be progress toward a settlement. And the first presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Abulfaz Elchibey from Azerbaijan, and Levon Ter Petrossian in Armenia, personally negotiated two times: once in Paris, under the auspices of the French president, and once in Key West, under U.S. auspices. Although the Minsk Group continues to pursue a compromise solution, the Karabakh dispute remains unresolved.

There is some increased sentiment in Azerbaijan for trying to retake Karabakh militarily, but the general assumption is that the Armenian forces are too strong, militarily for now. The most capable army in the Caucasus , pound for pound, is undoubtedly the Karabakh army. They fought well during the Karabakh conflict, demonstrating an ability to operate with combined arms unmatched by the Azeri forces. The Karabakh Armenians also had a long tradition of providing soldiers for the Red Army and the Czarist Army before it; mountain boys who were rough and tough and good shooters. The Armenian Army is probably the next most capable force in the Caucasus. The Azeris have shown themselves to be considerably less capable militarily. So, for the time being, it looks as if the Karabakh Armenians, backed by the armed forces of Armenia, hold the upper hand in Karabakh. Although, there is a concern that as oil pipelines are built, as Azerbaijan's oil and gas wealth generates hard currency, Azerbaijan will be able to buy an army, so to speak, and improve their forces. Azerbaijan is acquiring military education assistance from its ally, Turkey, which is of

course a very formidable place to learn soldiery. In any case, the conflict remains unresolved.

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The Armenians view the Karabakh conflict against the background of the Armenians being driven off the Armenian Plateau and out of the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the 1915-1923 period. They see it as a question of Armenians surviving on their historic lands. The first Armenian president, Levon Ter- Petrossian, a distinguished scholar and historian, made the following points to me when I discussed the Karabakh dispute with him early in my tenure. Yerevan, he noted, was not really an Armenian city a century ago. It was a city with a mixed population which probably had a Muslim plurality. The composition of Yerevan's population, of course, changed in the course of the twentieth century. But when one looks at Karabakh, he observed, there has been a continuity of Armenian presence and civilization there since much earlier times. So the Armenian perception, Ter Petrossian continued, is that the first requirement for the Karabakh Armenians is for security and then self-determination on their historic lands. It means also a permanent linkage on the ground by road and rail to Armenia, so that Armenia can guarantee the Karabakh Armenians' security.

For the Azerbaijanis, Karabakh is also very important. It played a key role in Azerbaijan's national literary-cultural revival. The capital city of Karabakh, Stepanakert in Armenian, and Khankendi in Azerbaijani, is symbolically and culturally important to both nations. So the short answer is that neither side wants to give up what would be necessary to satisfy the other. That being said, there are theoretical possibilities for compromise. There were several ideas out there. One of them was to govern Nagorno-Karabakh as a special entity based on an understanding between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh that Nagorno-Karabakh would not be under any direct hierarchical control or direction from Baku but would remain linked with Baku economically. Karabakh's own constabulary would be responsible for public safety.

There was also talk, more by people from afar than people in the region, of a possible territorial swap: the so-called Goble Plan. Paul Goble, an analyst in the in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, presented to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance the idea of a territorial swap: the Armenian 'panhandle,' the part of Armenia extending down to its border with Iran, would be ceded to Azerbaijan while Azerbaijan would cede Karabakh to Armenia. There was considerable opposition to the swap idea. Armenians in the Diaspora, particularly, but also important players in Armenia itself were opposed. They feared that a direct territorial linkage between Turkey and Azerbaijan would bode ill for Armenia. Armenians would be surrounded by people who didn't like them and didn't wish them well. And also Armenia would lose its geopolitical clout, what little it had. The fact that the Armenian panhandle, which in effect separates Turkey from Azerbaijan is seen by many Armenians as giving Armenia a bit of leverage in the region. There's no question that of all the states that emerged independent from the former Soviet Union, Azerbaijan has the closest relationship with

Turkey. And Azerbaijani Turkish has a particularly close linguistic affinity with the Osmanli Turkish spoken in Turkey.

There are possibilities for resolution of the Karabakh conflict based on compromise. The Minsk Group negotiators came close at times. They came close in Key West when Ambassador Terry Cavanaugh was the U.S. envoy. . In more recent years, there was regular contact between the presidents of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, and Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, and their special envoys engaged in extensive discussion. While a solution is possible, in principle, it would take immense political will on both sides.

That being said, without resolution of the dispute, it has not been possible to develop South Caucasus-wide – Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan – economic cooperation. The South Caucasus market is small in any case, but three small individual markets make for less attractive conditions for investors than one more sizable regional market. Both countries rely on Georgia for access to the sea and location of oil and gas pipelines. The Georgians have tried to foster some kind of dialog. But basically what you have is bilateral relationships, important ones between Azerbaijan and Georgia, and Armenia and Georgia, but no South Caucasus-wide institutions. When I say Caucasus, I am careful to use the terms South Caucasus and North Caucasus, because the North Caucasus, of course, is part of the Russian Federation, and that's a very different kettle of fish.

The Karabakh conflict was extremely brutal. It wreaked great hardships on the civilian population of the region. There was hostage taking. Extensive minefields were laid, and there were numerous maimings of both combatants and non-combatants, including of children. The conflict also generated considerable pressure on Azerbaijan's Armenian minority in and around Baku and Sumgait, and the smaller but still significant Azeri minority in Armenia. The conflict has caused extreme hardship to the peoples of the region, generating large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. So, it's an important, unresolved matter.

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GILMORE:... Americans tend to think of the Armenian lobby, as they call it, as a kind of a single force that is close to being monolithic. That is not at all the case. There are two major advocacy organizations, and there's another important organization I should mention too. And there are numerous other organizations I won't get to. The two major advocacy organizations are the Armenian Assembly of America, and the Armenian National Committee of America. The "Assembly," was founded in 1972, as an umbrella organization over all the Armenian organizations in the United States. Subsequently, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Dashnaktsutyun or Dashnaks opted out of the umbrella arrangement. They established their own advocacy arm called the Armenian National Committee of America. So there are two primary sources of the Armenian advocacy effort in the U.S. Congress: the Armenian Assembly of America, and the Armenian National Committee of America.

Although the Assembly and the ANCA often work in parallel; they do not have joint committees. The Assembly is not a political organization. It takes no part in Armenian politics as a party. It does not get directly involved in Armenian politics and supports whatever government is in power in Armenia. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation and its ANCA advocacy arm are quite different. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation is a party with a very long history. It was founded in czarist Russia in1890. It's still a player in Armenian politics. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation has a party organization in Armenia; it has seats in the Parliament. The ARF also participates in Lebanese political life having on occasion had representation in the Lebanese Parliament. The ARF also sponsors the Armenian Relief Society, which operates not only in the U.S. and the Republic of Armenia, but also wherever there are Armenian communities around the world. Both the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation/ANCA have very close ties to a number of U.S. congressmen and senators. There's been an Armenian Issues Caucus in the House of Representatives since 1995. Depending on where we are in the cycle of elections for the House of Representatives, the caucus normally has 130-140 members. It's quite influential. When a bill which would provide assistance to Armenia is under consideration in the House of Representatives, there are, almost automatically, 140 votes for it. The first co-chairs of the caucus were Representative Pallone, Democrat, N.J. and Representative Porter, Republican, Ill. In sum, there's a strong foundation of support for assistance to Armenia, not only in terms of the two Armenian American advocacy organizations, but also in terms of the Armenian Issues Caucus in the House.

While there's no Armenian issues caucus, *per se*, in the Senate, there have been a number of senators over time who have cared deeply about Armenia and worked to support it. Some of them are now retired. Senator Bob Dole and Senator Paul Simon are perhaps the two best examples. Both were very consistent supporters of assistance to Armenia. Senator Paul Sarbanes also comes to mind. There are more. During my time in Yerevan Senator Harry Reid and Senator Phil Graham visited Armenia. Harry Reid was then the Democratic Whip in the Senate. Phil Graham is now retired. But the foregoing list gives one an idea of what kind of oomph Armenian advocacy has had in the Senate. Harry Reid visited in the winter of 1993-94 when Armenia was in an economic crisis and the hardships it created were palpable. Mrs. Reid accompanied him. They stayed in what had been a luxury hotel. It had no hot water, and guests were advised to fill their bathtubs with cold water if they desired to bathe. But this was the kind of support Armenia attracted in the Congress.

There is another very important Armenian organization, which is not an advocacy organization in the classic sense, but has provided assistance to Armenian communities around the world for more than 100 years. It is the Armenian General Benevolent Union. A non-profit organization, the AGBU was founded in Cairo, Egypt in 1906 to promote Armenian identity and heritage. There was an important Armenian community in Egypt during the Ottoman period. The AGBU was founded there in response to the 1905 Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire. I mention it particularly because it has a sterling reputation in the Armenian world and has been highly successful advocating for funds for the American University of Armenia.

GILMORE: The American University of Armenia was in the process of seeking accreditation in the U.S. when I gave this interview. It has since gained full accreditation. It partnered with the University of California, whose Board of Regulators serves as the nucleus of the Board for the American University of Armenia. Like AUB, the American University of Armenia has been immensely successful. As Louise Manoogian Simone, Chair of the Armenian General Benevolent Union has pointed out, AUA alumni are the most desirable recruits in Armenia for government service and private industry. The AUA has already shown itself to be a remarkable success.

In closing, let me say that Armenians still care deeply about the issue that really brought them together before Armenia was independent: genocide recognition. There's a strong conviction among Armenian-Americans and, indeed, Armenians everywhere that the deportation and massacre of 1.5 million Ottoman Armenians living in Istanbul and five eastern provinces of Turkey from 1915 to 1922 constitutes genocide as it is defined in the UN Genocide Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. The Armenian-American community strongly supports action by the Congress and President affirming U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide. There have been a number of efforts in that direction, and more should be expected. The Armenian-American advocacy groups also advocate for economic assistance to Nagorno Karabakh which is not recognized by any government. Congress has approved the provision of some humanitarian assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenian-American advocacy groups also care deeply about Armenia's security. Specifically, they want to see continuing efforts by the U.S., together with France and Russia, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the CSCE, to bring the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to a negotiated settlement.

AMBASSADOR A. ELIZABETH JONES

Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs

Department of State
EUR BUREAU
Washington, D.C.
(2003)

Elizabeth Jones was born in 1948 and comes from a foreign service family. She graduated from Swarthmore College with a BA in History in 1970 and entered the Foreign Service the same year. She held multiple positions in offices from Afghanistan, to Washington D.C, to Egypt. She received her MA in International Relations from Boston University in 1986 while still working in the foreign service. She was Ambassador to Kazakhstan from 1995-1998. Her last post in the foreign service before her retirement in

2005 was as the assistant secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs. Jones rejoined the State Department in 2011. Ambassador A. Elizabeth Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus: The Effect of the Nagorno-Karabakh Issue in Armenia and Azerbaijan on Democratic Assistance Programs in the Caucasus

Q: Today is February 27, 2009. You had other things going on, too. One was the Rose Revolution in Georgia. What was that all about and how did we view it?

JONES: The Caucasus? We actually had a relatively similar view about the three Caucasian countries, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia and the five Central Asian countries. They became independent all at about the same time. We instituted similar assistance programs in each of the eight countries at about the same time, focused on military reform, economic reform, political reform and social reform. They each had similar relationships with the Russians, as they moved from being part of the Soviet Union to being independent states.

The difference with the Caucasus countries, of course, is that they were closer to Europe, so they had a stronger idea of a European future for themselves, including possible EU partnerships and eventually EU membership. All of these countries were already in Partnership for Peace, the NATO association, right after independence. They were all working in Partnership for Peace exercises and institutions to varying degree. A particular problem of course was between Azerbaijan and Armenia, because of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue that erupted after independence.

Q: You might explain what that was.

JONES: After independence there was a battle over a particular part of Azerbaijan called Nagorno-Karabakh, which is where Heydar Aliyev, the president of Azerbaijan, is actually from. A lot of prominent families were from that part of Azerbaijan. Armenia attacked that area, took it over, I'm probably describing it more in a one-sided way than I should, because of provocations that led to the attack. That area has been occupied by Armenia ever since. There have been negotiations sponsored by the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, from the time of the fighting in the nineties. The three cochairs of the negotiation are Russia, the United States and France. They call themselves the Minsk Group, it was a group that was formed in Minsk by chance, at an OSCE meeting. So the continuing confrontation, shall we say, over Nagorno-Karabakh caused difficulties between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the OSCE to the point that it was difficult for there to be joint training exercises in one country or the

other to which nationals of the other country should have been included.

We were constantly trying to sort out those kinds of issues, which was a very important element of our policy. Of course, one of the big elements in the NATO Partnership for Peace is that we all work together for a common good. There's not meant to be competition at all in the Partnership for Peace, certainly not in NATO.
So after 9/11, because of the strength of the Armenia lobby in the United States, Armenia was able to prevent the assistance program that we had in place for all of the Central Asia and the Caucasus countries from being used in Azerbaijan.

But after 9/11, when it became so very important that we really ramp up our programs with all countries, particularly on counterterrorism, on border controls, on intelligence exchanges, on law enforcement exchanges, we worked extremely hard to get rid of this prohibition on assistance programs for Azerbaijan. Failing that, we tried to at least get waiver authority, so that we could use the waiver authority to begin these programs.

The Armenian lobby in the United States was dead set against any assistance going to Azerbaijan regardless. We were able to launch a very effective campaign on the Hill, in the media and, frankly, with the Armenians in Armenia to say, "So let me understand, you, Armenia, would like to assure that terrorism is allowed to run rampant in the Caucasus, because you are refusing to permit us to do any programs to close down the borders of Azerbaijan to terrorists and criminal gangs that are able to access these territories rather freely without the kind of assistance that the U.S. can provide?"
Using those kinds of talking points we were able to overcome the Armenian resistance and we were able to get waiver authority for Azerbaijan.

Q: Did the Armenian lobby, which is terribly powerful in the United States, did that play any role in this?

JONES: The Armenian lobby was very strong. They were actually more opposed to eliminating the aid prohibition or providing waivers than Armenia itself was. We generally found that to be the case, that the lobby in the United States was more aggressively against Azerbaijan or against a solution in Nagorno-Karabakh than Armenia Was.

Q: This, again, is so often the case, where immigrants carry old grudges a lot longer and they're not really looking for a solution, because in many ways these old grudges give them a sense of cohesiveness around the bars of Glendale or wherever it is.

JONES: Right. The other factor that I always thought exacerbated the problem of the

Armenian lobby in the United States is that there were competing Armenia lobbies in the United States. So each one was trying to gain more adherents and therefore greater funding from Armenian-Americans by trying to out radical the other. The tougher one could be against Azerbaijan or against a solution in Nagorno-Karabakh or whatever it might be, they felt the more successful they could be.

So my strategy was to get the Armenians in Armenia to call off the dogs in Washington of the lobbies. They did. We finally were able to get waiver authority to institute, implement, some of these border controls, law enforcement, intelligence exchange, all of these kinds of programs, democracy programs, anticorruption programs, all of the things that had been completely lacking in terms of programs we were able to do in Azerbaijan and were really necessary there.

Q: Well, what were our concerns there?

JONES: We had very big concerns about terrorist organizations, criminal gangs, criminals involved in proliferation of nuclear materials, being able to smuggle material, weapons, people, trafficking of persons across the Caspian and across the Caspian through the Caucasus into Europe, into the Mediterranean and into other parts of Europe, into Turkey, wherever it might be.

The more we could erect appropriate barriers—so that people could get through who were legitimate but at least they would be checked at the borders—we felt the safer these countries would be and the safer the United States would be, particularly after 9/11 in terms of counterterrorism.

We also wanted to be able to beef up the Caspian naval patrols of various countries. We had
already done a big program upgrading Kazakhstan's abilities to deploy fast customs patrol boats in the Caspian. We weren't able to do the same thing with Azerbaijan because of this legal prohibition on aid. We worked very hard to get be able to institute those kinds of programs in Azerbaijan as well, to be able to go after criminal gangs and others that were involved in terrorism.

Q: Was there any opening towards a solution over the disputed territory?

JONES: There were. At the beginning of the Bush Administration we got very close to an agreement, actually, between the Armenians and the Azeris in negotiations sponsored by the Minsk Group in the Florida Keys. It was led by our Minsk Group colleagues and various of my colleagues in EUR were very closely involved in that. It involved the

president in the end. An agreement was actually written out for how you might solve a lot of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Right of return and internally displaced persons issues were sorted out, various programs were to be funded. But in the end both leaders went home and hadn't really done enough groundwork at home. It foundered on "Oh, public opinion won't let us do this." In other words, they didn't have the political will to do what was necessary.

It's not as though that led, then, to fighting. It's just meant that the Minsk Group had to go back to the negotiating table with these guys and try to come up with a way to get them to lay the political work at home to permit an agreement to actually take hold. We're not there even now. That hasn't happened.

Q: And this at least to a certain extent lanced the boil, as far as they weren't fighting each other?

JONES: To an extent it did, but every time elections came up in either country, which they did periodically, this would be one of the big issues: how tough are we going to be on Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, how tough are we going to be on Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh?

It was a constant irritant. When I'd go to visit, which I did regularly, all the conversations were about Nagorno-Karabakh, even though my agenda was to do a lot more on military, integration with the Partnership for Peace, these kinds of things, especially with Armenia. Armenia was still getting so much military assistance from Russia,. We needed to be absolutely certain that what was going on with Russia was not in contravention to the Conventional Forces in Europe agreements that had to do with how much the old Soviet forces could be in the border zone to Europe. Armenia was one of the big areas affected. That was one of the other big issues that we were constantly talking about with the Armenians.

BAHRAIN

PAIGE ALEXANDER
USAID
Middle East Task Force Leader
Washington, DC
(2011)

Paige Alexander grew up in Atlanta, Georgia in a very politically and socially active family. She got involved in working on election campaigns and working as an intern in political offices while attending college at Tulane and moved to DC following her graduation from Tulane to work in non-profits in the area. She continued her work in non-profits following her move to Prague in 1990 and worked in non-profits both before and after both her forays into working with USAID under the Clinton administration and the Obama administration. Mrs. Alexander currently works as the CEO for the Carter Center in Atlanta. Paige Alexander was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2022.

Topical Focus – USAID Middle East task force focus on Bahrain

Q: While also being AA of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau?

ALEXANDER: Yes. So, he asked me to take a little leave of absence. I had my deputy, Roberta Mahoney, who had been actually running the bureau before I got confirmed, and Jonathan Hale, who's the political appointee. [Raj] Shah said, "They've taken care of the Bureau until now, you can do this." That was during the Arab Spring in March. So that was March through June, I ended up leading the Middle East taskforce and trying to get all the players to agree. I had no Middle East background myself. But my husband was working at Brookings on the Middle East. And so we would literally, in the morning, while making sandwiches for the kids, I would say, "I've been tapped to go to a meeting at the White House on Bahrain. What do you think?" Now, USAID doesn't have much to do with Bahrain. But we didn't want to lose the seat at the table that we were being given to hear what the other agencies were thinking.

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Q: Did you have a sense of what the White House wanted from AID vis-à-vis response to the Arab Spring—was that clear? Was it evolving as these meetings occurred?

ALEXANDER: It was evolving as things went on, because we have led on the

humanitarian response. That was happening, and that was very much caught up in one bureau. And then the questions were primarily about Egypt at the time and what had happened at Tahrir Square. AID, prior to the Obama administration, had kind of let go in Egypt. And being at IREX, I saw this. We had wanted to work in Egypt, but if you didn't have the necessary registration—your golden ticket—you had to be registered to work with AID there. So during the previous administration, if you weren't registered in Egypt, you could still get DRL [Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor] money. And if you were registered, you could get AID money. And so there was just a very small group who were registered. And in Egypt, the more exciting programs were the civil society oriented work that DRL was funding. When Tahrir Square happened, the DRL grantees were the ones who really had a foot in the door. And so I ended up in a lot of unfortunate situations with Anne Patterson—not the AID Anne Patterson—but the Assistant Secretary Anne Patterson, who was coming out of Egypt, having been Ambassador during a very difficult time. She was awaiting confirmation to be Assistant Secretary, and she was making a lot of decisions about AID and how AID was going to work. And her decision was that MEPI—the Middle East Partnership Initiative—were going to take all of the foreign aid funding for Egypt, and AID would not get anything because she said we weren't doing exciting programs and our programs were for the longer term.

AID was sending me in there to fight to make sure that we had a good piece of the pie. And probably one of my more memorable meetings ever was at the State Department when Anne Patterson had announced that she was going to do it this way. But previous [prior] to that I had gotten together with Tom Melia [Thomas O. Melia], who was the deputy assistant secretary of DRL and a longtime friend of mine from the former Soviet sphere, and Tamara Coffman Wittes who was running MEPI at the time, and we sat down and I said, “What are you going to do with ninety-five million dollars?” And their eyes popped! Because DRL and MEPI weren't used to working with that much. And I said, “Look, why don't we do it this way? Why don't we each take a pot of funds, and we see how far we get by August. And then we figure out who's got the most traction, and they'll take the rest of the funds.” And we had sort of cut this deal.

And then suddenly, we're in this meeting with Anne Patterson, who announces DRL and MEPI are taking all the money. And Tom Melia leaned across the table and said, “Although I hate to agree with our friends from AID, I think we actually have a different solution.” And he laid it out and Tamara supported it. And Anne Patterson came back and called Don Steinberg—who is the Deputy Administrator at AID—and said, “Who the hell was that you sent in? Who totally tanked my meeting?” And Don, sort of thinking, “Well, Paige wouldn’t normally tank a meeting so that seems odd.” So, he calls me and he's like, “What just happened?” And I told him, and he was like, “That is impressive. You just totally back-footed Anne Patterson at her own game.” And that's exactly what

we did. And we each took a chunk of change. And AID moved faster, more effectively. And we didn't care anymore if someone was registered or not. It was the middle of things falling apart in Egypt. And we ended up with the bulk of the money by that summer.

Q: And what was the programming like? Did you have to do a lot of new programming or working in new areas or with new organizations? Or was it basically building on what you had?

ALEXANDER: Well, so here's the benefit of running a task force, you actually fight for the money and then you give it to the bureau, and you tell them to do what they need to do. So to my knowledge, I mean, Chris Crowley and George Laudato were still running the bureau. So, I was just trying to do inter-agency and intra-agency cooperation. My memory is that NDI [National Democratic Institute] ended up with two grants from AID and IRI [International Republican Institute] ended up with two grants—one from DRL and one from AID. And the AID ones stuck and the DRL one was a little bit more risky, and we were risk-averse. And so, theirs did not work and ours did. By August, I had turned it over to the bureau because I fought for the funds and got them and Jim Bever was in the field trying hard to get money

BOLIVIA

HILDA ARELLANO
USAID
Mission Director
Le Paz, Bolivia
(1996-1998)

Ms. Arellano was born and raised in Westfield, New Jersey. She received her Bachelor's at Cornell University and pursued Master's degrees at UT Austin and the Antioch Putney Graduate School of Education. She volunteered in Bolivia before entering the Foreign Service as an education officer in Washington D.C. She worked for USAID in Ecuador and Guatemala and has served as a USAID Mission Director in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Iraq, and Egypt. She has also worked in Hungary, Afghanistan, and Washington D.C. Ms. Arellano was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2016.

Topical Focus - Counter-Narcotics in Bolivia

Q: That is impressive. Okay. So what did you focus on just in terms of the specific development objectives for this tour in Bolivia?

ARELLANO: Well, at the time we had a very friendly government to the United States. So there was a major counter-narcotics focus, major, so coca eradication as well as judicial transparency. Very, very strong relationship with the minister of finance to work

on keeping them in the good graces of the IMF which was always an issue for them because they relied very heavily on IMF and World Bank assistance at the macroeconomic level. Health and education. But in general it was an excellent two years because I had never really had a formal U.S. experience in Bolivia. I had done some contract work but I had never been a Foreign Service Officer with USAID.

Q: How did the eradication of coca program go? I imagine there was resistance.

ARELLANO: Right and especially in Bolivia. They are extremely organized, very militant, so there was just a lot of strife. But there's always been a lot of strife in Bolivia. Having lived there for so long, to this day, it is just a way of life. Very well-organized at the community level. Very, very vehement. The government was a strong partner, and if you've talked with any of the ambassadors who were there during that time, even the mission directors, they could tell you. But as a result of that, there is no longer USAID in Bolivia. You know, after I don't know how many years, I can't even remember when the mission was shut down there, but it took a while. It took 10-12-13 years but you had a president, you still have the same president, who was a leader of the coca grower's movement and he ran on that platform and won. So again, the double-edged sword of how far you push, how hard you push. I mean the government was very much with us. I think the attitude of the U.S., at least when I was there, was it's only going to happen if they want it to happen so they had to be in the lead. Now we set certain terms and we were a very powerful partner and player in that. But you had a government that was extremely friendly to ideas of not wanting to become a narco-state, not wanting the judiciary to be totally in the hands of either the Columbian mafias or other mafias. I mean just very, very strong statements. But at the grassroots level, that level of analysis fell on deaf ears because it's an extremely poor country and that was the bread and butter to this day. So it's the delicate balance. I think there's been a lot written about that but it was interesting to live it. And I lived it before I joined AID, before the end of the seventies, you already had a very strong coca grower's movement and as they shut down the mines, which had a lot to do with keeping in the good graces of the IMF because they had a very, very hardline stabilization program that closed down what were the state-owned mines, they couldn't afford to keep them open anymore, a lot of those miners were relocated to the coca-growing area. Well, they were relocated to the tropics and subtropics where they were kind of told, go out and grow things in areas where really the only thing that grew was coca.

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
Peace Corps Volunteer
Achiri and Machacamarca, Bolivia
(1968-1970)

Mr. Rhodes was born and raised in Tuscon, Arizona. He received his Bachelor's at Occidental College and his Master's at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia, attended U.C. Berkeley's Law School, and worked in the legal field before entering the Foreign Service. He worked in

various positions for USAID in Haiti, Washington D.C., Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, South Africa. After retiring from USAID, Mr. Rhodes did NGO work for the Institute for International Education and Save the Children, worked as the Latin American Managing Director at the Millennium Challenge Corp, and the Chief of Staff for the Peace Corps. William Stacy Rhodes was interviewed by John Pielemeier in 2016.

Topical Focus - Peace Corps Involvement in Bolivian Community Democracy

RHODES: It was a mix, but the focus was predominantly what was called then "rural community development." Not really technical or large-scale agriculture. I had been a philosophy major so they wisely didn't put me in agriculture per se! But I wound up working primarily on "campesino" agriculture in rural Bolivia. As with many Peace Corps programs in Latin America in the 60s, the primary focus was on community development; living and working simply in a village while getting to know your neighbors and the leaders, both formal and informal, e.g., teachers, church heads, business people, big farmers, etc. Then moving forward to provide assistance in organizing the community around setting priorities for improvements for the town. In those days, most of the volunteers going to Africa served in formal education; they either became teachers or trainers or were in schools one way or another. But in Latin America in the '60s, the focus was heavily on what some might call 'quasi-revolutionary' development theories of change. This entailed challenging the status quo from the 'grass roots', organizing communities amongst the majorities living in poverty who were socially and politically excluded. It was about how to raise the level of community organization and ability to obtain new resources for meeting basic needs. It did not focus on political participation per se, but addressed economic and social exclusion from access to credit, technical assistance, and other resources. On how you get a school or a clinic built with external resources supplementing local inputs and 'sweat equity'. There was such a broad set of social, economic and social constraints (including clear racial discrimination) for the campesinos – small farmers – in Bolivia and elsewhere in Latin America. Peace Corps had determined that it was critical to support communities in taking these issues on pretty directly, with a very large group of community development volunteers that used participation, organization and engagement to mobilize rural people to prioritize their needs and figure out ways to go after them.

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Q: I know Peace Corps stays separate from the government as much as it can from U.S. government activities. But did you see yourselves as part of the Alliance for Progress?

RHODES: Yes and no. I think all of us became aware in training of the relatively new "Alianza" with Latin America, which had been established by President Kennedy some years earlier, and formed the U.S. policy toward Latin America. But for most of us, all that was just 'too far away' from our tasks and we were much more focused on how to live and work in the Andes, or how to grow coffee down in the Yungas, or how to address TB in Tarija. I had the advantage of just having gotten a master's degree in international relations, focusing on Latin America. So I was well aware of La Alianza para el Progreso

(Alliance for Progress) and the fact that President Kennedy focused on and made a major investment in Latin America. But while I knew that the USG had increased significantly its assistance under the Alliance, I did not have any sense of a direct link to the very rural development work I was to do as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV). As you noted, Peace Corps was very sensitive about and jealous of its independence from the rest of the U.S. government, especially State and even USAID. Volunteers are not U.S. government employees; we were 'citizen-volunteers' participating in a program sponsored by a USG agency but we were not 'part of the government' or required to carry out (or defend) U.S. foreign policy per se. The Peace 10 Corps programs going to Latin America were huge in the 60s. When I was in Bolivia, there were between 300 and 400 PCVs there. There were even larger programs elsewhere; this was a time when Peace Corps was still close to its peak size, which was when Sargent Shriver stepped down as Director in 1966. So it didn't strike me that we Volunteers had a particularly strong connection to the U.S. government per se. But we were aware of the link of what we were doing to President Kennedy's foreign policy approach in Latin America.

BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

SUSAN KOSINSKI FRITZ
USAID
Democracy Officer
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1996-1999)

Susan Kosinski Fritz studied at Rutgers University and American University before entering USAID as a Presidential Management Intern in 1989. She served in many different positions in several countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in May 2024.

Topical Focus – Democracy Programming Post-Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Q: No, that's great. So, you were in the first group that went out to Bosnia and helped to create the Mission along with Craig Buck. When did Craig get there, and was he there for a couple months before you got there then?

FRITZ: Oh, absolutely.

He called me in December. I don't know if he actually went out in December, but I knew he came through Washington from Kazakhstan. I think he may have gone out in December 1995. And so I went out right after.

Q: A few months later. So how large was the Mission? How many people were there setting up? What was it like going to a country that had just gone through a terrible war?

FRITZ: You know, it was the best of times and worst of times. It was a small core group. So it was Craig, Gary Mansavage, a retired Foreign Service Officer, came out as a PSC to help get things running. People like Bill Granger, who was an experienced Executive Officer, came out as well. Jim Ahn, who had worked as a Controller for Craig in Kazakhstan also came out to get the Mission established.

Q: But it was a small group.

FRITZ: Small group to get things going. When I went out in January, the Mission was in one room in the embassy, just one big room with desk after desk lined up. No cubicles, no nothing. And I would say there were probably 10 people. It was small, it grew, but even then, when we eventually moved into an office it wasn't a huge Mission for the amount of money we were managing at the time. Our first office was in the old trade union building – Dom Sindikata (Union Home) -- which had been shelled and whose columns out front were crumbling. Thankfully, they weren't structurally required to hold up the building. But when you walked in the building every day, there was this destroyed column that was a reminder of the violent war that had taken place.

When I first got there, the Disaster Assistance Relief Team (DART) was pretty big because they were still delivering a lot of humanitarian assistance. There were a couple of Foreign Service officers, Merritt Brody, who managed all the infrastructure programming, rebuilding roads and electricity and all that. Then Erna Kerst came out as the Deputy Mission Director and Mike Kerst came out to run programs in the economic development sector. Yeah, so it was a very small staff and eventually we built up, hiring local staff. Before I got back out in May, I had been working remotely with Gary Mansavage, who was helping to staff up the Democracy Office. So by the time I arrived in May, we were interviewing and starting to hire people. In the beginning, we hired two FSNs, and that was it for a long time. Then I hired a local Personal Services Contractor as the Deputy Office Director – she was fantastic. And then eventually from there, built up the staff.

Q: And you were doing the democracy work. And what was the program? You said it started with working with the cantons on local government, but what else?

FRITZ: Yeah, that was part of it. I became an elections expert after three years there, because we had four elections in three years. The Dayton Peace Accords, which were signed in December, required elections to take place within six to nine months after Dayton was signed. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was designated to administer the elections. The State Department had appointed Ambassador Robert Frowick to head the OSCE Mission in Bosnia. In those days, the OSCE was basically seconded diplomats, still is to a certain extent, but not election experts. So we were tracking the organization of elections in addition to providing assistance to political parties. Larry Garber, who was now working for USAID but came from NDI and had quite a bit of elections experience, came out to Bosnia quite a bit to check in on the preparations for elections. We were looking at each other saying, "This election is not going to happen -- there's no way for this to happen by June 14 (which would have been 6 months after Dayton was signed." But we knew it had to happen by September 14.

We decided to bring in a group of election administration experts through IFES. I wrote up a scope of work for a small team of six people – the Director General for elections, an outreach person, an IT person, and a logistics person plus a few others. We basically hired this team that USAID paid for and embedded them in the OSCE under Ambassador Frowick's command. And they pulled off the elections by September 14. It was pretty hairy, because there was so much to do and trying to pull off an election in a war-torn country was pretty hard to do. But IFES did it. They were amazing. They pulled it off.

Q: Yes. And I really like the idea of embedding them in the OSCE mechanism. It sounds like that worked well? Do you have thoughts about making it less directly US?

FRITZ: It did work well at the time. I think there was a universal understanding that the OSCE did not have the technical expertise. The team that we brought in was so good at what they did. They were respected experts. So it made it a lot easier. Even though they were paid for by the United States, they were not seen as a USAID and USG team – precisely because they were embedded in the OSCE.

I think now the OSCE obviously has a whole lot more experience. In those days, OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) did election monitoring, but that's a separate arm of the OSCE and monitoring is not the same as administering an election. I think they have that now. In terms of a model for the future, I think there could be issues if, for example, we wanted the team to do something different from what whoever is leading the organization wanted. I think it could be difficult because you have dual command, but given that we all had a common goal, which was to carry out the elections on a very tight timeline, it was a lot easier.

Q: Was there also a Bosnian authority that was involved with organizing elections, or was it an internationally run election?

FRITZ: Internationally run. By the fourth election we were training poll workers and helping to set up a Bosnian-organized election commission and poll workers and all that. My understanding is that it still exists today and administers elections for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Q: Okay. Was Ambassador Holbrooke involved at all in what you all were doing? Or did you have contact with him? And what was it like?

FRITZ: No, I didn't have any contact with him, unfortunately, or fortunately. No, I never met him. He definitely was very involved in Bosnia, but he was at the highest levels. I was in the nuts and bolts and the lower levels, making sure things worked at the operational level.

Q: So, you were there for three years and managed elections. Were we trying to do anything else on the DG front? Or, did the need for electoral support overwhelm everything else?

FRITZ: The elections were definitely overwhelming. We were doing, again, local government work. We were helping establish new institutions such as cantons which is a level of government between the municipalities and the Federation. That was an important part of our work. We also were working with civil society, with NGOs, helping to build civil society. The war started in Yugoslavia right about the time of the transition from socialism and communism to democracy in Eastern Europe so Bosnia never had the opportunities that some of the other countries we worked with in the region. Day to day, as we were implementing programs, we would be confronted with that aspect of their transition in addition to rebuilding after a war. So it was a dual transition that was happening. And while we did have to focus on elections, we started to help civil society to develop and grow and media was an important part as well, because the media was a tool for division in the country. We did a lot with the independent media that were not incendiary, that were not sowing divisions.

Q: Were there significant movements of people out of Bosnia afterwards? I mean, did Serbs and Croats leave or were there Serbs and Croats that remained within Bosnia?

FRITZ: Yes, those who could get out did, but a lot of people stayed. What really happened was a lot of population shifts within the country. For example, there are two towns next to each other, one's called Travnik, the other one's Novi Travnik. Travnik is mainly Bosniak and Novi Travnik is now mainly Croat. But they had been mixed before. And so what happened? If you were a Croat, you got out of Travnik and if you were a Bosniak, you got out of Novi Travnik. So you had these population shifts and swaps.

That's what made the initial elections so interesting and scary at the same time. You could vote where you currently lived or where you were from. Many people wanted to go back to see their houses, their apartments, their towns and this was an opportunity under NATO protection for you to do that. If you wanted to go vote where you came from, you could do that. There was a lot of hand-wringing and people were very nervous that election day would be fraught with renewed fighting. Some of the war was on a very individual – neighbors shooting at neighbors. So there was this concern that you'd see huge numbers of people coming and going and therefore greater opportunities for conflict.

Q: But it didn't happen?

FRITZ: It did not happen. I had this wonderful woman on my staff, a Bosnian Croat, who was a chess grandmaster in Bosnia. She did an analysis of these population shifts that had happened and what we might encounter on election day. We wrote several cables including her analysis on elections because she was just so smart and everyone was trying to anticipate what we might see on election day. Luckily, nothing happened in terms of major violence and the elections did happen and people voted, and it happened by the Dayton-mandated deadline. So it was, from those perspectives, a huge success.

Unfortunately, all the parties in Bosnia were at that time monoethnic. You had (and I believe still have today), for example, a Bosniak party, the Party for Democratic Action (SDA). If you're a Bosniak, you're also Muslim, so you're only going to vote for the SDA, right? Your political representation is religiously and ethnically homogenous and it's the same with the Serbs and the Croats. There was one political party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) that I had high hopes for but unfortunately, they've become hugely corrupt and not the multi-ethnic savior party that I had hoped they would become. It was the one party that was multi-ethnic and reformist and said all the right things but in the end, it didn't offer anything different.

Q: So today it remains the three. Okay, interesting. You mentioned the important work done by one of the mission's FSNs, a Bosnian Croat. What was the composition of the FSN staff and how much of that was taken into consideration in recruitment of staff?

FRITZ: You know, it's funny, we didn't take that into account. We advertised the jobs and whoever was good, we hired. So I think we were just fortunate that we got people who were multi-ethnic or were not only of one ethnicity -- Bosniaks. I think it'd be a lot harder today because Sarajevo has become much more monoethnic and inhabited primarily by Bosniaks. The other person we hired had an ethnic Serb dad and an ethnic Bosniak mom. Her dad was stuck on the Serbian side during the war. He had a garden in Pale and he went to get onions when the fighting started so she didn't see him throughout the entire war. A lot of people saw themselves as Yugoslavs, not one or the other ethnicity – that was what Tito was all about and tried to inculcate. It wasn't until the war that I think that changed. But before the war, what I was told is that people saw themselves much more as Yugoslavs.

Q: Very interesting. You also mentioned that the woman working for you, who was the chess grandmaster, had done this great reporting in cables. So I assume that the embassy really valued the USAID mission and its ability to work at the ground level and to write cables and to do reporting. I have always thought that USAID was in a great position to do that. And yet most USAID missions don't do it very much. Do you have thoughts on that?

FRITZ: Yeah, I think Bosnia was the high point in that regard. We had a great working relationship. I think it had a lot to do with the fact that we were a very small staff and so was the Embassy. Given the situation you couldn't have large numbers of official staff. When I first went out to Sarajevo in January 1996, people were living in the Embassy and there were quite a few still living there when I went out in May. I think Craig Buck was one of the first Embassy staff who lived in a house. But during the war, people lived and worked in the Embassy—and it was not a big building. Remember, Bosnia was a republic of Yugoslavia before that so we didn't have embassies in each republic. So it was a little bit weird that people would come to country team having just rolled out of bed. Yeah, it was a little too much.

I think that, if you have a smaller staff, then you rely on one another a little bit more and that builds trust and cooperation. For the first election, we were not allowed to go into Republika Srpska (the RS). It was just too dangerous. It wasn't until later in my time there that we were able to travel to and work in the RS. The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) went in first and then we gradually expanded democracy programs managed by my office to the RS. I did joint trips into the RS with some of my Political Section colleagues when we went for the first time to eastern Bosnia and it was a bit scary. Actually, it was probably the most scared I've been in any situation.

Q: And this is part of Bosnia.

FRITZ: It's part of Bosnia. Bosnia and Herzegovina includes two entities, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We were living and working in the Federation initially and then eventually we got permission to work in the RS. First off, we were exploring assistance related to the elections. I went with my Embassy colleague to meet with some political parties in a very small rural town, I think it was Han Pjesak which is northeast of Sarajevo. A little further east is Srebrenica. We had driven across the inter-entity borderline and we had a driver who was a Bosniak. Actually, we had a two-car convoy, so we had two Bosniak drivers. When we arrived at the political party office, we walked in and the drivers came with us inside, which was not what usually happened. Drivers usually stayed with the cars. There was a small waiting room or office just outside the conference room in which we were going to be meeting. I could see our driver was shaking. He knew what these guys that we were meeting with were capable of. And then I got scared. We were going into the conference room for the meeting. I knew our drivers would not be comfortable sitting out there, that they would feel vulnerable, so I said that they needed to come into the meeting with us. So they sat in the meeting just to keep them safe. I'm sure nothing would have happened, but they were scared. I was scared for them because these weren't good people. While you don't know for sure what they had done during the war, you could make an educated guess and it wasn't good. We did not offer political party assistance to them.

But I did travel quite a bit with Embassy colleagues for that election. If one or other of us was going to go out, we'd grab the other one and say, “Hey, I'm going to go see so-and-so, do you want to come with me?” So it was a lot easier back then.

Q: That's a great story of collaboration in the way it should be. Each helping the other's perspective. I really can't imagine what it must have been like those days. Was there much communication among the USAID missions in the former Yugoslavia? There was a USAID mission in Belgrade. There was a USAID mission in Zagreb and a USAID mission in Sarajevo. Was there one in Slovenia?

FRITZ: No, we never had one in Slovenia.

Q: Was there much communication among the former Yugoslav countries?

FRITZ: During my time in Bosnia we did a joint retreat with OTI which included the OTI folks from Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia along with people working on DG programming in each place. I think for Serbia it was Kathryn Stratos who came from Washington. All of the OTI representatives were field-based. And we compared notes and shared information with one another at that meeting which we organized in Zagreb.

Before the war, there was a USAID Representative in Belgrade, Serbia, Mike Zak. During the early days of the programming in Eastern Europe Mike used to say, “Yugoslavia needs vitamin D – Democracy.” And he was always trying to get Jerry Hyman out to the region and to bring programming with him. So Jerry did go out at least once and it was during this time that he actually had met with Radovan Karadžić, who was later convicted of war crimes. Jerry still has this doodling that Karadžić did during the meeting where he was explaining where the Serbs are and where the Croats and Bosniaks are. And it looks like somebody just scribbled a lot because he was very animated. I keep telling Jerry, he needs to send that to the diplomacy museum in the State Department.

There was no office in Kosovo because Kosovo wasn't a separate country at the time. Croatia had a small USAID Representative Office run by Chuck Aanenson. A lot of the humanitarian assistance for Bosnia was being run out of Croatia. In order to go into Bosnia you had to go either through Zagreb or Split (Croatia) and get accredited by the United Nations. So absolutely there was collaboration in the beginning and during the war. When Craig Buck was named Mission Director for Bosnia they became two separate missions. There was also a small program in Macedonia that started early on.
Q: Yes, I think it was run out of Croatia initially too.

FRITZ: Actually, I don't think so – Macedonia started on its own with a USAID Representative Office.

Q: Other donors. I assume the European Union was very big. Were there other donors there and was coordination an important part of what you had to do? Were there ever any dramatic differences of opinion on what should be done and how it should be done?

FRITZ: Yeah, so again, this is still pretty early days for democracy assistance so the EU's democracy assistance didn't come into play. They were a little bit behind us on most things on the democracy front. For example, there were several members of the EU parliament that were intrigued with how the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) worked. I met with them on my way back from Eastern Europe once and shared background on both the NED and on our democracy portfolio. Shortly afterwards they passed a law creating a European version of the NED.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were both very important on both the economic side and on rebuilding, but I wasn't involved in that.

I do remember a meeting at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to discuss elections assistance. There were a few donors, such as the German Stiftungs which are political party foundations that provide assistance to political parties similar to NDI and IRI. There wasn't a big interest in party assistance from all the people at the meeting – most were interested in learning about how planning was going for implementing the elections. Rather than take everyone's time to discuss political party assistance we decided to organize a separate meeting which I volunteered to host. The EU representative at the meeting objected and said it should not be organized by a bilateral donor even though there were no multilateral donors providing party assistance. That was an eye opener for me. So, I let the EU organize it, but it was just a weird kind of dynamic there.

I'm happy to say I've had much better experiences both in Kosovo and Serbia with my EU counterparts. We were able to collaborate in pretty important ways, particularly in Kosovo. My proudest achievement, probably of my entire career, involved collaborating with the EU in Kosovo which we can talk about later. I'm glad that early experience didn't foretell the future. So, no, other donors were not heavily involved in the sector at that time.

Q: Good. I'm going to sort of jump ahead only because I want to ask, since you spent these early, very intense years in Bosnia, how you managed when you later went to work in Serbia. Were there any difficulties for you in doing that? I'm just curious whether your early days in Bosnia affected your thinking at all?

FRITZ: So it's interesting because I know a lot of Balkan hands would not serve in Serbia if they had served in Bosnia and or Kosovo. I felt that to truly understand how the war happened, I'd have to serve in Serbia and to get a more informed perspective. It was something that I really wanted to do. And in a twist of fate, Mike Harvey who was serving as Mission Director in Belgrade, decided to leave early so the position opened up just when I was finishing up in Kosovo. So I bid on it and I got it. It was one of those things that I thought was meant to be and helped me to really have a better perspective. I can't say it wasn't hard in some ways, but you get perspective and you understand where people are coming from. And it helped that the people that USAID hired to staff the Mission in Belgrade are all people who want democracy, who are tolerant of other ethnicities, and weren't the ones who started the war.

Q: So, you can see a positive side of Serbia as well even though you saw a lot of the negatives early on?

FRITZ: So yeah, absolutely, absolutely. It helped me to complete the picture. And I've met so many wonderful Serbs that on an individual level, it makes it easy.

Q: Okay. But it probably also gave you renewed respect for the history of Tito.

FRITZ: Absolutely. There are a lot of Yugoslavs who'd say that they missed Tito. I can understand why. I mean, he was a dictator, but he was a benevolent dictator. My deputy in Bosnia used to say that they had it good—they got to travel, they got to buy Italian shoes, and socially owned enterprises were much different than the more extreme form of a controlled economy that you saw in the Soviet Union. It was a nicer kind of dictatorship.

BARBARA TURNER
USAID
Lead of Task Force on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia
Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
Washington, D. C.
(1996)

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

Topical Focus – Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Programming in Bosnia and Herzegovina

TURNER: A couple of other things that we did there that were important. Most people were well educated, even more so than NIS countries and very Europeanized. I mean, at one point they did go back and forth to Europe and many of the systems were European and they were able to get radio and sometimes even TV although they had to jerry rig it but they were so close that they could get that. Many of them had relatives in parts of Europe. But not much experience in governance. USAID's OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives) became involved especially on the democracy and governance side. Brian Atwood and Rick

Q: Barton.

TURNER: Yes, Rick Barton put an interesting program together and Bosnia was one of the places they came in at the same time the USAID development program was getting started. Before that it was too dangerous with snipers and land mines, they couldn't do too much, it wasn't really transitioned yet. Once the Dayton Accords were in place OTI went in and the regular development efforts got. We worked very closely together. I think as long-term development people we were a little frustrated with OTI at first. I remember one of the things that they did was called a "swarm" strategy. It was sort of Let 1,000 Flowers Bloom. For instance, they funded a large number of newspapers and radio stations- because in old Europe every town had its own little newspaper and radio; that's how people got news. They funded local radio stations, local newspapers, helped train people in reporting on but there were dozens and dozens of them and they were in no way sustainable; they were small amounts of money but they did reach a lot of people. And the OTI strategy was that lots will fall away; there will be lots of failures. But, the three or four that survive out of these several dozen grants will be strong and people will save what they value. Taking those kinds of risks of failure is not what USAID was used to in our development programs. We were quite afraid of the auditors. But OTI had full notwithstanding authority and understanding that like humanitarian assistance, USAID would have a higher tolerance of risk. And it turned out that their strategy was very successful and worked beautifully and I got to respect it very highly. It was definitely locally owned. There has to be someone out there, especially in transition, taking the risk. What it should do is lead to longer term things, of course, so working closely with the development program helped us pick up where they left off. I gained an incredible respect for the kinds of things that OTI did.

AMBASSADOR ROBERT M. BEECROFT
Department of State
Special Envoy
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1996-1997)

While Mr. Beecroft served as Political Officer at a number of posts in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, his primary focus was on Political/Military Affairs,

both in Washington and abroad. Later in his career he served as Special Envoy to the Bosnia Federation and subsequently as Ambassador to the Office of Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) operating in Bosnia & Herzegovina. A native of New Jersey, Mr. Beecroft served in the US Army and studied at the University of Pennsylvania and the Sorbonne in Paris before joining the Foreign Service in 1967. Mr. Beecroft was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – OSCE and International Cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

BEECROFT: … Remember, that the first post-war election was held in September 1996, only a half year really after the shooting stopped. They were organized by the OSCE Mission, which then proceeded to oversee six elections in six years. The 1996 elections were pronounced free and fair, but the Bosnian patient nearly died. Why? Because the rule of law wasn't in place. People need to have confidence in the future if they're to vote for change. But daily life was still too uncertain in September 1996. Unless people have confidence in the rule of law – democratic, responsive police, a fair and efficient court system, functioning prisons – they will circle the wagons and vote for the hardliners. That's what they did. Too bad no one checked with us about this before going into Iraq.

Q: Now, when you got there, what was the OSCE doing?

BEECROFT: The OSCE Mission was doing several things that it had not been doing when it set up shop at the end of '95. Its mandate and mission have evolved. First of all, it's the largest OSCE Mission anywhere. As an organization, the OSCE has 19 missions, from the Balkans to central Asia. When I got there, the Bosnia Mission numbered over 800 people. It's now down to about 700, and two-thirds of its employees now are Bosnians. The OSCE is actually one of three international organizations with specific mandates in the Dayton Accords, the other two being OHR and NATO. The Mission's original mandate was to organize and manage elections. Between September '96 and the election of 2002, we organized six elections, each of which was very successful. Unfortunately it was sort of "the operation was successful, but the patient died, because the hardliners kept getting re-elected.

Q: The wrong people won.

BEECROFT: And that's an important lesson learned about the importance of stability and confidence in the rule of law. Elections alone won't solve your problem. Before she'll take a chance on the future and vote for change, Granny has to have confidence that she can walk down to the corner store and buy a loaf of bread without being robbed or shot at. If you don't have that, you don't have enough. By the time I got there in 2001, the Mission knew that we were down to one election before handing off election responsibilities to the Bosnian Central Election Commission, which is now up and running and is doing fine.

Q: What about corruption? I recall some headlines about money going to the government in Bosnia and corrupt as all hell.

BEECROFT: Yes, it's still true. The international community has been applying considerable pressure to deal with corruption. At the OSCE Mission, we had our own team of a half dozen auditors. They focused on publicly owned corporations such as the electric companies, which in many cases are socialist relics. Corruption is built into the system. It's very Mediterranean in that sense. The attitude is this: if you work for a public company, or for the government, you're entitled to skim some cream off the top. The war just made matters worse. There is political corruption, but the whole economy is also based on corruption. People claimed there were no jobs. The fact is that there were, but they belonged to the gray economy. It wasn't full employment, but it wasn't 40% or 50% unemployment either. P people were working for somebody's brother or nephew or somebody in the family, and they weren't paying taxes. Have you ever heard of Arizona Market?

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Q: You know, I was in is it Derventa.

BEECROFT: Derventa. When were you there?

Q: '94, I think it was the third election.

BEECROFT: Oh my God. So you saw it when it was really in bad shape.

Q: Yes. People would point out houses. These were Muslim houses essentially that had been blown up.

BEECROFT: Yes.

Q: Were you able to, I mean were they getting Muslims back into places like that?

BEECROFT: Not a whole lot in Derventa, because Derventa is still terribly poor. A lot of it has to do with lack of jobs. People need to be able to come back and do something. The eastern part of Republika Srpska, along the Drina, had been overwhelmingly Muslim. That is, after all, where Srebrenica is. The region was viciously "cleansed" of Muslims by the Serbs. If you go back today to places like Foća or Višegrad, the Muslims have come back in large numbers. Foća is a town right on the border with Montenegro, not too far from where Karadžić reputedly is holed up. The Mayor of Foća, a Serb, deserves a lot of credit. Mosques have been rebuilt. Muslims have come back. In the spring of '04, I was at a town called Janja, near Bijeljina, to visit a school there. Before the war, Janja had been 48% Muslim and 52% Serb. By 1998, it was 99% Serb. Now many Muslims have returned, and the school was a wonder. Here were people of both nationalities on the ground, faculty, parents and students, and they were working together very smoothly. They had developed a curriculum that both be comfortable with. The lesson is if there's some sense of law and order, and if there is some sense of comfort with each other, you can begin the reconciliation process on your own.

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Q: How did you find within the OSCE the cooperation?

BEECROFT: Before we get to that, there were other things we did. We had a department that did nothing but monitor and support the free press. We were helping develop a free press. I closed that department down a few months after I arrived, because it had basically done its job. The press in Bosnia and Herzegovina is lively, noisy, scrappy and a often fun. It certainly is under nobody's thumb. They don't know enough yet about reliable sources, but they're getting there. We also had a terrific democratization department, and they are still going strong. We are helping, at both the state level and the municipal level, to build governments that are responsive to people, not the other way around. There was no such thing as a help desk in any city hall in Bosnia, for example. There was no concept on the part of mayors about how to allocate tax receipts, because the ingrained habit was to call Belgrade and ask for more money. Well, Belgrade's not there any more, so they're now learning about funding and building a budget. Then there's education reform. Bosnia and Herzegovina was, and to some extent still is, a country with schools where textbooks look like something out of Mississippi in 1963 – if you don't belong to our ethnic group, you're inferior. Segregation was everywhere, but based on ethnicity, not race. The OSCE Mission changed that, pressing for curriculum reform, textbook review, integrated classrooms, and local control of schools. Education reform was one of the things we did that I'm proudest of.

We also had a military reform department, headed by a retired British two star general. The OSCE Mission supported the combining of the three former warring factions into a single military force with a single ministry of defense. That, let me tell you, was no small achievement.

Finally, we put together a small team of international auditors as a sort of a flying squad. They would go unannounced into publicly owned corporations and audit the books. This was all done in close cooperation with Lord Ashdown. We both had an interest in rooting out corruption. There was this unholy alliance of religious authorities, hardline politicians and mafias. They were sucking the life out of these corporations. This flying squad of a half a dozen people turned out to be invaluable. On issues like corruption and education, we had a symbiotic relationship with Paddy Ashdown.

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BEECROFT: …The Croats were still angling for ways to get out of the bargain completely and become part of Croatia, which was not going to happen, but you had the HDZ, the Croatian Democratic Party, which is anything but democratic, and was closely aligned with the Croat mafia and the church in pushing for separation, on the grounds that because the Croat population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the smallest of the three main groups, it was going to be squeezed out by the other two.

RAZIGVOR BAZALA
USIA
Public Affairs Officer
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

(1995-1996)

Mr. Bazala was born in Germany but immigrated to the United States while he was still young. He joined the Foreign Service in 1970 and served in Warsaw, Poland from 1970-1973. Afterwards, he was sent to the Republic of South Vietnam from 1974-1975 to serve as a Branch Public Affairs Officer (BPAO). He then became a Deputy PAO (Public Affairs Officer) and was moved to New Delhi, India, where he stayed from 1975-1978. After his tour in India ended, Razvigor and his wife were stationed in Belgrade, Yugoslavia from 1979-1982. He then spent 1982-1988 in Washington DC, serving as country affairs officer for Yugoslavia. While still in Washington DC, he took the position as European Press and Public Affairs spokesperson. After going back to being the country affairs officer for Yugoslavia again, he worked as a special assistant to the White House for the Iran-Contra Affairs. He spent the next couple years working with the Venice Economic Summit and as a USIA Senior Policy Officer until he was stationed in Jamaica from 1988-1992. Mr. Bazala spent a few more years in Washington until he was stationed in Macedonia for most of 1994, and then returned to Washington, and was then stationed in Bosnia again but this time as the IIP (International Information Program) team chief. After his time there, he worked as the media advisor and spokesperson for Brcko. Mr. Bazala spent the remainder of his career in Washington until his retirement in 1999. Razigvor Bazala was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Topical Focus – Information and Media Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bosnia Leading up to the 1996 Elections

BAZALA:...The overarching core issue immediately after the signing ceremony in Paris was whether the Dayton Accords had any chance of minimizing interethnic hatreds in Bosnia, which it was impossible to eliminate, to a level at which institutions of civil society could be reestablished and prevail. To that end, one of the first things I was involved in was developing a civic education program for Bosnian high schools at the request of Bosnian teachers who realized the country was on the cusp of major political and economic changes but had little comprehension of what that entailed. They all knew about the conduct of elections, of course, but nothing about the substance of the electoral process, which in Yugoslavia was employed over four decades only to reaffirm communist authority. So the teachers were interested in learning about what was required to establish an environment in which election results did not degenerate into armed hostility against the parties elected form a government, but rather motivated unsuccessful parties to prepare to campaign for the next election as in Great Britain or the U.S. for example. To reach that point after what Bosnia had just endured would require much hard work. The mindset of an entire generation would have to be radically readjusted.

To advance that cause, USIA offered me the assistance of the Center for Civic Education [CCE] in Calabasas, California which had conducted civic education programs in American schools over the past several decades and was prepared to assist in promoting democratic norms through civics courses in Bosnia's secondary schools. Our objective was to teach teachers to teach the courses rather than trying to conduct civic education classes ourselves. In February 1996 CCE had a group of ten American teachers come out to train a group of Bosnian secondary school teachers from various regions of the country that we had hand picked. They focused on teaching principles of democratic governance, the rule of law and tolerance.

That initial small-scale program was enormously successful. It was not easy to arrange, however, when intercity communication in Bosnia was still very tenuous. You couldn't make phone calls between cities. Without cell phones or the Internet widely available we had to venture out into the country and meet people face to face. We spent much time just touching base with people on the ground and this put a significant segment of the Bosnian population, its educators, into direct contact with American civilians, which I think was very useful and important in the immediate post-war period. I consider that the American teachers were real heroes, making pioneering efforts to deal with challenging circumstances in Bosnia's early post-war days.

The CCE program started with five American two-teacher teams working with Bosnian teachers from five cities. We tried to get Serbs involved and eventually were able to encourage two to join us in Sarajevo. They received a warm round of applause from the Sarajevo Bosniaks when they entered the training room several minutes after the program

began. Getting into Sarajevo was a significant challenge for them early in 1996. After week-long training sessions our teams of trainers followed the teachers back into their classrooms where we found student receptivity to the ideas that their teachers were presenting just overwhelming. Their open-mindedness made the American teachers and me very optimistic about the prospects for introducing democratic governance in Bosnian politics right away. The kids got the point about a democratic electoral process involving tolerance of the view of others.

I anticipated back then that if every Bosnian secondary student learned about the basics of democratic governance under the rule of law, politics in Bosnia might look much different a decade later. Unfortunately, that proved not to be the case even though CCE continued to conduct an increasing number of civic education seminars across the country for the next several years including in the Serb Republic. It became clear that the electorate continued to vote for candidates on the basis of ethnicity rather than their commitment to governing Bosnia as a unified society. While I found that deeply disappointing, I was not naïve enough to regard that outcome as unexpected. There are forces in any society that motivate voting behavior more strongly than a few civics courses in high school. I just hope the substance of CCE's program remains part of the educational system in Bosnia. Someday a large enough segment of the electorate may get the message and vote accordingly.

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In addition to democratic governance under the rule of law, U.S. policy objectives dictated that the USIA develop programs to influence public attitudes towards tolerance and freedom of expression. Among the first things I did was meet with as many media editors and reporters as I could and selected from among them individuals who I thought would be the most promising participants in the International Visitors Program that would take them to the U.S. for between three and six weeks. We hoped they would return with fresh ideas and enhanced skills to reshape media production and content in Bosnia.

USIA media exchange programs in all post-communist European nations involved people with no previous journalistic experience who were being hired by newly formed newspapers, radio, and television stations across the region. We also developed programs for visiting American media experts to Sarajevo, some of whom remained in the field for several months, to provide media personnel technical knowledge and an understanding of the functions of independent media in a democratic society.

USIA also used SEED funds to provide grants to people interested in establishing independent radio and television outlets. Across Eastern Europe there emerged a good

mix of non-nationalist stations that aired programs similar to broadcasting on public media in the U.S. At the same time, it was interesting to see how rapidly advocacy media emerged in these countries. A number of media outlets represented the views of specific political groups, promoted their agendas, and sought to enlist public support for their views and ideas among like-minded people. While they were technically free and independent, their coverage of internal events was not objective and they could not be considered reliable providers of unbiased public information. We understood that local equivalents of the Times of London or the New York Times would not spring up overnight. For one thing, championing media independence and objectivity were not the top priorities of the firms that advertised with them. Government media of course supported the agendas of the political leadership which colored their coverage. Attempting to reshape the post–communist media was a major challenge and the transition was difficult.

In encouraging the emergence of freedom of expression in Bosnia I let editors and producers know that USIA's objective was not to restrict the content they produced. If I provided a grant to media that did not adhere to a few general standards, unbiased reporting covering all sides of a story, for example, I could terminate what generally were one-year grants that did not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars. It was not USIA's objective, however, to have media it funded tow a U.S. government policy line. Certainly PAOs and information officers in the field could convey concerns about the scope and nature of coverage to the media organizations USIA funded. Just reminding them that USIA resources were limited and that I had other priorities generally was all that was necessary to keep grantees from wandering too far off the reservation.

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BAZALA:...Needless to say, the Bosnian landscape was littered with dozens of representatives of international NGOs who streamed into Bosnia almost as quickly as the military force that entered the country beginning the day after Christmas. They all came with good intentions. Some had greater capabilities than others; some conducted effective programs that contributed to promoting the reemergence of civil society in Bosnia. The American Bar Association, for example, had an excellent program to promote the rule of law by providing training opportunities to judges in Bosnia.

On the other hand, some U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] subcontractors came in with half-baked scope of work papers that had no bearing on realities on the ground. But USAID itself is often half baked in my view. It was an agency that had lots of money and was ready to bestow it on almost anybody, even those

inexperienced and uninformed about the history of Bosnia or its social, political, and economic dynamics.

USIA was always closer in touch with ground truth in Bosnia than USAID. We personally met and got to know all the people we engaged with in exchange programs and those to whom we provided grants. We discussed their objectives, their strategies, and broke done almost on a dollar-by-dollar basis what their needs were, and how we could best fulfill them with relatively small amounts of money. I am convinced that the work USIA did in support of developing civil society in Bosnia succeeded to a greater extent than many of USAID's programs.

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BAZALA:...After consultation and a few days leave, I returned to Sarajevo for a major round of teacher training for civic education, the establishment of a Bosnian TV network and the first democratic elections in the country that September. With no evidence of ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, or ballots cast more than once, the international community judged the conduct of the elections to be free and fair. The results, however, indicated little commitment to the emergence of a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ethnic divisions would continue to dominate the politics of the nation for the indefinite future.

I considered the establishment of a national television network as another activity that could promote the emergence of a unified Bosnian state and devoted considerable attention to that objective beginning during my first days in Sarajevo in November 1995. I discussed a range of ways it might be achieved with media representatives across the country eventually including one in Banja Luka. Government TV was not the answer. During the war, the facilities of Yugoslavia's state radio and television network fell under the control of local authorities in Sarajevo and virtually no Serbs tuned in. Furthermore, Serb shelling had knocked out most of its transmission towers, limiting the reach of its signal.

A month after implementation of the Dayton Accords began, it was impossible to think of a single national television network covering the entire country with a simultaneous signal available to affiliates in cities around the country. My initial idea was to encourage the private television broadcasters that had popped up in Tuzla, Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka in the RS [Republika Srpska] to consider airing a portion of each others' local productions to give viewers current and accurate images of developments elsewhere in the country. In the early post-war period my idea of a network involved little more than

carrying videotapes from one station to the next with the idea of providing Bosnians a broader picture of events across the country.

The idea did not take hold, however, largely because private broadcasters in the major cities knew very little about each other and had very limited production capabilities. By the end of that winter my thinking changed as the situation on the ground evolved rapidly. Things had moved far beyond the primitive notion of a network based on videotapes bicycled among independent broadcasters. USIA's International Visitor Program had already taken a number of radio and TV production personnel from different broadcasters who happened to participate in the same programs to the U.S. This increased professional capabilities at several stations and helped establish links among them.

In early spring, leveling the playing field among them became my top priority. I proposed that SEED funds be used to provide grants that would offer five stations equal packages of contemporary audio and video equipment, which I thought would make them willing to commit to interaction and the sharing of video productions. Washington experts proposed a modest fifty thousand dollar package of equipment suitable for each station. On a lovely warm and sunny Sunday in May at a restaurant overlooking the Neretva River in Mostar, owners of the five stations and I gathered over lunch to conclude an agreement committing them to cooperate in the production of programs that they all would air in return for the grants of equipment I provided them. The owners, all with differing views, perceptions, and attitudes on how to go about this, agreed on a basic document within a couple of hours, but by the time I got back to Sarajevo to put it in final form, it had already become a source of contention among them. While all the equipment my grants provided was immediately put to good use, there was little subsequent evidence that the stations were cooperating in program production.

The idea of a network held, however, and eventually the Office of the High Representative [OHR], the ad hoc international institution that to this day (2014) serves as ultimate civilian government authority in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, picked up on the idea and expanded it into something called the Open Broadcast Network [OBN] that reached across the entire country. It was privatized in 2000. I was just pleased to have played a substantive role in getting the ball rolling toward that objective.

RAZALA:...The Peace Implementation Council [PIC] composed of nations and international organizations that participated in the peace negotiations at Dayton, or subsequently supported the peace process in Bosnia, established an ad hoc international institution, the OHR, to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords. The objective of the OHR is to ensure 117 that Bosnia and Herzegovina evolves into a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration into Euro-Atlantic

institutions. The PIC authorized the OHR to adopt binding decisions when local parties seem unable or unwilling to act and to remove from office political officials who violate legal agreements of the Dayton Peace Accords. The High Representative is appointed by the PIC with the approval of the UN Security Council; he is responsible only to the PIC and is the final civil authority in Bosnia.

The PIC regarded the sole unresolved matter of the peace negotiations in Dayton, the location of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line [IEBL] in the Brcko district, an issue that could undermine the ability of the OHR to implement other civilian provisions of the accords if not addressed in a manner perceived as equitable and unbiased by the nation's Serbian, Croatian, and Bosniak ethnicities. One of the preconditions set by the international community prior to the start of the talks was insistence that Bosnia would consist of only two political entities. That required bending arms to get Bosniak and Croats to agree to jointly govern one (the Federation) with Serbs governing the other (Republika Srpska or RS). The Serbs insisted, however, they would not enter talks unless they were guaranteed 49 percent of Bosnia's territory, which was a considerably larger portion than their share of the nation's total population. The international community, however, agreed to the 51/49 percent territorial split to get the Serbs to the table. Several earlier proposals involved divisions of Bosnia's territory into nine or ten regional enclaves, an idea quickly rejected because their boundaries would immediately become sources of discontent and tension that could undermine implementation of a peace agreement. To eliminate any further consideration of enclaves, the international community laid down another condition at the start of peace negotiations. Only a single line, not to be referred to as a border, would delineate the division of territory between the Federation and the RS. A computer program had been developed to divide Bosnia's territory into any number of 51/49 divisions delineated by a single line; it could not, of course, determine the exact placement of that line. Those around the negotiation table in Dayton could not either. And there was the rub.

The Brcko municipality on the north-east border of Bosnia was an area about twenty-five miles long stretching along the Sava River border with Croatia and hardly three miles wide at its narrowest point. The Serbs were deeply concerned about where the IEBL would run across Brcko knowing its narrow strip of territory would be the only link connecting the two so-called saddlebags of RS territory together. When the location of the IEBL in Brcko threatened to upset negotiations in Dayton, in order to conclude the talks with a settlement, it was decided to delay further consideration of the Brcko question for a year and then deal with it through an arbitration process.

That postponement exceeded a year because the man designated as the principal arbitrator for Brcko, American judge Roberts Owen, said in 1997 he lacked information

about the extent to which Dayton provisions were being implemented by both entities in the Brcko municipality. He therefore requested OHR to name a supervisor for Brcko who would have a year, until March 1998, to encourage both entities to fully implement the provisions of the Dayton Accords in Brcko municipality. At that time a report prepared by the supervisor assessing the progress made toward that end would provide the arbiter with enough information on the basis of which he could recommend where the IEBL in the Brcko municipality should be located. The supervisor would be responsible for implementing the arbiter's decision.

I understood well the difficulties Farrand would face in the role of OHR supervisor for Brcko. I witnessed the evacuation of Serbs from Sarajevo in March 1996. The Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic who represented the RS in Dayton, could not insist that a section of the city of Sarajevo be maintained as a Serb district or neighborhood. To do so would have violated the Dayton Accords provision that the IEBL be a single line. I found it amazing that the entire Serb population of the city literally just packed up and moved out over a one week period in a series of seemingly endless convoys of heavily-laden cars, buses, and trucks headed off in the snow.

One day, just out of curiosity, my two FSIO colleagues and I drove across the Miljacka River into what had been Serb Sarajevo in the war to observe the process. It was truly bizarre to witness Serbs rip out the entire infrastructure of the apartments they were now abandoning, including light switches, light fixtures such as sconces, ceiling lamps, and bulbs, electric power plugs, all kitchen and bathroom plumbing fixtures, and even the rubber or vinyl baseboards along the floor. The same process was repeated floor by floor, building by building across the neighborhood. Perhaps somewhat undiplomatically, I smiled, waved, and wished several evacuating grim-faced Serbs the equivalent of bon voyage in their language. My colleagues later said I was lucky not to have been assaulted by one or more of them, but the whole episode struck me as utterly surreal.

We did not know at the time how significant the Serb evacuation would be. As it turned out, most of them were headed for Brcko where they occupied abandoned, partially destroyed Bosniak and Croatian homes at the border and southward as a way to strengthen the RS claim to as wide a corridor as possible through Brcko in the arbitration process. To keep a lid on the stress and strains that such a mass relocation could generate, the U.S. component of IFOR established a base, Camp McGovern, that straddled the IEBL just a few miles outside of Brcko with a force of several hundred soldiers armed with tanks and heavy artillery.

Farrand was going to have a hard time in Brcko. Most Serbs in the municipality were people who had exiled or expelled themselves from Sarajevo. They were politically alert

and had a very strong sense of themselves and their rights and privileges. Cheek by jowl with them were many Croats whose homeland, Croatia, lay just across the bordering Sava River. Much of the Bosniak population that was driven out during the war was intent upon returning to the municipality. The supervisor had to get local leaders and authorities to accommodate each other's views and perspectives if there was to be any hope of implementing democratic norms and restoring stability in the community. Farrand's approach to the job was to walk the walk, get out and around, and personally size up the situation on the ground by meeting with local leaders in their neighborhoods and make himself a known quantity they could approach freely.

There were two major problems in Brcko that the supervisor had to address immediately. First, areas of the municipality that were densely populated before the war had been extensively mined during hostilities which posed a major barrier to the resettlement of areas abandoned by Bosniak and Croat families. Second, freedom of movement had to be restored. The supervisor presided over a large-scale de-mining effort to ensure that the reconstruction of several thousand single family homes could be undertaken without people being maimed or killed in the process. Because there would be questions about who would wind up occupying them there was much tension throughout the municipality over the fate of their small pieces of Bosnian real estate.

Adding to that tension was limited freedom of movement across the IEBL, which was demonstrated early in my stay in Brcko. Just a few weeks after I arrived, a group of Bosniaks from Sarajevo, several of whom I had met previously, decided to test freedom of movement by chartering buses and driving up to Brcko to look at homes they occupied before the war. I saw firsthand the ugly tensions between ethnic groups in Bosnia. The Bosniaks had let authorities in Brcko know their plans and word got out rapidly to the Serb community.

Thuggish Serbs gathered at key intersections along the likely path the buses from Sarajevo would take through the municipality. At each was a pile of cobblestone-sized rocks to toss at the buses to let passengers know just how they felt about their intrusion onto what they considered their turf. Farrand's deputies and I along with another group of OHR staffers walked out to see what would happen as the buses passed by. At some locations, our presence was enough to get Serb thugs back off, but we could not monitor the entire route the buses would take.

I could not believe what I saw as the buses approached. Unarmed passengers sitting calmly in their seats and looking out the windows were barraged with stones and bricks as if they constituted a force of hostile enemies. Every window was smashed. Thank God no firearms were involved. I joined up with the buses as they approached the Brcko

municipal center and boarded one as soon as it arrived. Almost every passenger had suffered some injury, fortunately none of them serious. If repeated, such episodes would prevent the full implementation of Dayton provisions regarding freedom of movement in Bosnia. Needless to say, no members of the predominantly Serb police force were anywhere in sight.

And that was problem number three. The attack on the buses hammered home the point that civil society and tolerance would not prevail in Brcko if the police force was dominated by Serbs. Farrand was fortunate to have an effective American as leader of the International Police Training Force [IPTF] in Brcko who was able over time to make enormous strides to convert Brcko's police into a multi-ethnic force.

IFOR soldiers initially deployed early in 1996 had already torn down dozens of roadblocks all over Bosnia that were thrown up during the war and IFOR patrolled the IEBL regularly to prevent roadblocks being set up anywhere along its path. Unfortunately that did not ensure that Bosnian citizens could move freely through what previously were ethnic strongholds, and this put a real crimp in refugee returns that could have undermined further commitment to the implementation of other Dayton provisions. What could have proven to be a major setback proved to be very easy to resolve, however.

During the war, Serbs, Bosniak, and Croats added small insignia to their auto license tags to indicate their ethnicity, which in the post-war period worked against building a unified nation. An international organization official proposed creating a single national license tag by using letters common to both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets (such as A, K, M, and T that represented the same sounds in Serbian, Croatians, and Bosniak, and B, C, H, and P that represented one sound in Serbian but another in Croatian). Put any single one of those letters between two groups of three numerals colored black on a plain white background and you had tags with no indication of ethnicity. Just after I left Brcko, those license tags were introduced and almost immediately made it possible for anyone to travel anywhere in the country without facing hostile reactions on the road. Serbs benefited greatly. They no longer had to take circuitous routes to get from one saddle bag of the RS to the other; they could cut, more or less, straight across.

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BAZALA:...It was my objective to get the messages Farrand communicated in local gatherings to the population as a whole. Doubts and skepticism about the role of the supervisor made that difficult at first. Brcko city did not have a television station; also broadcasts from Sarajevo could not be seen in Brcko but TV Belgrade came through loud and clear. Several marginal radio and television stations with small broadcast footprints

had been established elsewhere in the municipality, however, since Dayton implementation. There was a small Bosniak television studio in a barn that had holes in the roof; someone held an umbrella over its sole camera to prevent water damage when it rained.

I ventured forth to identify and locate all existing local media outlets and in the early days I had to negotiate their acceptance of an appearance by Farrand. The Serb community was particularly hostile to him initially. Later on he regularly received invitations to appear for interviews about his work and objectives. My efforts to make him familiar to Brcko's residents through media appearances were successful and made his job less difficult. He rapidly became a known quantity, almost a household name, which was what he wanted. That made his agenda widely known and the public perceived him as playing a balanced role in his dealings with Bosniak, Croatian, and Serbian authorities.

To provide Farrand a regular opportunity to address the media, I arranged biweekly press conferences at the OHR Brcko building, which drew local, national, and sometimes even international reporters from Stars and Stripes, a U.S. Defense Department authorized independent newspaper for the U.S. military community, and VOA for example. Those events provided him a wide stage on which he could get his messages out. I also briefed the local press on numerous occasions about OHR activities.

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BAZALA:...My office also monitored local media output for accuracy in reporting about OHR and the activities of the supervisor. On several occasions, I had to remind editors and producers, sometimes in a less than cordial manner, that they could not publish or broadcast lies about the activities or functions of the supervisor. In fact, I threatened the Serb municipal radio station in Brcko with closure if it continued broadcasting hostile and inflammatory commentary about the supervisor claiming he was biased against the Serbian community. The Dayton Accords specified that OHR decisions are binding and they all got the message.

DAVID R. ADAMS
Department of State
Office of the Under Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Mr. Adams was born in Washington, DC and raised in Virginia and abroad. He
was educated at John Carroll, William and Mary and George Washington

Universities. Mr. Adams joined USAID in 1973 in Washington, DC. He served in
Washington and abroad, dealing primarily with matters concerning Latin American countries and Kosovo. His foreign assignments include Bangladesh,
Guatemala and Haiti, where he served as USAID Mission Director. Mr. Adams
was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus – USAID and the International Democracy NGO Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina

ADAMS:...Because a lot of this was in Bosnia later, or rehabilitation of water systems that had been destroyed or damaged. Damage repair, everything from large infrastructure to just helping communities re-elect mayors or city councils. It was a hodge-podge of different things to help people recover from war or crisis, usually man made crises, not just a regular disaster unless it was a huge one. So we deployed a team and they were there working as I was involved in the logistics with some admin folks to physically reopen the AID mission in the capital, the AID headquarters.

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Q: You had been away for awhile and in coming back had you found that the relationship between AID and the non governmental organizations had matured considerably or not, or maybe there were new strains?

ADAMS: It depends. Ironically the segment of the NGO community whose relationship was the most strained with AID were the democracy and governance movements. The National Democratic Institute and the republican equivalent. The National Endowment for Democracy, the elections group, there is an election NGO that is IFES, International Foundation for Electoral Reform. And there were others who felt similarly, and I think it is ironic because the head of AID at the time was the former president of the Democratic Institute, Brian Atwood. They were upset because of among other things the slow process within AID of entering into grants or awarding grants and contracts, and then all the bureaucracy involved in actually releasing the money and in the oversight for the grants. So there were other NGOs which had a similar view, but the situation seemed to be exacerbated for some reason with the democracy group. People's careers were damaged within AID because they were perceived to having contributed to the problem. I won't mention any names. I am sort of fast forwarding here to the next, after two years in Africa I then got involved with the reconstruction of the Balkans, and in the whole Kosovo thing which was coming to a head at that time. Bosnia and Croatia reconstruction. That is when the relationship went downhill the most between the number of NGOs and AID. In part it was because AID didn't have a cadre of officers that had a strong background in the democracy and government arena. So a number of the NGO's field personnel were giving feedback to their headquarters that they weren't getting the

kind of support and help that they thought an AID mission should be. It was a strained relationship, and now it continues actually.

Q: I can see a problem with democracy and governance and all. This is pretty soft stuff. This is not delivering grain or help and it allowed for a bunch of people with maybe good ideas, maybe not good ideas, but it is pretty hard to say if you are delivering wheat you know people are eating. But if you are delivering advice, particularly coming out of the academic world or some other world, it is a little difficult to see are they really making much of a difference. I don't know. Sometimes I have a feeling that maybe that type of thing is a great boon to the Ph.D. candidates or what have you among the universities. I am not sure about the impact overseas. But this is maybe a job that is new.

ADAMS: No, you are right. But fundamentally the problem was you had a very risk averse bureaucratic mindset in AID, somewhat similar in State but it is worse in AID 63 because there is a lot more money, and because Congressional oversight and the strings attached to the funding have become much tighter to put it in more benevolent terms it has caused folks, especially those like contracting officers and agreement and assistance officers who legally can be penalized if something goes wrong. That is a key reason why I think the number of the NGOs have been upset, and a number of the for profit companies who deal with USAID is because of this butt covering that goes on. In a sense you really can't blame some of these folks whose careers and their pocketbooks are on the line. They get in trouble if they do something intentionally or unintentionally wrong or illegal.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CRAIG BUCK
USAID
Mission Director
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1995-1999)

Mr. Buck was born in Mississippi in 1944 and joined USAID in 1969. His postings abroad include Turkey, Uganda, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Kazakhstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. He was interviewed by Mark Tauber on August 2, 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID Support of Democratization in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

Q: Before we go into the details, there were two other major players sitting in Sarajevo with you, which is the U.S. embassy, whenever it was finally established, and the administration established by the Dayton Accord. And that was quite a complex piece of negotiation, because you had the High Commissioner, and then the High Commissioner's various deputies, also doing all sorts of things. How did you lace up with all those different parts?

BUCK: First of all, we were there on the ground and working long before the UN had its organization set up. We were out making loans or, for example, in the other areas where we were working, we were way ahead, before they had their personnel on the ground. We were rehabilitating war-damaged infrastructure while the UN experts were still looking for their own housing and perquisites. However, we did make it a point that we would coordinate and work with them, that this was an international effort. We were one part of this effort – we obviously had our own particular interest, but we were all part of a broader international effort. On the economic sphere, the Special Representative quickly set up a weekly economic council, and the participants were the European Bank, UN (United Nations), World Bank, IMF, and USAID. We were all working together on the same broad economic policy basis.

Similarly, the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) was responsible for the democratization side of things, and for elections. We seconded – AID seconded probably the best person that AID had, in terms of managing elections, to the OSCE, to help manage that process. So, you know, I guess we were all working together.

I believe another important factor to remember is that Ambassador Richard Holbrooke had authored the Dayton Peace Accord and had an enormous investment in making it successful. He came to Bosnia normally every 10-14 days after Dayton. In my first meeting with him he called me to the Presidency where he, Bosnian President Izetbegovic, the Foreign Minister, and may others were discussing immediate steps ahead. He asked me to explain what the USG would do for reconstruction, and I outlined the program I had discussed earlier with Brian Atwood. I also emphasize the conditions we would place on our assistance and the conditions they would need to meet. Holbrooke told the Bosnians to give close attention to these activities and to ensure they met conditions. He also told me that it was vital that the USG make these reconstruction efforts successful and that the US should look good by our performance.

Q: Yeah. What – Did you run into problems of what a typical, you know, move towards full market-driven economy, which is, you know, the scams and pyramid schemes and things like that – In other words, a bit of economic criminality, as well?

BUCK: We were heavily involved in promoting transparency in government. The third leg of our reconstruction program, besides getting credit out to private businesses and repairing war-damaged infrastructure was to get the fundamental instruments of economic governance---of the enabling environment---established. We were heavily involved in setting up a balanced and fair tax system, in making it fair, transparent, and open. Similarly, we worked on helping establish a transparent and data-based budgeting system. We had a large program to set up a banking supervision and monitoring program as well as drafting the provisions that governed the functions of a private banking regulatory system. We helped set up the Central Bank in Sarajevo as it began to function as an independent authority. We worked with it in the issuing of its new currency, when it moved from the German mark to the convertible mark, which became the currency of the realm. But we set up the regulation for the banking system so that people would have

confidence in it. And, we were key to providing assistance in developing a privatization program to get rid of a lot of old enterprises that had few assets and a few former employees that needed to be moved into more productive areas.

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BUCK: Let's take the area of democratic development and free press. In Bosnia and in Kosovo, we worked with organizations that were promoting free press, promoting laws that governed the broadcast and print industries, that ensured their freedoms. Our people worked with a variety of organizations in Holland and Austria that were promoting these democratic practices. Our people became familiar, I think, with what other organizations were doing internationally to promote these norms. We developed two independent television stations in Bosnia, and set up transmitters to transmit this throughout the province. We worked very closely with the OSCE in doing this, in the financing of these, and in trying to figure out how we could finance private print and electronic media in the future. They've got a very small market, and how could you come up with a means of making them financially viable. We didn't want to have official governmental news stations, but one of the ways getting revenue was to have the government collect a tax on every television set or every antenna or every receiver that you use. So, we hadn't come up with a solution to that difficult thing, but we worked with our OSCE colleagues.

BARBARA TURNER
USAID
Lead of Task Force on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia
Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
Washington, D. C.
(1996)

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

Topical Focus – Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Programming in Bosnia and Herzegovina

TURNER: A couple of other things that we did there that were important. Most people were well educated, even more so than NIS countries and very Europeanized. I mean, at one point they did go back and forth to Europe and many of the systems were European and they were able to get radio and sometimes even TV although they had to jerry rig it but they were so close that they could get that. Many of them had relatives in parts of Europe. But not much experience in governance. USAID's OTI (Office of Transition

Initiatives) became involved especially on the democracy and governance side. Brian Atwood and Rick

Q: Barton.

TURNER: Yes, Rick Barton put an interesting program together and Bosnia was one of the places they came in at the same time the USAID development program was getting started. Before that it was too dangerous with snipers and land mines, they couldn't do too much, it wasn't really transitioned yet. Once the Dayton Accords were in place OTI went in and the regular development efforts got. We worked very closely together. I think as long-term development people we were a little frustrated with OTI at first. I remember one of the things that they did was called a "swarm" strategy. It was sort of Let 1,000 Flowers Bloom. For instance, they funded a large number of newspapers and radio stations- because in old Europe every town had its own little newspaper and radio; that's how people got news. They funded local radio stations, local newspapers, helped train people in reporting on but there were dozens and dozens of them and they were in no way sustainable; they were small amounts of money but they did reach a lot of people. And the OTI strategy was that lots will fall away; there will be lots of failures. But, the three or four that survive out of these several dozen grants will be strong and people will save what they value. Taking those kinds of risks of failure is not what USAID was used to in our development programs. We were quite afraid of the auditors. But OTI had full notwithstanding authority and understanding that like humanitarian assistance, USAID would have a higher tolerance of risk. And it turned out that their strategy was very successful and worked beautifully and I got to respect it very highly. It was definitely locally owned. There has to be someone out there, especially in transition, taking the risk. What it should do is lead to longer term things, of course, so working closely with the development program helped us pick up where they left off. I gained an incredible respect for the kinds of things that OTI did.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

TED D. MORSE
USAID
Bosnia and Herzegovina Task Force
Washington, D.C.
(1995-1997)

Ted D. Morse was born and raised in Sacramento, California. He served in the Coast Guard for 8 years and was educated at Sacramento State College and George Washington University. Mr. Morse worked for the United States Agency for International Development for thirty-seven years. His work took him to Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Balkans. After retirement, Mr. Morse spent another twelve years as an international consultant focused on the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society. Ted D. Morse was interviewed by W. Haven North on May 25th, 1998 and in 1999.

Topical Focus – U. S. Reconstruction Programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

MORSE: The Dayton Accords had a General Framework for Peace and Annexes on Military Aspects, Regional Stabilization, Entity Boundaries, Elections, Constitution, Arbitrators, Human Rights, Refugees, Displaced Persons, National Monuments, Public Corporations, Civilian Implications and International Police Task Force. The word reconstruction only appeared once bracketed by humanitarian aid and elections! Reconstruction was estimated to cost $5 to 6 billion. The U.S. initially pledged $600 million because State felt: "Bosnia is in Europe; and, we think the Europeans should lead here." I was assigned to direct a USAID Task Force on Bosnia Reconstruction.

Q: So you went to Bosnia?

MORSE: Yes, on September 30, 1995. I flew up to Europe and then into Sarajevo and took a look around at what was going to happen. The UN actually flew me in. The only flights that were going into Sarajevo at that point were the United Nations relief flights. All the roads were blocked. I then flew over to Washington and met with several people there, including Brian. At that point, I agreed that I would postpone the retirement again to work on that challenge. I went down to Zimbabwe. I stayed for the dedication of the courts but didn't go on the white- water rafting, the safari or all the other things with my kids. I felt that I kind of shortchanged them on that; but, we did what we wanted to do as far as Ernice's memory, which was the most important. And, they all agreed that, if there was a chance to make a contribution on Bosnia, it was the right thing to do. They were fearful that without work, my grieving would continue.

Q: What was your assignment, your position on the Bosnia situation?

MORSE: Again, I was asked to set up a Bosnia task Force within AID. In addition to that, as the Director of that Task Force, I represented AID on other inter-agency task forces related to Bosnia. To spend a minute on that, there probably were around town at least six (6) or seven (7) Bosnia task forces internal to each organization; so, we had to kind of keep in touch with those. State had three (3) separate Bosnia task forces. DOD had a couple. AID had ours. The intelligence community had theirs. Then, NSC had theirs. So, the assignment was internal to AID but also working with them. I want to come back to that later. There were literally thousands of administration people working on Bosnia. That is not an exaggeration. But, it also said something about the USG corporate culture and the relief to the development continuum. In the first meeting with Assistant Administrator for the ENI Bureau, Tom Dyne, he said, "One reason we wanted you to go there and then will need you to go right back there is that we don't have anybody on the ground. We don't know what is going on. We don't know where to start." I said, "That strikes me as strange, Tom. I just met with Tim Knight, who has been on the ground there for four (4) years. Tim worked with me on the Africa drought and famine of 1984-1986 task force when he was OFDA."

Q: He was in AID?

MORSE: He was in AID; and, he's still in AID. He was with OFDA and had been in there for four years. Our agency had administered one billion dollars of relief in Bosnia before Dayton. We were funding over 100 Americans through OFDA direct hire contracts and NGOs; and, yet, here the Assistant Administrator of AID/W's ENI Bureau, which had responsibility for the Bosnia area could say, "We don't know anything about the problem in that country. We don't have anybody on the ground."

Q: Because this was run by another AID bureau.

MORSE: That's right. It was run by the Bureau of Humanitarian Response and not his ENI geographic bureau; but, it tells volumes about the kind of problems of shifting from a relief to a reconstruction operation again. Where do we begin on it? First, some of the real big issues from my point of view. The NGOs had played such a fantastic leadership role during the four years of the siege of Sarajevo and the war. They had been on the ground. They had been working effectively. They had staff, institutions and organization. They wanted to continue to be involved in the reconstruction phase and yet the way it was being shaped, working government to government again instead of through NGOs, their role was going to be greatly diminished. Because of that, the NGOs were openly hostile and critical to the U.S. reconstruction plans and particularly to the fellow that we chose to put in there as the director, Craig Buck. I think that was most unfortunate that they wanted him out because they said he was anti-NGO and all that sort of stuff. It's, again, that difficult stage of having to go through a relief to reconstruction transition. The NGOs were delivering the relief. Yes, many of them can deliver development; but, there are a lot of things they can't do. You're going to have to structure it differently. That was a huge issue. The peace agreement (the Dayton Accords), from my point of view, was lousy as far as a basis for reconstruction. It probably was the best that I had seen if you look at what we went through with the agreements we've talked about. The Lancaster Agreement for Zimbabwe; the Escapulus Agreement for Nicaragua; the Paris Accords for Cambodia; etc. It was the best; there is no doubt about it; but, as a basis for moving forward, it just was shot full of holes. Still, it was the best political agreement you could get to stop the Bosnia war.

Q: What were these holes that you are referring to?

MORSE: Take all of the agreement annexes, all 11 of them. The one on the elections: The elections were to be held within one (1) year. We held meetings that Dick Holbrooke chaired, inter-agency meetings, up in the Secretary's conference room up on the seventh floor next to the Crisis Center. I remember saying to Holbrooke at one point that, "We have been working with the World Bank, the IMF and with the European Union; and, we're coming up with a five- year economic reconstruction program; but, it's not just economic reconstruction. It's also political development and governmental development. There is no government under the Dayton Accords. You are talking about a one-year election; and, we're talking about a five-year process. Don't you see the disconnect?" His answer was, "That is because you guys are too damn slow. You have to speed up and lend your support to us."

I was so frustrated by the agreement calling for unrealistic reconstruction and development. I said about two weeks later, "The election is going to do nothing more than polarize the three factions that have been fighting all along. The same three factions will be elected; so, you're institutionalizing the kind of competition that has been there for four years between the Croats, Bosniaks and the Serbs. That is not developing good governance."

In private (never in public), Dick Holbrooke said one day that, "One year is the best that we could get because that is the exit strategy to pull the U.S. forces out of Bosnia. That is all we could sell in Congress and to the American public. You can't pull them out unless you have the legitimacy of a newly elected government." I can go through lots of those kinds of holes in the Dayton Accords that, from my point of view, were flawed. The fact was you didn't have a government to work with; and, you had to consult with three (3) different groups that couldn't even agree on license plates or the flag, let alone policies. All of them felt that the U.S. and the West were tilting away from the Serbs and even away from the Croats to the Bosnians and Muslims – that we were biased.

Q: Were there any points of agreement among the three groups?

MORSE: Lower down, not at the so-called "national" level, but at the sub-national level. In part, we, with the EU, the World Bank and the UN, the IMF, had all agreed that, whatever we did, we had to use the reconstruction aid in ways so as not to perpetuate the ethnic rivalries. So, whatever we did at the municipal and local levels all three parties had to agree. There were three mayors, three councils. I don't know if you've interviewed anybody yet on this; but, it's well worth doing. I hope you can interview Craig. So, we literally would have the three of them sit down together and say, "Okay, if we're going to fix the water wells and the electricity supply for this municipality, you need to recognize the sources are up in the Croat area and the people are in the Muslim sector; but, the water canal comes through the Serb area. You all three must agree how it's going to work and that you're going to make it work and that you are going to work together. Otherwise, you're not going to get the revenues from the electrical generation or from the water sales; and, you're not going to get the electricity or water." So, everything was predicated on that type of tri-party cooperation.

It's unrealistic, I think, to believe that you can either use development aid to break down old ethnic rivalries and force them to live together in harmony. It's deeper; and, it needs a different approach. It gets back to the conflict prevention work. Other big issues in this, besides the flaws in the peace agreement as a foundation for economic reconstruction, were: "Can aid be a tool for ethnic reconciliation? Can it be a tool for achieving our political objectives? Can it be a political-social tool at the same time as you're doing economic reconstruction?" That was so complex. It could; but, again, everybody wanted it done in a year.

General Snuffy Smith (we worked closely with the military) was highly critical that AID just didn't fix everything ourselves, get it done and have it working instead of working slowly with the three parties and the three organizations. It took time, meetings and consensus to get something done. From his point of view: "Get the damn electricity on,

AID!" There were a lot of issues about whether you can achieve those three objectives simultaneously.

Another huge issue was, we talked one game and played another in terms of the European leadership. The U.S. had played such a lead on the military pressure and on the peace negotiations, the political front, it was desired by Congress, by the public and by everybody in the White House that the Europeans should pay for the economic reconstruction. The Europeans were not all that happy that Holbrooke and the Americans have a Dayton Peace Accord and then they're supposed to pay for it. In fact, the White House, the NSC and the State Department were so involved there was absolutely no way they were going to let go of that.

Dayton was going to be one of the successes of this administration; and, "We damned well weren't going to walk away at the end of Dayton and say, 'Okay, it's up to the Europeans to bring about the reconstruction and to implement it.'" It was almost embarrassing at times, the sense of our authoritarian dictating to the Europeans, let alone the Serbs, Croats and Muslims, what would be done. It was almost embarrassing to be so publicly non-engaged but in every private meeting: "You will do this. This has to be done." The U.S. was still leading it, just like they had at Dayton. That was a huge problem in terms of what we publicly would state, but not what we were actually doing at that point.

Q: We were giving directions; but, we were also not willing to put up the money?

MORSE: We worked with Congress; and, it was agreed that we would put up $600 million over three (3) years for Bosnia reconstruction. But, I can tell you there was a kind of shell game that was being played so that we made it always look like we were only paying one third; yet, the total U.S. amount that was going in there didn't get counted as reconstruction because: "That is still relief, and it's rebuilding houses, and that's just human relief of their habitat, not reconstructing of the wells, the water, the electricity, the telephone, the buildings and the services."

Frankly, it was embarrassing when you had to explain this to OMB and to the Hill, the press and the Europeans, the Bosnians and everybody else. We had two sets of books: a huge amount we were putting in, which was way over the $200 million a year and the $600 million in three years that was supposedly agreed to by Congress.

Another part of that is, I guess I had a grandiose idea that AID would be in USG leadership on the Bosnia economic reconstruction. Holbrooke had decided long before that Treasury would be in the lead. So, he had at Dayton itself, a fellow I have enormous respect for, who has now left the government, David Lindstrom, who became Under Secretary of Treasury and Assistant Secretary of International Monetary Affairs. He rose dramatically fast. He was a very young fellow, but was very competent and very good to work with.

But, it was Treasury at Dayton, not AID. We asked and fought for a major role and tried to show what we would contribute to reconstruction and development where Treasury

was at a macroeconomic level. We needed to be working at a different level to pull reconstruction off over the five years and Holbrooke said, "Well, but Treasury is the lead with the World Bank; and, we want the World Bank and the IMF to take the lead. Treasury has more influence with the European Union than AID. Besides, State really will take that lead instead of AID!"

All of a sudden, AID wasn't in league with the other donors, wasn't in league with the Congress. Part of this was, there were so many Bosnia task forces around town. State had one on the economic reconstruction headed by Jim Holmes. How ours related to his task force was always a bone of contention, even the influence when AID went to the principals and the deputies in the EXCOM meetings.

This is very critical of Tom Dyne; but, I've said it to Tom and I've said it to Brian directly. Tom Dyne, as the Assistant Administrator, would be the "plus one" many times at these senior meetings. Tom would never speak up; yet, we had spent an enormous amount of time on his talking points, briefing papers, briefing folders and briefing books. He would go to those senior meetings and never say a word, even though, I felt, we had better insights, better understandings of things relative to the economic reconstruction or when they were talking about the economic phasing of the military withdrawal, the holding of the elections, or the working of how do you knit together the politics of reconstruction. He just wouldn't confront or even contribute when Tony Lake or Sandy Berger were in the NSC chair. Tom and I would walk out of the meetings and walk back; and, I would say, "Why didn't you make this point, Tom? "They've got a wrong impression. They've got wrong data." He would say, "I didn't have a good opening" or "It wasn't the right time" or something like that. Finally, when I was going as the "plus one" or sometimes actually sitting up at the principals' table in the White House war room (we would meet three times a week), Brian would say, "If there is something to be said, you say it. You'll never find Tom doing that. You do it." So, with Brian's blessing – and Tom got irritated at first - I said ahead of time that, "I've been asked by Brian to make some of these points". Tom accepted it; but, it caused some more strain there.

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MORSE:...The third program focus (we only had really three major focuses) was a program to get employment going with small business development. Before the war, there was still overwhelmingly parastatal ownership of the means of production in Bosnia. The first reaction was, the Bosnians wanted us to rebuild the coal mine and the steel mill, things that had never been profitable before and shouldn't be rebuilt. There was a program of selling off those and trying to get private investment to buy them. We found that there wasn't a single banker in all of Bosnia that had made a private loan; so, if you're trying to get a small business developed, the banking system was totally geared to the parastatal organizations that weren't going to be rebuilt, not geared to small business loans. We made contracts with both Riggs and then with Chase Manhattan banks and helped rebuild the banking system with one working at the regulatory parts of banking and the other one working literally training the tellers and the loan officers. But again, State, Defense, our military and NATO were highly critical of us, that, "Why don't you have people back to work? Why don't they have an income?" When you say, "Well, to

get an income, you have to have a job. To have a job, you have to have a business. To have some sort of a business, you have to have finance. To have finance, you've got to have banking."

You couldn't get the three parties to agree on what the national banking system would be or the currency. There was a revolving chairmanship at the national bank level. Every month, you got a Serb, or Croat or a Bosnian at that level. So, trying to get a central bank established, that would set up regulatory structures – ugh! It was tough. But again, a lot of small business development work was by by-passing the formal banking system and working with the NGOs, a lot of small business development took off. People were eager and it was necessary to get them into production and get some income. They were penniless. They had zero, no savings. That had been wiped out by inflation. They had nothing. So, those were the three program focuses.

Q: What kind of scale are we talking about in terms of the numbers of people involved?

MORSE: The World Bank, the EU, the IMF and ourselves had worked out a five year, six billion dollar reconstruction program that went from the highest infrastructure down to the lowest level. That is the magnitude of that. In terms of the people, you're looking at a couple of million people. It's doable. It's small enough.

Q: How did it work on that ground?

MORSE: The UN wanted to take the lead. The EU did. The World Bank did. But, as you know, there was the UN Special Representative, Carl Bildt (former PM of Sweden). His deputy was an American. They were heavily preoccupied with coordinating the ethic, political, military, security, the police and all that part of it. In terms of the reconstruction part of it, Bildt had floundered at first.

I remember when the World Bank lead for this called me. Her name was Christine Wallick. She was highly competent. Chris had been working on Bosnia for quite some time. It was time for the World Bank team to take the first trip in. They were going to do it with the IMF. We said, "We would like you to do it with the EU, too, and ourselves." She said, "How do you get into Sarajevo?" She asked, "Where do we stay?" The Holiday Inn had been blown apart. They were kind of starting from that low level of current background and knowledge, but then wanted to take the lead to coordinate! Ultimately, there were municipal level coordinating groups that were set up to coordinate the donors, the NGOs and the three parties. At the higher level, there were donor coordination meetings that were convened by Carl Bildt on behalf of the UN.

Q: And this level was among the donors?

MORSE: High Representatives and with the host country representatives, yes. But there should have been a much stronger lead by either Carl's office, but they were preoccupied with other matters. The Bank and EU were less prepared to turn the lead over to the UN because the UN wasn't a reconstruction player. They weren't putting much money into it; but, they had the political fig leaf of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, Carl Bildt.

Q: How was AID represented there? Did we have a mission?

MORSE: Oh, yes. Almost immediately, Craig Buck was transferred in from Eastern Europe and made Bosnia Mission Director. He set up a temporary office within what was the embassy compound and then ultimately found space down the street and opened up an office. The office had an authorization to begin with direct hire and a lot of contractors. Overall, I think we were fairly supported. There are always the to-and-fros of the competing AID/W bureaus.

Q: He was backstopped by the Humanitarian Bureau or by the regional bureau?

MORSE: The ENI bureau, the geographic regional bureau. There was a parallel Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) office still that had been there for four (4) years. They were not co-located. I had urged that they be co-located and wanted that continued again to get them to work together; but, they were going to phase out in a year. There was also a separate Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI) office that was starting up and was very active. They supported the democratic initiatives, the elections and all of that. There was also a lot of good work that we could spend a lot of time on in terms of listening to grassroots groups, trying to get not political parties formed, but people to express a cause and an issue rather than just come together around their ethnicity. OTI was quite good in doing that.

Q: What is OTI?

MORSE: The Office of Transitional Initiatives, which is one of the three offices of the Bureau of Humanitarian Response: Food, OFDA and the Office of Transitional Initiatives. This was a perfect transition for them to work in. We worked with George Soros. Again, the election was coming up. There were three television and radio studios. They were each controlled by the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. They were just spewing out the ethnic line. We had different surveys that showed that 87% of their people got their news by television, but that same 87% only listened to one channel and it was the channel of their ethnic origin. When you asked why they didn't listen to the other two channels, they said, "They're just liars. We can't believe them." We were trying to support independent training of reporters. I have to tell you, I was interviewed by different reporters over there. They didn't even know how to ask a question. They had grown up in a system where there wasn't free speech and free press; so, there was a lot of training about how a free election should be reported. We tried joint funding of television. One group wouldn't give the property rights. Another group wouldn't permit a transmitter. Another group in the government wouldn't give the transmission frequency, just to block it, so that they didn't have an independent voice. It was a long-term process that people were trying to get away with short-term solutions.

Q: How has it evolved?

MORSE: I don't think Bosnia has healed the ethnic differences. In fact, the way the peace agreement is set up, it has perpetuated it. You basically have the country divided along ethnic lines. We called it the "inter-ethnic" boundary; but, it was supposed to be called

the “inter- entity” boundary. It was basically separating the Serbs from the Bosnians and the Croats.

Q: At the practical level, what has been accomplished?

MORSE: Reconstruction has not been as fast as people wanted; but, overall, we found that people were able to restore basic services. What they didn’t do, total failure, is put Serbs back into houses in areas that had been theirs before, but that the Croats and Muslims had kicked them out of. You couldn’t get Muslims back into areas that were now Republic of Serbska, part of Bosnia, a total failure. So, the whole refugee resettlement areas were just a total failure. It’s validated ethnic cleansing in the interest of stopping the fighting quickly.

Q: Was there an alternative?

MORSE: Longer term building reconciliation. It would have had to have been started earlier. There probably wasn’t much of an alternative at the time of Dayton. That gets us to one other role. It’s a sensitive role. Because of the inter-agency work as the head of the AID/Bosnia Task Force working with others, I worked a lot with State, CIA, Defense and the NSC. They were extremely frustrated that we, the U.S., never could come up with a plan of what to do about arresting and taking the indicted war criminals to the Hague, mainly, the two main ones, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. The NSC staff did a paper on this; and, it was rejected. State did a paper; and, it was rejected. DOD and DIA did one; and, it was rejected. Every time, basically, the NSC principals would say, “Take it back to the drawing boards.” And they would put somebody else in the U.S. leadership on this. At one point, the NSC principals put Admiral Blair in charge. He was the CIA’s DDI, the Deputy Director for Intelligence, not operations. He put together a small group of three people. He asked Brian in one principal’s meeting, “Can Ted join us?” Our agency doesn’t do that much with CIA and certainly didn’t want it known, overt and public. This was at a time that I had stepped back into more of the conflict prevention work and less of the Bosnia work. Brian asked why. Admiral Blair said, “Well, because we need somebody who understands the Bosnia economics. We want to see whether or not there is some understanding of how Radovan and Ratko are financed, where they get their money and that kind of stuff.”

That request came in part because, early on in talking to our people on the ground, the 100 that had been there through the relief operation, they could tell you where the corruption was and how it worked. They could tell you where the Serbs were cooperating fully with the Bosniaks and selling each other everything from booze and cigarettes to arms and ammunition. There was that secret transit tunnel that was underneath the airport that was never publicly announced. It is now a museum. They have painted the walls inside with murals. But that tunnel came out on the Serb side: and, the Serbs let the Bosnians come out of the besieged Sarajevo through that end of the tunnel, which was very, very long. But the cost was a case of whiskey, a case of cigarettes, a case of ammunition or a case of rockets or whatever they were bringing in. Some of our people knew who the contacts were and who the mules were for all that stuff. I didn’t know; but,

some of our NGOs knew about it. Some of our OFDA people knew about it. So, I went and would work two days a week out at CIA headquarters with Defense Intelligence, State and a CIA person

Q: This group was supposed to come with – what?

MORSE: Another plan yet of how to either deliver these two indicted war criminals to the Hague, or neutralize them by undercutting their power base, their finances and all the rest of it.

Just one story on that. One day, the CIA psychologist was invited in. He had prepared a psychological profile of Radovan Karadzic. It was an excellent briefing. He had to admit that he hadn't had a chance to talk to anybody who had actually talked to Karadzic. I said, "Well, you know, he was a professor of psychiatry at the university. Why don't you talk to some of his fellow professors at the university?" "Well, we can't go out there and talk. We can't do that openly." I said, "You don't have to. The chairman of the Department of Psychology lives about six (6) blocks down the street from you at the CIA headquarters." "Who is he? How do you know him? What is his name?" I opened the book and said, "His telephone number is such and such." Well, they don't think of unclassified, open sources like that. Admiral Blair asked, "How do you know him?" I said, "He is the father of the Bosnia Foreign Minister. On my last trip, the Foreign Minister asked me to deliver a package to his father. He was the chairman of the psychology department where Radovan Karadzic taught. He knows him. He knows his thinking. They taught together for seven years." But, the CIA doesn't always think in open sources; they seem more inclined to electronically intercept information and all that kind of stuff.

One more comment on Bosnia in terms of winding that down, too, it was my recommendation that we disband the AID task force and turn responsibilities over to the geographic bureau. BHR was out; and, it was pretty regularized by that time. We're now looking at late 1996. Just before, I was supposed to go on a plane to Bosnia with Ron Brown, as the AID person on it. I went over and had an inter-agency briefing for him and others at the Department of Commerce. It was so much selling America when we were trying to simulate the local economy that I disagreed with what they were doing on the trip. I told Brian and said I just didn't think it would be helpful for us to explain to our European reconstruction partners and to our local partners why AID, a Bosnia local development supporter, was really promoting American exports, instead of local production; so, I dropped it. Next thing you knew, Brown's plane plowed into the mountain at Dubrovnik.

Q: That was fortunate for you.

MORSE: That's kind of what I felt, even though my heart and mind pained for the loss.

Q: The Task Force disbanded then; and, it became a regular operation.

MORSE: That's right. The Bosnia desk. The geographic bureau ran it from that point forward. They had the continuity of Paige Alexander.

Q. It was more of a reconstruction and development type program?

MORSE: Right.

Q: Humanitarian aid was phased out?

MORSE: That was done. The BHR bureau was done; so, the need for an inter-bureau TF and inter-agency work had practically dried up as well.

Q: But the core issues with the lack of cooperation among the three governments still persisted; so, you were dealing with three separate territorial entities.

MORSE: And with political, administrative and economic ramifications.

Q: Except that there were some points, I gather from what you're saying, where they agreed to cooperate on some practical solutions.

MORSE: If you put enough pressure, at time when you'd get Holbrooke back in there or we would have to take an issue over and over to Carl Bildt or the Secretary of State would weigh in, State and the U.S. administration stayed involved day by day, hour by hour – but divided as well. There is another story in that one. When Holbrooke finished Dayton, he retired almost immediately. To take responsibility for Bosnia within the USG there were all kinds of mechanisms. Holbrooke had run Bosnia policy as a separate task force, separate from the European Bureau; but, the man who was the European Bureau Assistant Secretary of State had been Holbrooke's deputy when he was Assistant Secretary for Europe. So, they got along fairly well; but, when Holbrooke was going out, the administration asked Ambassador Gallucci, a fine human being, if he would take Bosnia on. Gallucci said he would. We only had half a dozen meetings before he left.

Gallucci kind of set out what were the parameters of my authority, my responsibilities vis-à-vis all these other task forces, the White House, the NSC and Holbrooke, who was still feeding indirectly to the White house, to Gore, to the Secretary and to the Assistant Secretary of European Affairs. It became clear that he had enough influence still that he was tilting responsibility to the European Bureau instead of to Gallucci and his Task Force. I don't think Gallucci was on the job three months when he said, "I have another opportunity; and, I'm departing." My own speculation is he left because Holbrooke was still calling the Bosnia shots, from behind the scene. He is now head of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. He's a fine person.

Bosnia policy was getting institutionalized within the USG, but not without a lot of strain. Just to continue that up to today, after Gallucci, then Ambassador Montgomery took it over. He was completely overshadowed by the European Bureau. Then Bob Gelbard

came in because they felt they needed a higher profile person. Gelbard ran it just until last week. He is now our Ambassador to Indonesia.

Q: Outside of the European Bureau or in it?

MORSE: Outside.

Q: Why didn't they integrate it into the State Department European Bureau?

MORSE: I guess they felt that the Bosnia Task Force needed direct access because these people were all known as the President's Special Representatives and the Special Advisor to the Secretary of State. How can you be advising the President and the Secretary if you're under an Assistant Secretary? The man who is now heading it, Ambassador Jim Dobbins, is now taking on Kosovo and Bosnia, the whole Balkans. He's within the European Bureau; but, he still is the Special Advisor to the President and the Secretary of State.

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Q: Did UNDP have any role in this?

MORSE: No, not much of a role at all. It was pretty much the big five powers were ascribing to the UN a different role, not a UNDP role at that point. The UN role was to put together the Kosovo administration, the interim administration. The United Nations Security Council resolution, which the big powers had asked for, authorized the UN to go in on an interim basis to Kosovo and totally run the country. To the best of my knowledge (and I have to research this), I couldn't find any other parallel in my immediate experience except for what we had in Japan after World War II.

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Q: The UN's most important role was in this larger question of a potentially new country administration and reconstituting a national system.

MORSE: But, here again, there was tremendous conflict between the UN's role and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe). The OSCE had been on the ground. They had been so dominant in the election process and the public administration over in Bosnia. They had been working in Kosovo before fighting broke out, almost with a shadow government in Kosovo. They had been working with some of the refugee groups outside. They were headed by former American Ambassador Walker. He got crosswise with Holbrooke; and, so OSCE itself got a tainted name simply because Walker was heading it. Still, you found that OSCE was widely involved outside the UN.

Q: Did they have an independent capacity?

MORSE: Oh, totally. They had staff and what we called the "pumpkins", the orangecolored vehicles, hundreds of the OSCE orange-colored vehicles, running around. They were the Peace Verification Group inside Kosovo before this last humanitarian and reconstruction phase. For two years, they had a couple of thousand people in Kosovo that were verifying adherence to the peace that had been negotiated two years before. Then, when that peace broke down, they came out ahead of the refugees and then with the refugees; but, they were prepared to go back in to verify any peace agreement. They also were in charge of collecting information on war crimes. So, they were interviewing refugees in the camps; but, there were differences between OSCE and the UN regarding establishing or running an interim Kosovo administration.

Q: This was basically the European organization.

MORSE: Yes.

Q: With the Russians and the others all very active.

MORSE: That's right. But, then the role on establishing a government and Kosovo administration that you might have thought fell to the UN very naturally became complicated by the tension with the OSCE in terms of who should be doing this. Of course, who would the UN put in charge? Carl Bildt at one point said he didn't want it; but, then he was going to be the super person over it. I guess my biggest criticism was that people don't think of the different over-lapping phases in a continuum that you have to work on simultaneously. If you're not working on the refugee return at the same time you're doing refugee relief, you're not ready. If you're not working on setting up the new government, the police, the elections and the local government at the same time you're working on the relief and return, you're not ready, you're behind the curve. Almost everybody thinks of the relief stage as to separate from the return, from the resettlement, from the rehabilitation, from the reconstruction. They must be seen as over-lapping phases in a continuum.

Q: There is no group that looks at these things in that perspective? The UN might be taking that role.

MORSE: If you talk to the Europeans, if you talk to the World Bank, you talk to the United Nations, everybody can talk a continuum; but, they can't act on it. It's just like the American ambassador didn't want to be bothered with the concept. Others understood the concept but bureaucratically could only work on one phase at a time. For instance, in the U.S. side, the Congress certainly didn't want the U.S. involved in the reconstruction of Kosovo. So, in terms of being able to do the prepositioning, the roofing, the prepositioning of the construction materials, or deciding who was going to be in charge of restoring the transformer for the village versus the plugs in the house versus the dam to generate the electricity, they don't think in these terms. You just don't have over-lapping assigned responsibilities or staff that stays to work on the follow-on phases.

Q: That reflects this conflict resolution preparation process. Until you have a conflict, it doesn't have a priority. After a while, you create an entity to deal with these things when there isn't anything happening. You have to have a crisis to bring it into being.

MORSE: That's right. That is the whole process with doing prevention versus resolution.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

THOMAS J. MILLER
U. S. Ambassador
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1999-2001)

Ambassador Thomas Miller was born in Illinois and joined the Foreign Service in 1976. His career included postings in Thailand, Greece, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he served as Ambassador. He also held roles in Washington, including Director for North African Affairs and the Office of Israeli-Palestinian Affairs. Ambassador Thomas J. Miller was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

Topical Focus – Democracy Development and Sectarian Divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Q: Oh God yes. Can you say when you got there in August, '99, what was the situation in—well, I'll say in the Balkans basically?

MILLER: Well, when I got there Kosovo had heated up in a big, big way and Bosnia had never cooled down. Kosovo, we did go into. We bombed Serbia. That was all a backdrop so our relationship with Serbia was extremely tense. And Serbia was kind of playing out. Milošević was still in office. Serbia was playing out a lot of these tensions in Bosnia, the Republic of Srpska—the Serbian part of the two entities of Bosnia, the Republic of Srpska and the Bosnian Muslim-Croat Federation. And so the situation when I got there was very, very tense. The dominant party in the Republic of Srpska was the Social Democrats, the SDS, and, and they were the dominant party, but not exclusive and there were a lot of less nationalist parties in the Republic of Srpska that we worked much more closely with. I mention this because there's a reoccurring theme in my career, and that's Richard Holbrooke. He just keeps showing up. And by the way, I told you the story of how I got the job. If you ever interviewed Holbrooke he would say that he had a lot to do with me getting the job in Bosnia. And maybe he was there in the background. I just wasn't aware of it. But he decided he was going to really get me off to a great start, so he got Joe Biden, who was then Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and the two of them decided to take a trip to Bosnia and they arrived five days after I had gotten out

there. And Holbrooke really was trying to be helpful to me. And it was a big, big deal for Bosnia because here's the guy who put together the whole Dayton agreement who's coming four years later, and I think it might have been the first trip he had made since Dayton. Anyway, he was treated like a conquering hero. And it's funny, Biden's kind of second fiddle, you know, at that point. And Holbrooke gets up and gives his speech and basically calls for the High Representative who was the internationally appointed tsar in Bosnia, to use his powers, and he had something called the Bonn Powers, to basically disband the SDS and the SRS, Social Radical Party, which is even more radical than the SDS. And that immediately set off a firestorm within the international community, among the Bosnians over should you do something like this or not. The Americans obviously pushing for it, or most of Americans because there were some people I found out later who disagreed with this. And much of the rest of the international community, mainly the Europeans who thought this was kind of usurping the whole democratic ethos, these guys had been elected in a democratic election. So that made life difficult. Immediately the Serb president of the tri-presidency tried to get rid of me. At one point several months later I had two of the three presidents (the Serb and the Croat) who actually tried to have me recalled because they thought I was too activist. And it turned out that the Croat later was indicted for all kinds of crimes and fled to Croatia where he is today. So, their efforts never succeeded. Obviously that made me a real hero among the more moderate elements of Bosnia, and that helped a lot later because about a year later it became clear to me not long after I arrived that everyone had said this was an ethnic conflict. But what became very clear to me once I was on the ground was it was an ethnic conflict but at its base it was driven by economics , by money. And the three hard line parties, the Bosniak, the Serb, and the Croat, who had killed each other during the war, they could do deals. And they were doing deals to basically split up Bosnia, like mafiosa. You know, you stay out of my territory and I'll stay out of your territory. And Bosnia has got a lot of natural resources and was the center of Tito's Yugoslavia in terms of heavy industry, in terms of minerals, in terms of hydroelectric power. It had a lot. And even though in some ways it was a lot poorer than other parts of Yugoslavia, the potential was there. And it became clear to me that these guys, that these three dominant parties who had been dominant during the war, who were dominant after the war, who ran things, and who cooperated, were going to just keep on doing deals to stay in power and the moderates were going to be shut out. And because I had a lot of credibility with the moderates I got together with my British colleague and we hosted a series of dinners of all the different moderate parties, many of whom had never even dealt with each other before. Kind of small, there were about nine people from all three ethnic groups. And these dinners were quiet off-line affairs which became known as the "secret dinners." And out of these several dinners they created a coalition and in 2000 they actually ran in the national elections and between them they took over the government.

Q: OK, let's talk about the nuts and bolts of these secret dinners. I mean how—what do you do at something like this? Just put them in a room or --

MILLER: No, you give them good food first. What you do is we had—if I remember correctly I think we had nine people, three Serbs, three Croats, three Bosniaks, Bosniaks were Muslim. And we kind of set the framework and we said the purpose here is to see if you guys have enough in common that you might be able to have broad cooperation. And that might lead to some cooperation. It wasn't trying to create one party or --

Q: Did you get up and say this or --

MILLER: Yeah.

Q:—did you have your officers --

MILLER: No. No, this was pretty explicit. And it was the British ambassador and I. This was my idea, but I just did it—I needed a coconspirator here. I didn't want this to be a strictly American thing. And the Brit was just a terrific guy. He was an activist, like myself. And so, we conspired to this together. And we had two dinners at my house, one or two at his house. It was maybe three or four dinners over the course of long, long evenings. And it was basically—it wasn't "You will do this," because that doesn't work in any kind of context. But you know, this is an opportunity, is the potential there that you guys will see enough in common to cooperate in the form of a broad coalition, because individually none of them had come close to bringing the numbers that they needed to form a government. But collectively—it was just barely—collectively you could do the arithmetic and figure that they conceivably could have the numbers to form a government. And they did. They formed a government. And in fact just a month ago I had lunch with a guy who took over as prime minister. I still stay in touch with a lot of these guys. Unfortunately, you know, because they took so long to put the government together, and this is June of 2010, a lesson for the Iraqi coalitions, they're still arguing today, and there were serious economic problems and other problems. Basically the vote was not so much that everyone in Bosnia was wanting to throw the rascals out. They just voted like most voters around the world vote, focusing on the issues that affect them on an everyday basis. They were the bread and butter issues, the economy, jobs, nothing different than in most—and four years after the war you still had a couple hundred thousand people who were refugees or internally displaced. They hadn't returned to their homes. A lot of homes had been destroyed, tremendously high unemployment rates. And so the vote in 2000 was as much a repudiation of the guys in power as it was support for these guys. And unfortunately these guys didn't get their act together so they had another election in 2002. They've now shifted it to four-year terms, but in the 2002 election

people threw these guys out and they brought the hard liners back in. And that's how it's been ever since then.

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Q: Well, OK. Let's talk about—you said crooks. I can recall during the time you were there, before and after, but you know, headlines about the corruption there that this was 140 an exceedingly corrupt state.

MILLER: Right.

Q: How did you find it and who was doing what and who was trying to do something about it?

MILLER: Well, we found various things happening. There are a lot of natural resources and in the name of privatization the people in power were selling these natural resources to private entities. But the entities they were selling to were their friends and at ridiculously low prices. This is the kind of stuff that happened a lot in Russia after the fall of the wall. That was one thing. There were people in key positions who would, for instance, control real estate. And remember that Bosnia—Yugoslavia had been a socialist state and then it goes into this terrible war and emerges, and the system hadn't changed at all. It was still pretty much a socialist state and so there is a tremendous amount of statist control over physical assets and resources including real estate (apartments). I remember there was a big, big scandal involving Elektroprivreda, the state electricity company. And it goes on and on and on. And it's all of the above. There's a fantastically large aluminum mill in Herzegovina in the Croat section and basically the Croats just took this over. They wouldn't allow non-Croat workers and did deals with some international aluminum companies and it was very an efficient mill but they had a policy of not hiring non-Croats. And then there was all the international aid that was coming in, hundreds and hundreds, billions of dollars at the time. And you know, the opportunity to misuse that aid—I mean I'll just tell you one story involving us. And again, I'm not implying there's any corruption on the American side, but our Congress had decided—and this is just one example—our Congress had decided that, probably in consultation with the administration, but this is before my time, that really what needed to be done was not only to get Bosnia back on its feet again, but to transform it from a socialist demand drive economy to a market-based economy. Well, that all sounds good. Everyone would agree with that. So we came up with a very, very large loan guarantee program where we would give loans to private businesspeople to start companies, and that all sounds good. The problem was that we had all this money but there weren't that many private

businesspeople and there definitely weren't that many who qualified for the loans because Bosnia still had a socialist economy.

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Q: Well, did you find that the officials, not only the elected ones but the people who held office, were they generating corruption? Was this the main driving force or not?

MILLER: They were pretty dominant. I mean again, you know, it's hard to generalize. I mean every rule has its exceptions and I'm not going to say everyone in Bosnia was a crook, but the corruption was pretty endemic and it was pretty tough. I felt 100% since we were making such an investment in Bosnia that we had a right to be involved. Near the end of my tour there was a bank that was basically laundering a lot of dirty money in Herzegovina. It was a Croat bank. The High Representative's staff raided the bank and it was kind of violent and then we brought in a person who we funded to go start leading an effort to go through the books. We thought it'd be 90 days. She was there six years later. Just fighting massive amounts of corruption was tough because it was pretty endemic.

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Q: What was your impression of the state of Croatia and its rule in Bosnia?

MILLER: Well, the dominant party in Croatia was the HDZ (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union)), of which there was an HDZ dominant party in Bosnia. And these guys were pretty hard line, you know, Croat nationalist types. And the HDZ—and the HDZ leader in Croatia was Tudjman, you know, until he died.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: And there's very close linkage between the two HDZ parties in Croatia and Bosnia. I can't remember when it was, but when I was in Bosnia the HDZ had been thrown out of office and some more elements who didn't particularly get along that well with the HDZ in Bosnia came in. So it made it much harder for the HDZ in Bosnia. Not impossible, just made it harder for them to practice their hard line policies. Because that umbilical cord with Croatia was less so. But the HDZ in Bosnia was still dominant. And the HDZ in Bosnia made it very, very difficult for any kind of Croat party to—or any party that included, you know, multi-ethnic party to take root, particularly in Herzegovina, which was the main area that they controlled.

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MILLER: When I left I was much more optimistic than I am today, because we had helped this coalition of moderate political parties get into power. They were still arguing about who was going to do what and they were slow in putting together a government. But I kind of thought they could pull it out, they could do it, it would be a struggle. And it turned out they got turned out of office the next year after I left, and they never got back in again, and the hard liners have been in there ever since.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARSHALL ADAIR
Department of State
Political Advisor to the U. S. Military Forces
Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(2002-2003)

Mr. Adair, son of a United States Foreign Service Officer, was born in Maryland and raised at Foreign Service posts in the United States and abroad. He was educated at Middlebury College and joined the Foreign Service in 1972. During his career Mr. Adair held a number of senior positions at the State Department in Washington, DC, dealing with a variety of areas, including relations with the US military Commands, Economic and political issues in Europe and Department personnel matters. A Chinese language specialist, his foreign posts include Paris, Lubumbashi, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Beijing, Rangoon, Chengdu (China), and Tuzla (Bosnia). Mr. Adair was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Topical Focus – Municipal Administration Issues in Tuzla after The Dayton Accords

Q: How'd you find the elements of the Bosnian government that you dealt with?

ADAIR: I didn't deal with the central Bosnian government in Sarajevo that much. We dealt with the city administration of Tuzla. I met with the mayor fairly often. The

commanding general and I called on the local governor, who was a very impressive guy, and had played an important part in holding the community together during the war. I met with mayors in the smaller towns as well. I had dealings with some of the Serb officials in the Republic of Srpska. That's where some of the problem areas were. We had to go talk to them about issues such as reintegrating the people that had fled the ethnic cleansing, and protecting the rights of minorities. We had to keep tabs on them, and ensure they were complying with the terms of the Dayton Accords. We sometimes had to pressure them, or even recommend their removal by the high representative.
There was an office of the high representative in Tuzla and the head of that office was an American Foreign Service officer at the time. I would see him quite a bit. He held a monthly meeting of all of the international organization representatives in Tuzla and the surrounding region. Some of them would come in from outlying areas like the Republika Srpska. We would talk about the issues, and about how we could bring our different resources to bear on various problems. We had some synergy there. The Tuzla government and the Tuzla environment were really interesting. Tuzla during the war had been an enclave. I don't think it was completely surrounded, but it had been besieged by the Serb Army. It had been shelled. The local government had been pretty enlightened. They had resisted the pressures to engage in ethnic cleansing. When the Serb army began shelling the city, there had been some pressure to take retribution on the Serb population of Tuzla. However, the leadership of the city, which was Bosnian, had said, "No; they're our neighbors and fellow citizens, and we're not going down that road. Anybody that wants to leave is free to leave, but we are one community, and we're going to protect our own." Almost everyone chose to stay. They protected each other, and it was really pretty amazing.

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Q: I realize you were in one part and all but did you get any feel that Bosnia was beginning to coalesce?

ADAIR: They were trying to, or at least some people were trying to. However, one of the problems was that much of the political and economic power was still in the same hands as before the war or during the war. I don't know exactly how to say this, but in times of trouble, certainly in times of chaos, economic power tends to fall into the hands of people who are clever and strong, don't necessarily play by the rules and have relatively little civic commitment. When Dayton was negotiated, the parties basically agreed to keep the status quo. Therefore, many of the people who had benefited from the nastiness of the war kept their gains. Some of the people in prominent political positions were vulnerable, because the high representative had the power to remove them from their positions if he concluded that they were obstructing the process of the accords. That didn't necessarily apply to people in the business community, and they of course continued to exert substantial influence. That made it more difficult to really change things, and perhaps also more difficult to help all those who had just barely survived the war. Those people looked around and saw that the real power was still in the hands of the people who had been doing the damage. I think it was very hard for many of those people to accept that the future was going to change. They still had to play the same game.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CRAIG G. BUCK
USAID
Mission Director
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1995-1999)

Mr. Craig G. Buck, born in 1944 in Jackson, Mississippi and raised in Carthage, Texas, is a retired senior officer at USAID. Following his undergraduate education at Texas A&M, he spent a year conducting research as a Fulbright Scholar in Bolivia (1966-1967) and the following year as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at Stanford (1968-1969). He later earned a M.A in Economics from Stanford in 1980. Mr. Buck first joined USAID in April 1969 as an intern in Turkey (1969-1972) and held postings as a mission director in Uganda (1980-1983), Dominican Republic (1984-1987), Peru (1989-1992), Kazakhstan (1993-1995), Bosnia (1995-1999), Kosovo (2000-2002), and Afghanistan (2002-2003). His Washington assignments include the Latin American Bureau (1972), Turkey Desk Officer (1972-1976), Office of the Senior Advisor for Narcotic Matter (1976-1977), and Egypt Desk Officer (1977-1979). Following Mr. Buck's retirement from USAID in 2003, he worked in the private sector as a contractor for AID and other developmental organizations. Craig G. Buck was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2017.

Topical Focus - International Post-Conflict Stabilization and Support in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Q: Before we go into the details, there were two other major players sitting in Sarajevo with you, which is the U.S. embassy, whenever it was finally established, and the administration established by the Dayton Accord. And that was quite a complex piece of negotiation, because you had the High Commissioner, and then the High Commissioner's various deputies, also doing all sorts of things. How did you lace up with all those different parts?

BUCK: First of all, we were there on the ground and working long before the UN had its organization set up. We were out making loans or, for example, in the other areas where we were working, we were way ahead, before they had their personnel on the ground. We were rehabilitating war-damaged infrastructure while the UN experts were still looking for their own housing and perquisites. However, we did make it a point that we would coordinate and work with them, that this was an international effort. We were one part of this effort – we obviously had our own particular interest, but we were all part of a broader international effort. On the economic sphere, the Special Representative quickly set up a weekly economic council, and the participants were the European Bank, UN (United Nations), World Bank, IMF, and USAID. We were all working together on the same broad economic policy basis.

Similarly, the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) was responsible for the democratization side of things, and for elections. We seconded – AID seconded probably the best person that AID had, in terms of managing elections, to the OSCE, to help manage that process. So, you know, I guess we were all working together.

I believe another important factor to remember is that Ambassador Richard Holbrooke had authored the Dayton Peace Accord and had an enormous investment in making it successful. He came to Bosnia normally every 10-14 days after Dayton. In my first meeting with him he called me to the Presidency where he, Bosnian President Izetbegovic, the Foreign Minister, and many others were discussing immediate steps ahead. He asked me to explain what the USG would do for reconstruction, and I outlined the program I had discussed earlier with Brian Atwood. I also emphasize the conditions we would place on our assistance and the conditions they would need to meet. Holbrooke told the Bosnians to give close attention to these activities and to ensure they met conditions. He also told me that it was vital that the USG make these reconstruction efforts successful and that the US should look good by our performance

Q: And then there's one other aspect of the relations that you're having, with the two autonomous entities within Bosnia. How did that work?

BUCK: Initially we did not work in Republika Srpska, and our approach was that Republika Srpska was not executing the stipulations in the Dayton Peace Accord, and consequently, we would not work with Republika Srpska. We had a fairly robust program working in the Bosniak and Croat areas. But because the RS failed to turn over war criminals, they were denying people the right to return, they were not providing evidence of war crimes, they continued to discriminate, we did not work there. However, about six months after the Dayton Accord the new president of Republika Srpska, Biljana Plavšić, began to break with the hardline – or hardliners, we called them – elements in Pale, which was the capital of the Republika Srpska at that time. She recognized, I think, that an approach of being hardline was going to isolate Republika Srpska.
She began to meet with us, and so with the agreement of the ambassador, we opened up our program to Republika Srpska. I drafted a very detailed cable for Washington that the Ambassador sent out that explained our rationale for moving into the RS, our expectations, the conditions we would place on our assistance, and how we would leverage it. On the ground in the RS as well as elsewhere in Bosnia we were very vocal and very open about where we had projects, why we were working there, we were only working in communities that are allowing refugees or internally displaced people to return. We're only working areas that were turning over indicted war criminals. We are not working in areas that actively promoted discrimination based upon ethnic or religious origin. We had a fairly rapid opening to Republika Srpska, with an effort to drive a wedge between hardliners in Pale and more responsible officials who saw the need for cooperation with the West. That proved to be successful, because ultimately Krajisnic, the prime minister and the various leaders – were ultimately isolated, and Plavsic who, at great peril and being under death threats moved the Serb Government to Banja Luka. Anyhow, I think we, the United States, diplomatically and economically were able to support efforts to show that supporting the Dayton Peace Accords would bring tangible

results to their communities.

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Q: Now, you started out the conversation talking about administrative leave within USAID, and how difficult it was to ramp up and work in this immediate post-conflict, or near post-conflict, situation. In the four years you were there, did USAID evolve enough institutionally to be able to do it again when the time came, and when it was called upon to do it again?

BUCK: No, unfortunately it did not. I think that one of the – Because at one point, I think Bosnia was a fairly – It had moved from zero to a fairly significant percentage of AID's overall development budget, so people became acquainted with the approaches that we used, with the concept, and understood what was going on. I think the other thing is, the people that we were able to get moved up very quickly. I found that the people that we got to go to Bosnia, many were fairly junior officers who were willing to take a risk, who were pioneers. They were rewarded for that. I know all of them showed that they had talent and the capacity to do it, and people saw that going into these new areas had certain advantages. But the system itself… I'm not certain it has changed. One thing that AID developed was its Office of Transition Initiatives, which was an idea that Brian Atwood had come up with. OTI was one of the first entities that we had in Bosnia, and to me it provided a model for the rest of AID. It was lean, it was quick, it was responsive. I had it in Bosnia, and it really was excellent in terms of giving me an idea and information on what was happening, where opportunities were, what they were doing, what could be done. They had a good sense of the political realities. And, OTI had developed rapid response mechanisms to enable it to address urgent needs quickly.

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Q: So, there are there are pieces there that can respond quickly, but you're saying, sort of, more overall as an institution, this was not such a gigantic challenge that it felt it needed to change significantly internally the USAID side.

BUCK: You know, we didn't change our personnel policies; we didn't change our program development cycle, whereby you do your analysis, you identify the problem, you work with the government, you work by the community. You get an idea what you want to do. You go through this god-awful long 18-36 month process of doing papers and justifications, and – AID still does it. That's just to define an issue and how to address. Then add a year or so to contract and get people on the ground.

However, in the case of Bosnia, as well as later in Kosovo and Afghanistan, you have some people that recognize that this was not applicable to the realities of an urgent post-conflict thing scene, and so they allow for exceptions. But all of it was done by exception, rather than, "This is a preferred method of responding." However, I think in Bosnia, by the time I finished up in Bosnia, AID was beginning to see that post-conflict issues are something that that, developmentally and conceptually, AID needs to think about. Because this is where – Bosnia is not going to be the first, and of course it

obviously was not the last. So, as a developmental issue, AID began to think about it.

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Q: At that point, was USAID still planning to remain as large and as involved as it was, or were you beginning to see some sunsetting?

BUCK: No. Our program levels had come down, but then there were other opportunities. I'm trying to remember when Milosevic fell in Serbia, which gave new opportunities for us, for the United States. The international community in Serbia was one of the real factors, but, you know, we were continuing to have a fairly large and significant program when I left Bosnia. While I was in Bosnia, we were partially watching what was going on in Kosovo, and even though Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia. Bosnia did not consider Kosovo to be a real close friend and still had more important issues to be concerned with then Kosovo. It had been like any other entity a republic within former Yugoslavia, just one of several. There was no special relationship, although as I left Bosnia, fairly significant numbers of people who had been expelled from Kosovo were settled in refugee camps in Bosnia, but they were discriminated against because of their ethnicity. This was disturbing since the Bosniaks had just suffered through a grueling war largely founded on ethnicity, and their lack of empathy was disappointing.

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BUCK: Let's take the area of democratic development and free press. In Bosnia and in Kosovo, we worked with organizations that were promoting free press, promoting laws that governed the broadcast and print industries, that ensured their freedoms. Our people worked with a variety of organizations in Holland and Austria that were promoting these democratic practices. Our people became familiar, I think, with what other organizations were doing internationally to promote these norms. We developed two independent television stations in Bosnia, and set up transmitters to transmit this throughout the province. We worked very closely with the OSCE in doing this, in the financing of these, and in trying to figure out how we could finance private print and electronic media in the future. They've got a very small market, and how could you come up with a means of making them financially viable. We didn't want to have official governmental news stations, but one of the ways getting revenue was to have the government collect a tax on every television set or every antenna or every receiver that you use. So, we hadn't come up with a solution to that difficult thing, but we worked with our OSCE colleagues.

BULGARIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

SUSAN KOSINSKI FRITZ
USAID
Regional Democracy Officer
Mission to Bulgaria
Sofia, Bulgaria
(2005-2007)

Susan Kosinski Fritz studied at Rutgers University and American University before entering USAID as a Presidential Management Intern in 1989. She served in many different positions in several countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in May 2024.

Topical Focus – USAID DRG Programming in Bulgaria

FRITZ: The way we had planned managing our tandem careers was that my husband would be the lead bidder on the first job after we got married and he was, and the next one would be for me. However, while we were in Central Asia, I had twins. At the time we were bidding they were two years old and by the time we left, they were three. And I said, ”You know what? I can't do this. I can't raise these babies and be here for them and have a high-powered job.” My husband's older than me so I said, “Why don't you go try to get a mission directorship somewhere and we'll figure me out after that.”

Mike became mission director in Bulgaria, and I became a regional democracy officer as part of the DG Team in the E&E Bureau. As you may recall, at the end of my Central Asia tour I was already reporting to the director of that office. Gloria Steele was the assistant administrator at the time, and she was our guardian angel. She really helped us to be able to stay together as a tandem couple. Gloria identified a Foreign Service job in the region that wasn't going to be filled. She moved it in Bulgaria, made it regional and reporting to Washington. The idea was that I would work as part of the E&E team, but obviously closer to the missions that we were supporting as a Bureau and be able to help missions design projects, evaluate projects, and provide mentoring to staff. Basically all missions would have to do is pay my travel costs, which sounds great, right? But that was when there was a huge Operational Expense (OE) crunch just as I came into the job. I was concerned that I was going to be sitting there for three years with nothing to do because missions don't have money for me to travel. As it turned out, it was cheaper and easier for them to use me than someone from DC. I could drive to several posts in the

Balkans. I also went to Moldova where I designed elections and political party programming. I went to Ukraine where I also designed a political processes project. I did most of my work in Kosovo (rule of law) and in Macedonia (local government), and a little bit in Serbia (civil society, political process).

I left Bulgaria six months early to serve as deputy mission director in Kosovo and then mission director in Serbia, so it was helpful to have had that introduction to those missions. But in the Bulgaria job I wasn't managing any people, projects, or money. I was concerned that this was going to be a career killer because that's what we do in USAID, right? That's how you move up. So I told myself that I'd just devote the time to family and, and that'll be okay. I can hang around for three years and do this work, which is really rewarding. Surprisingly, I got promoted out of that job. I think it was because I did a lot of mentoring. We weren't sending staff to training back then. I created a manual on how to monitor and document monitoring projects. We had a lot of new FSNs and so I helped them to learn how to manage the projects that they were being assigned to manage in a very practical way. It was a really great, rewarding position. My only regret was because I thought that there would be no OE, I would accept any mission request. So I was not in Bulgaria as much as I would have liked. I just kept thinking, "Well, this is going to end, this is going to end." But it never did. It was a very good experience and time in my life and career.

Q: One of the things I see on your CV that you did was an analysis of the USAID Bulgaria program as well. And I wonder if you could talk about that a little bit, because did that analysis lead to the graduation of Bulgaria? Could you talk about that whole process of graduation, closeout and criteria?

FRITZ: Sure. I was assigned to work with the former mission director, John Tennant—I think he may have been the first mission director in Bulgaria. John continued to have ties in Bulgaria and lived there. So John and I, along with Ivanka (Vanya) Tzankova, who was the FSN program office director, worked together as a team to set about looking at the impact of the program. The USAID program had been active for 17 years. We tried to look at the impact and try to distill lessons learned. We started with reading all the evaluations that had been done. The problem was that USAID wasn't doing evaluations then and the ones that we were doing weren't very good, so we didn't have a lot to go on, but we had some information. Probably more important was that we had the institutional knowledge of John and Vanya who had been there for a good part of the life of that mission. I think Vanya was hired maybe in the second year of the mission's life. And she's so bright and smart. John and Vanya remembered well the people and projects. So we went back to people that were part of our programs, like champions or just people who were knowledgeable about some aspect of the work we were doing and interviewed them. We asked them, "What did USAID do and how did we do it? Were our programs done

well? What kind of impact did we have? What could have been done differently or better?"

It wasn't a scientifically sound process from a social research point of view. But we did distill some good lessons learned. I think we were able to see where we had more impact. Some of our local government work was very impactful. In fact, one woman who we worked very closely with was the mayor of a small town in southern Bulgaria, Zlatograd. While our programs were active, she became the head of the local government association. Now she does local government training and evaluations of European Union projects. She was even the chief of party for a USAID local governance project in Kosovo and another one in Macedonia. There are people like that who have done amazing things. There was another woman who was part of one of ours that became an EU minister. So there are some really bright people that we were able to interview and learn from in terms of what USAID had done that was good and things that maybe were not so good. And then we drafted a full report that described the good, the bad, and the ugly. Separately, we extracted all of the good parts and distilled those into more of a puff piece. Both of these are available on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

Q: Right. And I assume that some of the lessons learned are things you took with you as you went on yourself to become a mission director.

FRITZ: For sure. It's something I mentioned earlier in our discussion about the very first program that I managed, the local government program in Poland. Having a champion is just so important, like having somebody who wants it more than you, who we can give a little technical assistance to or maybe a lot and they can really navigate and run with it. That's so much more effective. And so I think the more successful work that we did in Bulgaria had that. I was really impressed with the democracy aspect of decentralization, which is a lesson I brought to Ukraine. The more people have a say in local decision making about the resources that their communities, municipalities, or cities are getting. And there's a real opportunity for people to experience democracy at a local level and to feel the impact of that in a way that's really hard to do at the national level.

Q: Yes. Just to go backwards for one second, is that something you think could have been done in Central Asia on the local government front, just out of curiosity?

FRITZ: Maybe. We did have a local government project in Kazakhstan which was at the oblast level, so it wasn't real grassroots. But I think it was impractical, because the country was so large. And so we were working with only three oblasts. Here's where it backfired on us. The champion we had in Pavlodar Oblast was the governor. And he was a reformer. He was really good and worked with us really well. We were giving him the technical assistance and the resources to reform his oblast but that became threatening to

the central government so they removed him (oblast governor was an appointed position, not elected.) I think he may have even gone to jail and just like that, our champion was gone. So I think it works better in smaller countries, although in Ukraine we supported their decentralization effort, and I think pretty successfully.

Q: So did Bulgaria do the program, did the closeout happen while you all were there? Did Mike close down the mission?

FRITZ: He did. And Administrator Henrietta Fore came out for it. As did Andrew Natsios. I was on TDY at the time so I missed it. But it was, I understand, a great ceremony and a great way to mark the end of our presence there.

Q: Was there some kind of a legacy institution created there? I know that was done in a number of the Eastern European countries as they closed. Did that happen in Bulgaria?

FRITZ: Yes, but it was a legacy foundation that was created from the enterprise funds. The Bulgarian American Enterprise Fund was hugely successful. They made a lot of money. Originally when these enterprise funds were established in each country, there was not an expectation that they would make money. They were created to help spur economic development. But the Bulgarian one did make a lot of money, as did a few of the others. From the reflows from the investments they made they created the America for Bulgaria Foundation which is still active and funds projects. In fact, Vanya, the former USAID program officer moved over to head up their M&E work for many years and she just retired from there. So she brought the USAID experience to inform some of the Foundation's efforts so that was good.

However, the kinds of people that were on the boards of the enterprise funds were from the private sector, investment bankers and the like. But the people that you need to run these legacy foundations – which are nonprofit organizations – need to have a different skill set and background experience, if you will, different experience. I think that USAID has had some challenges because of that. When I was acting assistant administrator in the bureau, one of the challenges I was dealing with was that the America for Bulgaria Foundation was funding projects that didn't seem to fit with their mandate. What we had approved when we agreed that they could use the reflows to establish the Foundation was in support of private sector development. But the Foundation was supporting the ballet and other arts programs. They built a children's museum that did not seem to be financially sustainable – or at least had not developed a sustainability plan before they built it. But these legacy foundations are a nice way to continue U.S assistance after USAID has left, a way to continue U.S. support.

Q: Was there much DG programming in Bulgaria itself?

FRITZ: Oh, yeah. In Eastern Europe, there basically were two types of programs in I would say almost every country in the early days – Economic Development (EG) and Democracy and Governance (DG). These were not Third World countries. Literacy was high because they had good educational systems and health indicators were good because they had strong health care systems. So USAID didn't really focus on programs outside of EG and DG in many of these Eastern European countries. However, in the former Soviet Union, for example in Ukraine, there might have been targeted health programs to fight TB and HIV.

Q: Okay. Did you have much involvement with the embassy, and were relations good with the embassy itself? Did you engage with the Ambassador, John Beyrle?

FRITZ: I didn't. Obviously, Mike did. I did do a trafficking in persons (TIP) assessment together with one of the Bulgarian FSNs and we briefed the ambassador on it. Sometimes he would ask me about what was going on in the region, particularly in Serbia and Kosovo, because it was a hot issue at that point and he was curious. So if I saw him in the elevator, I would brief him. But that was, you know, just in passing, but nothing formal aside from the TIP report that we had done.

Q: Okay. Anything more on Bulgaria that's important to mention?

FRITZ: No, beautiful country, beautiful people. It was great.

Q: It restored your faith in USAID after your Central Asia experience?

FRITZ: I didn't lose faith in USAID – maybe in what can be achieved with democracy assistance. But, yeah, it was nice to be back in a country where you had more champions.

Q: Okay. Just a final question, since you were traveling around a lot, did you as a regional DG person have to consult with the embassies where you were going? Any challenges to that?

FRITZ: Yeah, in Kosovo I partnered with somebody from Washington on an assessment of a judicial reform program and I think we briefed the ambassador. In Serbia I think I consulted with the political section on a political processes design I was doing. And sometimes it just depended on the nature of the particular ambassador or DCM – whether they were very hands on or not. So I remember that many of the things we came up with had to be run through them in one shape or form, but mostly because I was acting more like an outside consultant almost, it was usually the mission staff that was doing that.

Q: Okay. But overall being a DG officer, one gets a lot more practice dealing with embassies so it's good preparation for becoming a mission director.

FRITZ: Yes, yes, and definitely.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES R. HOOPER
Department of State
Deputy Country Directory for Eastern Europe
Washington D. C.
(1989-1991)

James R. Hooper was born January 9, 1947 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He graduated with a BA in International Service from American University in 1969 and a MA in International Studies from Columbia University in 1971. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971 where he worked first as a Vice Consul in Saudi Arabia from 1971-1974. He was a Political Officer in multiple offices including Syria, Libya, and the United Kingdom. He was also the Deputy Country Director for Eastern Europe from 1989-1991. His last post before retirement in 1997 was as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Warsaw Poland. James R. Hooper was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Topical Focus – Supporting Democratic Opposition in Bulgaria

Q: I'd like to go back to this earlier time. Okay, things start changing in Bulgaria first. You say we were doing things. What were we doing and what were you getting from the embassy? How did things work?

HOOPER: I think I might have even sent an email out or a request asking "Will there be any change at the upcoming party congress?" I think the embassy sent something back saying they didn't think so, but I might be unfair. I don't want to be unfair to anyone serving in Bulgaria at the time because there was a group of very talented officers there at Embassy Sofia. And we had a terrific desk officer in Susan Sutton, absolutely indefatigable and imaginative plus a great sense of humor. Oh and then, I keep forgetting Albania. I don't want to forget Albania, because we were involved in that, also. Okay, Bulgaria, I had believed that change was possible but it was still a surprise when Zhivkov was actually replaced. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had tipped off Secretary Baker. During the UN General Assembly Baker had met with the foreign minister from Bulgaria. We wondered, "Why would he meet with this guy?" It turned out he had done it as a favor to Shevardnadze. Shevvie asked him to do it. It turned out this was the one the Soviets had picked to be the reform communist to take over from Zhivkov. So when he

was picked, we realized why Shevvie had done that. The embassy had not expected this. And again, why should they have, necessarily, expected the change to take place, since it was a top down change orchestrated by Moscow? But the embassy then became very active in working to support the democratic opposition and to try to use the reform communists, as I recall it they were touting the reform communists and "Let's not forget that they aren't the same thing as the hard liners." At heart the reform communists were trying to establish their bona fides with the embassy, because they knew they were on shaky ground and the opposition was not united. Baker was making a swing through Europe and we really pressed him to go to Sofia and meet with the opposition and he met the reform communists as well. And he went and the embassy had arranged to put him together with the leaders of the democratic opposition in his hotel suite and he told them, "Now, there's certain things you have to do if you want to prevail. You've got to be united, you've got to be organized, and you have to believe you can win." Remember, he started as the kind of Karl Rove, so to speak, of his day, as the political advisor who helped bring the first President Bush to power and he had a very close relationship with the president. And it just electrified the opposition. No one had paid any attention to them before. Now here's the American secretary of state coming at this crucial time. And, wonder of wonders, they went out, got themselves united and organized and began to believe they could win, and in fact they ended up prevailing. When the meeting at his hotel broke up, he left and there was a crowd outside the hotel and they started chanting, "Baker, Baker, America, America!" For Baker, it was an emotional moment. No crowd had ever done that for him previously. He'd never had that experience. He'd always been the back room guy. So he had a good memory of Bulgaria from that experience. As I mentioned, this exposure to Baker electrified the democratic opposition. They got themselves together and the demonstrations picked up and they ultimately ousted the government of the day. I worked with the embassy and with Baker's office, again, when he was on another trip to Europe and said, "Listen, can Secretary Baker meet with Sol Polansky," our ambassador to Bulgaria? "All we need is 15 minutes. The fact that he goes to meet with Baker, who's been to Sofia, to report on how the democratization process is moving. Just the very fact 150 that the ambassador goes to Brussels for this brief meeting. He can walk out and say, 'Secretary Baker is very concerned about the situation in Bulgaria and the democratization process and wants to keep abreast of developments." And Baker's staff accepted that. The ambassador went to Brussels, met with him, came back. And the embassy got into the spirit of things and the reform communists were replaced by genuine democrats. And it was a huge change, because they had been expelling the ethnic Turks into Turkey, which was just blackening the image of Bulgaria, which had a reputation to live down already as the umbrella assassinators.

Q: And the guy who tried to assassinate the pope came through Bulgaria.

HOOPER: It didn't get any worse than Bulgaria. I think they were called the sixteenth republic of the Soviet Union. I think Bulgarians genuinely respected Russia for its help in the past, against the Ottomans. Now, Bulgaria had protected its Jewish community during World War II, but this was the only positive thing anyone in the West could say about Bulgaria, because it was just a residual Stalinist holdout and a tough place to operate in for real democrats. And these democrats really began to move this place forward. I thought we played a very helpful role in this transition period, in getting the democrats in power, giving them the self confidence, the belief they could do it and the kind of tools, the techniques. It would be an obvious exaggeration to say that the East European office and embassy in Sofia stage managed the Bulgarian democratic transition, but we certainly helped it a lot. Our help was crucial at the time. In the vast sweep of history, this was probably going to happen anyway. But it was all relatively non-violent and it worked. Sometimes if you don't take a movement at the crest and see it through to its conclusion, it ebbs. And then we began using Bulgaria to shame the Romanians, because they considered themselves head and shoulders above the Bulgarians. Well, the democratization of Bulgaria then was more advanced and proceeded faster than in Romania. When Ceausescu was ousted, you then had reform communists there, too, but there was a real question as to how "reform" they were and whether this had been stage managed by the Securitate. And I thought it was very useful to have genuine democrats in Bulgaria showing the contrast with the lack of change after Ceausescu was replaced and the cautious nature of the change in Romania. So we played that.

BURMA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WINSTON LORD
U.S. Ambassador
Burma
(1993)

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

Topical Focus – Burma Human Rights and Illicit Narcotics Policy Debate

Q: Burma?

LORD: Next to North Korea, Burma had probably the most unattractive regime in East Asia. Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League for Democracy, had in effect won the 1990 elections, much to the surprise of the military junta, which was known as the SLORC, or the State Law and Order Restoration Council. Subsequent to the elections of 1990 the SLORC acted to disallow the elections, and there has been tension ever since. Since then Aung San Suu Kyi has been the symbol of the disenfranchised, democratic majority and the repressed in Burma. The SLORC is responsible for all of the authoritarian human rights abuses practiced by the Burmese Government. Burma has a very tightly controlled society which, furthermore, has promoted the drug traffic and has produced a lot of refugees, which has put pressure on Thailand and other countries.

The Burmese Government is very isolated. I believe that if you went back 30 years or so, foreign observers would probably have predicted that the Burmese economic situation would be one of the most promising in that part of the world. Instead, the Burmese Government turned Burma into a total basket case because of their mismanagement, their authoritarian rule, and the general isolation from the rest of the world, part of it self-imposed.

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Our interest in Burma was to see whether we could improve the human rights situation and gain the Burmese government's cooperation on drugs. There was some debate within the U.S. Government and within our Congress about which objective should have priority. Some observers, including some Congressmen from Harlem [in New York] and other places where drugs were a huge problem, consider that drugs are decimating our youth. They feel that, in this case, our overriding priority should be dealing with the narcotics situation. Even if it meant giving some aid to the Burmese Government while holding our nose about the nature of the regime, they felt that we had to do something to stem the flow of opium and other drugs into the United States from Burma, which was a key supplier. I don't have the figures before me now, but a huge percentage of the opium traffic in general and other drugs was coming out of Burma.

On the other hand the human rights groups were saying as follows: “Burma has such a terrible regime. Human rights must come first, even if it means a little bit less cooperation in drugs, it's worth it because to gain any cooperation on drugs, you're going to lose the money anyway through corruption.

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We had this kind of debate going on within the U.S. Government as well. We made an effort - I believe in the fall of 1993 - to see whether we could move on Burma, in a way that was sort of analogous to what we were trying to do in Vietnam, although it's a completely different situation in many ways. Namely, we would lay out a program under which, "You do this, and we'll do that." My deputy, Tom Hubbard, went out to Burma and sat down with the Burmese authorities. This was after continual negotiations within the U.S. Government about what the talking points would be and what we wanted out of the Burmese Government. That is, how much emphasis on human rights and how much on drugs and so on.

We finally settled on doing both, although the human rights dimension had a slight edge over the anti-drugs program. We basically said that while we were not trying to set out a specific timetable for actions and reactions, we laid out some of the areas that we wanted to emphasize.

Specifically, we wanted the government to free Aung San Suu Kyi or at least to start a dialogue with the NLD [National League for Democracy], which was headed by Aung San Suu Kyi and which had won the elections of 1990. It was prevented from taking its seats in the People's Assembly that it had won. We wanted a better record on human rights generally and also more aggressive efforts on the drug traffic. So those were the

areas that we wanted to emphasize. In exchange for positive steps in these areas we could loosen up on some trade and investment restrictions and upgrade our relations.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Office of Democracy and Governance
Director
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)
Burma/Myanmar
(2014–2017)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993 and served in senior leadership positions, including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. His career centered on democracy, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022

Topical Focus – USAID Management Innovations and Field Deployments (CMM), Burma Democratic Transition and Rohingya Crisis

Q: Very interesting. That's a lot of very good work that you all did for that five-year period you were there. And you helped to institutionalize an office which continues to do good work today.

LEVINE: I think one experience of your best jobs when you hear about the praise, you recognize that it relates to having a great staff. I just had great people from day one and a shared ethic around the privilege of getting to do this work. I always said as a manager I have the luxury of solving most of my personnel problems at the front door. I had my pick of very, very talented officers from the start. It was never a case of hiring a person who wasn't going to make our office better; it was a question of how they will make it better. And we were always able to recruit and retain very good talent.

On the management side, I was highly experimental in remote telework, in job shares, and in looking for win/wins in staffing arrangements to keep a high performing staff happy and able to manage the work there. We experimented a lot with hiring—regionalizing and sending folks to the field which we financed so that we would bring our advice one step closer to the field. We stationed staff in Thailand as part of an

experiment with a regional officer. We did a staff exchange where we sent someone to the International Peace Institute and worked out of New York and had a New York presence to monitor what the UN was doing. In exchange, we got staff from the International Peace Institute to cover the Africa portfolio, and it was a real example where both institutions got talent as a result.

Q: Were you able to do this on your own, or did you have to run it through HR or whatever HR's name was at the time?

LEVINE: I used the Interagency Personnel Act to do the exchange with IPI (International Peace Institute), so I had an IPA (Interagency Personnel Act) with the IPI, which was confusing in itself. In Thailand, we hired a PSC (Personal Services Contractor) who was long tenured in Washington to experiment with how we get someone into the field quickly who could be what we called "CMM Outbound." So, we had CMM Outbound in Thailand and CMM 'Big Apple' in New York. And CMM Outbound in Thailand was a PCS who we got the NSD-36 (Embassy staffing approval directive) for them and made them part of the USAID mission. That gave CMM the opportunity to assist programs in Nepal, Burma, and in Thailand proper. We then asked HR for approval for this as a Foreign Service position. We argued that the officer be assigned to DCHA/CMM, do a year in the office to get familiar, and then be deployed for two years there. We could not get HR to go along with that, so it started and ended as a PSC pilot.

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Q: That program was just starting up, is that correct?

LEVINE: There was a lot of anticipation of progress following the democratic opening in Burma. The concern that arose involved the atrocity risk involving the Rohingya. There were some difficult comments made by Aung San Suu Kyi relevant to the Rohingya that reflected a leader very much locked into traditional views of the Rohingya, which were not very progressive. There was no doubt that we wanted her to succeed but there were tensions in the relationship and debate in the interagency on this issue in terms of justifying or recognizing any kind of rights for the Rohingya.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHRIS MILLIGAN
USAID
Mission Director
Burma
(1987-1991)

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

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

MILLIGAN: Yes. Besides the PACT program, there was limited work in HIV/AIDs and very limited governance work as well. We didn't have much time to figure out a strategic approach. We had to decide what we were going to do and had to be very quick about it. And figure out how to get resources quickly. Our budget cycle takes 4 years to get funds to the missions and we needed to respond quickly to windows of opportunity. The agency was so lucky to have Nisha Biswal as the head of the Asia bureau. She was masterful at bringing the agency together and leveraging the right strategic resources for Burma. Back in Yangon, we crafted a strategic approach that incorporated and adjusted the existing programs in a targeted manner to best advance Burma's democratic and economic reforms. There were offers of assistance that we had to turn down, many activities that would have been nice to do, but not essential. We had to stay focused and preserve our bandwidth for only the most strategic interventions. I say this because we did not have a development focus in Burma. This surprised some. As our staff grew, I'd sit our new

colleagues down and say, “We are not doing development in Burma.” This left them a little confused at first. “What do you mean, we’re not doing development work? I explained to them that Burma is still a military authoritarian government, and that we were not doing development work but rather using the tool of development to promote democratic and economic reforms. If and when those reforms are successful, we may have legitimate government to work with and then we could broaden our scope. Opening up the USAID mission was not without controversy in the United States. Quite a few Burma Watchers, human rights groups focused on Burma, opposed reestablishing diplomatic relations and any assistance program. Their fear was that we would be inadvertently legitimizing the military government. They thought we were pawns and that we didn’t understand that we were being played. While I understand their point of view, these groups were not on the ground in Burma. Many across Burma cautiously welcomed the reforms as well as the support we could provide to deepen them. We consulted extensively with civil society and local organizations on everything we did. This is why we had a reform strategy not a development strategy.

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

MILLIGAN: Our assumption was that Burma’s transition to an elected democratic government had to produce social and economic benefits to the Burmese people or the reforms would not be sustained. While we focused on democratic reforms, electoral support, political party development, human rights and civil society/media, our 127 programming also included support for economic reforms and improved health service. Approximately seventy-five percent of the population was dependent upon agriculture. Therefore, an agriculture program should be a key part of our reform strategy. In Burma at that time, farmers had no choice. The government instructed them what to plant and it was almost always rice. If a farmer planted anything else, a government official would have the crops ripped out. Not only did we focus on agriculture to boost incomes and therefore sustain momentum for reforms, but we also ensured the programs strengthened democratic principles. I’ll give you an example of what that means. One of the innovative programs incorporated the principle of farmer’s choice of what to plant and when. The program worked with the Rice Institute in the Philippines. The Rice Institute staff would pilot different rice strains in test plots with farmers. Some were drought or flood resistant; others were more salt tolerant. Some produced more rice or had a tasty flavor. The farmers would vote on which rice strain was the best. That idea was revolutionary in Burma at that time, that farmers’ opinion mattered. One of the reforms that occurred with our support was a ministerial reform that allowed farmers to plant what they deemed best. This made a lot of sense given that Burma has many different eco-systems, from the Irrawaddy delta to the highlands, from the tropical areas to the Dry-Zone. As I mentioned, farmers in Burma were not allowed to choose what crop to grow in their

fields. This was dictated by the government. Burma had a proud history as a leader in Southeast Asia. It was considered the rice bowl of Asia, particularly in the fifties. The military government wanted to reclaim that sense of pride and instructed farmers to grow rice and even what rice to grow. The idea that farmers had a choice was revolutionary. What appeared to be a simple agriculture project had the message that your voice matters. You can vote on what matters. To figure out where to begin on agricultural reforms, we were lucky to have some great minds from Michigan State University to help us and the Burmese think through options. Engaging with the government was not easy at that time. The embassy was in Yangon and ministries were based in the capital of Naypyidaw. That was a five-hour car ride on a very crude and dangerous highway. There were no flights to the capital early in my tenure. Eventually, there would be. Engaging on reforms required spending a lot of time in the car driving up to meet with government counterparts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MILLIGAN: Supporting the elections was essential. Particularly since the country did not have the processes and capacities required for credible elections. We moved quickly to

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

Q: Was OTI there before you were?

MILLIGAN: Yes.

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

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

Q: For some AID missions there often is a lot of contact with non-governmental experts or even diaspora groups in the U.S. I don't know if it's because some countries provoke strong interest or it's the receptivity of AID missions themselves. But I would think it would have been valuable for you to have that kind of contact whenever you came back to Washington.

MILLIGAN: Yes. It was. Nisha arranged introductory meetings for me with these groups before I even went out to Burma. The story of Burma inspires many people. For them, it is more than a country, it has been a cause. Many have worked on the cause of Burma for their entire lives. They are passionate about it and are quite invested. Sometimes, we need to take a step back and see Burma as a country and not just a cause—as a deeply fractured country that has little experience with effective democratic governance. Remember that Burma was a military empire, the largest in Southeast Asia. Then the

country was taken over in tranches by the British and administered as a colony from India. Following independence, it went through successive authoritarian military governments. Burma is still a deeply fractured country that in the past has been held together by military authoritarianism rather than by a process of democratic nation-building. Burmese human rights leaders such as Aung San Suu Kyi are inspiring. I think many allowed themselves to believe that if only she were released from prison, then Burma would be a cohesive and vibrant democracy.

Q: Yes, right, right.

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

BURUNDI

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

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

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

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

Q: Uh-huh. The least objectionable.

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

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

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

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

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Right.

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

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

Q: Ah.

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Right.

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

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

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

Q: Sure.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Interesting.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Oh my goodness.

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

Q: Wow.

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

Q: Right.

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

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

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

Q: Yeah.

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

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

Q: Right.

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

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

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

Q: Wow, just as this was happening?

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Yes, of course, right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Oh, my God.

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

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

Q: Oh, my God.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Wow.

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

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

Q: Oh, easily, easily.

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

Q: Of course, right.

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Wow! Oh my God.

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

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

Q: Wow.

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

Q: Sure.

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

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

LIBERI: The case was clear.

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Ah.

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

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

Q: Beautiful.

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

Q: Wow.

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

Q: Ah. Okay.

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

Q: Yeah.

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

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

Q: Hmm

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

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

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

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

Q: Un-huh.

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

Q: Sure.

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

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

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

Q: Wow. Wow.

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

Q: Right, right.

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

Q: Oh, of course.

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

Q: Absolutely.

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

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

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

Q: Right.

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

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Okay.

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

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

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

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

Q: Oh, woe be tied.

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

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

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

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Wow.

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

Q: Right. Right.

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

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

Q: Beautiful. Beautiful.

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

Q: Right, right, exactly.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Okay, uh-huh.

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

Q: Right, right.

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

Q: Oh my God.

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

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

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Okay.

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

Q: Exactly.

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

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

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

Q: Uh-huh.

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

Q: Oh beautiful.

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

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

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Yeah.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right. Uh-huh.

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

Q: Right.

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

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

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

Q: Good Lord.

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

Q: Incredible.

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

Q: Wow.

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

Q: Right, exactly.

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

Q: Oh yeah. Absolutely.

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

Q: Right.

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

Q: Right.

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

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

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

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

Q: In 1972, they returned to be killed?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAMBODIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

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

Topical Focus — USAID Programming and the Cambodian Election

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

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

It was exciting. My staff and I went around the country a great deal. The UN Special

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

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

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

On election day, May 23, at 6:30 a.m., I heard loud bangs. I was still in a hotel room, overlooking the Mekong River. I looked out because when the Khmer Rouge were finally attacking Phnom Penh in 1974, 1975, they often attacked from the east. The Mekong was to the east of my hotel. I looked out the window, wondering whether the attacks had started. Instead, I was hearing thunder, and there was lightning. I thought then that with diluvium rains, nobody

would even come out to vote, and I went back to bed again. Finally, I roused myself thinking, "I should really go to a couple of the polling places to see what it looks like." We had other people from the U.S. mission out in other parts of the country. I went to the national stadium, where I was astonished to find that I had to fight my way through the crowds. People were lined up by the hundreds, maybe by the thousands, to get into the national stadium to vote. I went to another polling place and found the same thing. Voters had turned out in droves.

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

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

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

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

Early on, we started using our AID program to bring in the American Red Cross, for example.

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

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

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

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

Topical Focus – Cambodia Peacekeeping, Elections, and Coalition Struggles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I went to Cambodia early in my tenure as Assistant Secretary to show support for this electoral process. This was only about ten days before the elections. There were some

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

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

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

After the elections Hun Sen began to make ominous noises, in effect saying: "I've got to share power in this arrangement." Then a decision to distribute power between the leading parties was made by the UN. I have to say that we supported this choice with some reservations but we thought that a power-sharing arrangement was the best outcome. People now look back and say: "If Prince Ranariddh won the election, we shouldn't have let Hun Sen in 'under the tent,' because he was sure to muscle his way forward against the ineffectual Ranariddh forces. Hun Sen didn't deserve to be part of the government chosen by the election." Furthermore, people said that the government set up

after the elections was something of a "Rube Goldberg" operation, with "Co-Prime Ministers," "Co-Foreign Ministers," and "Co-Everything."

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

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

Therefore, this new, strange, bifurcated government took over, with the Hun Sen people pretty much in de facto charge of the administrative structure and still dominant militarily, as I said. In meetings I had with the Cambodian leaders Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh would always both be there. The same thing was true if I called upon the Cambodian leaders with Secretary Christopher in New York. At these meetings Prince Ranariddh would do all the talking, and Hun Sen would just sit there. As I said, he had been a member of the Khmer Rouge organization and he had only one eye. The other eye is made of glass. He had lost one eye due to an injury. Prince Ranariddh reminded me of his father, Prince Sihanouk. He had a sort of high pitched voice. He was very polite and friendly but he clearly was not a real heavyweight.

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

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

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

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

To what extent should we have tried to isolate and pressure Hun Sen? Since I left government service, Hun Sen has taken over the government, essentially by coup d'etat.

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

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

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

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

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

Within our own government, I don't recall the exact process. At the very least, it would have been a decision approved by Secretary of State Christopher and by Tony Lake, the National Security Adviser to President Clinton. I don't know whether it ever reached the President. Certainly, it was the kind of key decision that would be dealt with at that level.

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

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

Topical Focus – Supporting a Transition to Democracy and Cambodian Elections

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

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

I was sent back to Cambodia on TDY [temporary duty travel] from New Zealand to cover the 1998 national elections, five years after the UNTAC elections. Scores of international observers came in, and they looked and watched the voting in the various districts and provinces, and they decided that, "Well, you know, it seemed like it was basically a free and fair election." But what they didn't understand was that the fix was already in before they got there. Dictators become very proficient in learning the jargon that they're supposed to use to satisfy the international community and get the donors to give them money. Meanwhile, under the table, they've got the fix in already, and they do whatever is necessary to perpetuate their power.

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

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARIE T. HUHTALA
Department of State
Office of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam Affairs
Washington, D.C.
(1996-1998)

Ambassador Huhtala was born and raised in California and graduated from Santa Clara University. Joining the Foreign Service in 1972, she studied Thai and Chinese languages and became a specialist in East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Her overseas postings include Paris, Quebec, Hong Kong and Chiang Mai (Thailand). In Washington she dealt primarily with East Asia and Pacific Affairs. From 2001 to 2004 she served as US Ambassador to Malaysia and, from 2004 to 2005, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Ambassador Huhtala is a graduate of the National War College and the State Department's Senior Seminar. Ambassador Huhtala was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus – Democratic Transition in Cambodia

Q: Okay, well Cambodia then.

HUHTALA: Cambodia. Throughout the 1980s the U.S. had been supporting the noncommunist resistance to the government imposed after the Vietnamese occupation began in 1979. The resistance was led by a party called FUNCINPEC, who were royalists supporting Prince Sihanouk, and included the KPNLF of Son Sann. Khmer Rouge remnants were also involved in the resistance, though we always kept our distance from them. There had been a sort of low-intensity guerrilla war going on all through that period. We saw Hun Sen as a Vietnamese-installed stooge and we didn't think he had much credibility. He was in charge of this communist government in place in Cambodia all through the 1980s. The horrific events of the Khmer Rouge period had all become known by then., so many heartbreaking stories.

So negotiations started in about '89 I think, led by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, particularly the U.S., Britain and France. We had China's cooperation as well and put together a peace agreement which was signed in Paris in 1990. (I remember I drafted Secretary Baker's remarks for that. I thought that was kind of exciting.) The agreement led the way to the UN force which came in to restore order and produced the first elections in Cambodian history. Hun Sen reinvented himself as a democrat and leader of the Cambodian People's Party; he won the 1993 elections, together with Prince Ranariddh, the leader of FUNCINPEC. Because the results were very close, the two agreed to a coalition government in which they each became co-prime ministers, and there were dual ministers for some of the key ministries as well. Needless to say, this was a fundamentally unstable arrangement and boded ill for the future.

We had the sense during my two years on the desk that Cambodia was beginning to pull itself together and move towards a functioning democracy, though it still had a lot of problems, and not just the problems of poverty and corruption that any country in that region started out with. Boy, that was a country of shell-shocked people. The entire country had post traumatic shock syndrome in many ways. Every single Cambodian had lost people who were dear to them. An entire class of intellectuals and educated people had been completely wiped out. All educators were killed or executed, if you wore eyeglasses or if you were a doctor or a lawyer you were killed. It had just been a nightmare. Some of the same NGOs and charitable organizations that were helping out in Vietnam were also helping out in Cambodia. One good thing that we had to offer was a diaspora of Cambodians who had come to our country as refugees and got themselves educated. Some of them went back to head up human rights organizations, to help write the new constitution, that kind of thing. We did our best to facilitate that.

Q: '96 to '98 okay.

HUHTALA: When I had left VLC in '92 Cambodia was under UN mandate and they were on their way to free elections; it was a budding democracy. When I returned in '96 it was becoming a real mess. By that time, Cambodia had a system of two co-prime ministers co-existing uneasily, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, who had never really lost power.

Q: He was the man who had originally been put in by the Vietnamese.

HUHTALA: The Vietnamese, that's right and he headed something called the Cambodian People's Party. Prince Ranariddh was the son of Prince Sihanouk, who became King Sihanouk after the 1993 elections. Prince Ranariddh headed up the royalist party called FUNCINPEC (it's a French acronym). Besides the two co-prime ministers, there were dual ministers heading up several key ministries, including Interior and Foreign Affairs. The rest of the ministries were sort of divided between the two parties. It was supposed to be a functioning government, but of course this was a recipe for real instability, and it did not work very well. There was a lot of rivalry and isolated violence.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

TIMOTHY MICHAEL CARNEY
United Nations
Director of Information and Education
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
(1992-1993)

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

Topical Focus – UN Voter Education Programming in Cambodia

CARNEY: Yes… When the Paris Agreements for Cambodia were signed in October of '91, it was clear that a senior U.S. official was going to be part of the mission. Yasushi Akashi was ultimately named SRSG, and I went up to New York and talked to him in December or January of '92. He wasn't sure what he wanted me to do. It might have been human rights or something else. He talked about the elections. I remember saying to him, "There is a key aspect of those elections. Given what's happened in Cambodia, people have to know their vote's secret." These were going to be the only elections the UN had ever actually conducted. I said, "But more than that, they have to be assured that their village's vote is secret lest the victors ultimately wreak wrath through denial of development monies just to make an example of the village that did not vote for them." Akashi was so taken with that that he decided I ought to be Director of Information and Education, which is what I went to Cambodia with the UN to do.

Q: So you went to Cambodia from when to when?

CARNEY: March 25 of '92 to August 1, '93.

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Q: What were you doing?

CARNEY: We were doing about four things, and we were doing it in print, which included posters, comic books, leaflets, pamphlets, and posters and banners. We were doing it in radio broadcasts to provide information on what the UN was doing in Cambodia in the first place, and then on what you as a Cambodian had to do to register to vote, where to vote. Then we were leveling the information playing field by giving the various political parties a platform to voice their views. Then we were doing all those things through TV as well. We had a TV studio which ultimately proved able to produce an hour of TV a day. Our radio effort came to produce fifteen hours of programming a day, live from March 1993 to the end of the UN Mission.

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That was a fascinating year and a half partly because of the control dimension, but even more so because of the very great complexity, including trying to stand up a radio broadcast facility from "not even a paper clip" as one of my staff members described it. We did it... First of all, you had the programming aspect. We programmed basically through soap operas—aunt, uncle, nephew and niece—all this in Cambodian, beginning with nephew wondering who those people in the blue berets are. Then it went on to more complicated soap operas that had a man with a gun come into their house on stilts and say, "It doesn't matter what Radio UNTAC says, you all are going to vote for my party." Then when he left the aunt would say, "Why did you tell him we'd do that?" The uncle would say, "You can tell him anything, but your vote is secret. You vote the way you want. You can even take bribes from him and you can vote the way you want. They're the ones who are wrong and they're intimidating us. We can lie to them. It's okay." That's a specific example of one of our soap operas.

Q: You were saying on the vote that the ballot is secret. That I can take. But when you say that you can't tell how the village voted, that gets very tricky.

CARNEY: It turned out to be easy to do. They moved the ballot boxes from each constituency
voting place to the province capital and mixed them all together and counted them there.

Q: We're so used to having a local vote.

CARNEY: You're right, there is a philosophical argument that you really do want the local vote. But in the circumstances, the electoral component—run by a white Zimbabwean as it turned out,
much to the UN's chagrin, they were looking for diversity—essentially accepted my argument that secrecy outweighed other considerations.

CAMEROON

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: What did you do as an election observer?

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

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

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

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

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

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

Topical Focus – Early 2010s Cameroonian Democracy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Director
Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Central African Republic
(2008–2013)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Conflict Prevention and Fragile State Engagement in the Central African Republic

Q: As I recall from the early days when they were first setting up the office, they were trying to
identify the countries with the greatest risk of conflict. In some cases, this could lead to modifying existing USAID country strategies. Was that still a part of your work?

LEVINE: Exactly. This was an orienting charge that I inherited. And again, Elizabeth had set that up by developing an open-source data that was related to the same sort of analysis that was done at the intelligence agencies by what was called the Political Instability Task Force. The intelligence community was talking to the same academics to understand which countries were most at risk for conflict, but their own materials were all classified. But because the academics' databases were not classified, we could produce our own analysis in a non-confidential form. We used it in a Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) way in that we did not publicly release our AID list, but we did make it widely available within the agency and the interagency, and it guided us in just the way you suggest.

We shared the analysis with the regional bureaus and missions so they were aware of outside, independent, academic analysis of which countries were more likely to fall victim to conflict. We could then work with the missions to see what might be done that

wasn't already being done. A lot of it was awareness raising and making available what tools and programming advice that we had developed. What I always said was that it was a pretty good bet that the countries that scored highest on those lists were already in the headlines -- Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali. I was always interested in the second tier of countries where they were out of the headlines and there might be scope for preventive action that really was within AID's wheelhouse to program upstream of conflict before conflict would either start or recur.

Q: Could you give us an example of a country, perhaps, where that might have been the case?

LEVINE: Kenya was a country that had a full-service AID program and democracy program, but experienced spasms of violence around the time of what were seen as transitional or crucial elections, both in 2008 and 2013. We asked, "Is there anything more that we can be doing to protect the programming and protect the country from the onset of violence?" In 2008, it was much more of a surprise that it occurred and so, there was a lot of additional resources and programming that was done in advance of the 2013 elections to avoid a repeat.

In the Central African Republic, we identified a high conflict risk with potential for atrocities. USAID did not have a mission there, so it was that much harder to generate resources or programming. But there was some programming and other donors that were interested, as well as a strong State Department interest. Building on that base, we were able to muster about $5 million in programming that otherwise would not have been applied in that case. So, I think around the margins in countries that were out of the headlines, there were opportunities to raise the issue of conflict and conflict mitigation and apply programming.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES FOX
USAID
Latin American Bureau
Staff Economist
Washington, D.C.
(1982-1992)

James Fox was raised in Nebraska and attended Notre Dame to study engineering. He joined the Peace Corps and taught engineering in El Salvador for two years before attending graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Four years later in 1970, he joined USAID where he worked on economic development in Costa Rica, Uruguay, Colombia. He also worked at the Department of the Treasury, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. James Fox was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

Topical Focus – USAID Democracy Programming in Central America - Economic and Judicial Dimensions

Q: What about Central America? What was your work on that?

FOX: Okay, so gradually over the next couple of years, we kept increasing our attention, our aid levels, to the Central American countries and began to try and develop a conceptual framework for what we were going to do in Central America and why we were going to do it. This ultimately dovetailed with the work of what was called the Kissinger Commission, more formally the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America. This was chaired initially by Senator Jackson of Washington who died during the time the committee was operating. Jackson perhaps was co-chair. Henry Kissinger was the other chair of the commission. The idea was to come up with a bipartisan approach to Central America that would deal with the problem with the Sandinistas. Bring them in if possible, and if not to find a way to deal with the rest of the region which would isolate the Nicaraguan government. The commission ultimately came to the conclusion that the Nicaraguans were not cooperative. They were a threat to the rest of the region. So the US ought to carry out the major program to develop the rest of Central America and for Nicaragua to participate at such a time as it stopped its belligerent behavior. This culminated in a proposal for a six billion dollar seven year program of aid to Central American countries.

We had been doing our own work before the Kissinger Commission started, but tried to feed it into the Secretary to the Commission and work with them at least conceptually so that we were all on the same wavelength in terms of general strategy of the approach and the levels of resources that might be feasible. Basically there were three of us that developed the program: Peter Askin, head of the Central America Office; Buster Brown, Deputy for the Latin American Bureau, and myself. I did most of the writing and they did

most of the critiquing. We were all very heavily involved. We came up with a four prong strategy. The first step was stabilization during the first 18 months. We hoped to stop the sharp downward slide of the economies in the region. All the countries in the region had GNPs that were shrinking. It was an alarming pace. As capital flowed out of the countries, as businesses saw conditions getting worse, as people were fearful, and simply everybody held back from economic activity seeing that the conditions were terrible. Governments had to shrink their budgets because the economies were shrinking. So it was a bad situation. We hoped with initial large inputs of foreign exchange we would be able to arrest the downturn. Get ____ into the economies and stabilize the situation.

The second prong was to get sustainable growth going through private sector activity, particularly export activity. The belief was that Central America could prosper without a much higher level of imports from the Western world than they had and the only way they could afford to have the needed level of imports was to export a lot more than they had been. The traditional exports of the region were coffee, sugar, bananas and beef and had fairly negative prospects in world markets. Prices were low and nobody expected the prices to return to previous levels for a long time. In fact, we are still waiting 20 years later for that to happen. So they needed to find new products to export. So our focus was on trying to generate the policies that would allow new export sectors to emerge and promote entrepreneurial activity that would cause it to happen.

The third prong of the strategy was to spread the benefits of economic growth and to try and get education, health services and similar social needs out to all the people of the country. In some of the countries large numbers of kids were not in school. Health was not available in rural areas. The idea was to create a more broad base society by seeing to it that all members of society derived real benefits from it.

Finally, the last prong was democracy.

Q: How were you proposing to do that?

FOX: By a variety of activities in terms of supporting non-governmental organizations, supporting what we now call civil society but we didn't have names in those days. By effective electoral processes or electoral processes that people have confidence in.

Q: Also judiciary reform?

FOX: Some judicial reform as well. Basically to create the condition under which people have confidence in elections and in government's enforcement of the rule of law.

Q: Was there a time frame for this proposal that you were developing?

FOX: Yes, the program was to achieve all its results by the end of 1990. There was some vagueness between 1990 and 1992?

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Q: What about the fourth area, the democracy one, how did that work out?

FOX: Well, by 1992, at the end of the Kissinger Plan, there were democratically elected governments in all the countries and the prospect of continuation of democratic institutions in the countries of the region, although they are still fragile. I would say pretty unambiguously there is no question that great progress was made.

Q: What would you think was the main factor that brought this around to democratic …?

FOX: I think certainly the worldwide move toward democratic government. A belief that as Winston Churchill said that, "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all the rest." That democracy may not be perfect but there is no other principle that is as satisfactory. I think the military in those regions and the political elites all came around to the conclusion that life would be easier if they had institutional procedures for changing government and could make these political and political-military conflicts go away.

Q: Were they part of this initiative related to the military?

FOX: We didn't get involved in that side of it. The Defense Department did provide substantial military aid to El Salvador and after Guatemala elected a democratic President to Guatemala and of course to Honduras. I think of the case of Honduras our military aid may have been destabilizing and reducing the prospects for democracy in that country simply because we were using Honduras as an instrument in our anti-Sandinista policy in promoting cultures and were willing to sacrifice Honduran development to our own broader foreign policy concerns.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Otto J Reich
United States Agency for International Development
Office of Public Diplomacy
1981-1986

Otto J. Reich built a career in U.S. diplomacy and Latin American affairs. Serving in USAID, the Reagan administration, and as Ambassador to Venezuela, he focused on Central America, public diplomacy, economic development, and U.S. policy toward the Sandinistas, Cuba, and regional security, while navigating contentious relations with Congress, the media, and foreign governments. Otto J. Reich was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Topical Focus – Democracy Promotion and Security in Central America

Q: Let's look at our Central American policy. I can see two major themes that had to be played. One was the nastiness of the Sandinistas, both internally and their efforts to export the revolution. The other theme was in El Salvador, and to a lesser extent, in Honduras and Guatemala, the nastiness of elements within those governments. Every time you turned around you were having death squads and assassinations. So you had both of these going and, of course, one side of the Administration would focus on the Sandinistas, while the critics of the policy would focus on the right wing within El Salvador, etc. How did you deal with that?

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That is one of the things that we had to deal with. But being in the Administration and having been part of the policy formulation process and implementing process, all of us who were in knew that the issue really wasn't that simple. We had a policy that had basically four pillars and it was, in fact, simplified down to four elements. A political, an economic, a military and a diplomatic component. We called them the four Ds, so people could remember–democracy, development, dialogue and defense. I didn't coin that. I believe it was Luigi Einaudi, who was director of policy planning for the Bureau for Inter-American Affairs at the time. When exactly he or his staff came up with these four Ds, I don't know, but it was a very good way of defining what our policy goals or instruments in this case, were.

The democracy, the political element, meant that we were trying to help build institutions of democracy which had either never existed or had been destroyed in Central America over the last 150 years of independence. Through development, the economic component, we were trying to help establish as equitable society as a foreign power can possibly establish with limited resources in a convulsed society, which is what Central America was at the time. Through dialogue, the diplomatic component, we were trying to achieve these goals through, among other things, diplomacy. Some of the critics said that it was nonsense, we were never serious about diplomacy. That is not true. In fact, once again with the benefit of hindsight, we can now say the proof is that when we had complete power to do whatever we wanted in this region we chose the peaceful route. We could have used military force, and, in fact, have used military force, say in Panama. Panama, I think, can be the exception that proves the rule. We used military force in Panama only when everything else had been exhausted.

Q: We are talking about the invasion…

REICH: ... of Panama in December, 1989 by US forces to arrest General Noriega and restore the democratic government that had been elected six months previously in an election and which had been annulled by General Noriega who was then the self-appointed dictator of Panama and who, as we speak, is being tried for narcotics trafficking in a US court in Miami.

The fourth element was defense, the military component. That, as you mentioned, is probably the one that got the most attention and got the people on both sides of the issues most roiled up. That was because those people supporting the policy were saying that if we did not have a military component to the policy that the other side was going to continue the military buildup. The Soviets and Cubans were involved. I hope there is no debate about that today. There is no question they were involved...the Soviets have admitted it and, in fact, even Castro has admitted it. Unfortunately, when you have some people using force you have to use force yourself to defend your interests or those of your Allies.

Then the question is: who were your allies, why are you defending these terrible people? The fact is that we were not defending these terrible people, we were using every means at our disposal to help the democratic elements in Central America...El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica. We were trying to help the democratic elements clean up their act, in effect. Get rid of the despots, get rid of the inequities through programs such as land reform, which I believe we mentioned in the last section.

CENTRAL ASIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

SUSAN KOSINSKI FRITZ
USAID
Mission to Central Asia
Director
Office of Democracy and Governance
Almaty, Kazakhstan
(2001-2005)

Susan Kosinski Fritz studied at Rutgers University and American University before entering USAID as a Presidential Management Intern in 1989. She served in many different positions in several countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in May 2024.

Topical Focus – Democracy Programming in Central Asia

FRITZ: My husband really wanted to serve in Central Asia – that was his dream job. As a tandem couple, it's not always easy to find places to serve together which was really important to us. There was a deputy mission director position open for him and there was a DG office director position open for me. That was our first assignment as a tandem couple. We went out to Almaty to manage programs regionally for the five former Soviet Central Asian Republics -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. And we were there for four years.

Q: And this was 2001 that you went out. I believe the mission opened in 1992 or 1993, so it was an established mission by the time you got there?

FRITZ: Definitely. It was an established mission, but the challenge was in overseeing technical officers – both PSCs and FSNs – in each country that both reported to me in Almaty and to their Country Representative in the country in which they were working. It was a kind of matrix management which can be difficult. They had two bosses, and sometimes that worked and sometimes not so much. But other than that, it was an established mission and those were established country offices and staff and so forth.

Q: Who was the mission director when you went?

FRITZ: Glenn Anders was the mission director when we first arrived. When Glenn left after a year George Deiken replaced him. And then in our last year there, George left early to go to India. So my husband, Mike became the mission director and that created some issues. Then I had to report through the Europe and Eurasia Bureau DG Office in Washington after that to address the nepotism issue.

Q: I was going to ask what your reporting arrangements were because obviously that's one of the challenges for tandem couples.

FRITZ: I reported to the mission director until the mission director was my husband, and then I reported to the DG team and E&E in Washington after that. It was just the last six months of our time there.

Q: Okay. Can you describe the DG program for Central Asia? Were they all umbrella projects that were then implemented in different countries, or how did it work?

FRITZ: Yes. We had, what I would call more of a civil society approach, more grassroots programming. We had a large, multi-country civil society program implemented by Counterpart. We had the party institutes, IFES, and Internews active in Central Asia at the time. We had a local governance program implemented by ICMA in Kazakhstan, but I don't believe it was active anywhere else. And ABA CEELI was also active in each country. We had some anti-trafficking work. And yeah, that's mainly it.

I would say most of our funds were concentrated in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, particularly towards the end of our time in Kyrgyzstan, when the democratic transition began. There was a democratic election with a reformer elected at the end of our time there. There weren't a lot of democracy partners or civil society activists in the other countries.

We did have human rights work going on as well, but it was very challenging. When I look back at my time there, I learned a lot and the experience changed my beliefs in democracy assistance and what can be achieved.

If you look at Freedom House's Nations in Transit democracy indicators, I think there's seven that they measure: media, local governance, national governance, elections, civil society, judiciary, and corruption. For the five countries I worked in for four years, only one indicator went up one year and that was for national governance in Tajikistan. The sad part is that I didn't even agree with the reasoning behind it. They had improved on national governance because the central government had more control over some of the areas of the country (it had recently come out of a civil war). I really believe in democracy as the best form of government possible and I believed at the time in our

ability to help. But to leave after four years and feel like you didn't make a difference was really hard. It was a hard tour from that perspective.

It made me think a lot about the conditions you need to move the needle on democracy, when does it make sense for us to provide DG support, and what kind of assistance makes sense in a country under which conditions. Looking at it with 20/20 hindsight, I felt like we wanted democracy more than the people with whom we were working. There weren't champions like we had in Eastern Europe who, with a little support, moved the needle.

But in Central Asia we had authoritarian governments and most people have never experienced democracy. There was also a fondness for the Soviet Union under which these countries developed with the building of schools and hospitals, and all kinds of infrastructure. When the Soviet Union fell apart these countries weren't like, "We want democracy, we want to be part of the Western world." It was a very different situation. We did get a plus up of some conflict mitigation funding after 9-11 so we were able to do some community development work, very grassroots in the Fergana Valley, which is located in three of the Central Asian Republics. I felt like that work was maybe more impactful and more important than the other democracy work we had been doing.

Q: That's interesting and important. You can't push a string on democracy.

FRITZ: No, no, no. It was hard.

Q: Did you also have community-based partnership programs that brought together Americans and Central Asians? I know that these kinds of partnership programs in Russia were doing a kind of grassroots democracy development. I'm wondering if you had any of those in Central Asia.

FRITZ: Yeah, not really. I think that Peace Corps really played an important role in that way, linking particularly the youth that worked with Peace Corps with some of the State Department Public Affairs programs, the Muskie fellowships and the like. I am on the board of the Eurasia Foundation and learned yesterday that the head of business development had gotten his start running a youth camp with the Peace Corps volunteers in his community. He learned English through that, and ended up doing some of the educational programs through the State Department in the United States. He worked for me in the USAID Office in Kyrgyzstan and then eventually emigrated to the United States. I think these types of programs were much better geared towards the environment in which we were working and more impactful.

Q: Can you talk at all about how you coordinated with the State Department in Central Asia? It must have been complex with five different countries. Did you have to do a lot of problem solving with embassies?

FRITZ: Yes. Yes. Yes, to all those questions. It was challenging. It was very challenging. I talked earlier about matrix management. I won't mention the country or the ambassador, but we had a problematic employee who was a locally hired PSC. His main job was to review and provide for his country, input on implementing partners' regional work plans and to monitor the programming being implemented in his country. And he wasn't doing it, but he was a great assistant to the ambassador. This, as you can imagine, was problematic. I discussed the issue with the USAID country director and he fully agreed with me, at least when we discussed it. We decided that we needed to have a sit down with the employee, which we did. When the employee didn't improve we did not give him his step increase so he quit. The ambassador blamed me – the one and only time that an ambassador read me the letter that each ambassador receives when they are deployed to a country. It was humiliating.

I also had a problematic contractor in another country that was using the resources of the contract for their own personal use. Somehow it came to our attention that this was happening. We looked into it, the Inspector General (IG) looked into it and it wasn't big enough for the IG. I went out to the country and gave the ambassador a heads up that I was going to have to talk to this partner. The partner's spouse was a doctor and the Embassy didn't have one so I knew that was important to this ambassador. I gave him a heads up. The implementing partner did not quit so they didn't lose the doctor, but the ambassador wasn't too pleased with me. I thought I was diplomatic, but I learned later apparently not. So it was challenging. It was really, really hard. But you do the best you can, right?

Q: Yes. Were there other donors working in this space as well? Or, were we alone trying to push the string?

FRITZ: On some of the local government strengthening programs we coordinated with the World Bank because they were interested in decentralization. Other than that, it wasn't a crowded field. The Soros Foundation had some money for civil society but there weren't a lot of other donors out there doing this work.

Q: And you'd mentioned after 9-11 there was a big increase in your program. Was that also in the DG budget or was that in other aspects of the program? Just wondering if you got more and more pressure on you.

FRITZ: There was definitely pressure. We got a plus up of this conflict mitigation money which funded both DG and EG work at the local level. There was definitely pressure to program this new money and quickly. Initially we created an intra-mission working group to design a program under the leadership of Mike Harvey, who was the Tajikistan country office director. Mike led the effort, but the various offices also contributed. Once all the programmatic pieces were put in place, the conflict mitigation work was put into the DG office to manage. I believe there was a microcredit program that complemented the community development work but that was managed by the Economic Growth office.

Q: One of the questions I was going to ask you was which elements of the program you thought might have been most successful. But I think you've just answered that.

FRITZ: None.

Q: But I think that there's an important lesson here that people need to take more into account, that is to be realistic in our expectations.

FRITZ: For sure. The community development and civil society work is so foundational. And just trying to find partners that want it more than we do is important.

Q: Right. Is there space? Even then if a country is not committed to democracy, is there still space for things like the independent media? Can an Internews operate to strengthen independent media even if a country is not so committed to other aspects of democracy?

FRITZ: I think it's hard but doable. We had a situation in Kazakhstan where one of the partners that Internews was working with had criticized the president's son-in-law so he went after the Internews in a pretty public way. That was a difficult problem for us. We had to get the ambassador involved and he wasn't too pleased about having to do that. So I think it's really challenging. And it depends on the country, obviously, but in smaller countries like in the Balkans, the media can bleed over the borders, so you can do a lot more. And I think nowadays with the internet, there are a lot more opportunities outside of traditional media where you can have an impact. You can impact the information space in a way that wasn't available back then.
Q: Other things to say about your time there? It doesn't sound like your favorite posting.

FRITZ: No, but my husband loved it. Yeah, and you know, it's an isolated part of the world too, so that was hard. You learn something from everywhere you serve. Probably most importantly from that assignment, what I took away from that time living in Central Asia were the friendships, the friends that I made, the colleagues I had that I'm still friends with. I just organized a Central Asia get together a couple of months ago, and saw some of my old colleagues. I think because it was so far away and the countries were so

undeveloped or underdeveloped, there wasn't a whole lot to do. You could ski, but aside from that, I think in those kinds of places, and I suspect you've experienced this as well, this is where your strongest friendships develop. And so I think that was probably the best part of Central Asia for me.

Q: Just one final question, were you able to talk to the DG Center about some of these thoughts as you were leaving and feeling the sense of frustration? Were you able to talk to other DG folks about this philosophically? Does it make sense to continue to try to push the string in countries like this?

FRITZ: I don't recall that I did. When the DG Center was created, the idea was that all the DG staff from all of the geographic bureaus would be housed in the DG Center but that was not the case for E&E. E&E kept a large part of its technical staff. So certainly we had lots of conversations in the DG office in E&E, but not so much in the DG Center as much.

Q: Okay. Anything else? Because then you went off to a somewhat unusual assignment.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CRAIG G. BUCK
USAID
Head of Central Asian Programs
(1993–1995)

Mr. Craig G. Buck, born in 1944 in Jackson, Mississippi and raised in Carthage, Texas, is a retired senior officer at USAID. Following his undergraduate education at Texas A&M, he spent a year conducting research as a Fulbright Scholar in Bolivia (1966-1967) and the following year as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at Stanford (1968-1969). He later earned a M.A in Economics from Stanford in 1980. Mr. Buck first joined USAID in April 1969 as an intern in Turkey (1969-1972) and held postings as a mission director in Uganda (1980-1983), Dominican Republic (1984-1987), Peru (1989-1992), Kazakhstan (1993-1995), Bosnia (1995-1999), Kosovo (2000-2002), and Afghanistan (2002-2003). His Washington assignments include the Latin American Bureau (1972), Turkey Desk Officer (1972-1976), Office of the Senior Advisor for Narcotic Matter (1976-1977), and Egypt Desk Officer (1977-1979). Following Mr. Buck's retirement from USAID in 2003, he worked in the private sector as a contractor for AID and other developmental organizations. Craig G. Buck was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2017.

Topical Focus – Post-Soviet Transition and USAID's Support of State-Building in Central Asia

Q: Did you find, as this is taking place, that this sort of became the wild East, in that entrepreneurs from other countries thought, at least, they saw opportunities to get in and somehow get contracts with at least some of the larger production facilities and work out deals, legal or otherwise?

BUCK: And the other concern was on the democratization, human rights, free press, civic responsibility – This was an area where the countries were very concerned about us working. A free press did not exist in any of the countries. Government-official news was the only news. So, I think the areas where we did have some success was in the development of civil society, helping develop organizations that would express the needs of people, and articulate their needs to the government. The former Soviet Union controlled organizations by not allowing any organization to exist that was not official. We spent a lot of time, particularly in Kazakhstan, working with them to have a law to recognize non-governmental organizations.

I'll never forget trying to articulate the rationale and the need for this to the office director for the United States in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I explained why they needed civic organizations, and what they could do to help make this a better country, and they said, "We can't have non-governmental organizations; here all organizations are governmental." Conceptually, the idea of having a non-governmental organization, of space for civil society, was inconceivable. We finally were able to get them to articulate and to enact a law for non-governmental organizations, but this was difficult.

Organizations including the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute all had problems. They had problems with not being able to get registered, problems with bank accounts, problems with their personnel, problems with visas. We spent an inordinate amount of time trying to establish the conditions to enable civil society to flourish.

Q: Now, the other aspect of establishing, you know, a new country, is also the transparency in government, because that flows directly into establishing open markets and, you know, so on. How did that go in the period you were there?

BUCK: It was difficult. We worked in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan on the judicial system, trying to help the branch understand the need for independence, the need for transparency. This was difficult, because they were still top-down, executive branch-directed systems, and it was extremely difficult to change. We could get a lot of people

that understood what we believed, and the system that we had, and how it had been so successful, but it was – We were moving upstream.

Q: Same with government procurement, I imagine.

BUCK: Government procurement… Yes. We never – We got involved in that when we were working on privatization, because by the time I got to Central Asia, Russia was fairly heavily involved in its own privatization program, which we all knew had major problems. So, we spent a lot of time in the privatization program we worked with in Central Asia to develop transparent regulations, to come up with systems that had the rule of law written into them, rather than of arbitrary decision making on the part of government bureaucrats. So, that was where we got involved on the procurement side of things.

Q: Since you were responsible for the five central Asians, and obviously Uzbekistan was sort of bottom of the five, how did you see the other three? I know Tajikistan had a great deal of internal unrest in that period and, you know, each one of them had, sort of, some unique aspect that affected how they were going to develop.

BUCK: Right. Tajikistan had had a quite large civil war just before I arrived there, and in fact, the embassy had been evacuated. Actually, the Ambassador was a resident in Almaty when I arrived. So, it was having its internal problems. Subsequently, Rachmaninoff came to power, and established quite an authoritarian regime, and we worked with them on health system reform. But I had very little impact on other areas, because the government was focused on maintaining itself in power at the time I was there. They were really not concerned too much with developmental issues. The engine of the economy, in addition to cotton and to some extent power, was an aluminum plant that was an enormous, environmentally tragic thing. But it made use of the abundance of hydropower that Tajikistan had.

In Tajikistan, our ability to affect where things went was limited, just because of the political issues. Turkmenistan was probably the least reformist of all the areas, and it was able to capitalize on the very large natural gas resources that it had. I just noticed in the paper the other day that Turkmenistan has finally decreed that people must pay for water, sewage, utilities, and electricity, which heretofore had been, as in most of the other former Soviet Union countries, provided free. So, it was a long way from establishing a market economy.

Q: And of course, Turkmenbashi and that whole cult of personality that he developed couldn't have been a particularly helpful direction to go in if what you're trying to do is, you know, modernize the country.

BUCK: That was, I guess, one of the areas that I spent an enormous amount of time doing: meeting with the senior economic officials in these countries, discussing economic policy reforms and directions that they should consider taking to improve the lives of their people. And in some areas and sometimes, they would approach it taking ginger steps. In Uzbekistan, we did get to make some efforts at privatization. We did work with them to finally adopt an independent currency. They were still using the ruble, as many of the countries were, and until two years after the fall of the Soviet Union, when they established their own currency. So, I just think that – With the Bank and the Fund, we spent a lot of time talking with them on the need for reform. But they – In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and I also think Kazakhstan, the bottom line was maintenance in power for those who were there.

Q: What about Kyrgyzstan? You haven't mentioned Kyrgyzstan yet.

BUCK: Kyrgyzstan was one that had had "democratic elections", and so it was the poster child of where these countries should be heading. We had a fairly large program with the Central Bank to develop the capacity to move on its new currency and to manage it appropriately, to establish a banking system that was independent and properly regulated and supervised, and I think that was one of the greatest success stories that we had. We had a significant privatization program, and so Kyrgyzstan moved very quickly to adapt many of the reforms.

The problem with Kyrgyzstan is that it is so isolated. It was just like Tajikistan. It was the farthest from Moscow, and it had very few indigenous natural resources. It had hydropower that it could sell to Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan would pay for it, but of course they didn't have any hard currency to pay with so, you know, they were up the old creek.

But Kyrgyzstan did undertake, economically, many of the steps that we were recommending. But politically, it had its problems, and President Akayev, the first democratically elected president, subsequently was overthrown. As it turned out, in terms of the traditional sort of corruption, that had been prevalent in so many of the other countries and had been there, too.

CHILE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARK B. FELDMAN
Assistant Legal Adviser for Inter-American Affairs
Department of State
(1970)

Mark B. Feldman served in the State Department Office of the Legal Adviser from May 1965–May 1981, including as deputy legal adviser and acting legal adviser, 1974–1981, taught foreign relations law at Georgetown University Law Center, and has been involved in significant international matters in private practice since 1981. Professor Feldman is best known for his work drafting/negotiating the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act of 1976, Iran Claims Agreement [1981], UNESCO Cultural Property Convention [1970], and U.S. maritime boundary treaties [Canada/Gulf of Maine Case, Mexico, Cuba, USSR]. He was interviewed by Robin Matthewman in 2021.

Topical Focus – The Allende Election—Copper Negotiations

Q: Mark, I think we are up to 1970 and I wanted to ask you about the Allende expropriation of American copper mines.

FELDMAN: The Marxist candidate, Salvador Allende, was elected president of Chile on September 4, 1970, initiating one of the most dramatic episodes of my career. Allende's win came as something of a surprise, embarrassed Ambassador Edward M. Korry and stunned the Nixon administration. The U.S. had supported outgoing President Eduardo Frei as a force for democracy in the hemisphere, but he did not run for another term. So, the election was mainly between former President Alessandri, an elderly man seen to represent the wealthy, and a coalition of Marxist factions led by Allende, leader of the Socialist Party. Allende was pro-Castro and hostile to the United States; he ran on a promise to nationalize the copper mines and other foreign investment without compensation and to establish a socialist state.

Q: Why was the Allende election a surprise?

FELDMAN: I remember discussions before the election as to what the U.S. might do to help our friends in country. In the end, the U.S. did little but spend some money on advertising. As I recall, no one in Washington had great confidence in Alessandri, but

Allende was not respected and was seen as a long shot. As the campaign proceeded, however, folks in ARA became apprehensive. I don't recall the White House being particularly engaged before the election, but when Allende won, they blamed Ambassador Ed Korry for not warning them of the threat.

Q: What was Korry like?

FELDMAN: Ambassador Korry was a bright, colorful envoy who had made a career in journalism before becoming an ambassador. Prior to the Allende election, Ambassador Korry had a solid record of service in Ethiopia and Chile. He was an activist and had personally mediated an earlier nationalization dispute between the Frei regime and the U.S. copper companies.

Q: Do you remember if we had many copper companies or just one or two?

FELDMAN: There were two major ones, Kennecott and Southern Peru Copper.

The Allende election created shockwaves. Nixon was furious. It was the beginning of the end of Korry's career in the U.S. government, and he knew it.

Q: Because he hadn't predicted it or because he hadn't stopped it?

FELDMAN: Both. Ambassador Korry came back to Washington for consultations, and there were intense deliberations about what the United States could do to avert the inauguration of Allende or to mitigate his policies. Much has been written about what followed, but there is one short story that has not been told. Korry decided he would try to persuade the Allende government, before the inauguration, to pre-negotiate the expropriation issues that were at the top of the Allende agenda. He was hoping to obtain some commitment to compensation. Korry had been successful negotiating copper issues with the Frei government. He knew the terrain extremely well and all the players. I was assistant legal adviser for ARA when Korry was in DC, and I'd been involved in a lot of expropriation work for the bureau. So Korry asked me to go to Santiago with him to assist.

Q: When was the inauguration?

FELDMAN: The inauguration was scheduled for November 3, 1970. Korry and I flew to Santiago on October 23. I had never been to Chile before. And it was a very tense, fraught environment. I remember landing early in the morning, October 24. It was a damp, cloudy day and there was a huge press corps waiting on the tarmac to interview

Chilean Foreign Minister Gabriel Valdez, who was on our plane. More important, the papers were reporting an armed attack on General Rene Schneider, commander of the Chilean Army. He was shot the day before and died on October 25. To complete the picture, Allende was formally elected president by Parliament the day we arrived, October 24.

Q: Chileans and others blame U.S. involvement.

FELDMAN: I have no personal knowledge, but a great deal has been written about this event. Best I remember, this was an attempted kidnapping by Chilean rightists that went bad. Allegations were made that Kissinger approved some contacts with those involved; he denied the charges. I'll leave this to the historians. But this development did not bode well for Korry's negotiations.

Korry did not tell me a great deal about his plans, and I don't remember much. But he asked me to have lunch with a man named Mario Valenzuela whom I understood to be an outside advisor to the incoming Allende government on financial matters. Someone set up the lunch, and I had a nice meal and talk with Valenzuela. I recall suggesting that a reasonable dialogue about the future of U.S. investments in Chile might help smooth the way for a better relationship between the Nixon administration and the new government. When I came back from the lunch, Korry was ashen. He had received a message from Kissinger that this mission was disapproved of by the White House. It was to be aborted. We were to return immediately to Washington. Now, I'm sure Korry believed that he had White House authorization for this enterprise. But whether he did or not, the mission was terminated abruptly. When I started telling Korry about my lunch, he said, "Whoa, you exceeded your brief." And for years, I wondered what Korry really thought and whether he mentioned me in his reports to Washington. I never found anything.

After a while, the Nixon administration did open negotiations with the Allende team on compensation for American investments seized without payment. I have vivid memories of a secret meeting we had with senior Chilean officials in Lima under cover of an OAS meeting in May 1972. Ambassador Orlando Letelier was there as was Jose Toha**,** Allende's interior minister. Both were killed by the Pinochet regime after the 1973 coup: Toha by torture in 1974; Letelier by bomb planted at Sheridan Circle in 1976. The U.S. delegation in Lima was headed by Assistant Secretary Jack Kubisch. It was a tense meeting with some recriminations, but we had serious, substantive discussions, and the U.S. floated a proposal for arbitration under the 1914 U.S.-Chile Treaty for Settlement of Disputes. There were follow-up meetings, but the effort to reach agreement failed because Chile was not prepared to make the arbitration binding as the U.S. insisted.

Q: Were these negotiations superseded by the military coup of September 11, 1973?

FELDMAN: Yes. I have no information about the coup, as such, but I would like to say a word about the Church Committee Hearings on alleged U.S. intervention in Chile, because I became involved in those as counsel to Assistant Secretary Charles Meyer when he testified on March 29, 1973. Sometime later, the Justice Department interviewed me concerning Meyer's testimony. That was not comfortable, but there were no problems.

I worked with DAS John Crimmins to prepare the testimony and follow-on Qs and As for the Church hearings. From the outset, Crimmins' instruction to all concerned was that we would not lie. Well, the sensitive question we expected was: "Did the United States intervene in the 1970 Chilean election?" In fact, we had done practically nothing by comparison to prior years, but we had spent some money for political advertising for parties opposing Allende. Still, we couldn't answer. If we said no, that would be taken as lying. To say, yes would be misleading and would be incendiary in Latin America. The OAS Charter prohibits foreign intervention in internal affairs. ARA didn't want to answer this question or to discuss the details. So, we decided that the witness would not answer that question, and would invoke executive privilege, if pressed to the wall.

Q: How does that work?

FELDMAN: Under our system—notwithstanding Trump—a witness is required to answer questions from Congress unless the president formally invokes executive privilege. So I reached out to Fred Fielding in the White House Counsel's office to prepare the ground in advance of the hearing. He gave State the green light.

Q: How did the hearing go?

FELDMAN: Not well. Charlie Meyer didn't want me sitting by his side. It reminded him of the McCarthy hearings. So, I sat behind him while he tried to fend off questions that were awkward for the administration. I remember, once, leaning forward and saying, not very helpfully, "Don't answer that." Meyer had been briefed and knew he was authorized to invoke executive privilege, but he didn't do it. He must have felt that would just escalate the issue. We never discussed this afterward. So, it didn't go well. In that environment, I worried there could be a problem.

Q: What did Meyer say, exactly?

FELDMAN: I don't remember his exact words. He was not very clear, but I worried that someone might question his veracity. I was surprised, however, sometime later, to receive a call from a DOJ prosecutor, Peter Clark, asking to come see me. Peter and a colleague came to my office, sat down, and Peter said, "We've been looking into this Charlie Meyer testimony, and all fingers point to you. Tell us what's going on here." And I said, "Not a problem. I drafted the talking points. You have seen them. John Crimmins directed our preparation, and the first thing that he told us was: 'Under no circumstances is anybody going to lie to Congress.'" That stopped them. Peter asked: "Just like that?" And I answered, "Just like that." Then, they relaxed a little bit; Peter said—in some form of words: "Well, tell us, off the record, was Meyer lying or was he just confused?" I couldn't answer that question. That was my first [hostile] interview by the Justice Department, and that's the end of my Chile story.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WADE MATTHEWS
Department of State
Political-Labor Officer
Santiago, Chile
(1982-1985)

Mr. Matthews joined the Foreign Service and held ambassadorial positions in Chile and Guyana and was consul general in Ecuador. In Washington, he served as deputy director of the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States and director of the Department of State's Office of Central American Affairs. Mr. Matthews was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Topical Focus – U. S. Democracy Policy under Augusto Pinochet's Government

Q: OK, let's talk about the situation in 1982 in Chile.

MATTHEWS: In 1982 in Chile, we had the Allende years terminating with his overthrow in 1973, about nine years prior to that time following which with the military government there were some serious human rights violations and almost a civil war in Chile, but it was put down by the military in Chile, in some cases rather brutally. Not a massive number of people killed. As well as we could determine, in the immediate military takeover and shortly thereafter and over the years there were very few, a total of about 700 people lost their lives in Chile. Mostly through elimination by the military or through guerrilla attacks and warfare. In some cases it was provoked by the individuals; in other cases they were simply eliminated because they were simply too dangerous or the interrogation was more harsh than it should have been and they lost their lives in that way. Not a huge number, but nonetheless there had been some problems. After that there were a couple of years of sort of bumbling around. Pinochet, though he had not been known as a non-statist, seemed to have a rather statist viewpoint took the advice of the so called Chicago boys, people who had been trained under the University of Chicago in

free market ideas and improvement, that sort of thing. They came to him with an idea, this is how you should reconstruct Chile.

Their idea was a rip roaring success but there was one major problem. They pegged their exchange rate too closely to the dollar. Things got outrageously expensive in Chile. Exports plummeted because of this artificially high exchange rate and the economy went into a recession. There were a lot of vacant stores. The unemployment had risen by the time I got there to at least 15% up to 20%. It probably got as high as 25%. We are not talking about a subsistence economy where 25% is ho hum. This is Chile, which is accustomed to a rather high rate of employment, low unemployment, so there was a significant crisis in the government when I got there. The questions were, had the free market experiment failed; were the policies not going to be successful, or was this aberration largely caused by an artificially high exchange rate. It turned out the latter was the case. The economy remained in sort of a crisis state the first year I was there. They stuck to their guns about the free market principles. They freed the exchange rate or allowed it to float essentially. The peso was devalued substantially and the economy by the time I left was improving rather nicely, and the public dissatisfaction which was really threatening to the government at one time with demonstrations against it and bombs being set off on the subways and elsewhere seemed to be ameliorating. That is what we ran into when we got there.

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Q: What were the Embassy's relations with Pinochet, personally and then with the government?

MATTHEWS: My relations with Pinochet were really nonexistent. Oh, I had been to some ceremonies with him. I had exchanged a couple of words with him on a couple of occasions. That was roughly the extent of it you know. I sat ten seats removed from him at a couple of ceremonies as well. Pinochet did not attend National Day receptions. He was not a terribly sociable individual other than intimate friends and relatives of his. He was a very stuffy rather starched shirt. Essentially honest. Oh there was a little hanky panky going on probably, but not much. He was basically honest and made his decisions on what he thought was basically good for the country. A very different person from Somoza in Nicaragua some years ago.

My boss would accompany visiting dignitaries to call on Pinochet with the exception of Dick [Gen. Vernon?] Walters. Dick Walters was the only American who had a more or less first name relationship with Pinochet. He came down a couple of times. When he needed somebody to go in and talk frankly to Pinochet and joke with him and tell a few off color stories. Dick Walters had known Pinochet way back when he was a colonel or captain or god knows something in the military, long ago. He was the kind of person who spoke fluent Spanish of course, along with five or six other languages. Dick Walters always insisted on making those calls on his own, not with me, I wouldn't have gone anyway of course. He always made these on his own and he was about the only person who could get away with it without wasting a trip. The Ambassador should be in on the

conversations even if the Ambassador is one of the note takers, he should be there. So Dick was the exception. Otherwise, Pinochet was accessible only to persons of adequate rank and background. Every businessman, every human rights crusader, every Congressman who came down, we had a lot of Congressmen come down, did not get in to see Pinochet.

Q: Other than keeping Chile from becoming the token punching bag for the left wing in the political United States, and protecting it from getting too involved, what were your main concerns?

MATTHEWS: Oh, we were pushing the U.S. policy to encourage an orderly transition to civilian government incorporating at least all non-communist areas of the body politic. Some communist areas, let's face it, were affiliated with some of the existing political parties. The communist party per se was not a threat. Its activities, at least while I was in Chile were not a threat. They are still not. Chile, unlike some other Latin American countries had really been inoculated against radical communist revolution by the Allende experience, including partisans of the Allende cause. People who were 100% with him said well, we made some mistakes. We moved too rapidly. We probably shouldn't have even moved in that direction. We should have moved much more slowly. We think that state control of the means of production is a good idea, but it would have to be a lot more gradually and with much more consensus. Allende was trying to do it much too quickly. These are all accepted. They literally outlawed people who were throwing the bombs around. There weren't too many then. That was the political scene. Now what do you do?

We encouraged the government through every extent we could, through all our programs to continue moving toward democracy. There were some moves toward democracy but they were rehearsing it while we were there. The opposition was tolerated. There were three opposition weeklies published. Two most of the time I was there, no opposition daily newspapers. They would attack Pinochet roundly, they would attack the government roundly. They were not terribly influential; the circulation was not too large, but their editors were not picked up and thrown in jail, and they were allowed to publish.

The daily press was sort of pro Pinochet but also pushing the same line we were. We had good relations with them; they were pushing for the same sort of things we were. Many of the cabinet members were also pushing for the same sort of things we were. Some of the cabinet members, some of the military were dubious that Chile could make any sort of a rapid transition. They were talking about 15 years to transit to democracy maybe. Of course, we felt that we could go much more rapidly than that, and in fact it did so. We had very good contact with and private lunches with the leading opposition people including the two men, the first immediate post Pinochet president and the current President of Chile. They would attend our receptions and were invited to our parties. I sat in on one very informal session of a Christian Democratic basic sort of a policy section. The Christian Democrats operated legally if informally. They were not really recognized as a party. Political parties were not formally recognized. They operated every way shape and form like a political party except they couldn't expand themselves because there were no elections. They couldn't have a legal status as a political party at the time. They were

referred to as the Christian Democratic party and Gabriello Valdez was the chairman of the Christian Democratic Party.

Patricio Allende, who was the first President of Chile after Pinochet, was the lawyer for the Christian Democratic Party. If I had to make my choice as to who I would like to see as President of Chile as soon as Pinochet allowed this to happen or if something happened to Pinochet, I would have picked Patricio Allende as my favorite. I didn't think he could be president, He was not enough a rabble rouser, he was not quite far enough to the left. His relations were relatively good with the military. Therefore I thought the Christian Democrats would not support him. Also he was a little bit older than some of his equivalents in the directorate of the Christian Democratic party. We all believed that the Christian Democrats depending on what sort of trunk, what direction things took after Pinochet, were one of the two most likely successor parties to represent them. One direction would be if a more pro military government, a group that had cooperated with the military they would have good political potential free market types. We thought that was at least a 50% chance.

Basically to summarize, our tack was twofold as far as our major purpose in Chile, one, encouraging the government to move toward democracy, and two, encourage the democratic opposition to collaborate sufficiently with the government in this transition so the military government would not feel they were going to be kicked out on their posteriors with charges brought against them, therefore they would hang on for dear life to the bitter end. To be honest, I think we were successful in both those endeavors.

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Q: Well, from '82 to '85 did you see any discernible change in the Pinochet government, in its direction of what it was going to do?

MATTHEWS: Yes, Pinochet's attitude, the economic crisis and the ensuing political developments, the rise in bombings, that sort of thing, his natural inclination which he indulged in you understand was batten down the hatches and not make any movement toward democratization because that would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. So it was difficult for movement to take place, but there were other countervening forces on him and as the economy got better we began to see some movement in that direction in the latter part of the time I was there, the last let's say year I was there as the economy was improving. It was clearly underway, and we felt it could be helped along by encouraging more progress in the direction that was being taken and saying fine progress; let's keep it up and if anything increase it. There were elements in the U.S. government as I say that would harp on other items to the exclusion of that. As it turned out, he did continue, and Pinochet didn't need to be pushed that much harder. He felt that his long term survival and his legacy that he wanted to leave Chile was in that direction.

Now Pinochet is not going to be remembered as the George Washington of Chile by any means. Bernardo O'Higgins has that role already. Pinochet is looked at by many as the person who interrupted Chilean democracy and the person responsible ultimately for

those roughly 700 or so deaths which are badly exaggerated. People talk about thousands of deaths. We checked into it as well as we possibly could and as I say, the number of deaths in the aftermath of the revolution and the course of the revolution was in the hundreds not the thousands. It doesn't excuse them all; I am certain there were many violations, but you have got to put it in the proper context. Could Chile's transformation have occurred with out the sort of military takeover? I don't think so. I really don't believe it could at the time it did. Chile was the leader of Latin America in this sort of thing.

Illustration, I was in Belarus for the department on business looking over the management of Embassies in 1992. While I was there I had occasion to have a brief conversation through an interpreter with the president of Belarus, not the current president, but the president back then. The conversation was on some moves toward privatizing social security and things like that. I said, "You ought to look at what the Chileans have done, not only on that but on a number of other things. They have anticipated the sort of thing you are thinking about doing some time ago. You really ought to send a delegation to Chile." He said, "We did. Chile is an interesting model that we are considering. Our delegation has been there," and I think he said a Chilean delegation has been to Belarus for that very sort of thing. He said, "It is quite interesting and we are considering that sort of thing." That is way over in Belarus.

Now in Latin America, other countries kept looking at what Chile was doing. They looked at the privatization. They looked at once the economy got back on the road, it happened in the last year I was there, much more so as the effect of it took place several years later, this became increasingly obvious all around Latin America, and I think Chile was a major motivation for what happened all around Latin America in ensuing years. Chile led the way. It led the way because the Chicago boys were given by Pinochet sort of free reign. They did more or less what they wanted to in the economic area and the area of government services, that sort of thing. It worked. Could it have happened if Allende had let's say if democracy had survived an Allende term which I think is very dubious and had the Christian Democrats returned, whatever party returned. I don't believe so because there was a lot of blood on the floor. I'm speaking figuratively here. Not literally. I'm not talking about those 700 people roughly who died in the revolution and its aftermath. I'm talking about people who lost their life savings, people who lost their secondary job for which they were being paid by somebody else who did their job because they had the union contract to do it. So the person doing the job actually got half the salary and the other half went to a person who just stayed home and collected it and maybe had another job on the side, all sorts of abuses like that. Could that have happened under a democratic government? Probably not. The people wouldn't sit still for it. Sometimes, though I am not an advocate of military coups and military takeovers, I am not at all sure in Chile, it would have worked without one.

Chile
Santiago, Chile
(1988-1991)

Mr. Gillespie began his career in the Foreign Service in 1965, when he was made regional security officer at the Embassy of the United States in Manila in the Philippines. He was later posted in a variety of positions around the world including the United States NATO mission, Mexico City and Managua, Nicaragua. Gillespie served as the deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean and deputy for operations in the State Department's Inter-American Affairs Bureau. He was a specialist in Latin American and Caribbean affairs in the foreign service and served as the interim Chargé d'Affaires in Grenada helping to open the first United States Embassy there. He later served as the United States Ambassador to Colombia and the United States Ambassador to Chile. Mr. Gillespie was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

Topical Focus – Democratic Transition in Chile

Q: To pick up on some of this, what were their concerns and how did you meet them - that you weren't too much of a starry-eyed liberal regarding Chile? Were there any pointed questions asked?

GILLESPIE: Well, you see, what the general public doesn't understand is that our relations with and attitudes toward the Chilean government under General Pinochet were evolving. One has to go back and say that, whatever would have happened without it, President Carter's human rights policy had set in motion forces which the Republican right in the United States didn't attach much importance to. However, I would argue that, when you get right down to it, our country has values which are basically shared. There is the value of democracy, for example.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, went through what, to my thinking, was a somewhat convoluted distinction between such terms as authoritarian, totalitarian, friends, and not friends. She said that an authoritarian friend is better than a totalitarian enemy. She categorized Pinochet as an authoritarian friend. Pinochet was 479 anti-communist. President Salvador Allende whom Pinochet overthrew in 1973 was "bad." She said that Pinochet had probably saved the Southern Cone of South America and Chile from a fate worse than death. Who will ever know?

Roughly from 1981, when President Reagan was inaugurated, until 1987 - this particular point - Elliot Abrams had been the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights before becoming Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. Whatever one thinks of Elliot Abrams, the man, or Elliot Abrams, the person involved with the contras, the Congress, the courts, or anything later, in 1987 Eliot was absolutely behind a policy of trying to move toward greater democracy in Latin America, whether in Central America or elsewhere. Remember that the argument from the right in favor of the contras was that we had to have these people in there, putting pressure on the commies or the bad guys and get them out. The object was not to reimpose Somoza or right wing dictatorships. Rather,

the big word was democracy, including elections, freedom of choice, liberty, free markets, and all of those good words.

That really was the policy stance toward Chile, whatever the Far right - and I might call it the reactionary right, the ultra-right, or the "wingers," as we used to call them - would do. Well, I was an advocate of greater democracy throughout the region where I had been working. I was concerned about the threats to democracy, where I was serving, both from guerrilla movements, a radical left, and an armed and violent left, as well as the nascent threats that came with this perversion of institutions and systems with narcotics trafficking and international crime. Those were already elements of our policy in the region.

When Malcolm Wilkey asked me what I thought about Chile, at this point in 1987 I simply knew that there was supposed to be a plebiscite, to be held the following year, in 1988. In this plebiscite the Chilean people, under a design which Pinochet had agreed to and which he thought he could control - and we'll get into that later on - were to express themselves on how they would go in the future. U.S. policy was that it was up to the Chilean people to make that decision. However, we made clear that we supported democracy. Even then Ambassador Barnes, Assistant Secretary Abrams, and those around them were organizing and planning what action the U.S. would take in support of our policy, as the plebiscite approached. There were debates as to how far we ought to go and what we ought to do. Ambassador Harry Barnes was an activist and a liberal. He tried to make sure, whatever his personal feelings and whatever motivated him most deeply, that his actions would ensure that whatever the Chilean people decided should be done in as open and democratic a fashion as possible.

Harry may have favored the immediate termination of the Pinochet Government, and I suspect that he did. Although I was not an expert on Chilean affairs in 1987, I had been an Ambassador in Colombia for over two years at this point, in a country where the civilians had called in the military to help them straighten out the situation. It was not a right versus left situation. There had been political violence and civil war. The Colombian people basically said that they wanted the military to come in and help to clean up the situation. The Colombian military had done just that, left the government, 480 and didn't want to come back.

I felt that these long-standing, military controlled governments were not good. I had seen this in Nicaragua under the Somoza regime and all of that. I was comfortable saying to Ambassador Wilkey, "Look, in my view this is our policy, as I understand it. I think that we have to find ways to implement that policy. The job of the U.S. in Chile is to make sure that we do this right. In my personal view I do not think that military people are necessarily very good governors. They may be capable and efficient people, but there is something lacking in an authoritarian or totalitarian regime. We all consider that democracy is essential for the continuing health of the political system."

I let it be known that I was not in any way a supporter of the continuation of the Pinochet Government. However, I made it clear that I would follow Washington's instructions.

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GILLESPIE: [...] As far as the democratic transition was concerned, that first year I was in Chile seemed to be crucial. It seemed to be going along all right, except that the 17-party concertacion group which supported the "No" vote was becoming the concertacion for democracy. It increasingly looked like the coalition that was going to run the Presidency, in some fashion. The 17-party concertacion did not like certain provisions in the Constitution of 1980 as they affected the upcoming elections in December, 1988, and what was going to happen after that. They basically came up with a set of desires, demands, or whatever you might want to call them. They proposed to the military government that these changes be made.

Well, the initial reaction of Pinochet and the junta was that they were not going to make these changes. They said, "No." Well, a lot of pressure was generated, and we added whatever we could to that, though we had to be careful not to appear to be interfering in anything. So it had to be subtle. However, in the final analysis the Minister of the Interior in the Pinochet Government, a civilian named Carlos Caceres, working through the internal processes of the government, convinced Pinochet that they ought to negotiate with the Concertacion. The Minister of the Interior felt that this would be okay. He could manage the negotiations, and they wouldn't have to give up more than they had to. This would be an appropriate thing for them to do.

Well, Minister of the Interior Caceres began these negotiations in February, 1989, and continued through March and April, 1989. A crucial event occurred on the afternoon of May 10, 1989. I forget where I was, but that afternoon I received a phone call - maybe it was from the CIA or maybe from Ron Goddard - reporting to me that Pinochet had pulled the plug on the negotiations. He was not going to let Minister of the Interior Caceres go any further, since he felt that he was going to have to give up too much.

Then an amazing thing happened. Carlos Caceres said, "If you do that, Mr. President, I resign." Pinochet had never had people talk to him that way before. He wasn't used to that. Two other cabinet ministers, including Hernan Felipe Errasuritz, the Foreign Minister, said, "If Carlos Caceres leaves the cabinet, the three of us go also." So there were three, key ministers who told Pinochet that they would resign if the negotiations with Concertacion were ended. The third minister was the Minister of Mines and Energy. The three of them were all civilians and Pinochet loyalists to the core. So when they said this, Pinochet backed down. I received a phone call at 5:00 or 6:00 AM the next morning saying, "Pinochet has backed down." Meanwhile, we didn't say or do anything. We acted as if it hadn't happened. We just let things ride and kept our mouths shut and our hands out of it. The fact is that Carlos Caceres probably is the reason that the democratic transition proceeded. He then went forward and negotiated. He was a tough negotiator.

Another plebiscite was held in July, 1989, in which the various changes proposed in the Constitution were validated and legitimized. A constitutional amendment was also

approved, and that set the stage for what was to follow. Those are the kinds of things we observed.

I had begun a process of introducing myself to Chile and Chile to me, as I indicated. One of the trips that I needed to take was to a city called Temuco, about 350 miles South of Santiago. There was a university there and a lot of activities. It was really a sort of environmental hodgepodge. There were some bad things going on with timber cutting, and other things were happening. I visited there on March 13, 1989, if I remember correctly. I had by now been in Chile for about three months. My wife was with me. We had been having meetings of various kinds.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PATRICIA DERIAN
Department of State
Coordinator/Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
Washington, D. C.
(1977-1983)

Patricia Derian was born in New York City and grew up in Danville, Virginia. She was an activist, organizer, researcher, and served as the first Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Mrs. Derian was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Topical Focus – Democracy under Pinochet

Q: Anything on Chile?

DERIAN: Only that I refused to go there because Pinochet was very anxious for me to come. And I decided that I didn't want to go at his behest. You know, Patricia Derian has accepted an invitation. The human rights person is coming here at the invitation of General Pinochet. I do have a funny aside, which illustrates the history of the time. I think in about the third or fourth year of the Carter Administration a group of Chilean expatriates, remember a huge portion of the intelligentsia left and a group of about seven or eight people, my memory's so bad, but it was more than a couple, came and said that they were going back to Chile because they had noticed that the only political entity from pre-Pinochet that was active and organized was the Communist Party. Because the party members had never left. They met all the time and sometimes they got thrown in jail but they were highly organized. They were going to go back for the democratically organized one. I said what a good idea that was. The most highly organized political state in Latin America had absolutely shut down as soon as the dictator came on the scene. So they talked and explained what their points of view were and how they were going to go about it. I said, "That's great! Thanks so much for telling me." And one of them said, "Well, we came to ask you something. We need your help." What it was, they said, was, "Who do you like?" And I said, "I don't know what you mean." "Who would you all support as

our candidate?" And I said, "We don't have a candidate." And they said, "Well you always have a candidate." I said, "No, we don't have a candidate. Our idea of democracy is that you organize your own people and you pick your candidates and you have an election. I know that it's not always seen that way but that's the way it is, in this room, today." He said, "But if you'd just tell us who you'd like us to support, then we'll do it." I want to tell you my heart sank; that was one of the saddest moments, you know. These were educated people.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

EDWARD L. LEE II
Department of State
Regional Security Officer
Santiago, Chile
(1982-1985)

Mr. Lee was born in 1944 in Saginaw, Michigan. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps after high school and served wartime deployment in Vietnam. After leaving the military,Mr. Lee earned a B.S in Law Enforcement and an M.S. in Criminal Justice. In 1973, Mr. Lee joined the U.S. Department of State (DOS) where he served as Special Agent in domestic assignments and as Regional Security Officer at U.S. Embassies abroad, including Cyprus, Korea, and Thailand. He later became Director of Training for the Office of Security and served in Panama as Associate Director of Security for U.S. Embassy security programs in Latin America. Mr. Lee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus – Programming under Pinochet

Q: How about Chile? How were things during this '82-'85 period?

LEE: That was a difficult period for our embassy and the presence. The embassy was in a rather decrepit old bank building that was very dusty, dark, and gloomy. It's often been said that Augusto Pinochet wasn't so bad, that he really helped develop the economy that Chile has today. But I recall a very interesting thing happening where one of our Foreign Service local employees, particularly our Foreign Service national investigator, was involved in a matter where we had asked him to conduct some investigations. It was a very routine kind of thing, but apparently he had sort of infringed into the DINA (Direccion de Inteligencia Nacional, National Intelligence Directorate), which was in essence the secret police. The next day, he didn't come to work. Another day went by and we really didn't know what happened to him. He had been interrogated by the secret police. Electrodes had been affixed to his genitals. This guy really went through hell. The embassy really did not complain because it would have gone nowhere. Pinochet really was a very utilitarian kind of dictator. Of course, we were still smarting a little bit from his taking over the government back in '73. I think the policy position of the Department

of State was, “Let’s just not make any waves.” Then as years went on, things improved. But it was not a friendly place to be in dealing with the Chilean security forces.

Q: But in ’82-’85, in one way, having a military dictatorship, they were taking care of your terrorist problem for you.

LEE: Definitely. In fact, it wasn’t until really… I think it’s important to do comparison contrast because it’s better to understand it. I think as we got closer to democracy, to Pinochet surrendering the government in 1990, the rebel activity actually increased the closer they got to that period. When Pinochet was in full control in ’82-’85, Santiago was such a wonderful place. For our people that were assigned there, there was generally no problems at all. But as we’ve learned, times did change.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DAVID N. GREENLEE
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
Santiago, Chile
(1989-1992)

Mr. Greenlee entered the United States Foreign Service in 1974. From 1he served as Deputy Chief of Mission to Bolivia, Chile, and Spain. Later, Greenlee served as the United States Ambassador to Paraguay and also to Bolivia. Mr. Greenlee was interviewed by Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

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

Q: You were in Chile from when to when?

GREENLEE: I was in Chile from the end of July of 1989 until about June of 1992. It was a direct transfer. In those days it was very difficult to drive from La Paz to Arica, the northernmost city in Chile. That leg was a dirt road with deep ruts. But from Arica there is a very good highway to Santiago. It’s quite far, well over 1200 miles.

So we sent our car on a flatbed truck to Arica. Then we flew from La Paz—only about a 25 minute flight—to Arica, picked up the car, spent the night at a seaside hotel, and then drove south. It took about three days to reach Santiago. We arrived just before the second of two referendums near the end of the Pinochet period. This one was on a constitutional point needed to clear the way for a general democratic election. It was very organized and orderly and the “yes” votes carried overwhelmingly.

Q: It’s a fascinating story, and I’d like to get your view of that. First, could you describe the situation in Chile before you arrived?

GREENLEE: The military government of Chile was losing legitimacy. It had never had legitimacy with the left, but it had a lot of support from the right. The economy had improved a lot and that was welcomed by the right and center right, especially. But the time of the military had run out. Democratization was reaching Chile. There was a sense that a more open system was needed to modernize the economy, to spur greater growth.

The military organized its retreat from government, and it did it through allowing public consultations and the two referendums that opened the way for elections. The referendum that I arrived for was one that really determined that there would be elections. It was very orderly. There was a large majority for elections, I think over 90 percent. Of that something like 56 percent supported what became the Concertacion, the center-left bloc that in December of that year elected Patricio Aylwin to be president.

The military in Chile and the military government tried to protect itself as it retreated from power through quasi-legal devices like amnesties, which much later were overturned. It was an interesting time because there was the sense that Chile was really on the cusp of very significant change. Then elections were held. Aylwin and his Concertacion slate prevailed over a right-wing slate headed by a former finance minister named Hernan Buche. The inauguration was several months later, on March 11, 1990, as I recall.

Q: Did you watch the pre-election referendum take place? What was our attitude prior to this crucial referendum? What did we think was going to happen?

GREENLEE: I had just arrived, and I visited some of the polling places with the political counselor, Ron Godard. There were a lot of international observers and the voting was very clean. I think there had been concern that the military would try to fix the vote, but that clearly didn't happen. Maybe it was because of Chile's strong institutional base.

Compared to other Latin American countries I have had experience with, Chile has always had a strong degree of institutional integrity. Even during the worst times of the Pinochet regime, for example, the national police, the carabineros, were respected as being honest. The court system was generally respected as well, although there were horrendous human rights abuses and repression of dissidents during the Pinochet dictatorship.

Q: What was the attitude of the embassy when you got there? The Pinochet regime was very controversial.

GREENLEE: The expectation was that change would happen, and U.S. policy was to strongly support the democratic transition. In the interval between the last referendum and the election there was a lot of political activity. Ron Godard accompanied me on calls at the foreign ministry and other parts of the Pinochet government. It was interesting to go into the Moneda, the imposing building that was the seat of power. It had been strafed by aircraft when Allende was overthrown and it was there that Allende had died—I believe by his own hand, although some dispute that.

After the election we began to work on the preparations for the visit of our delegation to the inauguration. In the last days of the Pinochet regime Godard and I were given a tour of the Moneda by a mid-grade officer. He flung open doors and let us walk about, pretty much where we wanted. He took us down to an underground auditorium, the Salon Prieto. I remember mentioning this to some Chilean, and the guy almost trembled and said, "That's where the military met when they decided to do the terrible things they did." It had an ominous feel to it.

It was interesting, the turnover. It went perfectly. I did not attend the ceremony. That was at the new parliamentary building in Valparaiso, on the coast. The ambassador was there. The U.S. delegation was headed by Vice President Dan Quayle. He capped his visit by buying an anatomically correct male doll at a market stall, a pornographic doll. The incident was reported in the Washington Post as a characteristic misstep.

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Q: Were you picking up feelings about the role of the United States during the Allende overthrow and during the Pinochet regime? Was this a more American-left driven idea?

GREENLEE: I didn't have any sense of palpable Chilean interest in our alleged or possible role in Allende's overthrow when I was deputy chief of mission in Chile. But there remained a lot of speculation in the U.S. Maybe Chileans of the moderate-left and center-left were too busy governing and trying not to tear the scab off their precarious relationship with the military to probe too much about our rumored role. The democratic left needed us. The Chilean right was self-justifying and pretty arch with us.

Q: Pinochet. How was he treated, and what was he up to from our perspective after he left the presidency?

GREENLEE: Pinochet, when he retreated from government, continued to be the head of the army. He became a senator for life, with the immunities of a senator. That was not a place of political power, but it was a position that allowed him to have some insulation from legal scrutiny, at least for a while. That later changed, but when I was in Chile he seemed invulnerable to legal charges.

Pinochet was a very vital older man. Before he turned over the government, I think one time when I was chargé, I had to so something out at the fair grounds, something related to a U.S. exhibition. Pinochet was walking through and I had to shake his hand and so forth. But I never really dealt with Pinochet. Later, when I was the political advisor to General Dennis Reimer, the army chief of staff, there was a conference of western hemisphere armies in Bariloche , Argentina.. I sat in on his meeting with Pinochet. This was in late 1995 or early 1996. Pinochet was in his mid or late seventies, I think but he still looked very fit and was very sharp. I remember that he remained fixated on communists—saw them as keeping their heads down around the world, but waiting their chance to come back.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES R. MEENAN
USAID
Mission Auditor
Santiago, Chile
(1969-1972)

Jim Meenan is a retired USAID Foreign Service Officer. His overseas postings included Monrovia, Saigon, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Colombo and Manila. After retiring, he became a member of the AFSA-PAC Advisory Board. Mr. Meenan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus – USAID Democracy Programming under the Salvador Allende Regime

Q: You went to Chile when?

MEENAN: We arrived in Chile during 1969 and remained until the Audit Office commenced closing in 1972. This assignment was one of the most enlightening experiences in my career. When we arrived, everything was peaceful and quiet, before the presidential election process started. The Audit Office was under the USAID Comptroller, until about a year later, when an Auditor General operation was created with its South American regional headquarters based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Audit Office was initially staffed by one other American, and a group of about four Chilean auditors. The Chilean staff was mostly educated in the U.S., sharp, inquisitive and as good as an American auditor. After the first year, I was the sole American residential auditor in Chile.

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Q: Was there much discrepancy?

MEENAN: Oh, yes, due to the economic distortions in the economy, the unofficial exchange rate was running about double or more than the official rate applied for the U.S. dollar.

Much of the economic distortions are traceable to the Frei Administration that resisted opening the economy to the campesinos, poor rural farmers. In contrast, Allende campaigned on a platform that attracted many of the professional middle/upper class people, to open the economy and enhance participation for all Chileans. Unfortunately, his reformist objectives to open the economy including the campesinos did not last long, following the election.

Shortly after taking office, Allende appears to have lost control to his radical elements. The reformist agenda was scrapped for a radical course of action that included freezing

prices, double-tripling wages, taking over companies, and seizing properties. Literally for that first year, we witnessed the country liquidate its national wealth. These actions lead to curtailment of most local goods production and rapid consumption of what little inventories existed. With the "enhanced" exchange rate we were receiving, a good meal out with entertainment became obscenely cheap.

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Q: Did the audits reveal any significant issues?

MEENAN: Two audits, in particular, directly tied the misuse of USAID funds to the campaign against Allende before the election. One audit involved a Jesuit priest who had a USAID/Washington grant for family health promotion that was paid by the USAID comptroller's office in Santiago. This strange arrangement did not provide the Agency with much oversight opportunities. We undertook the audit and ascertained that the grant had been poorly written and lacked most basic controls. The poor scope of work along with the lacking oversight called into question the activities that were taking place for encouraging population family planning amongst the heads of the countries in South America which appeared in conflict with overall USAID/Washington policy.

Once a review of the financial records commenced, our Chilean auditors found that subcontracts were being executed for work under the grant, but instead of proceeding with the tasks, the sub-grants were being promptly terminated once full payment was received from USAID and the funds diverted to another account. The audit found the diverted money was co-mingled with other outside funds that were used in a campaign against Allende's election. In addition, at the end of each year, the grantee and staff would enrich themselves by dividing up any unused USAID grant funds. Near the end of the audit, the grantee's records were being destroyed in anticipation of Allende being elected and the Grantee's eminent departure from Chile. The contracting office in Washington was not happy when the audit report was released. Others were not very pleased that we undertook this review. However, some months later, I received a book issued by Praeger Publishers that substantiated our findings and the actions that were taken against Allende's election.

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Q: What was the other audit case you identified?

MEENAN: The second linked audit involved an education sector loan USAID had made to Chile. The loan project entailed providing a mix of cash transfers for education policy reforms as well as funding procurements for educational books and supplies. Chile did undertake good education policy reforms, not that it could be determined that the USAID cash transfers had that much of a direct influence. However, the audit found that most of the educational supplies that were provided from the U.S. had been distributed to the various schools, but for one reason or another they were locked away in storerooms. The case of the locally printed text books provided another venue for the diversion of USAID

funds. In these procurements, the USAID was buying local currency with U.S. dollars, and paying for the printing of the new curriculum text books. Our Chilean auditors determined that the prices USAID was paying for the textbooks were significantly higher than the cost of the same items on the local market. Upon further analysis, they learned that the overpricing was directly benefiting the publisher, who happened to be owned by the Christian Democratic Party, which supported the Frei election.

Q: How well were these findings received?

MEENAN: I learned some time later that the USAID director, who later became an ambassador in Central America, sent a blistering message to Washington asking that they close the audit office in Santiago and disperse the staff. The reason he gave was that we were acting like "Gestapo" – secret police, in that we were going into areas that we shouldn't be in and he was fed up with it. Before eventually closing the office in advance of USAID's departure, we did perform a review of USAID's general fund for administrative expenses. Low and behold! We found an apparent Anti-Deficiency Act violation in that the USAID, under the director, had undertaken a brand new project during a Continuing Resolution restricted funding period established by congress. During such a period, no new activities are to be started and operations can only proceed at the same or lower level of the previous year. The audit further found that the USAID had this new project fully expended before they ever received approval for the activity from Washington. Months later when approval did come, the USAID transferred the accounting for the activity from the operating expense account over to the project.

Q: Would you say that the Allende government was under much pressure or running scared?

MEENAN: From my perspective, the Chilean economy was a pendulum that was going to swing. The Frei administration's policies and practices were very confining and did not benefit a large element of the population. It was distorting and polarizing the country—haves, have nots—and it was working up to a destabilization effort of one form or another if something wasn't done in the election. Frei's whole campaign was, "Continue the status quo," while Allende was campaigning on, "It's time for reform. Open up the economy. Bring the campesinos in." That's what attracted a number of professional people to support Allende in the election.

Shortly after Allende did take office, his radical elements really rose up and, from my perspective, turned the direction of his efforts to the radical leftist elements. Chile was very proud to have freely elected a socialist president. Note: Now that USAID/Washington has actively strayed from an economic development focus to promoting democracy and free elections around the world, it should remember this Chilean experience in that the U.S. may not like the results these efforts produce.

At the time of Allende's inauguration, a close relative of one of our audit staff was still the head of the carabineros, the national police. He provided the staff with his tickets so

we could attend the inauguration and sit in a good location, behind the president, for photographing the parade of troops.

Q: Was the United States screwing up the economy or was Allende doing the job?

MEENAN: The U.S. Embassy was blessed by having Mr. John Sprout as its economic reporting officer and he did an outstanding job in gauging the rising economic pressures and the points at which they would have political impact. John later became the head of the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State.

Q: Was the United States the precipitator or was it Allende?

MEENAN: The U.S. wasn't doing that much to support needed economic reform or change from the status quo of the Frei administration. There had to be change because the status quo wasn't serving the needs of the population. When that economic pendulum starts to swing, one needs to be actively upfront making needed input in order to have any impact. However, nothing seemed to be done to try to neutralize the radical elements of Allende's group and get more centrists coming forward to provide direction.

From our audits, it became clear there was money flowing in a campaign against Allende. I believe that the U.S. and others got on the wrong side of the problem and ended up providing an environment for the more radical elements to grow. Possibly, more attention could have been placed on Frei to open up the economy and become more of a centrist reformer than a status quo campaigner.

For example, Chile produced great agricultural crops; however its post harvesting, processing, and distribution systems were nonexistent. A friend from a California cooperative was providing some basic packaging and marketing advice that proved invaluable in opening the first cooperative market for fresh fruits and vegetables in Santiago. This model could have proven replicable to bring the rural poor farmers into the growing economy. However, these initial efforts died in the economic chaos that developed.

During our assignment in Chile some friends at the Brazilian Embassy confided in us its concern that the U.S. seemed to be pulling out of South America and that Brazil was going to have to fill that void both economically and possibly militarily. When the U.S. went on its intervention initiatives in Central America, including El Salvador and Nicaragua, this concern was further heightened. Today, the times have changed. The U.S. seems to be slowly realizing that the real economic power in the Americas lie in the Southern Cone, a key sphere of Brazilian influence. This is particularly true in the U.S. efforts to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement with the Americas. The Brazilian economy is strong and it has set itself up as a leader in the hemisphere.

PETER DESHAZO
Department of State
First Secretary for Cultural Affairs
Santiago, Chile
(1983-1987)

Ambassador DeShazo was a member of the career U.S. Senior Foreign Service, serving as deputy assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs and deputy U.S. permanent representative to the Organization of American States. During his Foreign Service career, Ambassador DeShazo directed the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs of the State Department and was director of Western Hemisphere affairs at the U.S. Information Agency. He served in U.S. embassies and consulates in La Paz, Medellin, Santiago, Panama City, Caracas, and Tel Aviv. Mr. DeShazo was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2013.

Topical Focus – Political and Security Environment in Chile

Q: What was the situation in Chile at the time?

DeSHAZO: It was fascinating. That was one of the reasons I went. I arrived two months before the election of Allende. The country was totally submerged in politics. Politics every, every minute of the day. Everyone predicted a close vote. The political polarization and politicization of students and the population at large seemed boundless. Huge disparity between the candidates. It was pretty clear that either the candidate of the right Jorge Alessandri or the leftist Salvador Allende at the head of a Marxist coalition would win — and that the Christian Democratic candidate had no chance. It was the kind of politics that I'd never seen before anywhere.

Q: Of course at that age you couldn't be concerned about you might say your safety particularly.

DeSHAZO: No, I didn't feel unsafe at all. Not a bit. At the university, there was a lot of anti-U.S. sentiment, but never directed against me. I recall very vividly the Cuban and pro-Allende propaganda all over the universities. They showed movies depicting American soldiers, burning villages in Vietnam and people shot — very powerful stuff. The Left seemed to dominate the cultural scene and it was all anti-United States and imperialism and Wall Street and all that. Chilean friends took me to coffee houses and peñas where singers like Víctor Jara performed — all very anti-U.S.

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Q: How'd the election go?

DeSHAZO: Allende won.

Q: How was that received?

DeSHAZO: Well, it was received with joy on the Left and with a sense of impending doom on the Right.

Q: How'd you feel?

DeSHAZO: I felt like Chile was going to go through a challenging process. I didn't have enough background in the country to have a profound sense of the implications. Chile had a great deal of poverty and social problems but also a vibrant middle class. Over time, I began to question more how a very bourgeois society — democratic and respectful of rights — was going to transition to a Marxist economy and a power shift to the working class. It was pretty hard to imagine that things could change so dramatically — but for sure there were a lot of people who wanted to see it happen and were committed to it. And plenty who were determined that such a change would not take place.

Q: So when you left Allende was in power?

DeSHAZO: Yes.

Q: And you know, you're, you're obviously somewhat at that time still a little bit of youthful experience. Did you things sort of developing peacefully?

DeSHAZO: Well, I knew that it was not going to be easy and he was going to run into some big problems. The economy had a consumer boom in the first year and then inflation really started to pick up. The Chilean currency — the escudo, seemed to lose value every day. And the United States was laying down some big markers as Allende nationalized copper and began moving against the banks the battle lines were getting drawn.

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DeSHAZO: I arrived in Chile with the goal of reaching out to the opposition to the Pinochet regime. In 1983, this was not encouraged by the Embassy front office but I felt that it was absolutely necessary. So, I found myself in the odd position of trying to establish contacts with people who distrusted the Embassy and the U.S. Government and at the same time were considered by the front office to be either unfriendly leftists or people of no consequence. There was distrust of me at first — people wondered why I was interested in them. I started with places where leftist academics and intellectuals were able to openly work — think tanks, human rights organizations, some media people, and cultural figures. I made many contacts among student leaders — at the time elections for university student federations were the only elections taking place in the entire country. Also university professors. Eventually I reached out to purely political figures — mostly Christian Democrats and Socialists — who were in the opposition to Pinochet.

Q: Well, did you find that there were true believers of Pinochet? People that really felt that any giving away to what we would call the left at the time would be disastrous?

DeSHAZO: Sure. There were plenty of those, especially in organizations like the army, in some political groups that were staunchly pro-Pinochet, people who were strongly anti-communist and thought that the opposition — if it should come to power again — would be dominated by the Left. Also in the business community. But there were others among Pinochet supporters who felt uneasy with the continuation of authoritarian government and were looking towards another day but were still distrustful of the opposition. There was a specter of fear of future instability or Marxism, since at the time the most active and vocal opponent of the regime was the Communist Party and its armed wing, the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front. It was not as if the Communists were about to topple the regime, — far from it — but Communism certainly caused fear in some sectors of the population.

Q: Well, could the left demonstrate itself or — I mean, you know, if you got a repressive regime, what about the left? Where —

DeSHAZO: The Left was divided. There were still a considerable number of former officials of the Allende government in exile. Some had returned. The big division was in the Chilean Socialist Party between a social democratic group that had been exiled in either the United States, Mexico, or Western Europe and a Marxist sector of the party that had returned from exile in Eastern Europe and was more militant. The Christian Democrats were also somewhat divided between a more conservative and a more progressive or liberal element within the party. The Communist Party was deeper underground and was considered the most anti-American and most dangerous element by both the Pinochet regime and the Reagan administration alike.

Q: Could we make contact with the Communist Party?

DeSHAZO: We did not have contact with officials of the Communist Party.

Q: But it was off limits?

DeSHAZO: Pretty much so. The Communists were considered beyond the pale.

Q: Yeah. What about the military? Did you have sort of contacts with the military other than our attaches?

DeSHAZO: There was a shift in U.S. policy that was very dramatic between the first two years I was in the embassy, 1983 to-mid 1985, and the last two — 1985 to 1987. This had a large effect on our outreach to the military. Before 1985, I attempted to make contacts in the military largely through efforts to bring U.S. speakers to the military academies and advanced policy centers. These speakers normally discussed U.S. foreign policy, Central America, and other issues that Chilean military officers were interested in. After 1985, when our policy of support for Pinochet began to change, there was greater distrust of the U.S. in the Chilean military — especially the Army and Navy, and it became more difficult to work with them — despite the fact that we were trying all the harder to reach

out. The National Police — the Carabineros, and the Air Force were more open to us — but only to a point.

Q: The Carabineros were like — the Carabinier in Italy and all were actually essentially part of the army. Were they, or were they —

DeSHAZO: No, they were a separate branch from the Army but were brought under the Ministry of Defense during the Pinochet years. The commander of the Carabineros was a member of the four-man military junta that governed the country — headed by Pinochet.

Q: But I would assume that they had probably a better feel for the populous and all than say the army or navy did.

DeSHAZO: Yes, I think they did. They tended to come from the ranks of the working classes and their officers more representative of the lower middle class than those in the army or navy, which tended to be recruited from the middle or upper middle class.

Q: Did you get any feel for sort of — I'm not sure how one does this, but for the housewives? Because the housewives, you know, turned out to be pretty — these were the people who got out and banged pots and pans and this sort of thing. I mean this is a group that's hard to, to win over by any particular party.

DeSHAZO: All political groups in Chile sought the support of women. The Pinochet regime thought that it had special attraction for women — and tried hard to win them over by appealing to what it thought was their fear of Marxism and a return to chaos, economic insecurity, etc. The opposition tried to win over women by an appeal to democracy, respect for human rights, and by underscoring the importance of equal rights for women. So one appeal was negative the other more positive.

Q: Well, did your — how'd your wife find it there? I mean was she welcome as a daughter of Chile, or was she — or was her American connection somewhat suspect?

DeSHAZO: She was not overtly political and was able to deal with lots of different people. She knew the culture of Chile well, obviously the language. Both of us had many close friends in an array of circles.

Q: How about, how about your work with the universities? Universities are, as I understand it in Latin America, are often quite independent. They get kind of taken over by students or become easily radicalized and all. How was that playing out in Chile?

DeSHAZO: During the military government the universities were not being taken over by radical students. The administration of universities remained either in the hands of state appointed officials or conservatives who were very careful not to be in opposition to the regime. In terms of student politics, however, Christian Democrats or the Left tended to dominate the elections for student federation leaders. These were significant events — as I mentioned earlier, the only real elections taking place in the country and therefore an

interesting barometer. Students were highly politicized. But even the student leaders had to be wary of the military regime.

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Q: Did we get much in the way of — or did you all get much in the way of visitors from Washington?

DeSHAZO: Again, I think you have to look at the two periods. In the first two years, when the USG was more enthusiastic about Pinochet, there were relatively few official visitors. I recall a visit by Assistant Secretary for ARA (Bureau for Inter-American Affairs) Tony Motley, but nobody higher than he that I can recall. As our policy shifted, we had more and higher level visitors — including high level congressional visits — such as Senator Ted Kennedy, who came to express support for the opposition and Senator Jesse Helms.

Q: Well, why — what caused this split?

DeSHAZO: This was a conscious policy decision that was formulated over time and was manifested during the course of 1985. At the beginning of the year, policy still appeared steady on course in support of Pinochet — although with more misgivings. By the end of the year, it was clear that the policy had changed and that the USG would actively seek a transition to democracy in Chile. It came about, I believe, from the realization that quiet engagement with Pinochet was not producing results in terms of greater respect for human and civil rights and that Pinochet had no intention of making any changes to his long-term plans for Chile, that would leave him in power for a decade more and result in a "protected" democracy still dominated by the military. Washington made the decision that this scenario did not favor U.S. interest or ideals.

Q: Did, you know, through your connections, reading the American papers or something, see where this — what was fostering this shift? Was this within the administration or was this public opinion, or what?

DeSHAZO: Everyone at the Embassy knew about the policy debate in Washington. The manifestation of it became clear in late 1985 when Harry Barnes was assigned as ambassador to Santiago. Harry made it patently apparent to everyone — and to the Chilean government and people, that this was a new situation. Upon presenting his credentials to Pinochet, he reflected that the "ills of democracy must be cured with more democracy" or something to that end. This was a sea change.

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Q: Looking at, at the situation, was there the feeling of the military junta that the air force was a bit more liberal or, or navy, or what?

DeSHAZO: The Air Force was closer to the United States in terms of its training, doctrine, and all of that, and was therefore seen as more open to the U.S. than the Army or the Navy.

Q: What was your impression or were you somewhat removed from the role of our attaches there?

DeSHAZO: I thought our attaches did a good job. As we, as we embraced a policy of support for a democratic transition, that made their life more difficult, especially for the army and the naval attaches because their counterparts in those branches of service began to look at the United States as operating against their interest. And so it made their work more difficult. But they tried hard.

Q: Well, it had to be a difficult assignment.

DeSHAZO: Yeah, it was. Especially with the Chilean Army.

Q: What about the artistic — I mean you were a cultural attaché and so obviously you had artistic contacts. I would think this group would be — to a person opposed to whatever the United States was for at the time.

DeSHAZO: Interestingly, this was a group that was very anti-regime, anti-Pinochet but that eventually began to look with favor on U.S. policy. When I arrived in Chile, there was suspicion of me as I reached out to them but over time I made many friends. And as it became clear that the United States was on the side of a democratic transition, the Embassy was viewed as being on their side. We used the International Visitor program to send Chilean artists to the United States. I especially recall sending three very distinguished Chilean actresses to the U.S. — all of them vocal opponents of the regime. The Government was furious — to the point, I recall, of sending a diplomatic note of protest to the Embassy. We promoted contact between the artistic communities of the U.S. and Chile. I had very strong contacts and friendships in the Chilean theater world, among writers and intellectuals.

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Q: Well, did you feel at the embassy under any particular threat?

DeSHAZO: The Manuel Rodriguez Front planted bombs in different places that were linked in the public mind to the U.S. and the Embassy was always on the alert. I was aware of all this, but especially after Colombia did not feel personally threatened.

Q: Did you all feel under a certain amount of siege by public opinion in the United States of saying oh, you're part of that support group for this horrible dictatorship and all?

DeSHAZO: No, I didn't. I was aware of what world opinion thought of the Pinochet regime, but it had little effect on me because I had confidence in what I was doing. And

after 1985, more sophisticated observers began to understand that the U.S. was no longer automatically supportive of Pinochet — quite the contrary. At the Embassy, post 1985, I felt that all of us had confidence in the rightness of our mission.

Q: What about — I would think that the French embassy and its outreach would be sort of a — I would say — I don't know, a bone of contention. Or it's just because the French took a pretty strong view against Pinochet.

DeSHAZO: That is interesting. Despite what international public opinion may have perceived, the U.S. was in the forefront of seeking a transition to democracy in Chile. We were in close contact with the Western European embassies, with Canada, Australia, and the democratic countries of Latin America. But in terms of staking out a public position in Santiago in support of democracy, we were in the front lines. The reaction of the Pinochet regime made that pretty clear.

Q: Well, how about — did you have the equivalent that was up in Central America? Sort of the Sandalista crowd? The kids who — American kids who came there to promote the anti-Pinochet movement?

DeSHAZO: No, I wouldn't say that. There were not large numbers of American students or groups who were in Chile at the time — at least that I was aware of. But it was clear that there was interest in Chile in academic and other circles in the U.S.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES MCGUNNIGLE
Department of State
Santiago, Chile
(1979-1982)

McGunnigle served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1957 and then returned to New York to attend Hofstra University. In 1962, he and his wife joined the Peace Corps and served for two years in the Philippines. In 1965, he joined the Foreign Service. During his career, he served in Ponta Delgada, Quito, Colombo, Bangkok, Santiago, Islamabad, New Delhi, Cairo, and Paris. Mr. McGunnigle was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2017.

Topical Focus – General Augusto Pinochet's Extradition

Q: Did you have much contact with the Chileans?

MCGUNNIGLE: Yes. Well, with the local staff I did. Again, it was a smaller embassy. I had some good GSOs and some good B&F officers, but I was actively involved with the Chilean staff of the embassy. But on a higher level I was not, in large measure because nobody was. We were arguing that these guys were bad government people; we were friendly with our neighbors, of course. We joined the Prince of Wales Club and the

Chilean Country Club; we had friends there, played tennis, and used the pool. Even others in the embassy--political officers and others--were also not encouraged to get to know people too well in the government because it was a Pinochet government through and throughout.

Q: What was your impression of Pinochet and his support staff and all?

MCGUNNIGLE: They killed people. We were aghast at some of the things. The killings were over by the time I got there, but if some of those scenes from the film "Missing" (a 1982 American historical drama film directed by Costa-Garvas) were accurate, there were people being chased through the streets. Two Americans were killed that we know of. It was a brutal takeover. I sensed that most middle-class Chileans approved of it because they saw that the government of Allende was getting chummy with Cuba; other socialist countries were coming in; things were nationalized.

Q: I mean he was forming, sort of, his own left-wing militia, from what I understand.

MCGUNNIGLE: Yes, Allende. It was one of these times when a third party swung the election. He was elected, without a majority of the votes, only because the two other moderate parties didn't get the numbers. It was a messy situation. Again, it was a lovely place to live and a good school. I was president of the school board. The kids did well there. Our children left there speaking Spanish. It was very nice, but my responsibilities were diminished when we reduced the size of the embassy.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

THOMAS NICASTRO
United States Agency for International Development
Chile
(1993-1996)

Tom Nicastro began his career in international development following various volunteer work experiences in Latin America with the Peace Corps (Bolivia, 1965–1968) and Save the Children (Peru). Mr. Nicastro's first assignment with USAID was in Bolivia from 1978–1980, cut short by various coups d'état. Following this, Mr. Nicastro held multiple successful assignments around the world in the Dominican Republic (1980–85), India (1985), Afghanistan (1990), and Chile (1993–1995). He served in a variety of technical and leadership roles, including AID/Washington combined Asia-Private Enterprise Bureaus, USAID Representative in Chile, AID/W Bureau Newly Independent States in Europe as Director of the Office of Democracy and Social Reform, and AID/W Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau as Acting Assistant Administrator. Following his retirement from USAID, Mr. Nicastro developed a working relationship with Justice O'Connor, advocating for judicial reform. He continues his commitment to international development as a USAID Alumni Association member with his wife, Peggy. Thomas Nicastro was

interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2023.

Topical Focus – Judicial Reform and Democratic Governance in Chile

Q: Okay, on to Chile.

NICASTRO: By 1993, we were ready for an overseas assignment. I knew that Chile was on the bid list, and I spoke to Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) senior management and others about my interest. At some juncture in the appointment process, I was told my nomination had been sent to the ambassador for his approval. He approved, and we were assigned to Chile as USAID Representative. I was extremely happy because our eldest daughter Gabriella would be schooled at an excellent Chile/American high school in Santiago, *Nido de Aguilas* (Eagles Nest) and our youngest would be in its elementary school.

At this time, USAID was going through a process of reducing overseas posts as part of cost cutting. Chile was one of about a dozen to be closed possibly as early as 1996. I had met the longstanding AID Rep Paul Fritz years before. In 1988, he had financed a TDY for me to complete an assessment of Chile's higher education system, school, its banking system, and its government interest to see if it was ready for the takeoff I had seen in India. I thought it was a possibility. The problem was that Paul didn't have the money or the time to pull together a team to develop the program to the level it had to be developed. So it never went anywhere. But I developed a friendship with Paul and had the opportunity to get to know the Chilean economy as a result of that experience. When I arrived in Chile in 1993, I knew what I could do if we had enough funding for 3 or 4 years, but that was not to be.

Q: Okay. So, in essence, you're going there as USAID is sunsetting. What were the goals in terms of being sure about sustainability, evaluation and so on?

NICASTRO: I had four goals: 1) I wanted a smooth landing for our democracy and environmental projects; 2) I wanted to make sure my twelve FSNs departed in an orderly fashion; 3) I wanted to open a new small grant program to support regional university workshops and open the dialogue on potential local impacts of the upcoming NAFTA Free Trade Agreement; and 4) I wanted to successfully launch the Chile/Americas fund.

I became the US representative to the Chile/Americas Fund at the Ambassador's request. The Brady Debt Reduction Plan identified about $20 million of Chile's sovereign interest debt to invest in community environmental projects. A new Board had to hire a director and put into place a project proposal evaluation system and ad campaign. In short, I was to organize a mini bureaucracy that would pass an IG evaluation and sunset. Setting up the mechanism took months. The ambassador, reasonably, urged that the process move quickly and begin awarding grants. I was guided by the results of other LAC Boards that had moved too fast and had to close

and restart or worse had critical IG reports issued.

When we finally launched, the Board had a transparent process in place and had no complaints from the non-funded or funded proposers. The ambassador was pleased.

Q: Alright. Now, of course, this is the moment when Chile transitions to democratic government. Was that environment accommodating to the plans that you were having?

NICASTRO: Indeed, they had been. The democratic transition had begun a year or two before I arrived. Pinochet lost in a plebiscite, and they had the first democratically elected government since Pinochet took over. Interestingly enough, I met Pinochet at the ambassador's residence at a 1994 reception for a visiting US three star general. It was the first time since the 1973 coup he had visited. When he walked in there was a low-level collective gasp. It was fall and he walked into the reception area wearing a big cape that enveloped him and almost touched the floor - Darth Vader in person.

Q: How did you carry out the program?

NICASTRO: Within months of arriving in 1993, I got a call from the Ambassador's secretary inviting Peggy and me to his residence the next week in honor of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. I had been to many Embassy receptions in my career and knew the drill: get there early, say hello, look for future contacts, schmooze around a little bit and don't drink until all guests have left. Well, we showed up to the residence and only ten of us were there: the ambassador and his wife, the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and his wife, Justice O'Connor, her husband, her friend, and his Chilean wife. The O'Connors were visiting Chile because a law school friend of hers was married to a Chilean. I was seated next to the Justice. And we talked about one thing I most about, my Judicial Reform Program, which was moving Chile away from the accusatorial system to the prosecutorial system. She seemed interested in the project. I told her I was bringing some of Chile's justices to Washington as part of the project and wondered if we could include a visit to her offices. She happily agreed.

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Q: Back to Chile.

NICASTRO: We worked through a local university group to carry the reform efforts. We provided technical assistance, electronic commodities, and short-term out-of-Chile seminars/workshops. Chile's program was considered to be one of the most successful judicial reforms in Latin America. And indeed, the Justice Minister Soledad Alvear almost became president of Chile. She decided at the last minute to pull her nomination because of family issues. She is a fantastic woman. She saw the future and it was reform.

The other development issue I covered was the Free Trade Agreement. Chile was in the process of negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with the US, which was never signed.
Before it failed, I wanted to take the agreement outside Santiago and move the dialogue to regions that would be more directly impacted. The premise was to open the dialogue and make it not just a Washington to Santiago negotiation but to get folks who were directly impacted to understand better what was going to happen to their particular—not company—but their particular region. [Note: After years of discussion and further negotiation, the US-Chile Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2004.]

I gave one grant to a regional university association which then sub-granted funds to universities in the south and the north so that they would become familiar with the intricacies of the Free Trade Agreement and its possible impact on the local economies. Chile was just beginning export of grapes, strawberries, and other food items like shrimp, tilapia, sea bass and wine.

Q: Over time were you able to measure public sentiment, or at least business sector sentiment about the development of the free trade agreement?

NICASTRO: Everybody wanted it. They saw NAFTA as the last step of acceptance back into the democratic world. It was the sign that Pinochet was officially gone.

Q: But you said it was never signed, and yet as far as I know, we do have the agreement?

NICASTRO: We do. It was bilateral rather than a trilateral with Mexico and Canada. It was supposed to be multilateral, and they signed a series of bilaterals to get it done.

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Q: So, this period of Chile and then the sunsetting in Uruguay and Argentina, this ends at what point?

NICASTRO: I was there in Chile for three years (1993-1996) continuing and then sunsetting the programs already in place supporting democracy, specifically judicial reform. And I added an economic focus to help Chileans in regional areas understand and accept NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), which was a key underpinning in the Clinton administration. Due to my work in both of those areas and expanding resources to non-traditional USAID recipients, I was asked if I could accept an award from the government, the *Grand Order of Bernardo O'Higgins*. O'Higgins was their George Washington. With LAC/W concurrence Chile had a nice little ceremony for my staff, and my family. The O'Higgins award is the highest recognition a non-citizen could receive and it was the first awarded to a US citizen in 15 years.

My assignment in Chile ended in the summer of 1996. A mentor, Barbara Turner, recruited me to be the Director of Democracy, Governance, and Social Reform for the Europe and Independent States Bureau. Before I started in that role, I was on a "threshold" promotion panel for about two months. A panel of three Senior Foreign Service Officers priority-listed over 100 FS-1s for promotion into the Senior Service based on up to 10 years of performance files. Since less than 10 percent of the Foreign Service are promoted to the Senior Service, competition is fierce. We listed fifteen for promotion and fewer than five or six made it.

Q: Just a question about the panel, obviously without mentioning names, what did you learn about USAID and promotion and who was moving up?

NICASTRO: I recall the security surrounding our files. Our room was locked overnight. All our daily notes were put in a burn bag. It was pretty tedious after a while, but careers were determined.

Q: Okay. But in the end, you found five or six to promote?

NICASTRO: There were many more than five or six. However, the USAID HR personnel budget only permitted so many staff at different levels. So, HR had to balance retirement and other departures with our promotion recommendations.

Q: I see. So, you complete this assignment and then you move into the office of Democratic—

NICASTRO: The Office of Democracy, Governance, and Social Reform in the Bureau for Europe and Newly Independent States (ENI). A 40-person operation with everything from judicial reform to setting up health systems. I managed people, I did field work. I traveled a lot - our portfolio was mainly in former Warsaw Pact countries.

COLOMBIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Director
Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Colombia / Plan Colombia
(2008–2013)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – USAID Conflict Management and Reconciliation Programs in Colombia and Plan Colombia

Q: Yes. One other country pops into mind. Did you all have any involvement with Colombia and Plan Colombia? Are there any lessons?

LEVINE: Two stories. One is the CMM story and then one is more personal. On the personal side, I had a request from the mission to facilitate a retreat, distinct from my CMM role. Later, I came down to work with the mission on their strategy and reorganization plan. Both requests came from the mission directors, Susan Reichle, and then Ken Yamashita.

One CMM program capability that I didn't mention was a congressional earmark for people-to-people programs of $26 million, $16 million for the global program and $10 million for Israel-Palestinian cooperation programs. Under the global program there were people-to-people programs in Colombia. I visited the Colombia program to learn more about that program.

I learned a lot about conflict and reconciliation from those programs, particularly that there are many different kinds of affected populations from the conflict. The first were

folks whose land was expropriated by either the rebels or the paramilitaries. There were internally displaced people (IDPs) and then there were folks who were human rights victims. I learned about the role that trauma plays in working with these affected populations. I thought this was a deficit when it came to agency knowledge. We're economists and agronomists and health officers and environmental officers and political scientists; we're not psychologists or sociologists. And when you're talking about conflict and war, you have people that are broken. They need to heal before they can reconcile, and I think that was playing out in Colombia. There's a lot of stigma associated with conflict from those who left versus those who stayed behind and experienced the conflict in place, and so for me, by virtue of studying these programs, I got a firsthand, highly rich exposure to the complexity and the role of trauma in resolving conflict.

There was also experimentation about the role of reconciliation and truth-telling there, and this is something personally interesting to me going back to the El Salvador and Guatemala experience with truth commissions. Having read Aaron Williams' book and talking to colleagues who experienced the South Africa truth and reconciliation commission, and then seeing it on the ground in Colombia, I found it personally interesting. I was truly gratified to be able to pursue this career-long interest through my professional assignments.

In terms of the mission and organizational development issues, I think part of the success of the Colombia program during this era was the close relationship with the government, and the excellent leadership out of the mission, first from Liliana Ayalde and then Susan Reichle and Ken Yamashita -- three of the best officers that AID produced during a critical time. I think they oversaw strong country teams that really had a unity of effort.

The embassy divided the country up into zones that were in active conflict, that was really for the Colombians to resolve and in essence pacify or find peace. These were known as red zones. There were also yellow zones where some work could be done, but this fell mostly to the area of drug eradication and the INL mission. And then, the green zones, former conflict areas for development where USAID could play a more traditional role or a transitional role in bolstering government presence and allowing the benefits of peace to flow more broadly into the country. So, it was a very interesting country, very successful, but I think in every case the credit goes to the leadership of the country and with USAID really in a supporting role. I think CMM was there as an additive to that, but not central. We had a small programming presence. OTI was very important in getting kind of to the point of the spear of some of these.

Q: It's interesting that even when a country is on the road to reconciliation, one still has to continue to monitor all of those variables that could easily tip back into violence, so that conflict monitoring is still a very important part of the peace.

LEVINE: Right. What we learned from our experience in developing the Alert Lists was that prior conflict is a leading indicator for conflict recurrence.

COSTA RICA

Democracy and Election Subject Reader

OTTO J. REICH
United States Agency for International Development
Office of Public Diplomacy
(1981-1986)

Otto J. Reich built a career in U.S. diplomacy and Latin American affairs. Serving in USAID, the Reagan administration, and as Ambassador to Venezuela, he focused on Central America, public diplomacy, economic development, and U.S. policy toward the Sandinistas, Cuba, and regional security, while navigating contentious relations with Congress, the media, and foreign governments. Ambassador Otto J. Reich was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Topical Focus – Democracy Promotion and Conditional Aid

Q: The '80s was a period of real change within Latin America from authoritarian governments to more democratic ones. Part of a great wave that is still going on as we speak today. Were you conscious of using AID as a weapon in this?

REICH: Yes, very much so. In fact, that was one of the controversies that I was in the middle of, between State, say the political imperatives that we had, and the development objectives. A lot of the AID people believe that we should use this money to "do good". Fine, nobody objects to that, but we do not have enough resources to "do good" for everybody in the world. We have to put them where they will do the most good, where they can leverage other changes.

For example, what we called policy reform. We would try to use our aid as leverage for policy reform in countries like Costa Rica, a rich country which had terrible economic policies and had no excuse for not being much more prosperous. A lot of the AID people objected to this forced leverage. They thought that was political pressure, using our AID money for political objectives.

Well, yes, it was, but the result of the political pressure was that we leveraged economic results in Costa Rica (and other countries) with a couple of hundred million dollars of aid that would have taken billions of dollars to accomplish otherwise if the policy changes had not been forced.

Democracy and Election Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Office of Central American Affairs
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Costa Rica
(1993–1995)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – USAID Mission Close-Out and Graduation in Costa Rica

Q: One other thing I wanted to ask you about during this period, USAID closed about 25 missions globally. I believe Costa Rica was one of those. It had been doing very well and was "graduated." Did the Central American Affairs office get involved in the close-out process or in identifying ways to celebrate Costa Rica?

LEVINE: I'm glad you brought it up because I've not thought about it for a long time. I would say that this was not a wrenching decision from a policy standpoint at all. Costa Rica was a peaceful, middle-income country and a candidate to evolve from being an aid recipient. There were two legacy issues to deal with. One was that it forever has been the site of an OFDA regional office, and it was seen as too disruptive to move to another location, so that was going to stay. Second, there was a very expensive building that was going to be sold or gifted to the Costa Ricans.

Q: I heard the government didn't want it. It was too ostentatious a building. (Laughs)

LEVINE: Exactly. It was too expensive to maintain. So, I think there was a growing pain there as well.

Part of the legacy was a Costa Rican foundation where we wanted to transfer whatever residual local currency funds to go in the form of an endowment. There was also the

celebration of fifty years of USAID in Costa Rica. Our office was tracking the close-out of the mission and the celebration. What I recall was that there were testimonials or honoring of employees who had been there for fifty years in one form or another associated with the U.S. assistance effort, going back to predecessor agencies.

Q: Right. They had an extraordinary group of Foreign Service Nationals. They really didn't need very many Americans there.

LEVINE: I always thought it was very unique in terms of our presence for fifty years or more in some of these countries. USAID was a part of that political economy and a major political and economic player. And the smaller the country, the more outsize our role there. But the reputation of the missions was exceptional, particularly in El Salvador as a tremendously well-run mission, as was the talent in Guatemala. In Honduras and Nicaragua, it was much more difficult in terms of human capital in those countries. But when you're talking about AID and the culture of AID, it is an FSN culture that we're talking about. And I don't know that we in Washington always appreciated that.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Ambassador Robert Jackson
U.S. Department of State
Political/Economic Counselor
U.S. Embassy
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
(1998–2001)

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

Topical Focus – Côte d'Ivoire Political Instability at the Turn of the Century

Q: That was going to be my first question. Côte d'Ivoire, kind of like Brazil, was always the country of the future. It has so many resources and its location is geographically 51 great for basing companies there. But what was the political situation there? Was there political stability?

JACKSON: Everyone thought that the country was very stable. It had never seen a successful coup. This was 1998; so President Henri Konan Bédié had already been president for five years following the death of President Feliz Houphouët-Boigny. Alassane Ouattara, who had been Houphouët's last prime minister, wanted to be president and left his post as deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund to return to Côte d'Ivoire to seek the presidency. He had strong credentials, but his father had been a traditional leader in what's now Burkina Faso, and Ouattara had represented both Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire in the West African Economic and Monetary Union; so there were questions about whether he was an Ivoirian. President Bédié promoted the identity issue as a way of sidelining Ouattara. However, millions of immigrants primarily from Mali and Burkina Faso lived in Côte d'Ivoire, not only in the northern, more Muslim part of the country, but in Abidjan and other southern cities as well. There were also Liberian immigrants and refugees who had fled fighting there. There were also immigrants from Guinea, which was governed by Sékou Touré's successor, Lansana Conté at that time.

Thus, Côte d'Ivoire was seen as an island of stability, even though the debate about Ivoirité was bubbling. The day that Ouattara returned to Côte d'Ivoire was huge day for

his political party, the Rally of Republicans [RDR], which had been part of Houphouët's Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire [PDCI] and then split from the ruling party. The RDR put on a huge show to welcome Ouattara back, and that stoked political tensions. [superfluous information redacted]

Then, December 24, 1999, a group of disgruntled enlisted men who had been part of the UN peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic, mutinied over unpaid allowances and living conditions. The mutiny evolved in an interesting way. Mutineers first robbed some of the major grocery stores. That action led friends to call my wife about ten o'clock in the morning, asking if she had any information about soldiers 52 ransacking and robbing Sococe, the major supermarket in Deux Plateaux, one of the neighborhoods where many embassy employees, American and Ivoirian, resided. Babs called me and I immediately started reaching out to contacts, often alerting them to the mutiny.

We later learned that President Bédié and some of his ministers had taken refuge at the French ambassador's residence, which was located next to Houphouët's official residence on the lagoon. The mutineers literally drove from the grocery store to the radio station, which was directly across the street from the then embassy in Abidjan. We saw them coming and saw them take over the radio station. It was a few hours later that former Chief of Defense Forces General Robert Guéï made a broadcast on the national television station surrounded by the enlisted men who stood behind him with their weapons as he announced a coup and the ouster of President Bédié. Many journalists and ordinary Ivorians speculated that this was "a good coup"; Alpha Blondy even wrote a song about the good coup in Côte d'Ivoire.

Many expected that General Guéï and his ruling military council would pave the way for genuine elections that would include Ouattara as a candidate; some thought Ouattara had organized the mutiny in order to run for president. In my meetings with him, it became clear that he had been caught by surprise and had no control over the mutiny or the military junta. The debate about Ivoirite did not end, and we very quickly learned that there are no good coups. A number of northern and Muslim generals became ministers in the new government, but things did not settle down. I was trying to figure out who was really in power. President Bédié and most of his ministers left the country after the French government ferried them across the lagoon to the French military base beside the airport, and General Guéï reportedly leaned on the enlisted men to allow the deposed leaders to depart.

On Christmas Day 1999, Ambassador George Mu, DCM Jackson McDonald, and I went to meet Guéï at one of the bases around Abidjan. We were shocked by the deplorable

conditions on the base. Buildings were in very poor condition with roofs leaking. One could quickly see some of the sources of discontent that sparked the mutiny cum coup, and I didn't wonder about the monetary motivations and the many stolen vehicles, which were eventually returned to their rightful owners. It was a tense few days with a curfew, leading up to roughly New Year's Eve Y2K [the year 2000]. All of our Y2K preparations and stockpiling of supplies and cash actually came in handy although not for their original purpose. People enthusiastically welcomed 2000; there were fireworks everywhere. Ivoirians and foreigners alike were very excited and optimistic about the new political environment. That optimism extended to former Prime Minister Ouattara and the members of his political party.

Initially, General Guéï said that he would not run for president; in fact, he said basically all the right things. However, enlisted men mutinied in March or early April, again protesting their remuneration and living conditions. That ended with a little bloodshed but not much. Then on July Fourth, there was a major mutiny that was bloodier still.

Ambassador Nancy Powell, who was principal deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, came to meet with General Guéï and urged him to stick with his original plan to have free and fair elections. He gave us a preview of what was to come, ending the conversation by thanking her "for the lesson." Exiting the Presidential Palace, we all looked at each other and concluded that was not a good sign. Shortly thereafter, the Supreme Court announced that Alassane Ouattara would not be allowed to run for president. That left General Guéï as the PDCI candidate and Laurent Gbagbo, a longtime advocate of democracy and leader of the smaller Ivoirian Popular Front [FPI] as the only candidates. Most observers predicted an easy victory for Guéï, but Ivoirians had grown disenchanted with the military.

There was a thirty-day campaign roughly coinciding with the month of October. The election seemed unremarkable, but, as the votes were being counted by the election commission on national television, Laurent Gbagbo held a significant lead when about 30 percent of the vote had been counted; then the television cameras were cut off. A couple hours later, General Guéï went on television to thank the people of Côte d'Ivoire for having elected him president. Well, Ivoirians were having none of it. They knew that Guéï had not won. Thousands marched on the Presidential Palace, and Guéï was forced to flee by helicopter. The election commission confirmed Laurent Gbagbo's victory, and he was sworn in in a hastily arranged ceremony that night. Because of the security situation and U.S. concerns about the legitimacy of the election since a principal candidate had been excluded, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering decided that I would represent the United States at the inauguration.

I knew Gbagbo, his wife, and his closest aides better than any other official American; so I was a logical choice. The inauguration was very emotional—in part because neither Gbagbo nor his wife had expected him to be elected. Yet, there he was, newly inaugurated. People were again very optimistic since someone who had fought for democracy and human rights for years and who had been imprisoned for his politics was now head of state. He promised an inclusive government, but the next morning thousands of Ouattara's supporters took to the streets demanding a new election. Gbagbo took a very hard line and insisted that there would be no new election, and the human rights advocates who had been in opposition now became the oppressors.

Q: Throughout the coup, the mutinies, and the election, the basic problems for the military remained living conditions and poor pay, correct?

JACKSON: Yes, and that remains a source of instability in Côte d'Ivoire to this day. We continue to see the Ivoirian military staging mutinies abuse because their grievances have never been adequately addressed—not by Guéï, Gbagbo, or Ouattara. The country desperately needs real security sector reform but it has never happened for a whole variety of reasons. Neither Gbagbo nor Ouattara once he took office in 2011 were prepared to undertake security reforms because they were so dependent on the security establishment. Their answer to mutinies was to pay off or promise to pay off mutineers. That has continued to be the practice, and at some point the strategy will become completely unsustainable. As Côte d'Ivoire prepares for another presidential election in 2020, the role of the military will be an unspoken issue because Guillaume Soro, the president of the National Assembly, who was prime minister under both Gbagbo and Ouattara, has the backing of a significant portion of the military, which he partially led in the rebellion between 2003 and 2010. He was largely responsible for the country being divided for seven years with a UN peacekeeping mission attempting to maintain order.

Q: I'm sorry. I took you a little further than your story. Let's go back. You were at the swearing in.

JACKSON: It was emotional; people were optimistic; the promise of the good coup had been renewed. However, several very violent days followed. Most embassy employees were told to stay at home; those of us who did go to work went in armored vehicles escorted by the regional security officers. It was tense; mobs blocked roads with burning tires and threw stones. Demonstrators were killed, and people were afraid to venture out. The department decided that we should draw down and insisted upon ordered evacuation. In the end, we went to voluntary departure, and a number of family members left once the airport reopened. However, this had become almost "normal." As things settled down,

Gbagbo moved into the presidential residence, which had not been occupied since Houphouët died.

President Bedie had chosen not to live there, which proved ironic since he probably used the tunnel from the presidential residence to the French ambassador's residence when he fled the December 1999 mutiny. The human rights situation continued to be poor; in fact, it deteriorated. President Gbagbo agreed to hold parliamentary elections, and we were hopeful that those parliamentary elections would be smoother and more transparent than the presidential election. However, Gbagbo set what I would call a trap for Ouattara and his party, barring Ouattara from running for Parliament just before the elections. In response, the RDR boycotted the elections—in spite of pressure from us to participate—and the result was a landslide for Gbagbo and to a lesser extent for the former ruling party, the PDCI. Ouattara was a great economist, but Bedie, Guéï, and Gbagbo all outmaneuvered him as a politician—at least until 2010.

At the end of 2000, three of the four men who wanted to become president when President Houphouët-Boigny died in 1993—then Speaker of the National Assembly Henri Konan Bedie, then Commander of the Ivoirian Armed Forces General Robert Guéï, and FPI leader Laurent Gbagbo—had become president, and the fourth—then Prime Minister and later RDR leader Allasane Ouattara—had been shoved aside. At the embassy, we grew more and more alarmed about deteriorating human rights. My team and I reported extensively on abuses by the security forces. On one particularly violent day after the presidential election, we saw the security forces taking women who had been protesting for the RDR presumably to be raped. We confronted the government and the military about what we had observed but never got satisfactory explanations. In any case, we documented that a number of Ouattara supporters disappeared and were never seen again—although mass graves were subsequently discovered. It was a tense time.

My spouse had left on voluntary departure after the airport reopened, spending seven weeks in the United States. During that time, the United States held our election with Governor George W. Bush running against Vice President Al Gore. When Americans started murmuring about stolen elections, Babs would tell them if they wanted to see a stolen election, they had only to look at Côte d'Ivoire. As Christmas 2000 approached, life calmed. Ouattara and his party were largely excluded from the political process; Gbagbo and his FPI were feeling invincible. That set the stage for yet another military mutiny and continued upheaval. Gunfire awoke us so many nights, and that continued long after we departed in June 2001.

Q: Was the military divided between northern Muslims and southerners, or were there divisions among Christians and others? Was it more a question of class and money? What drove the conflict?

JACKSON: Interestingly enough, the military remained relatively cohesive in the short term. Enlisted men were more interested in their living conditions than they were in any political agenda. It was the officers who became very politicized and eventually broke with Guéï and then with Gbagbo. The rank and file continued to demand better living conditions and more money, and those demands persist to this day. Some of the officers eventually did join Guillaume Soro, who led the 2003 coup attempt that led to the division of the country and the UN peacekeeping force. However, it was almost ten years between elections—and in 2010, they were supervised by the United Nations, and it was Gbagbo who attempted to steal them. The United States believed that Ouattara won those elections, but Gbagbo refused to concede, and ultimately the UN peacekeepers with significant French support forced Gbagbo to accept defeat as they overran the presidential residence and Ouattara's shadow government finally took power. That bloody chapter could have been avoided if the people who staged the good coup had kept their commitments.

Q: Now, you're looking back on these developments.

JACKSON: Yes, I'm looking back. We left in June 2001 with President Gbagbo in power, and the military somewhat quiet, although there were occasional mutinies and Ouattara's supporters continued to call for new elections and stage demonstrations. [superfluous information redacted]

Q: And did we maintain a USAID mission?

JACKSON: Peace Corps remained. USAID only had a contractor to manage health programs, working primarily on HIV with the enormous Centers for Disease Control [CDC] team there. I mentioned our old building downtown. The United States had used Abidjan as a regional center for years. Because of the coup, we looked at whether that was sustainable but we decided that it was. We proceeded to plan a new embassy, which was desperately needed. The old embassy in an apartment building was barely functional. To give an example, to get from one side of the embassy to the other, you had to go down to the ground level, go outdoors, and go back inside. Such was the structure of the apartment house. The downtown streets in front of the embassy were closed off for security, and you can imagine that the public disliked that. It was awkward to say the least. [superfluous information redacted] There's an important point that I want to make. Tibor Nagy, who is now assistant secretary of state for African affairs, was ambassador to

Guinea when I was a political/economic counselor in Abidjan. He wrote a fascinating cable before the coup in 1999, predicting that Côte d'Ivoire could experience the same kinds of unrest as Liberia and Sierra Leone had experienced. Those of us in Abidjan were very dismissive; yet he was obviously prescient in predicting the upheaval that came. He saw the dynamics there and was absolutely on the money.

Q: Wow.

JACKSON: I think it is wise for us to remember two things: 1) there is no such thing as a good coup, and 2) just because a country has never experienced a successful coup does not mean that it won't.

CROATIA

N/A

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JULIAN M. NIEMCZYK
Department of State
Ambassador
Czechoslovakia
(1986-1989)

Ambassador Julian M. Niemczyk was born in 1920 in Oklahoma, the son of an Army officer. He went to Oklahoma University and then went into the Army during World War II, eventually being assigned to the OSS serving in Burma and China. He remained in the Air Force and served in Japan and the Philippines and eventually Warsaw as an air attaché. He was Defense Attaché in Prague during the Prague Spring and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He was appointed as ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1986. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Topical Focus – Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia

Q: Would you explain, because this was a very important element, what Charter 77 was and how you, as the Ambassador, and your Embassy dealt with it during this period when you were there from 1986-89?

NIEMCZYK: Charter 77 was a group of, I think, about 1,200 people who in 1977 signed a charter opposing certain activities and principles of their own country and the Communist leadership didn't like this at all. Therefore, they accused the Charter 77 people in opposing the Communist government, of being traitors, etc. The officials to me would even refer to the Charter 77 people as their enemies. So the Charter 77 people were often under surveillance, often jailed, as was Václav Havel and many, many others. Their life was miserable and they went from Jiri Diensteier, for example, who was in public affairs, press, in 1968 was relegated to being a coal stoker. He is now the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Havel, now the President, was jailed so many times and I as Ambassador with the Embassy, with the State Department, with the White House, were responsible for getting him out of jail. During the period he was in jail only his wife could visit. We tried to get members of my staff to visit. Impossible. My wife would visit, Olga, his wife, at their five story walk-up apartment with boxes of two items...one he needed and one he didn't. Very strong vitamin tablets which we would get at the Nürnberg Exchange, which he needed because he had respiratory problems and health problems and cigarettes, which he didn't need but he was a chain smoker and still is. Then his wife would take those over to the jail. There was a Catholic priest, Father Maly, who was defrocked, not permitted to do anything like serving mass these 20 years, now has his own parish in Prague. And I could go on and on.

Q: The Embassy with the full support of the American Government was responsible for getting Havel out of jail. Now Havel was a Czech citizen, there was no connection with the United States. How does one be instrumental in accomplishing this?

NIEMCZYK: I would go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and say, "I have a list of four things here that I have been instructed by the State Department to bring to your attention, Mr. Minister. Out in Slovakia you have Mr. Novotny in jail and you ought to be giving some thoughts to improving your human rights which you tell us you want to do. Get him out of jail. You have Václav Havel in jail now for the second time and you are talking to us about your not having Most Favored Nation treatment and you desperately need it and you do, in fact, need it, but you are not going to get it unless you do a couple of these things." Then a CODEL of Senators or Representatives would come in. I can remember John Glenn, Senator from Ohio, with a group of five. Barbara Mikulski, who is of Polish heritage, Senator from Maryland. Senator Thad Cochran from Mississippi. Senator Kit Bond from Missouri. Another time Senators John Warner of Virginia and Sam Nunn of Georgia came in to discuss arms control matters with the military. But each time we would set meetings up for a CODEL they would always ask for the highest level...the President, Chairman of the Party, Minister of Foreign Affairs...some times they would get two out of three or three out of four...and out of meanness the Czechs would not let them see somebody. But on those visits there would be an opportunity again at a very high level of government...Senators and Representatives, and we would talk in my Embassy secure room..."Senator here is what we hope you are going to drive home when you talk...Havel was in jail, Novotny was in jail, the continued surveillance of these people, etc....they are not helping themselves by improving their human rights so that they can ultimately get MFN." So to answer your question, through myself, my private visits with them, and bringing in these senior level Senators and Representatives, they too would extend the voice of the American Government to these leaders and they would take note at times.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

THEODORE E. RUSSELL
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
Prague, Czechoslovakia
(1988-1991)

Theodore E. Russell was born in India in 1936 and educated at Yale and the Fletcher School at Tufts. He entered the Foreign Service in 1963. His career included posts in Naples, Prague, Trieste, Rome and Copenhagen and he was named ambassador to Slovakia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Topical Focus – Human Rights of Dissidents and U. S. Relations with the Czechoslovak Government

Q: Did you have any contact, did the Embassy have any contact with dissidents at this time?

RUSSELL: We had very extensive contacts with dissidents. Our dissident officer, Bob Norman at the time, had constant contacts with the dissidents. We were trying to upgrade the level of our contacts with the dissidents, but the Czechoslovak government was saying if you keep this up, we cannot have any decent relationship. Basically we answered "don't make us choose." We would frankly have chosen the dissidents over the government.

Q: What do you mean by upgrading?

RUSSELL: In other words if our Ambassador had frequently invited the dissidents over to the Residence, the Czechoslovak government would have reacted in some pretty dramatic way. They kept warning us "you are paying too much attention to these people. They are a tiny minority. You are sticking your thumb in our eye. You say you want a more normal relationship, then knock it off." We didn't pay much attention to that, but we did not go out of our way to stick it to them, since we were interested in encouraging a more normal relationship in order to encourage a less repressive regime. So we had an officer whose main job was to contact the dissidents and keep track of them. If they were in trouble or arrested we could go and protest. Then we upgraded it to the extent that I would have any high level Washington visitors like Deputy Secretary Whitehead, who would come over quite often, or Congressman Solarz over to the DCM residence typically for breakfast with a selection of dissidents for them to talk with so they could get a picture of the situation from the horse's mouth. Havel would often come, as well as others including Jiri Dienstbier, Martin and Radim Palous, Sasha Vondra and Rita Klimova, who would translate. Rita, Sasha and Martin all later served as Czechoslovak and later Czech Ambassador to Washington. So the upgrade was that a lot of these meetings took place in the DCM's house, and occasionally in the Ambassador's residence and not as before mainly at the home of the Political Officer who had this responsibility. So we were upgrading our relationship with the dissidents, and if, for example, one of them would tell us the police had stopped him from coming to a meeting with Deputy Secretary Whitehead, we would formally protest that.

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Q: Well, let's talk about what happened when the change of government came. I mean how did we see things. I think of everybody out there jingling keys and all this, but at a certain point the professionals had to take over in our embassy. What were we seeing?

RUSSELL: As I recall, what the Embassy reported by early December 1989 was that the revolution was succeeding and the Communists were gradually being forced out of government. In fact on December 10 a new, non-Communist majority government came in and locked in the transition from Communist rule. Then, when Havel came in as president at the end of December 1989, what we saw was a situation, replicated

throughout Central Europe, of a total change in our diplomatic opportunities. The dissidents, Havel, Jiri Dienstbier, Radim and Martin Palous, Rita Klimova, Sasha Vondra, Zdenek Urbanek, Jan Urban and other leading figures with whom we had been meeting periodically appreciated the fact that we had supported them very strongly when they were out of power and the Communists were harassing them. So when they came in, we had exceptionally warm relations with President Havel and the new Czechoslovak government. So we saw this as an opportunity and urgent necessity to help these guys succeed. We wanted to see the democratic revolution consolidate itself in Czechoslovakia as elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe. We would ask "how can we help." They said "we want your diplomatic support. We want you to show your interest in what is going on here. Help us consolidate this change." So every section of the Embassy developed a very close working relationship with their new Czechoslovak counterparts. There is one interesting story I'll share where Havel came in as President and yet was surrounded by people wearing the old Communist security guard uniforms. He hated the sight of these uniforms and wanted them changed. We heard that he asked the man who designed the costumes for the film Amadeus to design new Palace Guard uniforms.

Q: Could you say what Amadeus was.

RUSSELL: It was the wonderful film about the life of Mozart with fabulous period costumes. The story we heard was that Havel had uniforms, very handsome uniforms for his new presidential guard designed by the Amadeus costume designer. Then there was a problem with getting the proper hats to go with the new uniform. We got this request saying the president or someone on his staff had noticed that our U.S. air force hats, worn by Colonel Ed Motyka, our very effective Defense Attaché, were handsome. He asked if we could urgently get a bunch of those hats which could then have the insignia of the palace guard incorporated. What I understand happened is we actually quickly obtained some U.S. air force hats and turned them over. What I was told was we got this request and filled it. Sure enough these palace guards looked sharper than hell. Then a good friend of President Havel's, Michael Kocab, who was a hard rock musician, was asked to compose a presidential fanfare for use at the palace. He did a wonderful piece of music in just a couple weeks. So President Havel had his guards in handsome new uniforms and this splendid fanfare and there was quite a different atmosphere in the Prague Presidential palace.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Democracy and Election Subject Reader

JAMES MICHEL
Acting Administrator for Latin American Affairs
USAID
Washington, DC
(1990–1993)

James Michel was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended Harris Junior College and graduated from St. Louis University. After completing law school, he joined the Department of State's Office of the Legal Adviser and later served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. In 1987, he became U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala and, in 1990, Acting Administrator for Latin American Affairs at the United States Agency for International Development. He subsequently served as U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Throughout his career, he focused on democracy promotion and economic development in the Western Hemisphere and beyond. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 21, 2005.

Topical Focus – USAID Support for Democratic Governance and Civil Society in the Dominican Republic

Q: Did we have programs there?

MICHEL: We did, and indeed, I think that during the time I was in that job at AID the most interesting program there was working with civil society and particularly with one of the leading universities on trying to support more of a democratic culture. The rector of the leading university had a broad, wide respect, and could convene meetings that would get the different political parties to all come together, which not many people could do. There was a lot of work that was done on election reform, a lot of work that was done on legislative reform, a lot of work that was done on judicial reform, supported by the AID mission, and I went there several times. This was one I kept an eye on because it was pretty sensitive. There were contested elections and fraud complaints that were justified to a great extent, and the risk was you could get in the middle. The motto of the AID mission was in Spanish: "*medio paso atras"* which is "half a step behind." It meant, "Don't get out in front. Don't get in the middle. Don't pick favorites. Support the process. And do it in a way that is half a step behind the Dominicans," not telling them what to do or imposing our ideas and so forth. That process—you talk about things that come and go—I just received, not this year but a year ago, from the university that was in the center of this process a ten year retrospective of their efforts and the support that the United States provided for their efforts. I think that the Dominican Republic, to their own

credit and due to their own efforts, is doing much better today. The Fernandez government is achieving economic growth again. They had a bad patch under his predecessor. He's back for a second time, and one of the firms that I work with now has a rule of law, anti-corruption project in the Dominican Republic which is doing very well dealing with continued issues of institutional weakness and dealing with major cases. I think that that AID support really was a valuable factor that helped the Dominicans sort out for themselves the direction and how to do things that they wanted to do for themselves. And they've done them! Not perfect. Democracy is a process of continuous evolution, but I think the best thing you can say about any AID program is that it helped the country and the people of that country to do things for themselves, to make their own decisions and carry them out, and it didn't go in and build some edifice that was a memorial to U. S. generosity but that didn't really didn't change the quality of life or be something that people really wanted and would sustain for their own reasons.

EASTERN EUROPE/EURASIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

SUSAN KOSINSKI FRITZ
USAID
Democracy Officer
Eastern Europe Program
Washington, D. C.
(1991-1995)

Susan Kosinski Fritz studied at Rutgers University and American University before entering USAID as a Presidential Management Intern in 1989. She served in many different positions in several countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in May 2024.

Topical Focus – European-American DRG Partnerships

Q: Where was this office located? Was there a chief financial officer for the agency? And were you operating out of that office? Or who was the person, the chief honcho?

FRITZ: I think the chief honcho was Bob Bonifant. I worked for Wayne McKeel and Bob Kramer.

Q: Yes, I recognize those names.

FRITZ: It was in an annex across the street from the State Department -- not in Columbia Plaza, but on the other side. Now it's part of the George Washington University campus.

But the great thing about the PMI program is you rotate to different jobs during the two years you are in the program. Early in 1990 I was looking to do my first rotation and it was right as the Berlin Wall fell. There was a position open in what was then the Asia, Near East, and Europe Bureau (ANE) in the Office of Development Resources under the Office of Technical Resources. Jerry Hyman was a political appointee in that office, had no staff or anything, and he was leading democracy work for the Bureau. They were looking for a PMI to help him. So I was again at the right place at the right time.

Eastern Europe was already developed – these were not Third World countries. So the programs we were doing were not traditional development, and democracy programming was also very new. So you didn't have a lot of people within the Agency clamoring to do this kind of work. And so again, I was at the right place and the right time. I started working with Jerry and I knew immediately that this is where I wanted to be. I found my life's work. And it was just so fortunate that I was able to fall into it. Then I made the ANE Bureau my home base for the rest of my PMI program. I did other rotations as well. But I eventually came back to ANE and worked there until I went into the Foreign Service.

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Q: Okay. So, then you were in the democracy office of the Asia, Near East, and Europe Bureau? Was there a technical democracy office at that time? Was it your home base as a PMI? And you were there for several years?

FRITZ: Well, different iterations. It was Asia, Near East, and Europe Bureau (ANE), then it became the Europe and Near East Bureau (ENE), and then it became the Europe Bureau. Then the Newly Independent States (NIS) Task Force merged with the Europe Bureau and I think the Bureau was called Europe and the Newly Independent States (ENI). It went through many different iterations. I was there until we joined with the NIS Task Force, and Gerry Donnelly became the head of the combined Democracy and Governance Office. I headed up the local government work in Eastern Europe so when we merged, I headed up the combined local governance team. By the time I left I was the deputy of the Rule of Law and Governance division.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about those early democracy programs that you were helping to develop in the early 1990s. I assume Washington played a major role.

FRITZ: Absolutely. We had the Mission for Europe in Washington that worked just like a Mission in the field, but we were not based in Eastern Europe. That was the first interesting aspect of it. Programmatically, the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act had been passed in 1989 and it included up to $12 million for democracy programming for Poland and Hungary. There was some sort of gentleman's agreement that those funds would go through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). So we made a grant to the NED. By the time I joined the Bureau, the first grant had been made. And we kept amending that grant to add funding, usually for the next set of elections in one or another Eastern European country. But the interesting thing was that this gentleman's agreement was with one member of Congress while another objected. So every time a Congressional Notification (CN) went up to the Hill to notify the next tranche of funding to be added to the NED agreement, the objecting member of Congress

would put a hold on the CN until Jerry went up and explained what we were doing, was told that they didn't agree, and but then they would lift the hold.

Let me take a step back. NED was established with four core grantees, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI), and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). NED would bundle proposals from each of these four core grantees along with a number of direct grants it had planned to make to Eastern European nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These were part of each amendment we did to the original NED grant.

Q: So, they were even giving grants to NDI and IRI.

FRITZ: Yes. NED would submit a pretty detailed proposal or application for what sub grants they would make. "NDI would get this, IRI would get that. We'd make these grants for these purposes." Then we'd send up a CN and it would say, we're going to grant these funds to the NED for these purposes and subgrants. And as I mentioned, one Congressman was happy about that, but others weren't. And so the CN would be put on hold. Jerry would have to go up and justify why we were giving the money to the NED because they were getting their own appropriation. Every single time it was this back and forth, back and forth, and eventually the hold would be lifted and then we'd obligate the funds.

We knew that that wasn't a long-term approach to funding democracy building programs in Eastern Europe, but it was a good way for us to get our feet wet, to learn who the players were. As we were monitoring the grant, we would go out and meet—more Jerry, not me, but we'd go meet the partners and some of NED's sub-grantees. And it was really, again, a great introduction. If you think about it, in those early days there were elections coming one right after the other so our ability to respond at that point as an Agency was limited. We just didn't have any programming to respond to these. This was a really good way for USAID to support democracy building in Eastern Europe in the early days. That was the beginning. By the end of the first year, I would say we were well aware that we had to be designing our own projects and doing our own procurements. So we did. Jerry is very strategic and he was really great at giving us the strategic framework under which we would develop these so-called projects.

Now if you remember those days, the Agency had PADs (Project Appraisal Documents) and PIDs (Project Identification Documents) that were very thick. We "designed" six projects, the documentation for which were five to ten pages each max: civil society; elections and political processes; media; local government; rule of law; and parliamentary assistance. We also had an American Association for the Advancement of Science

(AAAS) Fellow, DeAndra Beck, who, when I was rotating to other jobs, was honchoing all of this. So I shouldn't take credit for this because really it was Jerry and Deandra. And then I supported as well. We just wrote up from the top of our heads and from what we learned in the first year through working with NED and its grantees. These were regional projects that we authorized money through and then we started doing the procurements. The two that I could speak about in more depth are local government and parliamentary assistance. We put out a Request for Applications (RFA) for local government assistance and ended up making grants to a number of organizations. One was to the University of Southern California (USC).

Q: So you did an RFA that allowed you to select multiple implementing partners?

FRITZ: Yes. We had one for Poland, one for Hungary, one for Czechoslovakia (later the country split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia), and we had one for the Baltics.

Q: Okay. So, it wasn't one implementing partner for the region. It was individual implementing partners for countries. Okay. Sorry for interrupting. So one was USC.

FRITZ: So USC did a pilot in a community in a town called Szekesfehervar – it's a mouthful. Jerry used to call it Boston. USC was also working in Budapest at one of the universities. They were supposed to be training local government officials based on the lessons learned in the pilot municipality. It didn't quite work that way, but it was a nice idea. Unfortunately, their Chief of Party, a well-known Public Administration expert, only wanted to teach undergraduate students. In Czechoslovakia, we had the U.S. Institute for Public Administration as our implementing partner. They were working with state public administration agencies, which we didn't know much about. We learned pretty quickly that they were very old school, not interested in reform. They were bureaucrats from the communist system. Nothing really came of that program. It was not one of our more successful ones. In those days, it was a lot of throwing things at the wall and seeing what sticks, what works and what doesn't.

In the Baltics, our implementing partner was the International Executive Service Corps (IESC). President Bush had made his famous thousand points of light speech and shortly after that, I believe IESC was set up. And while initially they were focused on the private sector, they recruited volunteers with public sector experience to work with local governments in the Baltics. I wouldn’t say that was one of our more successful local government programs. I remember going out to monitor one of the activities and found one of the IESC advisors sitting at a local government conference where he did not speak the local language and there was no English translation. He was totally lost and in over his head. A stand-alone short-term advisor with no international experience and no

programmatic infrastructure such as interpreters, no matter how good willed, can't be expected to have much of an impact.

The most successful program was in Poland through Rutgers University. A disclaimer: I didn't have anything to do with the selection. Jerry and DeAndra selected Rutgers while I was out on rotation. Rutgers had a professor by the name of Joanna Regulska. Joanna was a Polish émigré. Her dad, Jerzy Regulski, was the Minister for Local Government Reform. They set up this Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD), a local nonprofit organization in Poland. Rutgers would bring experts to come and help build their capacity. The Foundation had offices all over Poland that were providing training to local governments. At that time Poland was going through a pretty significant decentralization reform. So I think that combination made it one of the best programs, one of the more successful ones with which I was involved.

Jerry and I would ask ourselves, "Why was that one so good? What made that so successful?" And really it was a combination of things. We had Joanna, who is just a dynamo herself, and she knew so much and was just so smart, well plugged in and committed. And then you had her dad, who was the minister of local government reform at a time when decentralization is happening, so the government's committed to it. They were able to find really good people to run the foundation and their training centers. The project had all the perfect pieces. And it wasn't the kind of thing that you could replicate.

Coming full circle, I finished my career in Ukraine where I served from 2016-2020. At that time Ukraine was also undergoing a significant decentralization reform. It was very much under the radar which was an advantage because nobody really was paying attention to and thus, undermine it (common in Ukraine at that time). I went for a briefing on the program with the contractor and one of their subs was FSLD, which was helping Ukrainian municipalities design economic development plans. How great is that – the organization still exists and now provides assistance to others!

Q: That's the poster child for localization.

FRITZ: Absolutely, absolutely. But you know, it's funny because we weren't pushing to directly fund them and, particularly in those early days, supporting it through Rutgers was the best way to do it, but it didn't mean that localization didn't happen just because we weren't granting the funds directly to them. So I think there are many ways to look at localization.

Q: Now that's a wonderful, wonderful example. I've interviewed a couple of other people who have talked about the importance of decentralization and local government in democracy. And yet, if one steps back and looks at what USAID has done and its

priorities in democracy building, that very seldom jumps out as being one of the key priorities. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on that. Is it something that we need to look at more aggressively than we do, or perhaps it is now the norm to do it. And maybe it was just in my day that we didn't pay enough attention to it.

FRITZ: I don't know. When I started managing that grant in Poland, USAID had the Housing and Urban Development Office that, as you know, was very strong.

Q: And that's what they were focused on. Yes.

FRITZ: Well, not always. They had such a housing focus but there were a lot more resources going to local government more broadly, particularly in Eastern Europe. I think some programs were more successful than others. I think for some places, it's a way of bringing decision-making closer to the people in a way that is very tangible.

So when we were designing those projects and thinking about public administration, we focused on the decentralization and local governance aspects. But what happened? Initially, opposition parties made up of dissident groups won the first elections in these transitioning democracies. But they had no experience governing and let's face it, there was no roadmap for them on how to go from closed societies and economies to free market democracies. And there was a backlash in the next elections because life didn't all of the sudden get better for people. In many cases, the communists that were rebranded as social democrats were voted back in which caused a lot of hand-wringing in Washington. People were asking, "Oh my gosh, what did we do wrong? How did this happen?" We scratched our heads and Jerry opined, "Maybe we shouldn't have ignored public administration at the central level." Maybe we should have been focused on reform at the central level, because you had bloated bureaucracies that were draining the budget and were not so reformist. You had people who came into power that didn't know how to manage. Maybe we should have been helping them do a better job of managing. And maybe that would have helped them stay in power to advance reform. But 20-20 hindsight is easy, right?

Q: Right, well, it's probably a good field for future PhD research. Just another question on early democracy programming. The Latin American Bureau had started doing some democracy and rule of law work in the 1980s. Did you all in the Europe Bureau have discussions with the Latin American Bureau on any of their experience? Was there much cross fertilization across the agency?

FRITZ: Absolutely. There was something called the Tuesday Group of which Jerry was a member. I didn't go because I was pretty junior. The Tuesday Group included people from each bureau managing democracy programming so that was a venue for people to

exchange ideas. And I remember when I was in the DG Center looking at some of the rule of law work that had been done in Latin America and some of the lessons learned in that sector. For example, one study that was done on rule of law programming in Latin America found that the most successful programs included not only judges but also prosecutors and courts. So although the State Department International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Bureau usually focused on support for prosecutors, I made a special effort to ensure that we were linked up in advancing rule of law. So yeah, there was a conscious effort to cross-fertilize through that Tuesday group. And then, as the Agency learned and documented more and more through the Democracy Center, I think we definitely learned from each other.

Q: Okay. Now, when you started talking about local government, you said there was another area that you were heavily involved with at the outset?

FRITZ: Yes, parliamentary assistance which was implemented by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) with oversight by the Frost Commission led by Congressman Martin Frost. So as you can imagine, managing that program, you have to be very careful. But fortunately, CRS did a great job. One of the bigger programs was with Hungary. They went into each Eastern European parliament and they computerized everything with huge equipment drops. They set up a research service and all that, things that they're really good at. And yeah, so it was an interesting program. It was very unique for USAID to do things that way, but it worked. And for what it was meant to do, it was a good program. The down side was that the range of programming was very limited because CRS was not really an implementing partner per se. And I think there were questions about sustainability and the ability of these parliaments to repair and replace the equipment as time went on.

Q: Who were some of the other major implementing partners across those early six areas? Do you recall?

FRITZ: Oh gosh, rule of law programming was implemented by the American Bar Association Central and Eastern European Law Initiative (ABA CEELI). We granted funds to them for several years. Initially, we did a 632(a) transfer to the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) for media programming. However, that did not really work out because they tended to implement small efforts – a study tour here, a small grant there – rather than comprehensive media assistance of the nature that would really have an impact. So eventually we started granting funds to Internews and IREX. Internews was more focused on broadcast media while IREX was more focused on print media, at least early on.

Elections and political process programs were implemented by the usual suspects, NDI, IRI, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). For civil society

programming, we made a grant to the German Marshall Fund which was already doing work in Eastern Europe, making small grants to civil society. Their key person was Deborah Harding and she was very well plugged into local civil society organizations throughout Eastern Europe. We granted funds to them to do more of what they were already doing. And that was also another great way of supporting democracy actors in Eastern Europe at the time. That was the best way for us to support civil society because, again, we were working out of the Mission in Washington. There was no way for us to get out there and really get to know the lay of the land in a way that they were already knowledgeable about.

Q: I'd always heard that there was a lot of interest from the U.S. in the early years of the Eastern European program, especially from the diaspora in the U.S. Did you see any of that from your perch on the democracy front?

FRITZ: Not really—at least compared to in the former Soviet Union where, for example, the Armenian diaspora was very active or in Ukraine. There was some interest from the Albanian diaspora and a little from the Lithuanian diaspora, some of which worked through IESC.

Q: Okay and it may have been less in the democracy programming. After the fall of the former Soviet Union in 1991/1992, a new office was set up. Did you remain on the Europe side throughout that period?

FRITZ: Yes, I was on the Europe side there. My understanding was there were some intra-agency battles going on. And for some reason, there was a decision way above my pay grade to keep Europe out of the NIS which was a shame, I think, a real loss. We had learned a lot in a couple of years in Eastern Europe and we had programmatic vehicles that might have been helpful to getting assistance out to the NIS more quickly.

Q: Did they come and talk to you all about what you had learned? I know that early on they said we're not going to have a mission in Washington; they were going to operate out of the field, although they did still have a heavy operation in Washington.

FRITZ: Sure, so Gerry Donnelly was the head. Gerry Donnelly and Jerry Hyman had a great relationship. So they were definitely talking, but we were bureaucratically separate.

Q: Okay.

FRITZ: But we were separate until they merged.

Q: Right; they did merge in 1993 or so after Brian Atwood became Administrator.

FRITZ: Yes, they did merge. In those days, we had very small missions. There were maybe one or two people in each USAID Representative Office—we had AID Reps, not Missions – in the very beginning.

We don't work this way anymore, but I would set up my entire schedule from Washington and then go out to the field. I would meet with whoever was in the AID Rep Office and I would invite them to join me for my meetings but usually they were too busy. And then I would go out and meet with my partners. For example, I went out with FSLD staff in Poland to see several of their training centers around the country. I met with local government officials. I went to Szekesfehervar, Hungary more than once. We were a small staff so if Jerry went out, he would meet with my partners and vice versa. Between us, we tried to monitor all of our grantees. Jerry was covering elections so he was mainly going out during elections for election monitoring and to meet with our partners and some of the election monitoring groups that we were supporting. And so that was mainly his responsibility, along with civil society, and mine was local government and the parliamentary assistance.

Q: So, you really were a mission running the programs overseas. I know at some point, Poland became a regular mission. What was that transition and when did it happen?

FRITZ: I can pinpoint the moment of the transition -- in my mind anyway. I had gone out to Poland to design the local government and public administration follow-on program. Don Pressley was the Mission Director-designate and was in Poland learning Polish but had not taken over as Mission Director yet so he kind of engaged in the project design a bit.

Q: Was he actually the first to be called a mission director?

FRITZ: I don't know. They were USAID Reps in the beginning, but Don was definitely a Mission Director. I had designed this central government public administration program rather than a local government-focused effort. When I came back to Washington, I had to defend the project design at a Bureau-wide meeting. Peter Orr was the Program Office Director. I remember he proposed that the project should not be managed from Washington, that it should be managed by the Mission. And everybody agreed so the project went to the field to manage. That was when I realized that we in the Mission for Europe in Washington were no longer in the driver's seat. This is how development should really work, but I remember at the time being so heartbroken, like here was my baby that I had designed, that I had to give away. But it was a maturity thing, a learning moment.

Q: Do you remember the year that would have been? I am curious about how long it took before that transition?

FRITZ: About 1994.

Q: That's interesting. And then it began to change everywhere.

FRITZ: Then it changed everywhere.

Q: I know that Budapest became a regional center, although it had begun as a bilateral program. Was Hungary one of the first to graduate? Was there a timeframe for graduation?

FRITZ: So the original idea was that the Northern Tier countries—Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—would graduate within three to five years. That's why the Mission was set up in Washington and why we didn't staff up too much in the field. We were going to be in and out in three to five years. I don't remember exactly when Hungary graduated. I know Poland was the first to graduate and I think it was 1999 or 2000. So it was more than three to five years. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, graduated early on. Slovakia graduated a little later because it had kind of a shaky beginning but those three were early on – but in more like ten to twelve years.

Q: You initially spoke of Czechoslovakia and then you just mentioned Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. Since you were doing local government work, did the split of Czechoslovakia affect your work at all? Or, was any of that local government work instrumental to the split, or would that split have happened regardless?

FRITZ: Oh, no, the split happened regardless but it didn't affect our work because we had actually been working with two different institutes of public administration, one in each republic. It was quite easy to manage the program after the split because of that.

Q: Okay. So, it was always quite separate then?

FRITZ: It was. The guy who managed the project was Czech. I remember the first time I went out, I didn't realize political sensitivities between the two republics. I had a conference in Poland in Krakow and then took a train to Slovakia, to Bratislava. I went to monitor the local government project in Bratislava, Slovakia first and then went to Prague, the Czech Republic second. And this was when it was still Czechoslovakia. Apparently it was a big deal that I went to Bratislava first. Luckily the people in Prague didn't give me a hard time, but the people in Bratislava were just so honored that I would start there.

Q: That's a nice example. Well, it really sounds very exciting. You mentioned the expectation being three to five years and it was roughly that for several of the programs. Were there discussions of criteria? Because I know ultimately the Bureau ended up picking EU accession criteria as being an important graduation factor, but I suspect that wasn't at the outset. Were there any criteria defined? And if so, were any relating to democratic indicators?

FRITZ: Absolutely. Yes, the Europe Bureau started pretty early on by funding Freedom House's Nations in Transit. One of the reasons we funded it was to give ourselves a way of measuring progress or backsliding. We were hoping it was going to be progress, but sometimes it was backsliding on these different democracy sub-sectors. So on the DG side, it was the Nations in Transit, but they had a different set of economic indicators that they were tracking as well. The Bureau Program Office, under Ron Sprout's leadership, developed the criteria for closeout. I am not sure that we had anything initially but at some point it became where the Northern Tier countries—Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic—were on different indicators when they graduated. Every year, we looked at how each country was doing on these indicators. I don't know when it came into effect—probably in the mid-90s.

Q: So, they helped to define what the criteria were?

FRITZ: And then it changed. It became where Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia were on different indicators when they joined NATO or maybe the European Union. So for the countries that still had not graduated, that's what it was up until when I left the Agency.

Q: Okay. Obviously, you were working on one of the highest U.S. government foreign policy priorities. Did you have many dealings with the State Department? I know there was a State Department coordinators office on the allocation of funds, but I'm wondering how much involvement you had with State on the democracy front?

FRITZ: Sure, so the Coordinator's Office, which is huge now, had about five people in it. So the discussions in those days were much more substantive and less nuts and bolts micromanagement. So it was definitely more, higher level discussions. Those were taking place between Jerry and the Coordinator and/or the lead democracy person in the Coordinator's Office. Because the number of people working there was so small, it wasn't at my level. I did have the opportunity to join a meeting with Ken Juster who was a Special Assistant to Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger. Jerry brought me with him when he went to discuss the American Bar Association's CEELI program. So there were high level discussions going on about specific programming, surprisingly.

Q: Was there a specific issue related to the ABA CEELI program or was it just generically briefing them on it?

FRITZ: I think it was just briefing them on it. I don't remember there being an issue – I think I would have remembered if there were a big issue. They were very interested because the Eastern Europe program was high profile in those days and I believe that the ABA was very well connected politically.

Q: Similarly, when you were dealing with parliamentary reform and parliamentary strengthening and local government, did the embassies want to talk to you about your impressions of what was going on to help their understanding of the local situation? Or did state desk officers ask you about your perceptions of what was going on? I'm just curious because you were in a rather unique situation.

FRITZ: I would say not so much in those early days. A little bit. We were based in the State Department back then.

Q: Oh, that's right. Of course.

FRITZ: Again, we were in the State Department, so it was a lot easier. It was a lot more give and take. So I don't think there were special meetings to brief people, but of course we talked. There was a lot of just talking in the corridor about what was going on.

Q: Okay, I was just curious what it was like in those days. Was there any significant change from the George H.W. Bush administration to the Bill Clinton administration in 1993 and the arrival of Brian Atwood as the new USAID Administrator? Did you see changes in approaches?

FRITZ: Well, certainly democracy became an equal part of the development equation. And it became more important and better coordinated across the Agency. When Brian Atwood came in, they set up the Democracy and Governance (DG) Center, which was led by Chuck Costello. When Jennifer Windsor took over for Chuck – I think she started as the deputy director -- Jerry Hyman moved over to be Jennifer's deputy. There was an interest in bringing together within the agency, all of the democracy practitioners under one roof so that we could learn better from one another. And so I think we were elevated in terms of a respected part of development, whereas before it was, I don't think a lot of people within the Agency really saw it as development. And I think when Brian came in, it became much more a regular part of our development portfolios and approaches and so forth.

Q: Okay. But there wasn't any substantive change in priorities or anything that you noticed? Other than democracy being more important.

FRITZ: Yeah, no substantive change. Maybe more resources for democracy programming, so I guess that's substantive in a way but I can't point to one thing to say all of the sudden we started doing differently.

Q: Are there other things we should discuss? You spent five years as a Eurasia democracy officer. When Jerry Hyman went over to the democracy center in the Global Bureau, were you then the sole democracy officer left in the mission in Washington?

FRITZ: No, so by then the Mission for Europe had dissolved. And although all the other geographic bureaus had to move their staff into the Center, we were exempt. The Europe Bureau and the NIS task force had merged. When Gerry Donnelly became the head of that combined office, Jerry Hyman was the head of one of the divisions in the combined office -- civil society and media, I think. This was before the Democracy Center was created.

Q: So, once the merger of the Europe Mission and the new Former Soviet Union Office (NIS) took place in the new Europe and Eurasia Bureau, you saw some of the early work then in the former Soviet Union as well?

FRITZ: I did. I saw it from afar. Initially I was responsible for leading our local government work but I never actually got out to the NIS to see it. There was a local government program which had pilot cities in three locations in Ukraine and I think two in Russia including one in Nizhny Novgorod. I don't know how we thought we were going to make huge changes within countries of those sizes with five pilots. In Ukraine there was some early local government work that was done in Lviv, Kharkiv, and one other location. I never got to see it on the ground.

Q: You were overseeing the rule of law work as well then?

FRITZ: Not at that point -- it was just the local governance work. Subsequently, there was a merger of the rule of law and governance divisions and I became the deputy in that office. Interesting enough, that's actually how I ended up in Bosnia. I assigned each person in our division responsibility for overseeing our rule of law and governance programs in a particular country or countries. Nobody wanted Bosnia at the time because it was in the middle of a war. I missed managing programs (I was managing people now) so I took responsibility for Bosnia.

During the war, the State Department forged a peace agreement between the Croats and the Bosniaks called the Washington Accords. Because the United States was instrumental in negotiating that agreement, USAID focused its local government work on implementing it. The Washington Accords established ten cantons within the Federation. The idea was to get the Croats and the Bosniaks to stop fighting each other so that they could unify against the Serbs. The program was implemented through the International City Manager's Association (ICMA). I had been trying to get out to Bosnia forever and could never get approved by Diplomatic Security because there was an active war going on. I was supposed to go out to Kazakhstan for a TDY but at the last minute got approval to go to Bosnia so I went to Bosnia instead. I flew into Split, Croatia and drove into central Bosnia to the city of Zenica in a low-riding armored sedan. USAID had a field office there with one American and one Foreign Service National (FSN), and it was they who came to Split to pick me up.

I met with some local government officials and talked about the kinds of assistance we could provide. I was travelling with folks from ICMA to start to get the program going. There was supposedly a ceasefire, but there really wasn't. There was shelling going on so I was a bit scared because I had never been in a war zone before. We heard that peace talks were going on at Dayton, but that it didn't look good for a settlement. People were thinking it was going to fail.

I got back to Washington, and a couple of weeks later – on November 14,1995 -- there was a peace agreement agreed to by all sides. And on December 14th, the Dayton Peace Accords were formally signed. Craig Buck was designated to become the Mission Director of a new USAID Mission in Sarajevo. He called to ask me to come out to head up the Democracy Office. I told him I was flattered to be asked but that I couldn't do it because I was not a Foreign Service officer, I was in the civil service.

I had, before then, decided to stick with the Civil Service after my two years as a PMI because I would not have likely stayed working on or been assigned to a Mission in Eastern Europe. Our missions there were very small with usually one FS-1 or FS-2 level Foreign Service Officer. I decided at the end of the PMI program not to go into the International Development Intern (IDI) program, which was an option, because I knew I wouldn't be able to stay working on Eastern Europe. I knew I would have been assigned to another part of the world where there were lower-level positions. So I decided to not do it.

So now Craig presented me with the opportunity to go out under a limited career appointment in the Foreign Service Office. Given the TDY I had just done to Bosnia, I was not sure that I wanted to go live there – I didn't know if it was something I thought I was capable of doing. I asked Craig if I could do a TDY to check it out and he agreed. So

I went to Sarajevo for the first time in January 1996 and after that, agreed to do the limited appointment to work in Bosnia for two years. But it was in the middle of the big Reduction in Force (RIF) that the Agency was going through at the time. Thus, if I had been given a limited career appointment, I would have been the first to be RIFed. However, I would have had reemployment rights in the Civil Service so I would just have had to go back to Washington to work a Civil Service job. So I went out to Bosnia in May on TDY until the RIF was done and then converted in July to the Foreign Service under a limited career appointment. I was just going to do it for two years and ended up extending for a third year. I met my husband after a year in Bosnia and decided it was easier for us to stay together if I converted into a career Foreign Service position because he was in the USAID Foreign Service. When I decided to try to convert, which I guess was not that common because there was no real process for it at the time, between Human Resources and the DG Center, they made one up, and I converted successfully in July 1999. And yeah, that was it.

Q: Another well planned career move.

FRITZ: Yeah, right.

Keith C. Smith
Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary on East European Assistance
Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Program
1990-1992

Keith C. Smith built a distinguished Foreign Service career spanning Latin America, Europe, and Eastern Europe from 1962 onward. His work included political analysis, Cold War diplomacy, democracy promotion, and security affairs, with postings in Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Hungary, and Portugal. He also served in senior State Department roles focused on NATO, the Falklands War, Northern Ireland, and post-communist democratic and economic development in Eastern Europe.

Topical Focus –Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Program

Q: Having got caught up in the whole collapse of the whole system essentially, starting in November of '89.

SMITH: November of '89 was a key period that changed the direction of my career. After spending a year in the Latin American Bureau, the Berlin wall fell and Soviet control over Eastern Europe collapsed. We watched television at home every night as events unfolded in Berlin. It was an emotional time for me and for many others who had lived

under communist regimes in East Central Europe. In June of 1990, I was approached by Ambassador Robert Barry, who was putting together a team to work on East European assistance. The group was to work directly under Deputy Secretary of State, Larry Eagleburger. Congress had only shortly before passed the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) program, with an initial appropriation of $300 million to provide U.S. assistance to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The objective was to give these countries a hand in converting their communist systems to democratic market economies. We were somewhat naïve in thinking that the relatively small amounts of money we could give them would change things rapidly, but it did help these countries somewhat with the painful transition. The SEED program was only about one-twentieth the size as the Marshall Plan had been. But it was exciting adventure for all of us who were involved in the program. Sometimes, however, it was quite confusing for the proposed beneficiaries.

Q: Well you did this from when to when?

SMITH: From mid- 1990 to mid-1992, I worked under Barry and Deputy Secretary Eagleburger.

Q: I've interviewed Bob Berry and we served in Yugoslavia together at one point, as a vice counsel. You've already explained a bit, but what were you specifically doing?

SMITH: At first, I was given the task of drawing up a long term plan concerning economic and democratic development activities that the U.S. should undertake in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. We tried to differentiate between economic restructuring, democracy building, and education/training. Also, I was asked to oversee much of the activities in Eastern Europe of USAID, our assistance agency. Because USAID had had no prior experience working in Eastern Europe and State had little experience in delivering foreign assistance, it was a challenge for everyone. Our office was charged with setting assistance policy, and USAID with transforming the policy into effective assistance programs in the three countries. Not surprisingly, USAID had its own ideas concerning what should be done. Many USAID people didn't even want the U.S. to be involved in Eastern Europe, because it was not one of the world’s most poverty-stricken areas. Some of the USAID people were not comfortable giving money to what they saw as a political program. Those in the USAID leadership, however, were very much on board with the SEED program and they were a pleasure to work with. I learned a lot regarding development issues, and I hope they learned something about Eastern Europe from me.

The SEED program's budget, at least for the first three years, was approximately $350 million. We had to make decisions quite rapidly because the situation in Eastern Europe would not wait and we knew that Congress would not appropriate large amounts for more than a few years. It was particularly interesting to deal with environmental and energy issues and to work with people from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). USAID energy specialists assisted with energy efficiency programs. Eastern Europe had been one of the most energy wasteful regions in the world. Under communism, no one tracked the cost of individual energy consumption. We provided assistance to journalists' associations in Poland and Hungary. We tried to avoid giving balance of payments support to governments, but we did set up enterprise funds, that provided loans to small and medium sized enterprises. We had a $250 million enterprise fund in Poland alone. I think it was very successful. It has now been liquidated and the funds turned over to the Polish American Freedom Forum, who are engaged in a terrific job of outreach to the people of Ukraine and Belarus, and to Russians in the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad. I visit the Forum in Warsaw from time to time. During the early 1990s, we established several enterprise funds in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States.

Eagleburger and Bob Barry were convinced that the assistance effort would only be needed for 2-3 years. I was proven right was when I told them that the job could not be done through a three year program. It was going to take several more years to make the changes irreversible. Some of our programs were excellent. Other projects were less successful. One of the continuing policy questions revolved around how much assistance guidance we should take from the countries themselves. Generally, there was a sense that the new leaders didn't know what they needed, so we would simply inform them about the programs we would support. Looking back, I think we should have listened more to local officials. Nevertheless, I remember going to Poland on one occasion to talk about our assistance program with local officials. I met with three different government ministers and each of them thought that they should be running the assistance program in their country. They had three very distinct ideas of what we should be doing. So it's hard to say that we were totally wrong and they were totally right. It's a very complex issue. Years later, I worked in the Baltic States and had to deal with our assistance programs as chargé and ambassador. Ironically, back in 1992, I helped establish the whole U.S. assistance program in the Baltic States. Living in the region later on gave me an opportunity to see what had worked and what had not. Economic and political development has always fascinated me, and I continue to work on these issues even though I am no longer in government.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

GEORGE INGRAM

Citizens Democracy Corps.
Washington DC.
1995-1998

George Ingram's career combined academic expertise in international political economy with decades of leadership in U.S. foreign assistance and development policy. After serving on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, he held senior roles at USAID and the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign, focusing on foreign aid, Soviet and Eurasian affairs, education policy, and modernizing development assistance through advocacy, local ownership, and institutional reform initiatives. George Ingram was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2018.

Topical Focus –Citizens Democracy Corps

Q: Alright. So we talked a little bit about the Gingrich Revolution and the changes that were coming. Can you talk a little bit about your transition from the hill? I know you had many offers.

INGRAM: I wouldn't say I had many offers.

Q: Well, I think you did. But you had many options anyway. What caused you to take a job with USAID?

INGRAM: Well, first of all I took a job with the Citizens Democracy Corps. On January 1 of '95 I was out of a job because the Republicans took over the House. I spent six weeks having an enjoyable, interesting time moving around Washington talking to people about what I might do. I had spent the last four years heavily focused on the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I received an offer as the vice-president of the Citizens Democracy Corps, which was using U.S. volunteer businessmen to help support and develop new entrepreneurs in the former Soviet Union. That sounded interesting. So I did that for three years.

Q: Okay, I missed that. Okay. And you traveled to the former Soviet Union?

INGRAM: Yes

Q: And did you find that US businesses were receptive to the idea?

INGRAM: Oh yeah, very much so.

Q: It was funded by AID?

INGRAM: It was an initiative of the State Department. I think it was Eagleburger, maybe somebody else, who went out to the corporate sector and said, “You’ve got to set this up.” So some corporate CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) created the CDC with contributions of a few million dollars. After a couple of years it began living on AID funding.

Q: Uh-huh.

INGRAM: It found newly formed businesses that wanted help and sent a volunteer out for a month or two months.

Q: And how did it differ from the International Executive Service corps?

INGRAM: They’re not retired. The International Service Corps (IESC) is comprised of retired business people. The CDC volunteers are non-retired.

Q: Okay.

INGRAM: And I did that for three years.

EASTERN SLAVONIA

N/A

ECUADOR

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

HILDA ARELLANO
USAID
Deputy Office Chief
General Development Office
Quito, Ecuador
(1988-1990)

Ms. Arellano was born and raised in Westfield, New Jersey. She received her Bachelor's at Cornell University and pursued Master's degrees at UT Austin and the Antioch Putney Graduate School of Education. She volunteered in Bolivia before entering the Foreign Service as an education officer in Washington D.C. She worked for USAID in Ecuador and Guatemala and has served as a USAID Mission Director in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Iraq, and Egypt. She has also worked in Hungary, Afghanistan, and Washington D.C. Ms. Arellano was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2016.

Topical Focus - Corruption in Ecuador - 1988-1990

ARELLANO: There was some of that going on because some of what had happened was that… I think in many cases when a very close relationship develops between somebody who was not that experienced in the ways of the U.S. government as happened with the previous mission director, not the one that I went to work for, but his predecessor. There were things about that relationship that really needed to change in terms of transparency and setting limits on what kinds of things the U.S. government was willing to support and able to support in a country, to be very frank, corruption is rampant, as you know. This is not a secret to anybody and at that time especially. And so that kind of exposure was very, very interesting just to kind of watch it at your first post abroad.

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Q: In practical terms, what did increased interagency activity mean for you?

ARELLANO: What we had done, and I think again this is a model that has carried forward, I mean we would set up interagency task forces. For example, in the area of counter drug work where different agencies were it Justice or DEA, be it us, be it the political section, that were working on what was for Ecuador sort of an emerging threat. It wasn't a large drug-producer but it was definitely a transit and money laundering was an issue. So we would meet usually on a weekly basis on issues like this and then we were doing some work in civil society so there was a very close linkage with the political section and public affairs was then still USIA and as I said most of the time we would have regular weekly meetings and then because of some of this, I was also given exposure in the management of this activities. I was given exposure to having to brief the

ambassador, to brief the DCM and it was an excellent experience and just kind of see what their priorities were, never having worked for the U.S. government before and been kind of… My exclusive focus being development work and very often rural development work, it was exactly one of the reasons I wanted to join AID was it gave me that broader exposure to issues where you saw that it wasn't just the development piece. There were things in the bilateral relationship that were going to, because of the bilateral relationship, really be shapers of the way we did development. You couldn't work in isolation so as I say it was a very, very good first tour.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DEREK S. SINGER
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Chief, General Development Office
Quito, Ecuador
(1989-1991)

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

Topical Focus – Early democracy and governance work, including electoral assistance and judicial/legislative reform

Q: What was the situation in Ecuador when you were there?

SINGER: Not so bad. Today, I understand, the economy has dipped and the amenities aren't quite so nice. We were there from mid-1989 to the end of 1991. We left Kenya in 1989 and went directly to Ecuador after home leave. Anyway, I was again Chief of the General Development Office there. In Ecuador, we also had a whole potpourri of programs. Geographically, Ecuador is a small country tucked in between Colombia and Peru, two bigger countries in the Andean area and both deeply afflicted by the drug problem. Happily, Ecuador has not been badly affected by drugs. It is sort of a buffer

state. The Mission did sponsor a drug program, actually a narcotics prevention and education effort which was aimed especially to stop young Ecuadorians from using drugs. We wanted to help this pretty sophisticated and developed little country improve and reinforce its anti-drug activities, both in school and out of school, through education and other prevention activities designed to turn young Ecuadorians away from drugs.

Q: Why are they more sophisticated than some of the others?

SINGER: That's hard to say. I think its education level was a good deal higher. A lot of people went for advanced educational degrees in the United States and Europe. I am contrasting this, to some extent, with Africa, especially the tropical African countries, the Sub-Sahara African countries, where the education levels were not that high. The opportunities to go for advanced degrees and training and what have you hadn't been very widespread in the African countries, and certainly not as they were in places like Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, or most of them, as a matter of fact. Bolivia is an exception; just as Haiti, Paraguay, the old Guyanas, and perhaps a few other places are. But Ecuador is a relatively developed and sophisticated country compared to what I had been used to. So there the programs I was involved in included participant training, some adult education work, small enterprise development, private sector assistance, tax reform, and as I said, narcotics prevention and education. My plate was pretty full there.

Q: What stood out among your programs in terms of your time and interest and what you thought worked?

SINGER: Probably the drug education activities and the fact that AID was beginning to get into democracy and governance work at this time. This is a field in which I had a long-term interest, given my educational background, my interest in political science, in public administration, and so forth. We began to get into improving both the courts and the legislature in Ecuador, and we were working with the national electoral commission to help Ecuador carry out free and fair national elections.

Q: What did you do there?

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

Q: What was your strategy for the drug reduction program?

SINGER: There was a fairly big Ecuadorian group, a nongovernmental organization, actually, through which we worked on drug prevention and education. So, it was a question of giving them grants and then trying to follow how they were using our money. Basically, this was in drug education and prevention work, seminars they were holding, materials that they produced, arranging for skits and theatrical presentations at schools around the country, teacher education programs, and general "consciousness raising" among the young people about the evils of using drugs.

Q: This was mainly focused on drug use within the country rather than the smuggling of drugs out of the country?

SINGER: Yes, absolutely. Fortunately, they don't produce drugs in Ecuador, or if they do, it's very small scale, indeed, and they don't export it. It is a drug "pass through" country, if you will, - stuff comes out of Bolivia and Peru, goes up through there and then is refined in Colombia. In most cases, it then, in most cases, goes north from Colombia up through the Caribbean or Central America to the United States. But, Ecuador is not directly involved in the drug trade. Just about everybody wanted to keep it that way.

Q: We weren't trying to interdict the traffic?

SINGER: Well, we had a DEA office at the Quito Embassy, but its job seemed to be largely to keep an eye on things, and help out to see to that things didn't change for the worse. So, anyway, there was drug prevention and education, and also a tax reform program - we actually had IRS people come on secondment to us who worked with the Ministry of Finance's Tax Division on their tax collection procedures. That is one of the big pains, of course, of many Latin American countries; they are simply unable to collect the taxes that they budget for. Therefore, they have many budgetary shortfalls. Just as, ironically as we speak, Ecuador is at this very moment, having a terrible fiscal time because it has an enormous shortfall in its projected budget. Anyway, I stayed there in Quito just about two and a half years, from mid-1989 to the end of 1991, and then they did away with my job in a Washington-ordered cutback. At that point, I was given the choice of exploring a new job in Eastern Europe (which would have been a "first" for me), or of going back to Africa.

EGYPT

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER O. SELLAR
Special Deputy for Joint Commissions
Office of Middle East Affairs
USAID
Egypt
(1975–1976)

Peter O. Sellar was born in Connecticut and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in American History and Literature and later completed a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. After joining USAID in 1963 as a Management Intern, he served in a wide range of positions over a 30-year career, including assignments in Guinea, Liberia, and Washington. His Washington postings included senior roles in the Africa Bureau, the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Near East Bureau, and the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, where he worked on the Central America Initiative and helped develop USAID's Democracy Program. He retired in 1993 after serving as Senior Program Officer in the Office of Democratic Initiatives. Following his USAID career, he consulted on democracy and governance programs in Guyana and Nepal and authored a paper on USAID's first decade of democracy promotion. Throughout his career, he focused on program planning, democracy promotion, governance, and development policy. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on January 21, 1999.

Topical Focus – Egypt's Economic Support Fund Development Program and U.S. Strategic Engagement after the Camp David Accords

Q: So, what happened?

SELLAR: I'm a little fuzzy on that. I think they did the reclassification, and, then, they had a RIF. As a result of these two things, I was reassigned by the Personnel Office to a different job, which was in the Office of Middle East Affairs as it was called then. The title of the job was Special Deputy for Joint Commissions. I really benefitted from these RIFs. I got bumped into better jobs than the ones I'd been in, for part of my career, though that wasn't true at the end. This job was coordinating U.S. government participation in seven different Joint Commissions that had been established with Middle Eastern countries to broaden and deepen our relationships. This was an outgrowth of the Camp David accords, as a part of which special commissions were established with Egypt and Israel, and the desire of a lot of other Middle Eastern countries to have it demonstrated that we thought they were important too. It also happened in the wake of

the tremendous oil discoveries in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

Q: There was a Joint Commission for each country?

SELLAR: Yes. There were seven of them all together, all Middle Eastern countries.

Q: Which countries do you remember?

SELLAR: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, I think Tunisia, Oman. Everybody wanted one. I can't remember specifically, but I think the others were mostly the oil states, as well.

Q: I see. Linked to the oil?

SELLAR: Yes, it was, and to help

Q: Did it include Israel and Egypt?

SELLAR: Well, the Israel and Egypt Commissions existed already. So, I guess if we add them, then we're pretty close to seven. I don't think we had one with Syria, although I could be wrong. The areas of activities included technology, education, manpower training, cultural exchanges, agricultural development, trade and industry, and general economic and financial relationships.

Q: What was the makeup of the commission?

SELLAR: Well, it consisted of representatives from both sides, namely the U.S. government on one side and the Commission country on the other side. The makeup depended a great deal on what areas of joint interest there were to work on.

Q: Development focus?

SELLAR: Well, in some cases, not in all cases. In some cases there was more on developing trade and industry. But they were developmental in many cases. In some cases, Egypt for example, it was really a classic development program and the biggest one in the world, except it was run with Economic Support Funds (ESF), originally called Security Supporting Assistance funds. Egypt was pretty much purely developmental. Saudi Arabia was interesting, because they were attempting to jumpstart their country, jump it out of whatever century it was in (we used to say of Yemen that it was moving headlong out of the 12th century). Saudi Arabia was probably further along than that, but they needed development assistance. They had the money to pay for everything. Strangely enough, that Commission wound up being run by the Treasury Department. I'm not quite sure why that happened.

Q: It was a reimbursable aid program. Was that under the Joint Commission?

SELLAR: In the case of Saudi Arabia it was, yes. I'm sure there were some reimbursable

aid programs that took place other than in Joint Commission countries, but Saudi Arabia was really the first major instance where that happened, I think.

Q: Was the Commission's function to select programs: what areas and how?

SELLAR: Yes, and then to actually help them procure the kinds of assistance they needed help with procuring.

Q: Who represented the U.S. on the Commission? What kind of people?

SELLAR: You'd have people from the Treasury; you'd have the AID person; you'd have a State Department person; you'd have a Commerce Department person; and then when you got into particular sectors, like agriculture, you'd have an AID agricultural person or a USDA person. It really was an AID operation, except that the Saudis were telling us what they wanted, because they were paying for it, and they were paying overhead, as well. So, anything they wanted to do

Q: Was it all officials from the U.S. government? Were there private sector representatives?

SELLAR: There was a private sector component. In many cases you would have lots of working groups under the official commission itself. I'm sure there were working groups that involved the private sector, as well as government, because they were building plants and getting into large agribusiness schemes. This wasn't being run by the Saudis. The scope of the program was huge.

Q: What does that mean?

SELLAR: It means that, in 1975, one activity cost as much as a billion dollars. That was not the kind of money that AID was use to dealing with on a project. In fact, I can remember a meeting that I went to with our engineers who were grappling with something that the Saudis wanted done, and they had worked out a tentative cost estimate. The meeting was with Bob Nooter, who at that point was head of the Middle East Bureau. The engineers were sort of openmouthed about the size and cost of this. Nooter, a cool customer, said, "Hey, it's just a question of adding zeros." In fact, the initiation of that program saved an entire large group of engineers that had been working on Vietnam from being put out on the streets.

Q: AID engineers were doing the work?

SELLAR: And a number of contract engineers. But, a lot of direct AID people were involved who otherwise would have been surplus after Vietnam.

Q: Who managed the Saudi Commission?

SELLAR: The Treasury Department.

Q: Why was that?

SELLAR: I think because of the very large financial scope of the relationship. Different agencies had the lead role in different Commissions, just depending on what the main focus and objectives of the Commission were. AID was the head of the Egypt Commission, while the State Department was the head of some, where it was kind of a mixed bag of things that were wanted. Commerce may have been in charge of some of them.

Q: I see. Was there an overall coordination mechanism for the Commissions?

SELLAR: There was. That's what my job was, as far as AID was concerned, to keep up with what was going on, and register AID inputs where appropriate.

Q: In all the Commissions?

SELLAR: Yes. And interact, interface with the other agencies. You know, points of view are not always identical between Treasury Department and AID, and State and AID, or Commerce and AID.

Q: But, the ones other than Saudi Arabia were funded by AID funds, rather than reimbursing AID?

SELLAR: It was both. Egypt, of course, was fully funded by AID, but there were others where, I think there was a mixture. I was only in the job for six months. It was very political.

Q: What kind of issues were you mainly having to deal with?

SELLAR: Well, it's hard for me to remember. Here's where I'd have to look at some of my efficiency reports. I don't think there were any major issues that couldn't get hashed out within the coordinating framework that we had. There were issues of turf in some cases, you know, as to who ought to be running this or that Commission. There were issues as to whether or not to establish a Commission with a country, because many of them wanted them. The State Department was happy to have everybody have one. We were more conservative about that at AID, because we saw that leading to aid programs in countries that we didn't want to go in to.

Q: Did you think it was a good idea? Did it work?

SELLAR: I think so. I have never seen any overall evaluation of the Joint Commission activity, but I know a lot of stuff got built and funded, and a lot of people got trained and so on in Saudi Arabia. Agriculture was very expensive, because they have these circular irrigation cranes, basically growing vegetables in the desert. I don't know how economic that was. But, certainly there was a tremendous amount of activity. Of course, the Egypt

program. I don't know how to characterize that.

Q: Have the Commissions continued?

SELLAR: I think they tended to wither away. I don't know whether they formally still exist or not. I really can't say, because I was there for six months and then assigned once again to another job when there was a RIF. So I never looked back.

Q: These were essentially a political response to a political relationship that derived from the Egyptian/Israel accords?

SELLAR: Yes, political and economic and financial. I next went into the Office of Central American Affairs.

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SELLAR: I went to Near East DP and that was not because I wanted to, because I really liked Latin America and the Latin American Bureau and would have liked to have stayed, but I was in the situation where I had to move back into a GS-15 job within one year or lose the grade and lose the pay. Brad Langmaid offered me the job.

Q: He was the Head of DP at that time?

SELLAR: Yes. He offered me the job of Program Chief, which was also de facto Deputy, because he didn't have a Deputy. What I did was supervise on a daily basis about four program analysts and two budget analysts in reviewing and recommending disposition of projects and programs from 15 Middle Eastern, North African and European countries. The total budget was over two billion dollars. In time I also supervised the Bureau Controller when the Controller's functions were decentralized to some extent to the Regional Bureaus. And, somewhat unusually, I thereby had responsibility for analyzing operating expenses as well as program funds. And also staffing levels as well as program budgets, which was unusual.

Q: That's a big program to be reviewing and overseeing.

SELLAR: Well, it was certainly big in terms of the money. The fact is, many of them were rather small in terms of numbers of activities. Egypt, however, was huge and kept getting bigger and bigger. So, averaging those out, I guess you would say, yes it was a pretty big program. Spain, for example, was just basically a military base payment, and for Israel we just wrote them a check that accounted for a lot of money, but didn't require any programming.

Q: What kind of issues were you having to deal with?

SELLAR: Well, we had continuing issues with the State Department about the level of the ESF/SSA Programs. Originally, they'd been called Security Supporting Assistance.

By now, I think they were called Economic Support Fund, which was a more indirect way of saying politically motivated programs. There were two programming processes, AID's and State's. Most AID Bureaus had very little contact with the State process, nor did AID's Central Office of Policy and Program Coordination (PPC), because the ESF money was almost entirely, at that time, within the Near East Bureau. So we sort of had to discover how that programming process worked and how to interact with it. That was the way we often argued for different ESF levels than the State Department was arguing for. In any case, Egypt and Israel were sort of sacrosanct. Those levels were pretty well set. But, in many cases, we were able to influence the levels going into some of the other countries, and we saw that as our job to try to hold those down, because to the extent those levels were held down, there would be more money for development assistance. Not necessarily in our Bureau, but worldwide. We sort of felt an obligation to the Agency to try to do that. I can remember one example that sticks in my mind where I got our Desk Officer, who was also an economist, to go to a meeting along the chain of what was called the SAPRWG process.

Q: What does that mean?

SELLAR: Security Assistance Program Working Group.

Q: I see. That was State and AID?
SELLAR: That was the State process. He was able to actually persuade them that Turkey needed 50 million dollars less than they were proposing. So that was a good day for AID.

Q: This was Turkey?

SELLAR: Yes.

Q: Do you know what grounds you based it on?

SELLAR: I can't remember the specific issues. Just that he had a different picture of the economy than they did and then argued that they didn't need that much.

Q: An economic balance of payments kind of analysis?

SELLAR: Exactly.

Q: Well what about, did you make any dent in the Egypt/Israel levels?

SELLAR: Well, no. We couldn't do that. Didn't even try. It was pretty well set by the Camp David Accords. So, the question there really was to try to use the money as effectively as possible in Egypt. As Langmaid liked to say, Egypt was the largest development assistance program in the world, because even though it was funded with ESF money, Egypt was an underdeveloped country and needed all the same kinds of help that you typically found in a less developed country. But, it was unusual in AID at that point to have so much money to work with. So we had engineers out there and lots of

loan officers doing capital projects, on a grant basis, but nevertheless, capital projects that had pretty well died out in the rest of the Agency.

Q: Did you have any understanding of how those levels were originally arrived at and then became fixed in concrete?

SELLAR: No, I don't.

Q: How we ever got to that point?

SELLAR: I do not.

Q: I wonder. All right. Well, were you able to influence the allocations of these funds as to what they were used for?

SELLAR: Oh, yes. The interesting thing about State was that they were, I would say, about 98 percent concerned about the level and very little concerned about the content. Once the levels were established, they pretty much left it up to us to determine what to do within those levels.

Q: And how did you see that process working, the process of deciding?

SELLAR: That was done within the AID programming process in the same way that it was done worldwide. Annual program submissions would come in. They would be vetted by my Office, the Desk and others. Based on inputs from everybody who looked at it, we would then develop an issues paper, then have a meeting with the Mission Director. The Bureau would make up its mind what it was going to recommend and then go forward to PPC.

Q: Did you have particular issues or recurrent issues about allocations toward particular sectors or types of projects? What kind of issues were you raising?

SELLAR: I don't think we had any highly significant differences in perceptions from the Mission. For one thing, Egypt blew up so quickly and so few people really knew anything about Egypt that it wasn't anything that most of us were able to bring much background to, so we relied heavily on consultant reports, feasibility studies. In a way, there was enough money to do everything, so it wasn't like a resource-scarce AID program where you really had to make decisions between the sectors.

Q: But, there were issues about, I guess, drawing down the funds once committed to projects? Did you have issues and things of that sort?

SELLAR: Oh, yes. But, those were no more severe in Egypt than anywhere else. I mean, once the Mission got built up, initially the problem was finding ways to authorize the money every year. I remember, in fact, the AID Representative when all this began was a fellow by the name of Bill Templeton, a very nice guy. I'd known him in AID

Washington. He invited me out to try to help formulate the initial strategy for Egypt and I had six days to do that.

Q: Do you remember what you were trying to do in your strategy?

SELLAR: No. All I remember is going into lots of empty offices where there were stacks of feasibility studies in the corner, because no furniture had arrived yet and no people had arrived to occupy the offices or read the studies. This was very early.

Q: What year was this?

SELLAR: I suppose this was probably '76, '77. Bill told me that he use to dread to go to work in the morning, because he would go into work and discover that Washington had given him another 50 million dollars which needed to be programmed by the end of the year, and he had no idea how he was going to do that.

Q: Was it mostly project aid or did you use commodity import programs, or what?

SELLAR: It was a combination. That was certainly one of the issues between us and the Egyptian government, as to how much of it would be balance of payments support and how much would be projects.
Q: What were they pushing for?

SELLAR: They wanted more of the balance of payments support and less of the projects. We thought that they needed more projects.

Q: Any particular thrust of the program that you remember that stood out in your mind?

SELLAR: Well, I think it was a pretty balanced program. Again, we were doing something in virtually every sector. Major education programs; major agricultural and rural development programs in the Delta. Big projects to build roads and rehabilitate roads and do something about congestion in Cairo. Low cost housing programs. Health programs, family planning programs. I mean, you name it and we were doing a lot of it.

Q: Did you have any time working with the Egyptian government?

SELLAR: I personally did not, except during this one visit when I met some of them.

Q: What was your sense of the rapport or the issues they were experiencing?

SELLAR: I think the rapport was pretty good. Politically, the rapport was excellent. The Ministers were probably better educated and more competent than the ones we would be working within most countries. They definitely had their ideas as to what they wanted and how they wanted to do things. The problem was below the Ministerial level. You very rapidly ran into nothing, even though there were a lot of people sitting at desks.

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Q: How did you find your work in the Near Eastern Bureau? It was quite a difference from working in Latin America, I suppose.

SELLAR: Yes. I liked it in many ways. I found it very challenging. We were very busy, particularly because of Egypt. I didn't feel uncomfortable with my function since being a Program Officer was basically what I had been, and it was just a question of going back and doing that again in a much bigger program. The ESF aspect was different, and was bothersome at times in terms of levels, but I enjoyed the interaction with the State Department on that. In fact, one of my tasks was to go to the Assistant Secretary's morning staff meeting, which they held four mornings a week, and just be the AID person at that meeting in case there was anything to talk about. Mostly, I just listened and reported back to my superiors if there was anything that seemed significant. It was sort of fun, kind of sitting in the cockpit of history, if you will, since it was a period of major involvement in the Middle East. I think that our budget represented something like half or two-thirds of the Agency's budget. It was also challenging at times to serve as Acting Director. At these times I had to supervise the Economics Unit and the Evaluation Unit, as well, which were the other two units in the office. I had my ups and downs in the office in terms of perceptions of my performance, and I stayed too long. I was there for nine years.

Q: Nine years. That's a long time isn't it?

SELLAR: Yes, too long. But, the Obey amendment came along during those years.

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Q: Were there significant changes in the circumstance and environment over those nine years?

SELLAR: I don't recall any major ones, except for the Obey amendment and then at the end, the basically hostile takeover of the Near East Bureau by the Asia Bureau. That's what eventually knocked the concrete off my feet.

Q: What was that plan?

SELLAR: I don't think it was so much a plan as it was a general tightening up. Of course, there were always tightening ups and so forth, but in this case, I really think it was because we had a clearly incompetent Assistant Administrator who for political reasons couldn't be fired. Also, during this period Brad Langmaid moved up to be the Deputy Assistant Administrator and he ran the Bureau and he was fine, except he was a little overcontrolling in terms of field programs. At least that was the perception. So the Egypt Mission was out to get him and others may have been out to get him. And there was a movement, in fact, toward decentralization of authority to the field, which was needed. Langmaid was moved into a Central Bureau and never came back to a Regional Bureau. The joke was that the Assistant Administrator was fired for being incompetent and

Langmaid was fired for being too competent.

Q: What years were these roughly?

SELLAR: This was toward the end of the period, as I recall, in the early '80s. The first major move toward decentralization, I think, was made by the Asia Bureau. It was called the Asia Bureau Experiment. That then became quite quickly, really without waiting to see if it worked in Asia, the new Agency model. Under that model Washington, which previously had reviewed project papers too often, could barely review them at all. We had three project approval stages, as you remember, for a long time. First we would review a Project Identification Document (PID), just a one-page sketch of what the project would be, as part of the overall program submission. Then, if authorized to proceed, the Mission would do something called a PRP, which I think was a Project Review Paper (PRP). Then, if that passed muster, they were authorized to do a full-fledged project paper (PP). So that was three times that the Missions had to come to Washington for approval. There were also other areas where they felt they were over controlled.

Q: What did you think about that procedure?

SELLAR: I thought that there needed to be some decentralization. I didn't have any problem with eliminating the intermediate stage, i.e. not seeing PRP's. Eliminating those was one of the first steps taken by Bob Nooter when he became Deputy Administrator. But, I think they went too far delegating project approval to the field, with the exception of Egypt, because those Missions didn't really have the accumulated knowledge and expertise that you could find in Washington. What really needed to be done was to delegate implementation authority to the field, in my view, not project approval authority, and that wasn't done, because the Contract Officers and the Controller's Office remained central, even though a Mission would have Contracting Officers. The Missions may have had some authority. Usually they had Controllers in the Mission, but they were controlled from a Central Office in Washington. The impression I had is that implementation authority was never delegated to the same extent that approval authority was. I would have liked to continued to have seen project papers from Egypt. Once they got PID approval that was it. They could do the project design themselves. Also, at the PID stage, once the PRP was gone, you could decide to delegate authority to the Mission to approve the PP. It was up to the Assistant Administrator or whoever was chairing the review to make that decision. There was a lot of pressure on them to use that authority to the maximum, even though in some cases I don't think it was justified.

Q: Did they do it?

SELLAR: They did. Though not always.

Q: Do you remember the basis for not doing it?

SELLAR: Yes. Actually there were even written criteria. One of them was that if it was a particularly sensitive project politically, then there might be political ramifications that

would be understood better in Washington than in the field. Another one was if it was a particularly complex project that might require some Washington expertise. And anything that was really breaking new ground in terms of something that the agency hadn't done before, would likely be reviewed in Washington. The grounds were, in that case, that we were going to have to explain it to Congress, so we needed to know about it.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARSHALL D. BROWN
USAID
USAID Egypt Director
Cairo, Egypt
(1987-1991)

Marshall D. Brown was born and raised in Southern California, and studied political science at Stanford University. After starting his career in the Peace Corps in 1962, Mr. Brown served in USAID for thirty-one years with a focus on economic development in Latin America. He held positions including Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Latin America Bureau, Director in Egypt, and Mission Director in Egypt. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on December 4, 1996.

Topical Focus – Alternative Government Reform Approaches in Nonpermissive Environments

BROWN: In 1987 I went back overseas as director of USAID Egypt, the agency's largest program.

Q: How big was the program?

BROWN: $815 million per year of ESF was mandated by Congress, as part of the Middle East peace process. We also had almost $200 million in food aid. The bulk of the ESF was supposed to go for projects, built by US contractors; a smaller amount was for a commodity import program, to provide Egypt with essential imports from US suppliers; and a much smaller amount for a cash transfer, to give the Egyptians a little cold cash and AID a small level to try to move the government in the reform direction. The Egyptians greatly resented this arrangement: the flow of funds was slow, and highly controlled as to how the funds could be used; and they saw accruing to US firms. In contrast, the US gave Israel an annual cash transfer of one billion dollars. Given Egypt's underdevelopment and socialist proclivities toward wasteful spending, the asymmetry in how the two countries were treated made eminent sense-at least to everyone but the Egyptians. The requirement to spend the annual $815 million in ESF or else imposed a unique kind of burden. Most country missions were desperately in need of a few million dollars more in their programs, and I inherited one that had a budget of almost a billion dollars, and I had to spend it all. That made it very difficult to do serious policy reform. Moreover, the Egyptians knew very well they had gained an entitlement, as a result of the Camp David Peace Accord. They were very well informed about our political system, and had an

effective lobbyist working the US Congress. For ambassador, I had one of State's most talented and skilled diplomats, Frank Wisner. One of his basic directives was to insure Egypt continued to play a constructive role in the peace process, and that meant not antagonizing them-unless absolutely necessary. Frank was very supportive of the AID effort and knew that Egypt needed to reduce state control, introduce market pricing and mechanisms, and reduce the role of the state in the economy.

He was fully supportive of me as long as I didn't push policy reform to the point of antagonizing the government. Thus I had to devise a sector reform program in the energy sector that offered a bonanza of financial assistance to the energy minister if he would move the highly subsidized price of energy along a path toward market rates. I made him an offer that he could hardly refuse. There was still the risk that if they didn't raise rates and we didn't disburse, President Mubarak would become incensed, pick up the phone and call Secretary Baker, or try to call President Bush, to complain about this AID guy that doesn't understand the nature of their entitlement and the importance of their continued support of Middle East peace. In effect, there was a line in the Egyptian sand that I didn't want to cross.

Q: Did you go out there with some particular mandate that they wanted you to address?

BROWN: Well, like the physicians, my first commandment was to do no harm. That is, do not screw up this enormous program. Because it was so big, and so fraught with potential for mistakes, I had to be sure the program was well managed. We had about seventy projects, broadly defined. One of them, the Cairo Wastewater Project, had an $800 million AID contribution. We had many projects in the $100 to $300 million dollar range. Our undisbursed pipeline was around two billion dollars. All things considered, I believe we did as well as you could hope to in avoiding major mistakes or vulnerabilities. It did not help that we had an Inspector General's office full of auditors working in our building, reading our daily file and looking for any string they could pull to unravel something.

My second mandate was to find ways to increase the amount of policy reform we could get out of the program. As I said, this was hard because we still had to disburse the funds every year. Half the annual program was financing import needs and half went for projects, and the bulk of project funds went for infrastructure-water supply, sewerage, power generation and school construction. And those projects went very well in terms of doing what they were supposed to do. The water supply and sewerage program was both in Cairo and throughout the country.
We also had a major primary school construction program. There was a great deficit in primary school facilities, and we had reached the point where we were completing a school a day-360 schools a year. Everyone, even President Mubarak, who was skeptical of AID, thought this was a great program. He attended several inaugurations-and took full credit, of course. Ambassador Wisner thought it was great, though he wanted to diddle with the architecture to include the Moorish arch, which we finally incorporated. There was a visiting NBC News who interviewed me as we walked through one of the

school. It was a very favorable story which was broadcast on the morning “Today” show. The schools were built by local contractors, and were very inexpensive to build.

Q: Did they have the teachers and the resources to maintain and operate these schools?

BROWN: They had plenty of teachers. The Egyptians have a surplus of people, and a surplus of government employees so that was not a problem. The question of resources to maintain goes to the heart of one of Egypt’s most vexing problems-maintenance, or lack thereof. Because of that, in addition to providing educational materials and training teachers, we also trained inspectors in the proper operation and maintenance of the schools.

Just as I was completing my tour in Egypt our IG friends were engaged in an audit of the basic education program. Despite the success of the program, the increasing number of children in school every year, the simple, low cost two story structures and the popularity of the program with the government, the auditors managed to find some fatal flaws. They found a few minor cracks in the construction of some schools, some cracks in some sidewalks and a couple of bathrooms which didn’t have running water. They took color pictures and put them in their audit report and faulted AID for mismanaging the program. Inspector General Beckington then had a negative press release prepared in Washington for the media. They manage to convert a few minor, easily correctable problems in a few schools in a program of nationwide scope into a “cause celeb”. The wolves on the Hill express their outrage; AID leadership quaked at the reaction. The end result is that my successor in Cairo, Hank Bassford, ended up terminating the highly successful primary school construction program because of the political backlash created by the hypercritical IG audit report, and the malicious, political marketing of that report by Beckington to the Washington audience.

Q: What do you think was behind this IG's report?

BROWN: Well, I have my own theory, which is much broader than just this audit report. I believe Beckington really wanted to do away with foreign aid. For whatever reason, he didn't like it. Although he'd never admit it. He always professed sanctimoniously how he wanted to strengthen the management of the program. His auditors wrote hypercritical audit reports which trashed the program-all of course intended “to strengthen the management of the program”. Sure they were. He hired a group of vicious, misanthropic fraud investigators whose mentality were prosecutors rather than investigators. They really believed that everybody was essentially corrupt until proven innocent. And it was just a question of doing enough investigation to get the goods on anybody. I had never seen a more repelling group on the federal payroll. They only saw the bad. The glass wasn't even half full to them, it was just a waste of water. They took pleasure in “getting” people. Clearly, there is a need for an inspector general in government operations, but the type of people Beckington brought together in the AID Inspector General’s office were a perversion of this legitimate function. So, I think Beckington and his crew of auditors and investigators really discredited AID and enabled the scandal-hungry media to began the public trashing of US foreign assistance, during what I call the "dark ages” of AID, the

Roskin period. Beckington did enough damage that AID lost its credibility and reputation-which is why AID has been teetering on the brink of extinction as a separate agency.

Q: What are some of the other programs in Egypt that you felt were significant that you were trying to promote?

BROWN: Well, the fundamental problem for Egypt was to raise the low productivity of the economy. This involved a broad range of activities, including price incentives to increase private investment and force public enterprise to become more efficient; reducing subsidies on interest rates and goods; and liberalizing the extensive controls over the economy. We negotiated increases in electricity tariffs, reduced subsidies on key food commodities, reduction of interest rate subsidies, and price and acreage decontrol of major food crops. In an effort to put pressure on public sector enterprise was to sharply cut back US support in this area. This was a monstrosity modeled on the Soviet system where the government does everything. The Russians had been deeply involved in Egypt a number of years under President Sadat and had taught the Egyptians how to nationalize and operate everything. I had inherited from our predecessors a number of projects supporting public sector enterprises. Most of them were highly inefficient, and probably hopeless as productive enterprises, and I got us out of those programs and shifted the focus of our support to a new private sector effort .

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Q: What was the main reason for its shortfall?

BROWN: Well, the Egyptian society is still evolving along a continuum, one that began some 8,000 years ago and still has a long way to go. Egypt had been a very authoritarian society, dominated by the central authority in Cairo, and more recently, and to a much lesser degree, by the appointed local governors. The fact that local councils were successfully spending money on local projects did not mean Egypt had achieved grass roots democracy where informed citizens believed they had the right to, and were, managing and controlling local affairs. We had greater success in some provinces, or governorates as they were called, and less elsewhere. Governor Achmed Gouweli of the province of Damietta, was the chairman of the governors' committee that ran the local development program. He was a US-trained, bright younger politician, and a former military officer. He was the driving force on the Egyptian side. He saw the need for promote more participation, more local autonomy, more responsibility for providing and maintaining local services and the need to raise local revenue. But many of his fellow governors were hard line, former generals who saw their principal problem as defending against the inevitable Israeli attack. They were obsessed with national security and Israel. Most of them were really not equipped to be governors or politicians in a democratic framework; they came out of the command and control structure of the Egyptian military, and probably military intelligence. So, despite the best rhetoric of the mission's local development advocates, the environment was not entirely fertile for this kind of a grassroots effort. The other aspect that was oversold was local revenue mobilization. This

is a crucial area for assuring local autonomy and financial strength. I think our mission advocates had been in the Arab world so long that they had slipped into the believing that "saying something makes it so." When I arrived in Cairo they talked as if local resource mobilization was a reality; when I left four years later, we were still negotiating with the central government over this proposal. Over more than a decade AID contributed about one billion dollars to the local development program, and made a significant improvement in the quality of government and local infrastructure in many of the Egyptian provinces.

Q: Are there other program areas that you were interested in?

BROWN: We had a very successful health program focused on child survival, control of diarrheal diseases and cost recovery in health care. Significant progress had been made in reducing child mortality from diarrheal diseases. As a result of an extensive education effort throughout the country, Egypt had the highest level of awareness, and of use, of oral rehydration therapy in the developing world. They had extensive coverage by the health system throughout the country, but the quality and efficiency of service left a lot to be desired. We also had a very large and successful family planning program, which generated a minor scandal. We discovered that some people in the health ministry were selling our donated condoms as balloons in upper Egypt. The problem was corrected, and the culprits punished; but the IG still did its best make this into a big scandal. Fortunately, it seemed to blow over without further repercussions..

One of the fascinating things about the country was the extensive information and communication systems they had in place These served a variety of purposes. For example, Agriculture Minister Yusuf Wali, was also a deputy prime minister and the chairman of the ruling political party, and he had his own intelligence network. Every day he would get a brief report from each province about what was going on. The local extension agents and the ruling party's local agent would prepare reports on the agricultural situation, peasant attitudes, political intrigue or unrest in the villages or other noteworthy events. So he could tell you what was going on in any given province or community based on his own feelers. Meanwhile, the government had three official intelligence services, just like the Soviets had. These three networks of intelligence services watched each other, and everybody else, throughout the country. They didn't bother us, but we knew they were out there keeping track of what we were doing.

Agriculture was a complex area. On the one hand we had made some important gains in reforming the state agriculture bank, reducing or eliminating subsidies on inputs and interest rates and removing government price controls on output. In addition, we were providing new technologies and unsubsidized credit to an increasing number of small farmers through a network of village banks. As a result, small farmers were increasing their productivity, raising their incomes and producing more food and other crops. On the other had, I had inherited a impossible project to assist the Agriculture Ministry to totally modernize itself-at a cost of $300 million-and to refurbish everything from test tubes to ministry buildings. My predecessor, Frank Kimball, who was normally a tough, hard-nosed realist, had apparently given this extraordinary commitment to Agriculture

Minister Wali. Now without doubt, Wali was the most liberal and modern-thinking minister in the government. In fact, I was go so far as to call him "extraordinary." He had an amazing intellect. A devout Muslim who had detailed knowledge of both Christianity and Judaism. Meeting with him was like talking to a mystic. I found him a delightful but rather enigmatic person. He was very pro-US and US technology, and he was the major advocate with the government for closer relations with Israel, an extremely sensitive political issue. He wanted to build bridges to Israel, and had undertaken a number of US-financed joint agricultural research projects with the Israelis in the Egyptian desert. He was highly regarded by the US, and by those who wanted closer Egyptian-Israeli ties. So for whatever reason, Frank Kimball had made him this awful commitment of three hundred million dollars to renew, refurbish, reequip and retrain his entire ministry. And I had to try to somehow extricate us from that enormous and wasteful undertaking. The project was far too big, focused too much on hardware, software and physical construction. It was a prestige project. Every Egyptian minister wanted to build his monument, and usually at AID expense; and mystical Minister Wali was no exception. The full name of the ministry was Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation. This latter part of the name referred to the high cost quest to farm the desert by reclaiming land adjacent to the Nile Valley. This was a manifest destiny issue for the Egyptians. They knew it had to be done; costs were irrelevant. It was clear that the economic returns from our investment in this $300 million agricultural monument were highly questionable. I also discovered that AID had financed the construction of large government training centers for nearly every minister in the cabinet. If I did nothing else, I put an end to that practice.

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Q: Do you feel in that context where the political limitation of what you can do was so clear cut that the development program really was compromised much and maybe it would have been better to just give them a check, like we did with Israel?

BROWN: No. I believe that would have resulted in a real waste of resources. Despite the problems, I think we were getting a good "bang for our buck" in the major sectors we were working in. Power generation and rate reform, water and wastewater, agriculture reform, health and family planning, local development. We achieved things in these areas that the Egyptians couldn't have dreamed of-or bothered with. Left to their own devices, the Egyptians would have built water and sewerage systems that didn't work-they did that consistently during the years before AID went back into Egypt. When I left Egypt AID had provided the staggering sum of $16 billion over the previous sixteen years. If this had all been in cash, Egypt would likely have become a totally subsidized, unproductive, hopeless socialist state that probably would have eventually followed the Soviet model into meltdown.

Q: But a lot of even the power sector and others were subsidized?

BROWN: Not all. As a result of our power sector program, we had the government on a multi-year path of power rate increases towards market prices. We would only disburse if

they had raised rates the agreed amounts. Fortunately, we had Maher Abaza as minister. An intelligent professional engineer, trained in Scandinavia. That was a success story. We also were successful in eliminating the subsidy in small farmer lending by the Agriculture Bank.

Q: That with the prospect of a sustainable program?

BROWN: That's right. Agriculture under Minister Wali was progressively moving toward market prices. And in the electric power area, Minister Abaza was raising rates to world market prices so that they could be self-sustaining in energy. That was a major achievement for them. Water and sewage was a much more difficult case. It was a constant struggle. To have moved the country on to a sustainable growth path, I would have liked to have been able to condition about $300 million a year on internal reforms. Reforms that would remove state controls and regulations on markets and prices. I would argue that we were getting reasonably good development results from at least half the program. The other half should have been conditioned on the progressive liberalization of the economy.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ELIZABETH WARFIELD

Elizabeth Warfield was born in Daisy, Maryland in 1955. She graduated from Middlebury College with a BA in 1978 and from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy with a MA in 1983. She worked with USAID in multiple positions from 1983-1999 in offices in Washington, D.C., the West Indies, and Guatemala. She returned to USAID in 2005 as the office director for human resources and health in Cairo, Egypt. Her final position with USAID was as a mission director in Mexico City, Mexico from 2016-2020. Elizabeth Warfield was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2022.

Topical Focus – USAID's Mission Focus in Egypt in 2005

Q: Welcome to our fourth oral history session this Wednesday, November 30. Liz, let's continue with your fascinating story at USAID, specifically your experience in Egypt.

WARFIELD: Sure. In 2005, due to changes in my family's priorities and thanks to a significant uptick in USAID hiring, I was able to return to USAID. Mary Ott, the USAID/Egypt Deputy Mission Director, was looking for someone with strategic planning and project design experience to help accelerate the execution of the Mission's education portfolio. So my family and I were posted to Egypt, a critical player in the Middle East and vital to U.S. national security interests. There, I served as the Office Director for

Human Resources and Health.

Q: Could you provide some context about Egypt during this time?

WARFIELD: Certainly. Hosni Mubarak was president, and the country had an autocratic regime with limited opportunities for democratic expression. The literacy rate was around 66% with almost universal primary school enrollment. However, the education system focused mainly on rote memorization, lacking in critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Private tutoring was rampant. In health, infant and maternal mortality rates were showing improvement, in part due to USAID assistance.

Q: How much foreign assistance did the U.S. provide Egypt at that time?

WARFIELD: Over three decades, the U.S. has been a steadfast supporter of Egypt's peace with Israel, contributing significantly to regional stability, by providing $28 billion in economic assistance. However, funding to Egypt was on a ten-year downward glidepath from $815 million in 1999 to $450 million in 2008. When I arrived in 2005, the annual budget for USAID/Egypt was $491 million. It was a large mission with 38 U.S. direct hires, and between 200 and 220 total employees.

Q: What was the focus of USAID in Egypt?

WARFIELD: USAID/Egypt's goals were to:
- advance democracy and governance;
- promote rapid and equitable economic growth;
- improve the quality of healthcare and education—especially for women and girls;
- build infrastructure; and,
- preserve Egypt's antiquities and environment.

Q: What was the role of education in the context of the USAID/Egypt strategy?

WARFIELD: To address regional terrorism and instability post 9/11, the U.S. prioritized education in the Middle East as a key element of its foreign policy. The rationale was that educating Arab youth to develop literacy and critical thinking skills would likely lead
them to become productive citizens supportive of democratic institutions, in contrast to the prevailing system of rote memorization in Egypt. Liz Cheney, leading the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative at the time, had recently helped update the Mission's strategy to emphasize education as a cornerstone. This shift led Congress to allocate significant funding, between $80 to $100 million annually, to USAID/Egypt's

education initiatives.

Q: What were you responsible for as the Office Director?

WARFIELD: I led the planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation of the Mission's health and education programs. We obligated about $100-120 million a year in health and education programming, which represented over 50% of the mission's obligations. There were twenty-four employees in the office, with fourteen focused on education. The team supervised thirty contracts and grants, and managed an additional $100 million dollars in local currency programming.

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Q: In what other areas were you involved?

WARFIELD: Soon after my arrival, Embassy leadership, for political reasons, wanted to gradually move the entire USAID portfolio (excluding the congressionally mandated democracy programming) to sectoral cash transfer programs. This would enable greater agility in the U.S. government footprint and align with the maturing relationship between the United States and Egypt. This shift would empower Egypt to play a more significant role in its development and implement significant policy reforms crucial to the country's modernization. While the mission had a history of cash transfers related to economic growth, there was little to no staff experience with cash transfers in other sectors. In my first year, Deputy Mission Director Mary Ott, a seasoned USAID economist experienced in cash transfers, provided valuable guidance. After she left, I relied on my own experience with sectoral cash transfers in Guatemala. However, her departure left a noticeable gap in the Mission's expertise in this area.

Q: So what did you do to act upon the Embassy's request?

WARFIELD: USAID/Egypt's education and health teams successfully negotiated a $240 million program to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of health and education services in Egypt and establish an autonomous National Science Foundation (NSF) for Egypt, modeled on the U.S. NSF.

WARFIELD: The basic education reforms for the education cash transfer aimed to transform the sector through teacher certification, elimination of student tracking, decentralization, and
increased private participation in textbook production and school construction, among others. A key reform was the passage of the 2007 Teachers' Cadre Law. It provided a

professional career track for teachers and linked teacher pay to performance. It was a revolutionary concept in Egypt's K–12 education system, where classes were overcrowded (in some cases, 80 students to one teacher) and the teacher-to-administrator ratio was 1:1.2. The Ministry of Education, with USAID's technical assistance, navigated fierce opposition from vested political interests and teacher unions to pass the Teachers' Cadre Law.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JOE RYAN

Joe Ryan was born in Indiana in 1949. He graduated with a BA from Stanford in 1971. He then studied economics and international development at UC-Berkley from 1971-1977. He joined USAID in 1979. He worked in Washington DC, Zaïre, Pakistan, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Egypt, and Peru before he transitioned out of the foreign service and returned to the United States in 2014. Joe Ryan was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2017.

Topical Focus – Changing USAID Programming Focus in Egypt

Q: OK, so then is the reason that you ascribe low popularity of the U.S. in Egypt to U.S. Middle East policy, or to the way the U.S. has engaged with Egypt in the development work it has done?

RYAN: By far the first is more important. The second is more a part of the mix of good and bad that you find in any bilateral relationship. I had been, for a long time, convinced that I did not want an assignment in Egypt. Not that anybody was asking me, but Egypt is always on your mental radarscope because it's such an important program -- lots of money, a big place, a tremendous range of assistance programs going on. But at the same time, it's got the geopolitical overlay, and it's a big bureaucracy. A lot of people, including me, figured that it's better to be in a medium- sized mission where there's less political oversight -- you can do things that are more sustained and objective.

Q: Right, right. To the extent you understood what Bolton or Cheney or any of the other helicopter visitors wanted in terms of reform, what were they looking for? Was it reduction of corruption, or streamlining of bureaucracy, or in other words, what was the main goal?

RYAN: I think that's a good question. In fact, I think the main direction had always been more private sector, less state enterprise, less state control.

Q: I see.

RYAN: Definitely that would have been the John Bolton thing under the Reagan administration, and I think that was true of Liz Cheney also. Liz was apparently in town off and on for several months. In fact, when I got my assignment in December 2002, people were telling me, "You better rush to Cairo because Liz Cheney is redoing your Program." My opinion was the opposite. First, I wanted to let whatever was going to happen in
Baghdad happen, and then go after the dust settled. Literally.

Q: Right.

RYAN: And not try to fix Liz Cheney. I didn't think that was really feasible or part of my job. So anyway, I didn't arrive until August 31, 2003, and by then she had completed her series of meetings with the Egyptians. I was never clear as to what changed as a result. Subsequently, there was a pro-democracy thing that I should mention. Within a year or two after I arrived, the Bush-Cheney administration settled on what the reason had been for going into Iraq. After trying a couple other rationales, they came up with this idea that it had actually been part of a campaign to establish democracy in the region.

Q: Uh-huh.

RYAN: At that point the Congress said, "Yeah boss, that's what we're doing in the region," and they started requiring USG agencies across the board to do more democracy programming.

RYAN: Of course, we'd already had a democracy program going on for a long time as a normal
part of development assistance. But the Congress developed a new requirement in USAID/Egypt's case: that of the $50 million in NGO grants for democracy, $25 million should be grants to democracy NGOs for programs that did not have the approval of the Government of Egypt.

Q: Wow.

RYAN: I know. Of course, this was a public decision of Congress, visible to everyone including the Egyptian government, who obviously said, "Great, give them all the money you want, but none of them are going to operate in this country." It is hard to imagine how the U.S. could have seriously thought that this approach would get any real results.

A New Look for USAID/Egypt

RYAN: Another thing that the Bush-Cheney administration wanted to do was to normalize the
mission in Egypt. The Cairo mission, besides being bigger in its era than other missions, also had a lot of "only-in-Egypt" procedures, administratively.

Q: Right.

RYAN: Such as "Associate Mission Directors," like me. So about the same time I arrived, Washington sent a new Mission Director to Cairo with instructions to make it into a normal mission. And in fact, the afternoon I got off the plane, the Deputy Director, Mary Ott, who was an AID economist I'd known for a long time, took me to meet the new Director, Ken Ellis, who informed me that my job title was going away.

Q: Right.

RYAN: Still, our programs went on despite all of that.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

HILDA ARELLANO
USAID
Mission Director
Cairo, Egypt
(2007-2010)

Ms. Arellano was born and raised in Westfield, New Jersey. She received her Bachelor's at Cornell University and pursued Master's degrees at UT Austin and the Antioch Putney Graduate School of Education. She volunteered in Bolivia before entering the Foreign Service as an education officer in Washington D.C. She worked for USAID in Ecuador and Guatemala and has served as a USAID Mission Director in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Iraq, and Egypt. She has also worked in Hungary, Afghanistan, and Washington D.C. Ms. Arellano was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2016.

Topical Focus -- Egyptian Response to U.S. Efforts

ARELLANO: Well, when I got there the program I think now this is a major issue because of the downturn in tourism and just the downturn in the economy overall. You know some of the impact of what has happened following the Arab Spring. There was a major economic focus within the portfolio. A lot of it was policy-based just because some much of the economy is either state-controlled or actually controlled by the military. So kind of state-owned, military things. I don't know what percentage of the land in the 40

country is owned by the military. So there was a lot of trying to straighten that out. A lot of working with upcoming modernizing entrepreneurs and business people.

So the portfolio was kind of split between economic development, social development in the area of education reform and health, and democracy work. We had a major civil society earmark which, of course, the Egyptians were not happy about, but it was very high profile with congress. And justice. A lot of work with the justice sector. So it was pretty well evenly-divided among the economic side and the civil society building side. It was still a very large portfolio even though the funds had come down in recent years. It came right out of the Camp David accords which had set x amount for the military assistance and x amount for development assistance. And actually there had been a glide path established in agreement with the Egyptians to reduce the civilian side as long as nobody touched the military side. So that was the agreement.

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Q: Did the private sector that was trying to build out feel that it could or was it telling you, in effect, "We're in a mafia economy and there's only so far we can go?"

ARELLANO: No, they would never say that. We would say that but they wouldn't. There were very close relationships within the upper strata, the oligarchy, and just a lot of frustration I think but on the other hand, there were just a large group of wealthy people. A lot of them very socially conscious and wanted to do right by the country, very loyal to the country, but structurally the country needed, like many countries in the Middle East, structurally it was just not going to move in the right direction without major policy change. You had some modernizing under the leadership of one of Mubarak's sons. You had a modernizing group of ministers that kind of had a mini-cabinet that worked on economic issues and so we worked a lot with that group. And it was a daily fight. Again, intensely interagency with the embassy.

Q: And you served there…?

ARELLANO: 2007 to 2010. The Arab Spring was January, 2011. But it was clear that something was in the works even when I was leaving. Because a lot of our work was in upper Egypt and in upper Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood was extremely strong and so we would go to inaugurations and you could just feel it. People would say, the director of the school, or the health poster, I mean it was in Alexandria as well. There were areas, some of the marginal urban areas of Cairo. Mubarak had been in power for a long time, a long time and there were just a lot of tensions over the push for democracy that started with a bipartisan effort and so we had this civil society earmark which was the bane of existence of the embassy and the bane of existence of several of our key Egyptian interlocutors and just kind of making that work and sending the signal that if the U.S. was going to continue to fund the country at the level it had funded be it on the military or the civilian 41 side, there needed to be an understanding that it wasn't just about them signing on to protect the Gaza border, it was much broader than that.

Q: And you didn't get much of a feeling that the Egyptians at that point were really ready to make significant changes under Mubarak?

ARELLANO: No, it was in some ways we were starting to see a lot more push back particularly for the American NGOs that were funded through the earmark. It was starting to happen and then, of course, it all blew up during the Arab Spring. I don't want to say blew up, it's the wrong term, but it just really got much more complicated during the Arab Spring. So I mean you just knew that something was brewing and the president's Cairo speech which was so very articulate on the role of civil society and the need to open up to youth and listen to them, and realize that they were going to be part of, or needed to be part of a very different world and feel empowered. I mean, it sent some very, very strong messages that the Egyptians I don't think the government was comfortable with. The Egyptian people, yeah, it really echoed with the Egyptian people, and I actually, right after his speech, at the Cairo University where he had given the speech, I organized round table with then-Secretary Clinton and she had a round table with civil society organizations and she heard that even though the civil society organizations had had to be signed off on by the government. She heard about this emerging climate that everybody was very concerned about. This was 2009 and then the next year I returned to Washington.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARK SILVERMAN
USAID
Division Chief for Industrial Resources Office, Associate Director for Environment and Infrastructure
Egypt
(1982-1983), (1997-2001)

Mr. Silverman was born in Boston, Massachusetts and moved to Los Angeles in his childhood. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1965. He was educated at San Fernando State College and Ohio University. He volunteered for the Peace Corps in Afghanistan before entering the U.S. Foreign Service in 1976. He worked in various positions for USAID in Afghanistan, Egypt, Peru, Washington D.C., Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Mr. Silverman was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – Development Efforts and Egypt-USAID Relations

SILVERMAN: In the spring of 1979, I transferred to Egypt to work as a capital project development officer. I thought Egypt would be a good training ground since it was the largest program in the world with many projects developed or in the pipeline and it provided considerable opportunities for a second tour officer. Besides that, who wouldn't want to spend time in a country with such a fascinating history and after the Camp David Accords? I joined the Development Resources Directorate, [DR], the unit that managed

the largest infrastructure program in the world. Dick Dangler was the Associate Director and Tom Johnson was my immediate supervisor in the Office of Infrastructure. I was given the responsibility to manage the electric power portfolio, one of three sections in the infrastructure office (power, telecommunications and water and sanitation). I had design and implementation responsibilities and a huge budget to manage. It was an exciting time to be in Egypt. We had an amazing ambassador by the name of Alfred Atherton who had many years of diplomatic experience dealing with the Middle East, including serving as the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs. Atherton was an important negotiator who helped bring about the Camp David Peace Accords in 1978. Atherton was a gentleman and a great political leader. He was not very involved with the USAID program even though it was a major resource in support of our foreign policy; his interest was clearly in helping Anwar Sadat succeed.

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Q: This is the very beginning of a tremendous amount of money going into Egypt. I have several questions. The first is what were your observations regarding your counterparts in capabilities within the different organizations you worked with.

SILVERMAN: Yes, at the time the mission budget was the largest in the world and Camp David put Egypt at the top of the foreign policy priority list. I worked closely with the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. The functioning authority for all of the projects was the Egyptian Electricity Authority. Their engineers were trained locally, in Europe or in the Soviet Union but they didn't get much management training. Most of my counterparts spoke English and since I could speak conversational Arabic, I was able to pick up some of the discussion that went on between Egyptians. Very few of the ministry staff had studied in the United States. I would say that Egyptian management practices were quite different from our own. Relationships were important and the first twenty minutes of any meeting was made up of small talk, drinking Arabic coffee or tea and then getting down to business. Meetings and negotiations were often lengthy involving extensive discussions and back-and-forth exchanges while interruptions were normal. Senior members of the ministry often managed two meetings at the same time. I could bring an issue to the head of the Electricity Authority who would excuse himself from time to time to meet with the Soviets or the Europeans in another office and then return to our meeting. The Minister of Electricity, Engineer Maher Abaza had been with the Ministry for many years, first as undersecretary and then as Minister and USAID worked well with him. Nevertheless, he was the king of what I call multiple meeting management. The minister could work two meetings in his large office and another one across the hall. It took some getting used to this management style and required a degree of patience.

This was quite a different environment from working with American institutions or even Afghan institutions. Another challenge was in communications with the poor quality of the telephone system. The system was so bad that one couldn't make a call across town to speak to counterparts about an issue or the need for a meeting and so a messenger system was developed which meant that we sent someone with a written

message by motor scooter across town to the ministry with the message. That was the fix.

In capital project implementation the mission followed host country contracting procedures for projects which meant that contracts were between the Egyptian government and the U. S. firms. USAID had approval rights in accordance with USAID policy. In 1980 USAID went from being an agency that provided low interest loans to one that provided grants. That decision required a retooling of the processes followed by the agency in developing new agreements and implementation procedures. Capital project officers no longer designed and helped implement loans but rather worked only with grants and the new documentation requirements. Unlike in Latin America or in West Africa, we had the benefit of working in the English language so all our documentation with the Egyptians was in English.

Q: What were your relationships with several of them who have been trained in the Soviet Union and what were their capabilities?

SILVERMAN: Well, I think from a standpoint of skills the Egyptians had good technical skills but as I mentioned earlier some weaknesses in management. Some counterparts were more effective than others and some were more political than others. From the standpoint of getting to really know people and being able to get close to people it was more difficult. Religious and cultural practices created some distance and while we had many Egyptian friends not so many from among counterparts. Remember that only six years earlier, in 1973, Israel, Egypt and Syria were at war. The United States provided significant support to Israel during that conflict yet Anwar Sadat's bold move to visit Israel to seek a peace agreement and normalize relations with Israel translated into a totally different relationship between Egypt and the U.S.

What was interesting to me was that you had a lot of happy people who had new hopes and would express that happiness on the street. I was studying Arabic several times a week and could speak some conversational Arabic. I was able to have basic conversations with people on the street and when they learned that I was from the United States they were all smiles and quite friendly. Another interesting point was hearing Hebrew spoken at various places in Cairo, something I never expected to encounter with Israeli visits to Egypt; however Israel had established a small embassy in Cairo and political and cultural connections were being made. Direct flights from Cairo to Tel Aviv were established and we had a chance to go to Israel from Egypt.

I should mention that USAID financed a commodity import program that helped Egypt import goods that the economy required, and it was also something that helped Congress justify providing resources to Egypt. Companies from different congressional districts provided everything from buses to bakery equipment to industrial equipment and grains needed for the economy. Please remember that in the late 1970's and the early 80's you had the leftover of Nasserism which was basically a socialist type of economy. The public sector was enormous, government companies would be contracted to produce products such as tires or stoves based on government mandates. There were

shortages in many areas and there wasn't much competition since a few government companies produced the goods and the formal private sector was a relatively small part of the economy.

One of the things I found challenging was that public sector organizations ran most of the economy, didn't focus on controlling costs, promoting efficient operations or increasing market share. There were private firms in the construction sector like Arab Contractors, but many were led by ex-military officers. There were companies that had substantive construction experience but in terms of being overall responsible for programs and such they were mainly in the public sector. The military operated companies that produced goods as well. Overall the public sector budget was inflated, everything from tire manufacturing in Alexandria to cement plants run by the Ministry of Industry and military companies that produced small machinery. The companies did not compete and sell goods to consumers as we did in the west and the relationship between the military and industry was close, far too close. Foreign exchange was hard to come by which is why having select programs like the cash transfer helped work through key policy issues and facilitated decision making.

For example, for many months I worked with USAID's economists trying to demonstrate to the GOE the value of charging reasonable energy prices which would help them recover costs related to production and distribution of electricity and reduce the drain on the budget. A dialogue at the policy level was very helpful in facilitating the development of options for the government to think about in a somewhat rigid system. In a public sector led economy controlling costs and enhancing revenues were difficult objectives to get much traction in decision-making especially when subsidies were promoted throughout the budget. Nevertheless, we helped the GOE look at several opportunities to enhance their revenues, broaden the delivery of public services and improve the management of various systems which proved to be the right way a number of years later.

Q: Do you have any sense of what that looks like today in terms of the role of the public sector versus the private sector?

SILVERMAN: I do and it was considerably different. After serving as Deputy Director in Nicaragua I had the honor to return to Egypt in 1997 and found substantial differences. The GOE was focused on ways to engage and utilize the private sector more effectively and you had people coming out of the private sector moving into government. So, ministers who were successful business people were being put in charge in areas such as the Finance, Telecommunications, and Economy ministries. I was the Associate Director for Infrastructure and the Environment. I saw some interesting changes—for example the Egyptians had moved forward with plans to privatize the telecommunications system. As I mentioned earlier in the 1980s the local phone system didn't function, and a messenger system was developed to promote communications. By 1998 the telephone system functioned rather well. Instead of the government introducing cell phones private providers were allowed to operate and everyone was able to communicate via cell phone.

A lot of the work leading up to this point was supported by USAID technical assistance, training and introduction of improved utility management practices. I was surprised at how fast that wave had moved into a place like Egypt where we used to laugh about the Pharaonic state and how slow everything moved. Water and wastewater services in Cairo and Alexandria, two areas where USAID invested substantial resources, had improved dramatically and the government was searching for ways to promote greater efficiencies and more local investment. They started auditing the use of water in large apartment complexes as a way to understand the cost of water losses. Even in the housing sector the government was considering ways to promote more private involvement in the sector. USAID was proudly supporting these efforts.

Q: I have an observation for the reader. I think that the reader is going to find your oral history fascinating and your ability to compare and contrast your time there in '79 and then your time nearly 20 years later, that is quite something that you are in that position. Let me ask you a couple more questions. Tell us about the FSN staff when you were there in 1979. What role they played and what their capabilities were.

SILVERMAN: Well in the late 1970s we were ramping up the program. After carrying out a lot of the feasibility work to identify what types of project interventions were possible, we needed to recruit the FSN technical staff to help USAID promote improvements in various sectors. I was not an engineer, and we required American and Egyptian engineers to support the growing program. Within the infrastructure office we convinced USAID/W to hire two American engineers, one to work on telecommunications and the other in the power sector. We buttressed USDH staff with excellent Egyptian staff who had western training and experience and had recently returned to Egypt. One of the important aspects of a strong FSN staff is to provide continuity and a program memory. Americans come and go. Other than in Afghanistan I had never served in a post for less than four years. The State Department seemed to move people through postings in eighteen to thirty-six months. From my experience it takes time to develop contacts and become effective on the job and if you were going to spend only eighteen to twenty-four months at a post you probably weren't going to be as helpful as you would like.

The continuity of FSN staff was incredibly important for such a large and complex program as was launched in Egypt. I helped recruit several excellent Egyptian engineers with strong technical and management skills to support the program and to be interlocutors because of their knowledge of people in government and their language skills. USAID FSNs were not only assistants and support staff, but we were recruiting staff to manage programs. With the movement toward decentralization of decisions and delegations to the field to approve new initiatives, the role of the FSN in USAID became even more important. Returning to Egypt in 1997, I was delighted to see many of the FSN staff we hired in the 1979-1983 period still working for USAID but in positions of much greater responsibility. As Washington moved away from approving projects and decisions that needed to be made in the field, the opportunities for FSNs to have greater influence in the program increased dramatically. In the early 2000s, as Director in El Salvador, I proudly empowered one of our most senior FSNs to be the

division chief and manager of USAIDs $170 million earthquake reconstruction program, something that I don't believe could have been possible in the 1970s to 1980 periods.

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SILVERMAN: After reviewing key documents describing USAID's program initiatives it was clear to me that many of the areas USAID Cairo started working on in the late 1970s had made considerable progress. On the human development side Egypt made improvements in the education and health sectors such as promoting advances in reading ability in the early grades and more marketable skills, elimination of polio and a significant reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates. The government had also taken important steps in creating the conditions for more private sector involvement in the economy. Infrastructure services such as power, water and wastewater and telecommunications had markedly improved and there was some private sector participation in these sectors. There was an opening to carry out important environmental initiatives in support of cleaner air in Cairo and improved management of coastal resources. The ADs had considerable delegated authorities to make programmatic and management decisions in their areas of responsibility. With an overall budget that exceeded $850 million a year, funded with economic support funds [ESF] the mission's decentralized operating system was an innovative approach needed to effectively design, negotiate, obligate and implement a comprehensive development program in Egypt.

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SILVERMAN: Governors are appointed by the President with significant power and the Governor of Cairo was equivalent to a cabinet minister. We worked with the Governor of Cairo and his staff to encourage changes to the large bus fleet used by many Egyptians by considering the possibility of introducing LNG buses into the bus fleets. We agreed to finance forty to fifty LNG buses to demonstrate how they could potentially lower the particulates in the air. This was a difficult dialogue and took a lot of engagement by USAID and embassy leadership with the GON and the Gore-Mubarak partnership was the perfect mechanism to provide political support for such an effort. In mid 1998 we laid out a proposal to have Vice President Gore visit Egypt and participate in a program to highlight the joint efforts underway. VP Gore agreed to the trip and visited Cairo. I was the site officer for his visit to a natural gas station where taxi drivers were able to purchase the conversion kit and LNG fuel instead of gasoline for their taxis. Gore was impressed with the work being done and stated publicly that these actions will make a difference in Egypt's work to promote cleaner air for its population. This was but one example of the value of the strategic dialogue under the GMP.

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SILVERMAN: From time-to-time issues with specific USAID projects/programs were not fully resolved and the end of the fiscal year was fast approaching closing. The Egyptians understood that if they kept the pressure on and didn't come to an agreement with USAID on certain priorities such as a focus on democracy programs or working through nongovernmental organizations, priorities that were driven more by the U.S. than the Egyptian side, we would eventually have to find a way forward as no one, including the Egyptians, wanted to leave funds unobligated at the end of the fiscal year. There was a great deal of pressure on USAID to obligate all of the funds in our budget but because the funding source was political in nature, we couldn't decide to return funds to the Congress.

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SILVERMAN: As USAID had a dominant presence in Egypt for many years, the Embassy and USAID undertook a series of regional celebrations to publicize the results of twenty-five years of assistance to Egypt. Although the partnership between USAID and Egypt began in 1975, assistance dramatically increased after camp David. USAID's twenty-five billion dollars of assistance helped build the foundations of a stronger market-oriented economy and improved the quality of life for millions of urban and rural Egyptians. Right before the first event in Aswan, the Ambassador requested that I take charge of managing what had been a public affairs-run activity with six major events over two days. I had to mobilize the Embassy and USAID team, held planning meetings to assure smooth collaboration and worked with the Aswan governor and the involved Cabinet ministers. Three key Ministers participated in the Aswan event and USAID received extensive favorable media coverage in the local press.

EL SALVADOR

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER O. SELLAR
Senior Analyst for Central America and Special Assistant to the Director
Office of Development Planning, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
El Salvador
(1985–1990)

Peter O. Sellar was born in Connecticut and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in American History and Literature and later completed a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. After joining USAID in 1963 as a Management Intern, he served in a wide range of positions over a 30-year career, including assignments in Guinea, Liberia, and Washington. His Washington postings included senior roles in the Africa Bureau, the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Near East Bureau, and the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, where he worked on the Central America Initiative and helped develop USAID's Democracy Program. He retired in 1993 after serving as Senior Program Officer in the Office of Democratic Initiatives. Following his USAID career, he consulted on democracy and governance programs in Guyana and Nepal and authored a paper on USAID's first decade of democracy promotion. Throughout his career, he focused on program planning, democracy promotion, governance, and development policy. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on January 21, 1999.

Topical Focus – Civil War, Balance of Payments Assistance, and the Launch of USAID's Democracy and Justice Reform Programs in El Salvador

While I was out there, Bill Wheeler, who was the head of LAC/DP, had a vacancy and asked me to come in as the Senior Analyst for Central America and as Special Assistant to him. He wanted to streamline and improve the management of office operations in certain ways. He was aware that we were doing things in the Near East in a much more streamlined way with regard to certain things then than they were in LAC. He wanted to know what they were and he, I think, needed a counterweight to the opposition to change of the Chief of the Program Division there, who'd been doing it the same way for 25 years. I got there a couple of years after the Central American Initiative had been established. Again, I seemed to have the good fortune to arrive in a program just when it was becoming, or shortly after it had become, a very important program.

Q: What was your understanding of the Central American Initiative?

SELLAR: That it was a major response to the possibility of the Central American countries becoming Communist. It was in response to what had happened in Nicaragua and was basically driven by a sort of domino theory. El Salvador was also very shaky. The initiative was to provide enough aid, and the kinds of aid, needed to keep Central America in the Western camp.

Q: This was in 19...?

SELLAR: The Initiative itself, I think began in 1983. That was when Reagan made a speech and Kissinger made a speech, which were the foundations for the new thrust and to some extent set forth the priorities Kissinger had articulated in a broad way. You know, it takes time for these things to build up. It was still building up when I got there.

Q: That was in 1985?

SELLAR: '85, and the office was still working on strategy papers. It had done one and they were doing a revised one, and I played a role in that and found it very interesting.

Q: What was the strategy you worked on?

SELLAR: I reviewed the whole paper and made my own inputs. Particularly, I debated with the economists what their targets were and whether they were realistic. They were promoting an export-driven strategy. The idea was to find higher value exports, particularly agribusiness, as opposed to lower value domestically consumed crops. Strawberries and cut flowers and things like that had sprung up to some extent and seemed promising for the North American market. The only question in my mind was whether there was really enough of that to create the employment and therefore the income that was needed to make a substantial difference. I don't think it did. I never got a good answer out of the economists on that. But, as in the Middle East, there were a lot of resources being applied to the program.

Q: What scale of program are you talking about?

SELLAR: At its peak, it was over a billion dollars a year, which in fact was about two-thirds of the Latin America Bureau budget. Now, it didn't stay at the peak forever, but it built up to that and began to slowly decline and then at a certain point dramatically declined. But it was fun being involved with such a high-profile program.

Q: What was the money mostly being spent on?

SELLAR: It was mostly spent on development programs with DA criteria being used, except for the balance of payments assistance components. Balance of payments assistance to El Salvador was enormous, since El Salvador was one of the countries in particular that we were worried about. Where in fact there was, I guess, a civil war going on, a low grade civil war. That type of aid was provided on the basis of balance of

payments needs and certain growth objectives. Actually, it quite resembled the Vietnam Program in the sense that we were looking for ways to win the minds and hearts of the El Salvador people in the villages. We didn't have people in every village, but we found ways to put money into every village for village-level projects, as well as doing things at the Ministerial level. And there was emphasis on agriculture and agribusiness and developing the private sector in all the countries. With Reagan coming in, this became a much more important element of AID's program, even though it had always been there to some degree or other. The housing program was still attempting to prove that it could do something.

Q: You sound skeptical about the housing program.

SELLAR: Yes. I can't say that I've ever seen a housing program in the field that I thought looked truly cost effective and sustainable, and I saw quite a few of them. It's possible that the one in Egypt may have worked.

In Central America there was also lots of training, an enormous amount of training. A huge scholarship program to bring people here, that actually was held up by the Congress at levels above what we would have wanted to do. Congress was very involved in this particular initiative.

Q: They thought the training in the U.S. was important?

SELLAR: Yes. And, they also felt that it benefitted universities in the States in which they were interested. So there were certain Congressmen who were particularly vocal about it. In fact, Georgetown University was the prime contractor, and Georgetown had its own connections on the Hill and lobbied for the training quite effectively.

Q: They did the processing of the participants?

SELLAR: Right. Most of them didn't go to Georgetown, but Georgetown would find appropriate places for them in other colleges.

We also had environmental programs. They were beginning to become significant. Just go down the AID's list of priority development activities: we did it all. Rural health programs and family planning to the maximum extent that we could function in the family planning area. We had lots of difficulties with that in Guatemala as I recall, but we would try to get the rural health system functioning better and hope that one would be able to do something with family planning within that context, even if it was only child spacing. What else? Do you want more?

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Q: What was the reception to all this strategizing and approach to strengthening democracy by the Latin American country governments?

SELLAR: Oh, I think they were eager to have it. In many cases you had strong reform movements or even reformist presidents as a result of the wave of elections that had occurred. In several cases the military had sort of given up or been persuaded to go back to the barracks and let the civilians try, because the military had done so poorly. So there was receptivity.

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Q: I suppose the toughest problem would be dealing with the business of instituting values or changing values and so on. How did you find that worked and what did you do?

SELLAR: Well, yes, that was the toughest challenge, because that's the longest-term part of the program. You can't really expect to see too much impact until you get to the next generation. But we were invited to help them revise their curriculum in their civics textbooks, or whatever they were called. Most of them that I saw were just hopelessly unrealistic. For example, in El Salvador, which was practically like Vietnam, the books had shining, smiling faces describing this ideal system. Nobody would find it credible. In Nicaragua, the history books and texts had all been written by the communist-oriented regime. So everything Communist was good and everything U.S. was bad. That had to be revised and the new government invited us to do that. We had a major textbook revision program there. In cases where we couldn't or didn't have the resources in the Mission to penetrate the formal education system, we tried to do informal courses. There was a PVO program that we got started with Partners of the Americas that was a pilot effort in a few countries to start working on civic education with local NGOs and anybody else they could find to work with. That was very hard to get approved, because again the conservative element in the Bureau felt it was messing with people's values, "social engineering" a pejorative term, and didn't think that such a program would be well received. But, in fact the pilot program caught on like wildfire. The last time I talked with the President of the organization...

Q: Which one?

SELLAR: Partners of the Americas. The initial small grant that started them, a million or two, had already resulted in over four million dollars in mission add-ons. And that was quite quickly. So there was a need for it and a demand for it.

Q: What did they do particularly in the field?

SELLAR: I don't know, other than develop civic education programs. In many cases, I'm sure it was integrated into things that they were already doing with these local NGOs. You're familiar with the Partnership program: they had extensive contacts in every country. You could go right to work..

So the strategy paper, although formally never approved, was I think successful and useful, as was the Assessments Handbook.

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Q: Was that picked up and supported?

SELLAR: Yes, the Missions liked it and I'm sure they used it. Since it was for the Missions, it didn't have to be approved in Washington. No one raised the kinds of issues that had been raised with the first paper.

So, other than the strategy work, I was functioning as the office's Program Officer, which they really hadn't had before I arrived. And consequently they had been kind of the laughing stock of the Bureau when they got to their program reviews, because they didn't have the numbers right. They would sit there and argue with each other about what the numbers were and just generally didn't present themselves as being organized at all, which they weren't. So I just put in the procedures that one needs to put in to get submissions on time and get the Director to make it clear that he wants material prepared on time, which they really weren't use to doing. And analyze basic financial concepts such as making sure that your estimated expenditures didn't add up to more than the project authorization level.

Q: These were project proposals?

SELLAR: That's right. In some cases, we were developing new regional projects.

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Q: Did it have any particular thrust or was it just covering the whole range of programs?

SELLAR: It covered the range of programs that we had been doing up to that point.

Q: What worked and what didn't?

SELLAR: Right. I went back and started as early as '61 and talked about Title IX a little bit, how that was the precursor to the Initiative. Then the programs from '78 to '96. There actually was an earmark from Congress in '84 for one million dollars for administration of justice in El Salvador, so obviously there was Congressional as well as executive branch interest.

In the three years that I was there, doing the things that I described, I also managed the AIFLD Program, which had about six or eight million dollars a year going into 20 countries when I got it. Much too much money really in relationship to the total program. And we didn't know anything about what was happening or being accomplished.

Q: This was the Labor Program?

SELLAR: Right. They had never really been asked to justify themselves. This was because President Kennedy had reportedly made a commitment in 1963 to a certain

annual level of support. So it just went on year after year, with little if any AID influence over it. But in the new environment that we were in, in terms of resource scarcity, and with the winning of the Cold War in particular, a situation had been created in which Labor knew that, since their program was very much to counter Communist influence in the unions, they were probably going to have to take some reductions, and the opportunity existed for me to rationalize their program. So I worked on that, and we actually developed the first logical framework (log frame) for the program, on a country basis, that had ever been done, and we agreed on a slow reduction in their annual funding together with some targets and objectives.

Q: Did the logframe change the purpose of what they were trying to do?

SELLAR: Well, I don't know that it really changed it, but it clarified it, and I think it forced them to do a lot of thinking about what they were doing themselves, that probably changed things to some degree, just in terms of clarifying and possibly narrowing the scope of their activities. I mean, the very act of doing this, as you know, is often helpful to the person doing it, as much as to the person it is being done for. So we got that done, and included targets for increasing local cost contributions, which they had never bothered to try to do. This was all worked out and we were getting compliments about it from the reviewing officers, and everybody was happy with it. Unfortunately, I think in about the second year it just all fell apart when the Bureau's funding dropped precipitously. That was after I'd left.

I also worked on developing some projects. One was the civic education and citizen participation project with the Partners that I mentioned. I also worked on developing civil-military relations projects as a follow-on to the initial activity, which was just basically a couple of seminars. I also developed a technical support project, which was something that I'd learned to do in the Near East Bureau. This was extremely useful. It's not really a project, it's a pot of funding for a collection of activities. It enables you to do studies, evaluations, all the kinds of things that you have to do, and pay for them with program funds. We threw everything but the kitchen sink into it. Limited training, limited preapproval project activity.

Q: That was a common pattern in many Bureaus at the time.

SELLAR: Yes, and we did it for our program as well. It was helpful in enabling us to get people out to the field more quickly. Contract people and so forth. And provide more rapid response time. We used it to do a comprehensive evaluation of the AIFLD program, the first time that had ever been done in 32 years. Out of that we formulated a labor development strategy jointly with them.

Those were my main activities. I was also the LAC representative to an agency working group that became known as the Tuesday Group; it met every Tuesday to try to bring some semblance of coordination and similarity to what the different Regional Bureaus were doing in this new sector, democracy. There were all sorts of debates and things that had to be thrashed out. That was fun. We also wrote an Agency policy paper for

Democracy and Governance, as it was called.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Latin America Bureau, Office of Central American Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
El Salvador
(1995–2000)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Congressional Relations and Post-Conflict Transition in El Salvador

Q: How did you relate to the Senate committee? I ask in part because Helms and his staff were doing so much on Central America during that period.

LEVINE: Yeah.

Q: I'm wondering how the dynamics between the two were.

LEVINE: What I recall from the time was that the Democrats were in the minority from 1980 to 1986, so the subcommittee would do as much as it could legislatively, and then take their work to allies in the Senate, like Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Tom Harkin (D-IA) and other folks. They had to deal with Jesse Helms, who was at the time starting his career as Dr. No, and opposing a lot of those efforts. For example, the committee oversaw the human rights certification for El Salvador asking the administration to certify that the government of El Salvador was taking steps to improve its human rights situation. In retrospect, this could have been called our first encounter with fake news.

Q: (Laughs)

LEVINE: So, the headlines at the time were the churchwomen's case in El Salvador, the first efforts by the Department of Justice to help protect witnesses in criminal cases, and the earliest administration of justice programs carried out by USAID in Central America. That's where it all started, circa 1985.

I spent a year working for Congressman Barnes and then applied to grad school, ending up at Columbia University at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA).

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Q: The other big issue involved with USAID during that period was Central America, presumably.

LEVINE: Yes. You may recall that this was during the breakup of the Soviet Union, and what followed was an effort by Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to resolve all the brushfire third-area conflicts, including Central America. That shaped part of the context for the Esquipulas Agreement in Central America and winding down the war in El Salvador. This figured into the story when I joined USAID and the leadership of the Agency saying that it was our job in the newly arrived Clinton administration to aid in the transition from war to peace in Central America.

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LEVINE: At that time, Aaron Williams was acting assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean (AA/LAC). Stacy Rhodes was the head of Central American Affairs (LAC/CEN), but quickly moved up to be acting deputy assistant administrator, acting DAA during that time. I got to know both of them very early on. And I will say that this was very significant in learning about USAID from the pros—just the best of the best.

My first days of work were taking John Sanbrailo up to the Hill to meet with the Helms staff for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This was the week after the El Salvador Truth Commission findings were released. The next day, I escorted Liliana Ayalde, for briefings on Nicaragua.

Q: Yeah. Could you maybe talk a little bit about what John Sanbrailo was having to confront and talk about in his meetings on the Hill and the same with Liliana? It would be interesting to hear some of those.

LEVINE: This was a time when polarization was just drastically differing views of policy in Central America. So, it was very, very difficult for mission directors when they went up on the Hill to walk into that environment because everything you said positively about one side would be immediately criticized by the other. So, the Democrats would be interested in what aspects of the Truth Commission's recommendations was USAID prepared to embrace and enforce. But if they were too forward leaning the Republicans

would be highly critical. If we were seen as holding back or being too status quo, which was fine with the Republicans, it would be criticized by the Democrats. So, there was no middle ground. This is when you hunkered down because oftentimes, the two staffs would fight with each other, and the USAID posture would be to observe.

Q: Just sit there and let them argue among themselves.

LEVINE: Exactly. My job was to navigate those engagements. What I found was that USAID too often found itself on the defensive, often as a result of its own practices. First, USAID staff would walk in without an agenda and would just sort of say, "Do you have any questions?" That reinforced a reactive and defensive posture by the agency. What I tried to do was get as much intel on where the staff was coming from and talk to mission directors or whoever I was escorting to the Hill and say, "What are our three points that we want to be sure to make? What do you want to showcase about your program? Here's what you can expect from them. How do you want to handle the hard questions? And where do we want to be at the end of the meeting?" This became my practice. It included having a written agenda. I usually would be responsible for framing the meeting so we immediately started out speaking and delivering a message, to which the staffers would respond.

Now, that didn't always work. We got roasted plenty of times, but it changed the way we worked. I found that USAID delivered its message best when we had our expert people talking about their programs.

Q: Right.

LEVINE: And what I experienced was a deep abiding respect, regardless of party, for the professionalism of USAID's development field leadership. Hill staffers knew that our folks knew what they were talking about. Their problems were generally with the policy, and to the degree that that policy could be identified with USAID driving it. You had to take that criticism and defend that policy. But a lot of times, it had to do with State Department policy. We had to be prepared to defend that policy and take our licks or make the case. But what I felt is that we needed to be much better prepared for those encounters.

Q: Right, right. Do you think it would help if people had more frequent consultation with the Hill? Especially by senior USAID mission leaders?

LEVINE: I certainly did. Because of the way we work, frequency is not as easy. Certainly, at the office director level, we were frequently in contact with the Hill.

But one practice I started that really helped was that, along with the congressional consultations, we'd meet with NGOs as part of the consultation. At the time and to this day, the Latin American Working Group serves as an umbrella organization of all the advocacy and development groups paying attention to issues in the region. We developed

a practice of taking every visiting mission director, following their Hill meetings, we'd organize a session with the Latin American Working Group.

Q: Why was that important?

It was Dick McCall, who was chief-of-staff at the time, and intimately involved in the El Salvador peace process as a Senate staffer, who said the job of this administration was to see the successful implementation of the peace plan brokered by the last administration. That effort was bipartisan, and we worked under that guidance throughout the Clinton years,

When you look at the peace plans that were developed, they were national development plans as well. What this allowed USAID to do was to fold a lot of development work into those country-generated plans for peace and development. There was a natural framework against which USAID could apply a country strategy that already had a good measure of political buy-in, having been brokered by the most consequential political elements of the society.

The advocacy group that comprised the Latin America Working Group wanted the same thing. So, we basically developed relationships between our mission directors and folks who did this work. The experience for mission directors like Stacy Rhodes, George Carner, Ken Ellis, Liliana Ayalde and others, all of whom were well-known to the NGOs and had a lot of support because they basically got it. They recognized and respected the perspectives of these NGO representatives and above all, were open to talking to them on a regular basis.

Q: No, that's an important lesson and one that people probably need to be reminded of periodically.

LEVINE: Yes. It does live on. I believe that there is a legislative requirement for consultations on the Colombia human rights program. USAID and the mission now hold consultations in-country and in Washington with the human rights community. I think that process really grew out of what we started with the Central American mission directors.

Q: Can I just ask a somewhat off the wall question, but since you mentioned John Sanbrailo and his consultations on the Hill. He had also been part of that 60 Minutes broadcast that criticized USAID for its support to the private sector in Central America saying that it led to exporting U.S. jobs. I'm wondering if when he went up to the Hill to talk about the Truth Commission work in Salvador, was he also confronted with that issue?

LEVINE: I remember it well, and there was an overhang as the *60 Minutes* story had aired in the fall before the election, but in that spring, it was very much in the air. What I recall was that, as a result of the politics as well as policy preference, as AA/LAC, Mark

Schneider pretty much rolled up all those projects that could be viewed as exporting U.S. jobs.

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Q: I'll oversimplify this, but during the eighties, during the Reagan Administration, they obviously poured huge amounts of ESF (Economic Support Fund) money into Central America, and much of it was supporting structural adjustment programs. Many of those reforms in the 1980's presumably fueled the significant economic growth of the 1990's. Did you see it as a positive period in which there were real opportunities to do more because of those earlier reforms?

LEVINE: This was hotly debated at the time. The region experienced growth, but the concern always was whether it was equitable growth. When the distribution of wealth was so uneven and portions of society were excluded, it begged the question of whether our approaches were truly broad-based and inclusive. I think the record is kind of mixed. Certainly, you can point to the evidence of growth. A lot of that was pent up demand when the country was at war. Where we did less well, I think, was on equity. I think the El Salvador mission in particular really took that on. They said in effect, "We are going to work in areas that were poor and greatly affected by the war -- and we're still wrestling with that issue today. The administrator's recent Georgetown speech (November 2021) about inclusive and responsive aid still speaks to the fact.

Central America still suffers from inequality of wealth. The power structures probably have changed the most in El Salvador, but they're very much as they were in Guatemala. The Guatemala governance problem still remains the same. Answering that issue of broad-based equitable growth still is elusive for us.

Q: As I mentioned earlier, I had been involved in El Salvador much earlier when the U.S. was trying to support land reform, but I don't think much ever happened. Was that still an issue on the table during the period that you were there?

LEVINE: I would say that we really didn't have the wherewithal to do more. Land reform was an element of the peace accords, specifically getting secure title to ex-combatants. This was part of the USAID program and I recall this was done more as a reconciliation in a peace program than a land reform program, just by virtue of the size and urgency in relation to the conflict, it was a priority. The question was one of resources.

We did a lot of advocacy with the World Bank because they had a land reform program and we tried to open that up to make sure that it wasn't done exclusively through the government. This is one of the central lessons of post-conflict programming. Assistance needed to be evenhanded and seen as serving a much broader base. We were concerned that, if not designed with this in mind, this program might not benefit both opposition communities as well as those that supported the government.

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And Neil, when we finished up our initial conversation last week we were talking about your responsibilities as the deputy director of the Office of Central American Affairs. Before leaving our discussions of Central America, I am wondering if in retrospect, were there any things that you think we could or should have done differently? Any thoughts you might have on that subject, looking at it twenty years later.

LEVINE: Yeah. It's a really tough question, what we would have done differently because it suffers from sort of 20/20 hindsight, as well as I don't know that we had a solution at the time, had we the will or the resources to implement it. I think there were two issues that still plague us looking back. If you think about a region that was in conflict and really a highly ideological split over issues of power and haves and have nots in a landed class was particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala and to some extent in Honduras, Nicaragua a different kind of governance model. But with all the reform and the millions of dollars, we really did not fully address the insecurity around justice, law and human rights. And I think it wasn't for lack of trying. I think there were investments, there was, you know, some very important both legal reform and land reform, whether it was deep enough or thoroughgoing enough, it did seem to create a power vacuum that, while it wasn't an ideological conflict, the susceptibility to criminal syndicates, armed groups, irregular forces kind of moved into that power vacuum. And that continues to create the kind of insecurity that is at the heart of the refugee flows today. That's one.

The other part is the economic piece, which, you know, looking back in the eighties and nineties, I believe it's the case, I couldn't swear to this, and I'm not an economist, but the region always sustained high levels of growth, and while I was paying attention to this, a lot of it could have been attributable to kind of pent up demand post-conflict, that once the countries were at peace and there was free flow of goods and access, more people had access to incomes, demand increased and the economy grew. But it was unequal growth, and I think, so, that's why it's a hard question, what we would have done differently, because we hadn't solved the issue of equity and equitable growth or a broad base. We had some theories and hypotheses, but I think there were really—what was called for was a real transformation. And I would think that you would find in looking back that the governance bargain in Guatemala between those who have and those who have not is still essentially the same. And so, in terms of addressing poverty and long-term prosperity when so much of the populace is locked out of the political life of the country is still a problem that we have not addressed in a thorough way. And there's a question in my mind of whether any external actor can do that.

Q: Right, right.

LEVINE: Salvador, similarly unequal holding of wealth in that country, but a lot more assets in terms of productive labor, but in a very small geography.

Q: Did we see any of this in El Salvador during that period? Gangs and violence have plagued the country in recent years. Did we see any early signs of that? Also, I gather a

lot of the issues today in Honduras revolve around drug trade. I'm just wondering whether we were looking at those issues then, about the drug trade?

LEVINE: There were drug cartels transiting the region, but it was not in the headlines. There was always a fear that the isthmus was highly susceptible, mostly because it was ungoverned space with vast coastlines that were very permeable. The drug trade was definitely much more of a growing presence through the late nineties and early 2000s. I had a chance to go back to Nicaragua about ten years ago, so that would have been twenty years after my first visit there, ten years after my first visits, and there was a concern about crime. Now, I think there was some intermingling between right-wing paramilitary forces and criminal gangs, and I think that just accelerated after the conflict, when the ideological fires were put out. Rather than ideology, there was greed. Greed and all the other elements such as weak institutions, little law enforcement, ungoverned spaces, and people with money and power.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR CHRIS MCMULLEN
Department of State
Political Officer
San Salvador, El Salvador
(1992-1994)

Ambassador Chris McMullen was born in Pennsylvania in 1952. He graduated from West Chester University, Georgetown University, and the National War College. After entering the Foreign Service in 1987, his assignments abroad have included Nicaragua, Malaysia, El Salvador, and Tanzania, with an ambassadorship to Angola. Ambassador McMullen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2019.

Topical Focus – US and Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) Relations

MCMULLEN: I left Malaysia in the summer of 1992 and returned to Central America, this time to El Salvador. There was a certain sense of symmetry in going to El Salvador. I had begun my career with DIA in 1982 as an intelligence analyst covering El Salvador. Those were terrible times for the country, which was in the midst of a brutal civil war. Now I was going to El Salvador, which was just beginning to implement the UN peace agreement. My portfolio included the ruling right-wing ARENA party, as well as political-military affairs. The latter duty entailed working closely with the UN peacekeepers. For me personally and professionally, it was very rewarding; El Salvador

had come full circle, and I had borne witness to that evolution and maybe even helped in a small way in the reconciliation process.

Q: When you went to El Salvador, you were there from when to when?

MCMULLEN: I arrived in El Salvador in July 1992 and left in July 1994. When I arrived there, the country was in the initial phase of the peace process. The Salvadoran government had signed the UN-brokered peace agreement with the FMLN guerrillas in January 1992, and they were just starting to implement the required reforms when I got there.

Q: Where was the peace process when you arrived?

MCMULLEN: ONUSAL, which was the UN mission for El Salvador, had recently set up shop. The UN mission had established four main components: a political division, a human rights division, a military division, and a police division. Since I was the embassy's political-military officer, I dealt mostly with ONUSAL's military division. As part of this job, I also traveled extensively through the countryside to monitor the demobilization and disarmament of the FMLN guerrillas, who had moved into cantonment camps. In the broader regional context, neighboring Nicaragua was now ruled by President Chamorro following her victory over the Sandinistas. This development had a major impact on the war in El Salvador. With the Sandinistas out of power, and the Soviets and Cubans sidelined, the Salvadoran FMLN guerrillas could no longer rely on an external pipeline for weapons. This new reality had helped push them towards a negotiated peace agreement. The UN was now implementing it; as embassy officers, our two biggest challenges were: 1) convincing the Salvadoran military to carry through with the required reforms, including purging its ranks of human rights abusers; and 2) convincing ARENA to accept the concessions that the government had made in the peace process. It was an exciting time; I was fortunate to be involved in these efforts because I dealt with two of the main actors—the military and the ruling ARENA party.

By the 1970s, there was growing discontent among university students in the cities and landless peasants in the countryside. Liberation theology espoused by leftist priests was gaining traction among the peasantry, while radicalized university students began organizing armed groups that eventually coalesced under the FMLN banner.

Q: The FMLN?

MCMULLEN: The FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) was a coalition of five guerrilla groups that was formed with the help of Fidel Castro. The Cuban leader saw that these factions spent as much time fighting each other as they did fighting the Salvadoran security forces. So he helped broker a deal among these ideologically disparate groups. He had played a similar role in the creation of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) in Nicaragua. In response to growing political violence in the 1970s, elements of the Salvadoran oligarchy started hiring off-duty policemen and soldiers to carry out extrajudicial murders of suspected leftists, including teachers, university students and labor leaders. The rise of these death squads reflected the Salvadoran elite's lack of confidence in the government's security forces.

Q: What was the impact of these death squads?

MCMULLEN: In our conversations with FMLN leaders during the peace process, they told us the death squads were so lethal that by the early 1980s, they had driven most FMLN militants out of the cities and into the countryside. The death squads were targeting not only FMLN guerrillas but also anyone even suspected of sympathizing with the FMLN cause. The indiscriminate killings by these death squads radicalized even some moderate sectors of Salvadoran society. Once the death squads had driven FMLN supporters out of the cities and into the countryside, the Salvadoran military went after them with a vengeance. The human rights abuses committed by the military drove many disaffected peasants into the ranks of the FMLN. The guerrillas also committed abuses in the countryside but they were generally more discriminating in their acts of violence. The FMLN usually had better intelligence than the military about who supported their cause and who backed the government. The FMLN would go into a village, pick out several community leaders and say, "Either you cooperate or else..." In this sense, the guerrillas were equally brutal but more selective in their assassinations of village leaders who refused to cooperate with them, whereas the military was indiscriminate in its violence. The military would often go into a village and kill anyone they thought might be an FMLN sympathizer.

Q: Was Washington able to do anything to curb these abuses by the military?

MCMULLEN: Over time, U.S. military training helped curb these human rights abuses. Many of the Salvadoran military's worst abuses were committed prior to U.S. training, which began in earnest in the early 1980s. With our training, these abuses diminished significantly, probably in part because we had advisers in virtually every military unit and their presence served as a deterrent. Besides basic infantry training, our advisers provided human rights training, which was one of Congress' conditions for assistance. I think Congress was wise in setting a limit of 54 as the cap on U.S. military advisers. Why did

Congress choose the number 54 as a cap? Who knows why that number. Anyway, this limit had the salutary effect of forcing the Salvadorans to fight the war themselves. I think the Pentagon was fine with the cap, especially since U.S. military leaders were wary of getting sucked into the war as they had been in Vietnam. We had U.S. military advisers at every military base in El Salvador. While these advisers were there to train the Salvadoran military, they were also useful in keeping an eye on things. As the embassy's political-military officer, I would often travel to these barracks and talk to our advisers. They were able to offer a sense of what the average Salvadoran soldier was thinking, along with the views of senior officers. This perspective was extremely valuable in the fall of 1992, when there were constant coup rumors.

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Q: I suppose the U.S .advisers also had a sense of what was happening with respect to the death squads and any abuses by the military.

MCMULLEN: Interestingly, it was one of our advisers who blew the whistle on the Salvadoran military's murder of six Jesuit priests during the FMLN's "final offensive" in November 1989. This adviser heard about who had carried out the murders and told an embassy officer. So it was very helpful for us to have those eyes and ears in the barracks at that critical juncture. Our training had improved the Salvadoran military's performance but when FMLN guerrillas launched their nationwide offensive in November 1989, they caught military leaders completely flat-footed. The guerrillas had secretly infiltrated upscale neighborhoods of the capital, which caused panic among the elites. The military initially seemed to buckle under pressure from the guerrillas, prompting several senior commanders to order the murder of six Jesuit priests who were falsely accused of supporting the guerrillas. In truth, these priests had tried to facilitate peace talks between the government and guerrillas. Although the military eventually regained the initiative and pushed the FMLN out of the capital, the intensity of the offensive and the barbarity of the Jesuit murders marked a turning point in the war. Salvadorans were surprised by the FMLN's ability to infiltrate the most affluent parts of the capital, and they were shocked by the military's murder of six Catholic priests. Like the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the FMLN's failed offensive had a much greater psychological impact than a military one, and it likely contributed to the government's decision to enter into peace talks with the guerrillas.

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Q: I would think that by this time it was becoming more difficult for the guerrilla forces to get weapons. The Cuban supply line of weapons was probably beginning to dry up

after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Was that a factor or not in bringing an end to the war?

MCMULLEN: That's true. The Soviet-Cuban arms pipeline, which ran primarily through Sandinista-controlled Nicaragua, was crucial for the FMLN guerrillas. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, Cuba lost its subsidies and was forced to retrench; it no longer had the means to support the Salvadoran guerrillas or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. And when the Sandinistas lost the elections in February 1990, the FMLN lost its principal pipeline for arms and ammunition. Meanwhile, our training and support for the Salvadoran military was beginning to tip the scales against the FMLN. Also, with Cuba's diminished role in El Salvador, Fidel Castro was less able to mediate the ideological and personality disputes among the leaders of the five FMLN factions. The ERP (People's Revolutionary Party) was the strongest faction in terms of military capabilities, and its leader, Joaquin Villalobos, was the most astute strategist among the FMLN leaders. For these reasons, his views carried the most weight within the FMLN. By 1990, following the last major FMLN offensive, Villalobos had concluded that the guerrillas could not defeat the Salvadoran military and would have to enter into peace talks with the government.

Q: How serious were these divisions among the guerrilla leaders?

MCMULLEN: Toward the end of my time in El Salvador, sometime in the spring of 1994, I got an interesting insight into Villalobos' thinking on this question. I was control officer for a visiting congressional staff delegation that met with Villalobos to discuss the upcoming 52 elections. By this time the FMLN had demobilized its forces and reconstituted itself as a political party; it was now preparing to participate for the first time in elections. During the course of a long discussion about the FMLN's internal dynamics, Villalobos made a comment that has always stuck with me. He said, "If we had won the war, we would have become a military dictatorship." I think he was right, because it probably was the only way that the fractious FMLN coalition could have held together. These ideological and personality differences among the FMLN leaders were deep and difficult to bridge. The divisions had always complicated the FMLN's strategic planning. While Castro had managed to paper over the differences for much of the war, the fissures remained under the surface. Shafik Hándel, head of the PCES (Communist Party of El Salvador), was the most problematic FMLN leader. He was a hardline Stalinist with an abrasive and inflexible personality that antagonized his colleagues. In contrast, Villalobos was pragmatic and generally more accommodating; ideologically, he was closer to that of European social democrats.

Q: Who were the FMLN's foot soldiers? Were they drawn mostly from the peasantry?

MCMULLEN: Yes. For the most part it was the young sons, and sometimes daughters, of peasants who formed the core of the FMLN's forces. Some of the guerrilla field commanders came from urban areas and were better educated than the rank and file. Many of the country's best educated dissidents—university students and professors who supported the FMLN—were killed by the death squads in the early years of the conflict. FMLN leaders were certainly justified in denouncing El Salvador's landed oligarchy, colloquially called "las catorce," or "the fourteen" (ruling families). In reality, these extended families probably numbered in the hundreds. They had long controlled the land tenure system, and in a country with very limited arable land. They also paid pitiful wages to the peasants who worked on their large estates. These factors, along with their poor treatment of peasant day laborers, had produced simmering discontent in the countryside.

By the 1970s, landless peasants were ready to take up arms, just as their grandparents had done during the 1932 uprising. The dismal economic condition of the peasantry was a source of discontent throughout Central America. This historical problem was aggravated by other issues: for example, the high population density in El Salvador, and the abusive treatment of the indigenous population in Guatemala. Another factor that exacerbated discontent in El Salvador and Guatemala was the brutal repression carried out by the military and the death squads. Even worse, these abuses were carried out with impunity, reflecting the weakness of government institutions. By the early 1980s, El Salvador's fate was in the balance as the military struggled to keep the FMLN guerrillas at bay. Against this backdrop, Washington decided that it needed to have a political track that complemented our military support for El Salvador. This political track focused on improving the human rights situation and instituting a land reform program that would appeal to disaffected peasants. I think U.S. policy makers realized that if we were going to defeat the FMLN guerrillas, we had to push the oligarchy hard on land reform. In the end we did push the elites; they didn't like it, but it worked.

I remember an interesting conversation that I had with one of my Salvadoran neighbors about the land reform program. He was an ARENA hardliner who came from a wealthy family that owned several large coffee fincas (estates). He said, "You Americans were wrong for imposing land reform on us. It was never successful." I replied, "Well, if you're talking about economically, you might be right. But that wasn't the point of it. The point of the land reform program was to take this issue away from the FMLN. In that sense, politically, it succeeded." The land reform program that we pressed with the Salvadoran government achieved the primary objective of breaking up some of the biggest estates. This was important symbolically because the vast majority of peasants did not own the land that they worked on. By giving land titles to thousands of peasants,

the government had undercut the FMLN's ability to use this sensitive issue in its recruitment efforts in the countryside.

Q: So what happened after the FMLN's last major offensive?

MCMULLEN: The FMLN's 1989 offensive demonstrated that the war had reached a strategic stalemate; neither the military nor the guerrillas could achieve a clear-cut victory. Peace talks between the two sides began in 1990, mediated by UN envoy Alvaro de Soto. In early 1992, the FMLN and Salvadoran government signed the Chapultepec Peace Accords. As part of the agreement, the government was required to reduce the size of the military and abolish its rapid deployment forces as well as the National Guard and Treasury Police. The National Police was replaced by a new National Civil Police. For its part, the FMLN agreed to disarm and demobilize its forces. Some of these former guerrillas became part of a new Salvadoran armed forces composed of troops from both sides. These soldiers had to be vetted to ensure they had not committed any human rights abuses. The FMLN also agreed to integrate into the political process and run for the first time as a political party in the 1994 elections. Another key component of the peace agreement was the creation of a Truth Commission that would draft a report detailing the human rights abuses carried out by both sides during the war.

Q: How did this Truth Commission work?

MCMULLEN: The Truth Commission was tasked to investigate acts of political violence and human rights abuses that had been committed by the security forces and the guerrillas. The goal was to determine who was responsible for these crimes. The Commission collected information from anyone who had witnessed abuses or acts of violence. The investigators worked with NGOs and talked to thousands of people in trying to establish who had committed some of the most egregious atrocities, such as the massacre of innocent peasants in the village of El Mozote, and the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero. These were two of the most notorious acts of violence committed by government-linked forces. The findings were made public in a report that identified the perpetrators of violence; it also made recommendations on a path forward. These recommendations included a call for the purge of government officials and military officers implicated in human rights abuses and acts of violence; an overhaul of the judicial system; and reparations for the victims of violence.

When the report was published—I think sometime in the spring of 1993— President Cristiani faced a firestorm of criticism from conservative elements of Salvadoran society. Not surprisingly, the harshest reaction came from the military, which was implicated in most of the major acts of violence. To quell some of the backlash, Cristiani proposed an

amnesty that was passed by the National Assembly. The amnesty applied to everyone implicated in the report: Salvadoran security forces, as well as FMLN guerrillas. Rightly or wrongly, Cristiani believed that he had to take this action in order to relieve pressure from the military and the right wing of his ARENA party. In his view, the amnesty law was necessary to save the peace process. Despite the fact that many of its recommendations, including reparations for victims, were never fully implemented, the Truth Commission report was helpful in healing some of the psychological scars caused by the country's brutal civil war. As a result of the report's findings, along with the findings of the Ad Hoc Commission report, a couple of hundred officers were purged from the armed forces. These two reports also allowed Salvadorans to get a fuller picture of what had really happened during the war, and thus helped to foster reconciliation. Sometime in the last few years the Salvadoran Supreme Court ruled that the amnesty law was unconstitutional. However, I don't think anyone has been prosecuted yet for any acts of violence during the war. I'm not sure what will happen in the future. Quite a few of the principal players, particularly senior military officers, have passed away in recent years.

Our embassy worked closely with the Spanish and Chileans to improve the capabilities and professionalism of the new PNC. Both the FBI and the Department of Justice's ICITAP (International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program) were involved in training the PNC. As in the case of the newly reconstituted military, we assisted the Salvadoran government in vetting candidates for the PNC in order to ensure they had not been involved in any human rights violations. This helped create a police force that people no longer feared but respected. If people don't have faith in their institutions, particularly law enforcement and the judiciary, then they're going to take the law into their own hands. Of course, building a functioning judiciary is one of the toughest tasks, probably even more so than building a new police force. 55 I had an interesting conversation with the prominent political scientist, Francis Fukuyama, about this issue some years ago. He was visiting São Paulo when I was consul general there and we talked about nation building. Fukuyama noted, "The U. S. has been fairly successful in building central banks and finance ministries in developing countries, but we haven't been very successful in building judicial systems." It's true. I think one of the main reasons is cultural. Unlike central banks and finance ministries, judicial systems involve cultural norms. We come from an AngloSaxon culture that places a high priority on the rule of law. But that's not always the case in other cultures. Some cultures have other ways to resolve their differences other than in a court of law, which makes it difficult to build a functioning judicial system in those countries.

Q: Did you say earlier that senior military officers had been purged because of human rights violations?

MCMULLEN: That's right. In addition to the Truth Commission, the peace accords called for the creation of an Ad Hoc Commission that would identify members of the military who had committed human rights abuses. The Ad Hoc Commission was supposed to identify the bad actors in the military, including members of the High Command. Many observers at that time thought the Ad Hoc Commission would identify some lower ranking military personnel but leave the upper ranks of the officer corps untouched. To its credit, the Ad Hoc Commission identified more than 100 members of the military as human rights abusers, including all but one member of the High Command, El Salvador's equivalent of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Ad Hoc Commission report represented an unprecedented blow against the impunity that El Salvador's military had enjoyed since its inception. Military leaders were shocked and angry. For a period of time it seemed like the fate of the peace process was in the balance. Fortunately, we had good visibility on the military's reactions to the Ad Hoc Commission's report. This was a critical juncture when having U.S. military advisers in the barracks really paid dividends. While the upper levels of the military were outraged and unhappy with the report, junior officers and the rank and file were much less upset. For junior officers, they understood that the removal of more senior officers would provide head room for their own advancement.

Q: Did you think the military might mount a coup?

MCMULLEN: We didn't think so, but we couldn't be absolutely certain. Tensions in senior ranks of the military reached a boiling point in the fall of 1992, when there were constant coup rumors. We consulted closely with President Cristiani and his aides in monitoring the mood in the barracks and in the upper ranks of the officer corps. Our main goal was to make sure there was no backsliding, and that the military fully implemented its part of the peace process. In the face of these coup rumors, our chargé d'affaires, Pete Romero, requested that General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, come to El Salvador and meet with the High Command. There were only a few people on our side in the meeting: Colin Powell, our chargé, defense attaché, military group commander and myself as note-taker. It was a dramatic meeting and it proved to be a decisive turning point. Powell allowed each member of the High Command to speak, beginning with General René Ponce, the minister of defense. They talked for about an hour; it was more of a venting session than a conversation. The Salvadoran generals complained that they were being mistreated, asserting they had fought the communist FMLN guerrillas on our behalf and now we were throwing them under the bus. They claimed that it wasn't fair; the charges against them were false. Finally, Colin Powell said, "Gentlemen, I want to tell you that sometimes as a military officer you have to do things that you don't agree with but it's best for your country. And now is one of those times." Without offering an opinion on the validity of the Ad Hoc Commission's charges against the generals, Powell

essentially told them they had to step down. It was an appeal to their patriotism and professionalism. In closing the meeting, General Ponce said, “I understand.” He had tears in his eyes; he knew the gig was up.

Following a face-saving interval, General Ponce and the other generals stepped down, as did other officers who had been identified as human rights abusers in the Ad Hoc report. This marked a milestone in the peace process. The military also fulfilled its commitment to downsize its forces and to demobilize the counterinsurgency battalions that had been cited for human rights abuses, such as the Atlacatl Battalion. These were not easy actions, and all of us feared the military might balk at some point. Fortunately, there was enough momentum and external pressure to keep the peace process on track.

Q: How about the political side? Wasn’t it a conservative government in charge?

MCMULLEN: We did have some political concerns as well. While coup rumors were the most worrisome issue in late 1992 and early 1993, we were also concerned about hardline elements in the ruling ARENA party. President Cristiani represented the moderate wing of the party, which had gained ascendance after the death of Roberto D’Aubuisson, founder of ARENA and a leader of the death squads early in the war. In an apparent deathbed conversion, D’Aubuisson had thrown his support for the peace agreement, which was signed shortly before his death. Yet, even with D’Aubuisson out of the picture, there were still hardliners in ARENA who opposed the peace process. We were concerned that these hardliners might goad disgruntled elements of the military into staging a coup. Another concern was that some ARENA hardliners might resort to the use of death squads to torpedo the peace process. So again we worked with President Cristiani and his allies in the party to make sure that things didn’t go off the rails. Cristiani was a pragmatist and a savvy politician; and he assured us that he had things under control with the military and hardliners in his party.

Q: What about the guerrillas? Were they carrying through with their commitments?

MCMULLEN: For their part, FMLN forces remained in their cantonment camps as the disarmament and demobilization process moved forward. As part of our monitoring process, I visited the UN-run cantonment camps throughout the country. While we shared the FMLN’s concerns about the possibility of a coup or a resurgence of death squad activity, we nevertheless pressed the guerrilla leaders to follow through with their own commitments. For instance, we pressed them about reports that FMLN units might be trying to hide some of their armaments— 57 RPG rockets, rifles, and other materiel, presumably as an insurance policy in case the government did not comply with its commitments.

Q: Where was the UN in all of this? Did you coordinate with UN officials on the ground?

MCMULLEN: My main contact in ONUSAL's military department was a Brazilian commander, Colonel Romeo, who was very astute. In fact, most of the ONUSAL observers that I met had a solid understanding of the broader political context in which they were working. They also had good visibility on the FMLN's internal dynamics, much like we had with respect to the government and military. Though they sometimes needed a nudge, ONUSAL officials generally tried to hold the FMLN leadership's feet to the fire. This was important because the UN had more leverage with FMLN leaders, just as we had more leverage with Salvadoran government officials and military leaders. Once we got past demobilization and disarmament, which was the most difficult stage for the FMLN, the two sides began preparations for national elections in the spring of 1994.

Our job now shifted towards the political sphere; we wanted to ensure free and fair elections. We worked with the UN to insist on a level playing field that would allow the FMLN to compete fairly in the elections. This was more complicated than it sounds because there was still a lot of hostility among Salvadorans toward the FMLN. Many Salvadorans, fairly or unfairly, blamed the FMLN for the violence that they had suffered over the past 15 years. In terms of the elections, we were hoping that a moderate would win the ARENA presidential nomination. This would ensure that if ARENA won the election, a moderate would continue the pragmatic policies that Cristiani had pursued. In the end, ARENA nominated a Cristiani ally and moderate, Armando Calderón Sol, who went on to win the election. This provided the continuity needed to maintain support for the peace process, which was our main goal.

Q: Towards the end of your tour, were you doing mainly political reporting?

MCMULLEN: Yes. For the most part my reporting focused on ARENA's prospects and strategy in the 1994 elections. I also did quite a bit of reporting on how the military was adjusting to the post-war reforms. Under the terms of the peace agreement the military had to downsize and restructure its forces; 40 percent of the newly-reconstituted military was to be made up of former FMLN guerrillas; the Army's controversial counterinsurgency battalions had to be disbanded; and anyone charged with human rights abuses were to be purged from the armed forces. Also, former members of the military and FMLN who were demobilized were to receive vocational and technical training so that they could integrate into the economy. USAID was the main provider of this training. Despite periodic concerns in Washington about the possibility of the military balking at these reforms, the peace process stayed on track.

After the Ad Hoc Commission identified the senior officers to be purged from the military, there was less likelihood of a coup because mid-level and junior officers were promoted into the positions that the more senior officers were forced to vacate. For the remaining officers, there was no incentive in mounting a coup. Again, we had good sources of information that allowed us to monitor the military's reaction to the reforms. The other major issue that I reported on was the mood of hardliners in ARENA. We knew that many hardliners were unhappy with the peace agreement, particularly the integration of the FMLN into the political process. As elections approached, there was concern in Washington that right-wing elements might revive the death squads in order to torpedo the peace process. So I was tapped to meet with several ARENA members who were suspected of having financed the death squads in the early years of the war. The most surprising thing was that these guys did not fit the image of mafia-type thugs that I had imagined; they were well-dressed, well-spoken and well-educated, some at schools in the United States. Based on my conversations with them, it was clear that these former suspected death squad financiers had been sidelined by the course of events. They had lost the power struggle inside ARENA; Cristiani's allies, pragmatists and moderates, were now in charge of the party. The hardliners were isolated and had lost their main ally when Roberto D'Aubuisson died; they were not in any position to mount another death squad campaign.

While it was a bit disturbing to meet with guys who had a lot of blood on their hands, it was important for us to know where they were in the bigger picture. The stakes were high for the fate of the peace process. It was a fascinating time to be a political officer. And it was interesting from a personal point of view because I was bearing witness to the peaceful resolution of a brutal war that I had followed almost from the outset. I was watching a country trying to find its way forward, trying to end the zero-sum politics that had contributed to the war.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARK SILVERMAN
USAID
Director and Acting and Deputy Chief of Mission
El Salvador
(2001-2006)

Mr. Silverman was born in Boston, Massachusetts and moved to Los Angeles in his childhood. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1965. He was educated at San Fernando State College and Ohio University. He volunteered for the Peace Corps in Afghanistan before entering the U.S. Foreign Service in 1976. He worked in various positions for USAID in Afghanistan, Egypt, Peru,

Washington D.C., Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Mr. Silverman was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – Election Integrity Reform and U.S.-El Salvador Relations

Q: When it is convenient can you please give us a context when you arrived in El Salvador. What was the political situation? What was the situation in terms of stability and the size of your portfolio?

SILVERMAN: Well, when I arrived people were still feeling very uncomfortable with the impact of the earthquakes. Two massive earthquakes took place, the first on January 13 and the second on February 13, but in addition there were more than 2,400 aftershocks over several months and people were decidedly nervous. It was an uncomfortable period for many, but the Flores government was working pretty effectively with the donor community, in terms of immediate response to the earthquakes. ARENA, the right of center political party, governed while the ex-guerilla group, FMLN, was in the opposition.

Q: Who was the president at the time?

SILVERMAN: Francisco Flores was president. He studied at Amherst and Harvard and spoke fluent English without any accent. His Vice President was Carlos Quintanilla Schmidt, who was a banker and lawyer in San Salvador. Flores and Schmidt introduced the use of the U.S dollar as the official currency of the country and that policy decision led to reduced interest rates and increased trade.

We returned to San Salvador on September 9th, and on the 11th the United States was attacked, and the entire U.S. mission was in shock. The Embassy held an event for all the staff in memory of the many lives lost on September 11th and President Flores came to the embassy and stood next to our ambassador to pay his and his nation's respects. The Flores government's show of solidarity with the United States was greatly appreciated by everyone at post.

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Notwithstanding our major focus on responding to the earthquakes, after September 11 President Flores decided to implement a national identity card program and requested U.S. support. I spent many hours identifying available local currency funding opportunities and establishing acceptable performance standards for the national registry office which was responsible for developing and implementing the high security identification card system. This represented a significant step forward in establishing a secure national identity document but the process of establishing centers around the country with adequately trained staff, maintaining high standards in the implementation of the program was complex and required a great deal of monitoring and oversight. In the first year over 700,000 cards were issued which provided a more reliable and accountable document for border security. Thanks to USAID's support, over the next several years almost three million secure identity cards were issued which

provided the basis for election security in the next presidential election.

During this time an extraordinary event involving USAID took place in San Salvador. The National Assembly of El Salvador decided to publicly recognize USAID's contribution to El Salvador's development by having a formal ceremony at the Assembly's headquarters. At that event political parties across the political spectrum approved a document recognizing USAID El Salvador as a noble friend of El Salvador. I was asked to represent the agency at the event and received a formal certificate acknowledging our exceptional work and delivered a note of thanks to the entire Assembly. After the event was finished Shafiq Handal, who was the leader of the ex-guerilla group's faction in the assembly, approached me and wanted to shake my hand and thank me for USAID's assistance to the National Assembly and for the response to the earthquakes. It was an emotional experience for me and the USAID team and a wonderful demonstration of how people from different political persuasions could come together.

Access to decision makers is a large part of being successful in what we do. Prior to El Salvador I had never had any experience with the President or Vice President's office reaching out to me or the First Lady's office calling me for assistance for social programs. In the Flores administration his Vice President often reached out to join me on field trips and I accompanied the First Lady on several field visits to celebrate and review social and health programs we were supporting. Dr. Juan Jose Daboub, who was both chief of staff to the President and Minister of Finance, was an outstanding minister who worked closely with the U.S. mission and sought out assistance from USAID in a variety of areas, ranging from earthquake reconstruction to improving the collection of taxes. He went on to become Managing Director of the World Bank. The United States was in a unique position to be helpful to El Salvador in its development efforts because of the strong bilateral relationship and because USAID had host country owned local currency funds built up over the years from various programs and we were able to respond quickly to support well thought out programs. This relationship caused me to carefully thread the needle, as the ministers would often reach out to me for assistance, and I then had to brief Ambassador Likins before responding to any minister's request.

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SILVERMAN: I was proud of all of the work that went into this demonstration of what USAID could accomplish in support of our foreign policy objectives. Throughout the program's implementation, we conducted many visits to the field with our Salvadoran counterparts to show the benefits of our joint efforts, including visits by Presidents Flores and Saca and the local press regularly covered USAID's visits to the field in support of El Salvador's development.

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SILVERMAN: After the successful presidential elections of 2004 Tony Saca and his

team entered the picture. What was unique for me was having a Vice President and a Foreign Minister who were once FSNs working with USAID San Salvador. The new Vice President, Anna Vilma de Escobar, worked on export promotion activities at USAID for ten years and I believe Francicso Lainez, the Foreign Minister, worked in the program office. Imagine how easy it was for them to pick up the phone and want to meet with me and offer ideas for additional assistance. They understood what USAID could and could not do and, in that regard, we had two key interlocutors who valued USAID as a partner. Working with both terrific people was challenging but rewarding and together we made great strides in expanding export promotion and agricultural diversification efforts in El Salvador, reaching many small enterprises. Shortly after the new government took office CAFTA was signed with important labor and environmental protections and new opportunities for jobs and trade growth.

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SILVERMAN: During this period, we had an important USAID and State Department high level visit to El Salvador. State's Director of Policy Planning and USAID's Assistant Administrator for Policy Planning wanted to look at USAID programs to better understand how diplomacy and development go together. We put together an extensive program, impressing both Washington leaders with how USAID used scarce resources in democracy programs for example (5,200 mediation cases resolved the prior year as well as the successful launch of secure national identity cards for election integrity) and economic growth initiatives using targeted technical assistance (tax reform, small business development and agriculture promotion) to leverage policy, promote competitiveness and create new economic opportunities. The briefings which described the linkage between USAID funded programs and U.S. national security interests left the delegation impressed with USAID's ability to contribute to foreign policy objectives. The State Policy Planning director helped develop the foreign assistance reform initiative under Secretary Rice.

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SILVERMAN: I was honored to be nominated for promotion to career minister but missed the mark by one. More importantly to me, just before my departure from post, I received a special award from the President of El Salvador for strengthening the bonds of friendship between the United States and El Salvador and for my work in helping the people of El Salvador. This award is framed and proudly sits on the wall of my den office. Notwithstanding the tragic set of occurrences associated with the natural disasters that occurred in El Salvador, without question my job as USAID Director in El Salvador was the best job I had in my entire USAID career. Working with such a talented staff, and with host country counterparts who were generally first rate was an experience of a lifetime and one that I will always remember.

ESTONIA

N/A

GEORGIA

N/A

GERMANY

N/A

GHANA

N/A

GRENADA

N/A

GUATEMALA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES MICHEL
U.S. Ambassador
Department of State
Guatemala
(1987–1989)

James Michel was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended Harris Junior College and graduated from St. Louis University. After completing law school, he joined the U.S. Department of State's Office of the Legal Adviser and later served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. In 1987, he became U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala and, in 1990, Acting Administrator for Latin American Affairs at the United States Agency for International Development. He subsequently served as U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Throughout his career, he focused on democracy promotion and economic development in the Western Hemisphere and beyond. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 21, 2005.

Topical Focus – Political Instability, Coup Attempts, and U.S. Support for Democratic Governance and Economic Development in Guatemala

Q: Can you describe two things: the situation in Guatemala in October when you arrived, and then we'll talk about what were American concerns.

MICHEL: There were two things going on in Guatemala. One was there had been a constitutional convention, a constituent assembly, and they had adopted a new constitution. There had been an election. The winner of that election, a Christian Democrat. Vinicio Cerezo, is somebody who had spent a lot of time in the Washington area, knew a lot of people in Congress, and in his campaign promises and in his discussions in Washington, he talked a lot about human rights, democracy, opportunity for poor people. A lot of this and a lot of his government was viewed with cynicism by established powers in Guatemala both in the private sector and in the military who had left not like Argentina, a defeated army. They had won their war.

Q: Their war being against the...

MICHEL: The poor people in their country. And there was still a small force of armed insurgents out there in the countryside when I was there. I think was '96 when they finally signed the peace agreement. But it was hard to find a thousand of them, and I think there were just enough of them that the army could retain power and resources and it wasn't a serious threat to the country. So you had this internal fragility politically with an elected government. There were jokes like, "The president's mother was very happy when he was elected president because at last he had a

job." That was one of the jokes they told. There was not a lot to building on here, and the people who came into government included some who were very good and others who were more part of the political party apparatus rather than people who had real capability at governance. So it was a pretty mixed picture. Good presidents in the central bank, you had a good minister of economy, finance minister was pretty good, agricultural minister was pretty good, but some not so good, and some of the immediate staff, pretty political, less public spirited you might say. There was weakness in the performance of the government that justified some of the criticism, so this was an ongoing situation. The other situation was the *Contadora* process of the Central Americans under the leadership of Oscar Arias in Costa Rica at the time, saying, "Let's, we Central Americans, get together and see if we can work for peace in this region because it's not in any of our interest to have this conflict going." By that time it was largely Nicaragua, a little bit El Salvador, but mainly Nicaragua by that time. So Guatemala was very interested in that, and you had one of the meetings in this process had just occurred when I got there. It was Esquipulas which is a town in Guatemala where they drew up some ideas about peace in Central America. Washington wasn't too keen on all of this.

Q: Yea. I was going to ask about that. It's one of these things, "Well, if it isn't our idea, it should be." Typical Washington response.

MICHEL: "We're not in control. We don't know what these guys will do." There was that in Washington. Fortunately for me, we then had a series of people who were regional ambassadors that the president had named.

Q: This was...

MICHEL: This was President Reagan at the time. But just a small aside of how we can confuse people, my predecessor in Guatemala was named Piedra, and *piedra* is "stone" in Spanish. President Reagan appointed former senator from Florida, Dick Stone, to be the Central America ambassador to the utter confusion of some Guatemalans who had to deal with Piedra and Stone! [laughter] Anyway, so there was that regional diplomacy that was done, and I didn't have to be too responsible for that dimension of it and could concentrate more on bilateral issues trying to encourage the strengthening of a democratic state and a diversifying economy that created some jobs and expanded health and education systems. We had a hundred fifty million dollar aid program. There was no World Bank program because they were in arrears to the World Bank. There was no IMF program because they had not fulfilled their commitments to the IMF. So we were the economic policy dialogue partner about issues of exchange rates, interest rates - macro-economic policy issues. We were big in Guatemala.

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Q: Tell me about the two coup attempts. What happened, and what were our reactions?

MICHEL: In both cases you had some people in the private sector and some people in the army who had delusions that everybody was going to rally around and this civilian government was so weak and corrupt and unreasonable that it didn't deserve to stay in office. I'm sure that there were promises made and maybe payments made to some of the military officers who led these

adventures. The military command—the high command—and the minister of defense held firm. In the second one it was nasty because the coup plotters came to the Defense Minister's home and took his wife hostage. A nasty thing to do. They didn't have to go after families. And then they released her. But both failed. I was out there very visible with TV cameras and making absolutely clear where the U. S. stood, working the phones with Washington to get an OAS resolution adopted on the second one. The first one was over so fast. I remember some critics and analysts in Washington speculating that the first one was not a real coup but it was something that people wanted to get attention, that they were feeling neglected, that they didn't expect to really take over the country, but they were like the missile tests from North Korea: Pay attention now, please. I don't know. I have no knowledge of that. We had no pre-knowledge in either case that these were happening. These were both surprises to me, and I wondered about why that was, but we had no inkling that either of these was coming, and we reacted immediately and firmly and clearly and publicly, and I think that was a useful thing in making that go away. One of the...

Q: This is Tape 4, Side 1 with Jim Michel.

MICHEL: One small irony relates to the invitation to the heads of the democratic political parties to come to breakfast with the vice president of the United States, an invitation that added to their stature a little bit. One of them turned out to be the next president of Guatemala who really perpetrated the most serious constitutional challenge when he tried to dismiss the congress following the lead of his Peruvian counterpart. The political forces rallied around and asked him to leave, and that was the end of it, but he did, unfortunately, create a more serious constitutional challenge than either of the coup attempts had caused.

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MICHEL: Right. If you are a career person on the inside, you have the opportunity within the bureaucracy in the State Department to contribute to the statement of the U. S. objectives for the country to which you are being assigned and, indeed, to draft those objectives and offer them up to people who send them up through the chain of command. If you're informed and reasonable, you pretty much will see back in the letter from the Secretary of State the objectives that you suggested. In Guatemala we had a very extensive list of things that we were looking at in a country that was going through a very difficult transition. The military had left; the civilians had arrived. But it was in a very unstable situation: two coup attempts while I was there. I went back, and I looked at the checklist that I had prepared after I returned that tried to reduce the country team action plan to an unclassified document I could keep. It is a generic document that just lists the subjects without saying what we were doing about any of them, but I thought it might be useful to mention the main headings of what we were trying to address as a country team. It illustrates a couple of things. One is I think it was somewhat intrusive of us to be interested in all of these things, and the other is that I think it was done in the best spirit of advancing U. S. interests by finding common interests with our neighboring countries where we have something of a shared destiny. Let me read off a couple of the main headings: One was "Preservation and Institutional Development of Democracy." This is from 1987, not last week, which had several things in it: Improved performance by the public sector. That's electoral process, legislative, judicial, executive, military, local government; two, support for democratic process from various

sectors of society and moderation of distrust between sectors—business, labor, etc., religious community, political party, media. And third, under that heading of "Preservation and Institutional development and Democracy" was respect for and protection of human rights. Second main area was equitable broadly based economic growth. We wanted to encourage adherence to sound economic polities, expand non-traditional exports, increase access to and effective use of capital (domestic and international), efficient and effective provision of social services, infrastructure, and preservation of the environment. So these were all things that we were interested in. Agricultural activity. Growth of tourism. Access to land. The third area was to encourage the local government to support democratic values and objectives in relations with their neighbors including the United States, to have a positive image of the United States, to persuasively inform and explain U. S. government positions and seek agreement on similar way of looking at these issues, to eliminate the capacity of the conflict to impede political, economic, and social progress, to work on supporting local efforts to eliminate narcotics, trafficking, and cultivation and, of course, finally, to manage the mission in an efficient way and in a secure environment. So this was a very broad agenda!

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Latin America Bureau, Office of Central American Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Guatemala
(1995–2000)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Human Rights, Peace Accord Implementation, and Post-Conflict Challenges in Guatemala

Q: When you were at Columbia, did you continue to focus on Latin America and Central America?

LEVINE: Very much so. In fact, I had an internship at Americas Watch (now Human Rights Watch). I focused on the work of the UN human rights rapporteur's record in Guatemala. We found that rather than independently investigate human rights, the human rights rapporteur was really playing a diplomatic role and became, at times, a defender of the government of Guatemala's record, as opposed to a rapporteur. I contributed a chapter to a report called "Four Failures," which critiqued four different country rapporteurs, who Human Rights Watch felt had strayed from their mandate of an independent report. (Four Failures: A Report on the UN Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights in Chile, Guatemala. Iran and Poland, Americas Watch, Asia Watch and Helsinki Watch, 1986).

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I worked with Stacy Rhodes, first in D.C. and then when he became mission director in Guatemala as the peace accords were being signed and then implemented. A lawyer, Peace Corps volunteer and program development officer, Stacy shared with me his strong commitment to development, human rights and bringing people together. We spent time in meetings, cab rides, field trips and more than the occasional baseball game, talking about politics, foreign policy, development and leadership. We still talk about his "dream team" in Guatemala where every officer director went on to become mission director in several USAID posts: Hilda "Bambi" Arellano, Kim and Tom Delaney, Beth Hogan, Deborah Kennedy-Iraheta, Liz Warfield and Ken Yamashita to name a few.

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In Guatemala, I joked with her on sharing "one of Beth Hogan's best days" as I accompanied Administrator Atwood on a visit to support early peace accord implementation. As head of the mission's DG office, key parts of the peace accords fell across Beth's portfolio and we attended three site visits where Brian underscored strong US support for the process, acknowledging publicly policy mistakes of the past including the 1954 coup. I recall his visit to the parliament where USAID was helping to strengthen its function while broadening its reach to indigenous communities. Brian was impressed by the recent election of indigenous women, whose dedication speech moved Brian to throw his arm around her for a picture, apologizing that he couldn't vote for her.

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Q: Given the high profile of Central America, could you talk a little bit about the interagency process more generally on Central America. Were there any unique twists for individual countries?

LEVINE: When it came to the interagency process, probably the area of greatest concern was the justice sector. This had to do with the salience of the human rights issues at the time as well as the fact that we had a crowded field when it came to administration of justice and police training programs. For example, in Guatemala, we had—in fits and starts—worked in the justice sector with USAID generally working with prosecutors, the local bar, advocacy organizations and also ICITAP (International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program) coming in from the Department of Justice with very

different operating models. USAID was much more focused on an institutional reform roadmap. ICITAP, on the other hand, favored a "train and equip" model, without (by our lights) the attention to long-term institutional reform.

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Q: This is Carol Peasley, and it is March 2, 2022, and this is interview number two with Neil Levine.

And Neil, when we finished up our initial conversation last week we were talking about your responsibilities as the deputy director of the Office of Central American Affairs. Before leaving our discussions of Central America, I am wondering if in retrospect, were there any things that you think we could or should have done differently? Any thoughts you might have on that subject, looking at it twenty years later.

LEVINE: Yeah. It's a really tough question, what we would have done differently because it suffers from sort of 20/20 hindsight, as well as I don't know that we had a solution at the time, had we the will or the resources to implement it. I think there were two issues that still plague us looking back. If you think about a region that was in conflict and really a highly ideological split over issues of power and haves and have nots in a landed class was particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala and to some extent in Honduras, Nicaragua a different kind of governance model. But with all the reform and the millions of dollars, we really did not fully address the insecurity around justice, law and human rights. And I think it wasn't for lack of trying. I think there were investments, there was, you know, some very important both legal reform and land reform, whether it was deep enough or thoroughgoing enough, it did seem to create a power vacuum that, while it wasn't an ideological conflict, the susceptibility to criminal syndicates, armed groups, irregular forces kind of moved into that power vacuum. And that continues to create the kind of insecurity that is at the heart of the refugee flows today. That's one.

The other part is the economic piece, which, you know, looking back in the eighties and nineties, I believe it's the case, I couldn't swear to this, and I'm not an economist, but the region always sustained high levels of growth, and while I was paying attention to this, a lot of it could have been attributable to kind of pent up demand post-conflict, that once the countries were at peace and there was free flow of goods and access, more people had access to incomes, demand increased and the economy grew. But it was unequal growth, and I think, so, that's why it's a hard question, what we would have done differently, because we hadn't solved the issue of equity and equitable growth or a broad base. We had some theories and hypotheses, but I think there were really—what was called for was a real transformation. And I would think that you would find in looking back that the governance bargain in Guatemala between those who have and those who have not is still essentially the same. And so, in terms of addressing poverty and long-term prosperity when so much of the populace is locked out of the political life of the country is still a problem that we have not addressed in a thorough way. And there's a question in my mind of whether any external actor can do that.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

TODD AMANI
USAID
Democratic Initiatives Office Director
(2001-2004)
Deputy Mission Director
(2004-2007)
Guatemala
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Todd Amani studied at Wartburg College and then proceeded to join the Peace Corps. While in the Peace Corps he was paralyzed, leading him to instead complete his graduate studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS. He joined USAID in 1990. He served in a number of postings while at USAID including, Egypt, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Todd Amani retired in 2014 and was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – Corruption, Human Rights, and Democracy in Guatemala

Q: Excellent, thank you I'm so glad you provided that, that's very helpful.

So we're now going to proceed to your next assignment, right?

AMANI: I guess so. This is going back to Guatemala, right? I wanted to pick up where we left off. I was working in Washington for a while and then went to Honduras, where the hurricane was the big issue all along but we also had some democracy issues to deal with and we had some good work done by the team there. From there I went to Guatemala and went back to being a democratic initiatives team leader. We were focusing on the issues associated with democracy in Guatemala, which unfortunately has a lot of issues to deal with in terms of having a country or a government that actually cares about its people. A lot of human rights issues and some real issues with the military which are very hard to address. We worked primarily in our portfolio of about $25 million focused on how to promote democracy, how we can really find ways to make a democracy work in Guatemala. Very difficult, frankly. We worked very closely with a number of human rights organizations and we had a lot of work around elections.

Q: What year were we talking about?

AMANI: Peace accords, the peace accord was signed

Q: Right, so just tell us the context for this country, the AID program, what was happening following the peace accords.

AMANI: Right. I moved to Guatemala at an important time for Guatemala in terms of addressing some of the issues that had been rampant in Guatemala related to a democratic system. The Peace Accords that were signed tried to address a range of issues, particularly the problems with the army but also with a number of things that needed to be addressed around the country. That created a particularly important focus for the democratic initiatives office in Guatemala at the time. George Carner was there as Mission Director – I had worked with him in Egypt briefly. We really did make an effort to support the efforts of human rights organizations to address the issues of rule of law, civil society, local governance, human rights, and to develop in some ways an understanding of what real democracy is, including educational efforts to address the needs for Guatemala to address those things I just mentioned. In particular we had a program with the government's justice system. Steve Hendricks did a lot of work with judges and connected well with people working in that system. We worked heavily with local governments, with mayors for example. A lot of focus on human rights - we worked with many human rights organizations in Guatemala. And trying to work to make sure elections were free and fair.

It was not an easy area to work on in Guatemala. There are a lot of issues to deal with. I don't know how much of a success we had but we certainly did make an effort and some very innovative programs. We provided a lot of support for organizations like the human rights organizations who were doing great work but didn't have a lot of resources. We could help them by bringing resources to the table. Eventually, (this happened after I moved from the democratic initiatives office to the deputy director position after a couple of years), there was an effort put in place that I think was particularly innovative and had some impact, and that was CICIG (*Comisión Internacional Contra Impunidad en Guatemala* – International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala) which was an anti corruption effort supported by a number of countries, not just USAID, that were providing assistance to Guatemala and recognized that human rights issues were a major problem in Guatemala. It was an effort to have an outside organization review issues of corruption in Guatemala. I can't remember seeing anything quite like this, as it brought in an international organization to help sort out and oversee issues of corruption. It didn't allow for the government to throw them out. Eventually they were thrown out, but years later. I happened to be in Guatemala when they did throw them out – but for a period of six to eight years, this outside organization CICIG played a critical role in overseeing much of what was happening in the justice sector and in elections, as well as some other areas, but mostly focused on corruption.

CICIG is the only thing that I have ever seen that I really felt like, wow, this is a process that is actually significantly addressing corruption. So much so that later, the Guatemalan elites threw them out. But for a while, there was at least something happening to address corruption, to find it and address it. I keep thinking, because corruption is such an issue in so many places, that if something like that could happen more generally, we could take a big bite out of the corruption problem. Even though, after a number of years, it got thrown out by corrupt politicians, that ceding of power, of some oversight, from an international organization, really made a difference. It's so hard to address corruption, I felt like wow, this is something we should think about more and more.

I was at that time Deputy Mission Director. I worked on a lot of things there and it was a good opportunity for me to learn how things worked in a front office. I appreciated working with George Carner very much, Glenn Anders, and later with Wayne Nielsestuen when he came in. We had worked together in Honduras during Hurricane Mitch, and he came in to be the director in Guatemala. I learned a great deal from them and we did some really good things across the portfolio. I appreciated the opportunity to work with the FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) there because they had so much to offer, we had some really good staff in Guatemala and I wanted them to be really appreciated in what they could bring to the table as we continued to work on various issues in Guatemala. Debbie Kennedy, who was the Deputy Director for some time in Guatemala during the time I was there, was also a great role model, especially given her work with democracy programming. I essentially took over from her.

That was a good opportunity for me to think about what would be my next step, what I had learned from the years in Guatemala. We had been there long enough that we had really come to love the country and appreciate the difficulties they had to deal with on the political side. But not just there, the huge importance of improving education and addressing poverty in the country. Guatemala has a special place in my heart for the time we were there, the things we did as a family in Guatemala, and the friendships that we developed there. I have a soft place in my heart for Guatemala after the years we were there.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
USAID
Mission Director
Guatemala
(1994-1998)

William Stacy Rhodes was born in Tucson, Arizona and received degrees from Occidental College and Johns Hopkins University. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia before attending U.C. Berkeley Law School. His USAID career began in 1977, and he held several positions across Latin America, Haiti, Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, and South Africa. Mr. Rhodes retired from USAID in 2001 and worked for several NGOs, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and served as Chief of Staff of the Peace Corps until 2014. William Stacy Rhodes was interviewed by John Pielemeier in 2016.

Topical Focus – USAID Democracy and Governance Programming in Guatemala - mod-1990's

Q: After some time in the Central American office, do you then move to Guatemala?

RHODES: Yes. USAID had a large program in Guatemala, though over the years it had been declining as their civil war continued on and on into the 1990s. While some progress had been made under the first (since 1954) democratically-elected government of Vinicio Cerezo, the government of Guatemala after election of President Jorge Serrano had been something of a "fracaso" (disaster). In 1993, when I was still in Washington DC, Serrano got fed up with the difficulties of democracy and actually pulled off his auto-golpe. Although he had been elected, the Congress and Supreme Court had angered him with their actions and rulings, and President Serrano decided he'd had enough of this electoral democracy stuff.

Usually a 'coup' comes from outside the presidential palace; this time it was from the inside! The constitution was suspended, the Supreme Court was dismissed, and the Congress closed. Serrano tried to rule by decree, but the Guatemalans viewed this as an insult and further embarrassment to the country. Their 'democracy' was young but a matter of pride, given the difficult past, and the people came out into the streets. The popular protests were huge, and the Constitutional Court (separate from the Supreme Court) held a special session and declared all of Serrano's dictats unconstitutional. Serrano also did not have the unified support of the military, which past dictators had depended on, and the crisis ended without much bloodshed, when Serrano negotiated his quick departure and exile.

The Congress then selected as "interim president" Ramiro de Leon Carpio, a highly respected lawyer who had been the independent human rights ombudsman. USAID/Guatemala had been supporting the foundation and development of the human rights ombudsman's office for years, and the mission had a very close, effective working relationship with de Leon Carpio. He was courageous, energetic and active, fortunately able to get broad support across the political spectrum. As a result, Guatemalan democracy was restored in 1994, with much support from the U.S. Embassy and USAID programs. In spite of many imperfections and often weak and ineffective administrations, Guatemala's democracy has done well since, with numerous consecutive elections.

It was quite exciting to then be assigned as Mission Director to Guatemala by LAC Assistant Administrator Mark Schneider, and sworn-in by Administrator Brian Atwood. I departed the HQ in January of 1994, to head up the country mission, with the family

following six months later at the end of the school year. USAID was able to work very closely with President de Leon Carpio, and we were will funded to carry out a broad and strong 'democracy and governance program', as well as the more traditional and badly needed, poverty- oriented programs. Our education and health and agriculture programs were heavily focused on the indigenous people in the highlands of Guatemala – the Mayans. Mayans were and remain a majority of the population, but have been long excluded socially and economically. Still a difficult situation in a very beautiful country.

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RHODES: Looking back, though, I would probably have to say that the highest priority focus in our Guatemala programs were the democracy-strengthening portfolio of projects. We were fortunate to be well-funded in this area. Ambassador Jim Michel and others had established the earliest programs in the administration of justice (AOJ) programs, later to be called rule of law (ROL) programs, as they expanded from strengthening courts and court systems to strengthening prosecutors' offices, investigative processes and some defender services. The program area expanded further into supporting efforts to improve the functioning of the Congress with efforts to establish committee systems and a things like a 'research service. Further, our democracy programs also evolved to do a great deal to enhance the electoral process through extending the franchise and assuring fair/transparent voting. Finally our program worked very closely with and provided support to a substantial number of Guatemalan of civil society organizations and human rights groups. The is clearly still an area of relative weakness for Guatemala, to this day, but I think it is fair to say that we did make a significant impact on the capacity of the courts, the effectiveness of the human rights ombudsman and on the public ministry's investigative and prosecutorial and trial processes. This was perhaps less due to material assistance than with the extensive training programs for judges and prosecutors, along with the staffs of these institutions.

Q: Any of the USAID staff names you want to mention?

RHODES: Sure, with pleasure. Bambi Arellano had really started up a lot of these programs, with help from the LAC bureau and the AOJ/ROL staff, as it developed during the early days of Democracy/Governance programs in Washington. In addition, when Bambi became the Deputy Director of the Mission, her second in the Democracy Office, Beth Hogan, rose quickly to the challenge and never looked back! Both were bright, dynamic, highly energetic leaders who became true experts in this field and excelled in creating proactive and effective Mission teams. Even more important was their ability to establish relationships of extraordinary trust and confidence with the Guatemalans, both in the governmental institutions and the civil society organizations we worked so closely with. Both have been true leaders of USAID in this developing field.

Q: Did you also work with good contractors, like the DOJ, right?

RHODES: Right. We had a very productive interagency agreement with the Department of Justice and used the expertise in a couple of its divisions to provide technical assistance and training to Ministry of Justice investigators and prosecutors. We also had

help working with the court system from the National Center for State Courts and several other U.S. organizations to strengthen court systems and processes, and even bringing groups of Guatemalan judges to the United States for training in evidentiary rules, trial conduct and open courtroom management. A lot of work was done to strengthen the justice system, which really has been an Achilles heel, and to some extent remains so.

I have to say that while the overall program in Guatemala was very strong, funding had definitely leveled off as many in Washington were growing impatient with the very long, drawn-out peace negotiation process. But following de Leon Carpio's time as Interim President, there was a very important national election, resulting in a "reformer", the respected mayor of Guatemala City Álvaro Arzú became President in a clear and open democratic election. This was in late 1995, and when he became president in early '96 he promised to make the peace negotiations his highest priority and get it done within one year. He achieved this with the long-awaited, heralded signing of the peace accords just after Christmas 1996. It was an amazing achievement, really. It took one year of banging heads and making significant concessions that no other president had been willing and able to achieve. Arzú was also able to rein in the Guatemalan military to a greater extent than any earlier elected civilian President, utilizing his enormous popular support. So while the new democratic 'tradition' in Guatemala had started earlier, Arzú followed up on de Leon Carpio's initiatives and built on them (and adding his own) to significantly solidify it. And while there have been ups and downs, certainly some poor presidents and some weak ones (including a couple of former generals), the military has never again taken power in Guatemala, and a civilian has been popularly elected there ever since. That is progress. And that Arzú was also able to finalize and reach closure with the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) on far-reaching peace accords, this made an enormous difference for the entire population, but especially the Mayans – it was the first real official statement or 'codification' of the rights and privileges of the Mayan majority, which had not been established constitutionally or legislatively. Now it was there in black and white. There were 10 separate 'accords', six of them were 'substantive' accords – and these were historic documents, with the force of law, laying out the policy objectives and programs the government committed itself to, in order to address social exclusion and improve the socioeconomic situation of the Mayan people.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

HILDA ARELLANO
USAID
Mission Director
Head of the Democracy and Human Rights Office
Guatemala
Guatemala City, Guatemala
(1988-1990)

Ms. Arellano was born and raised in Westfield, New Jersey. She received her Bachelor's at Cornell University and pursued Master's degrees at UT Austin and the Antioch Putney Graduate School of Education. She volunteered in Bolivia before entering the Foreign

Service as an education officer in Washington D.C. She worked for USAID in Ecuador and Guatemala and has served as a USAID Mission Director in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Iraq, and Egypt. She has also worked in Hungary, Afghanistan, and Washington D.C. Ms. Arellano was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2016.

Topical Focus – Democracy after Civil War in Guatemala

ARELLANO: Well I think the thinking was I would stay. I'd always been told, don't stay two full tours. In other words, four years at your first post. So I'd always been thinking a maximum stay of three years. But this has been the story of my career. You'll see. I've never really applied for jobs. You kind of get a phone call that there is a vacancy where they need you and about a month into the start of what have been my third year, I got a call from Guatemala and they asked if I could go head up what was the democracy and human rights office in Guatemala. This was at the time of the negotiations for the peace accords to end the civil war. It was 1990 and for the next six years, those negotiations took place. But they asked me if I would do it. We checked on the school and so we decided it was a good place for the family and we moved up to Guatemala in 1990.

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ARELLANO: For example, one of the projects that was under my purview which I coordinated very closely with them was a fiscal reform program that had to do with… Well Guatemala had one of the lowest tax payment rates, according to the IMF, in the world. The wealthy just didn't pay taxes. So you started looking at the two or three issues that really were going to kind of be the bellwethers for reform. How were we really going to assess whether the government of Guatemala was committed to change? Because it was coming out of so many years of military dictatorship and human rights abuse and abuse of every other kind and really the instruction from the administration, which was, of course, President Bush, who had… They had very good contacts with the Guatemalans but by then it was crystal clear that you didn't just, because you were dealing with the private sector, assume that the private sector of Guatemala behaved like the private sector in the United States. You were dealing with a private sector that had been allowed to, for years, operate entirely on its own terms and as a result the government was not in a position to really move certain needed reforms forward. They had fiscal issues. They had human rights issues. They had just all the development indicators were among the worst in Latin America so that was what you looked at.

good mission director and an ambassador who was really quite extraordinary.

Q: It seems that every sector of society really needed a new understanding of the appropriate role they had to play in democracy. In terms of the private sector, were you able to find partners who understood this were willing to do some of the initial things that could be used as examples? Perhaps corporate social responsibility or..?

ARELLANO: Yes, not just me. The mission had that approach. Under the direction of a very, very good mission director and an ambassador who was really quite extraordinary.

He was Thomas Stroock from Wyoming. He was a political appointee under the Bush Administration but really when he arrived he saw exactly what was going on and he knew where he wanted to make his mark was in modernizing the behavior of the Guatemalans. He told us that. That was his goal and he set about doing that in a way that…because he had the credibility and he had the support that he needed to do it. It was just a very interesting thing to be part of. We had some excellent partners in the private sector. USAID was actually able to develop some very interesting public-private partnerships. In the area of coffee production, small production coffee growers, in the area of some of the civil society strengthening and training programs with a very, very forward-looking head of a supermarket chain who saw what was happening.

And there were a lot of those kinds of relationships starting to develop among the Guatemalans which is always the most important thing. I mean, we're observers. We're not going to be able to force that reform. If we force it, we may be able to do it momentarily but then when we leave, it all goes back to square one. So it was an interesting time and again since they were negotiating the end of this 50-year civil war, there were a lot of vested interests in trying to make it work and trying to reshape institutions. Of course, what's painful as you look back, is how many of the problems still exist and also how many new issues have emerged on the horizon, you know the gangs and the violence issues that kind of set things back. I think Guatemala has always had a bit of an uphill battle.

Q: When you were there, once again, what was the most important thing you saw develop? Because sometimes it's surprising. You know you want to develop, let's say a human rights court, but it turns out that the weight of interest among the Guatemalans is somewhere else.

ARELLANO: Yeah, no I think the most… Two things happened. One of them is we had a program that supported the establishment of human rights offices throughout the country under a very forward-leaning lawyer/politician who eventually became president of the country. Ramiro de León Carpio, at that time he was the Human Rights Ombudsman, which was part of this new constitutional look after the military dictatorships. He was a very, very courageous individual. Looking at it the way I looked at it at that time, extremely courageous. I traveled all over the country with him to some of the areas where human rights observers who they had in each of these locations, very often they were being killed. They were putting their lives at risk on a daily basis. So watching those offices take shape, some of them you'd say okay, they're in an area where there wasn't that much tension but some of them were in parts of the country where there was tremendous tension, particularly with the Guatemalan military and paramilitary because there were a lot of paramilitary forces throughout the country still. A lot of arms and a lot of just stuff left over from the civil war. So that was one.

The other was, of course, when he became president. I think it was a signal that people, his image and what he projected, really had captured the attention of the people as a way they wanted the country to be projected. And again, I go back to the private sector. There were some excellent people to work with in the private sector. I mean just top-notch and

the country is so productive and so wealthy in terms of its creativity and productivity that really you saw that the private sector, you know really a modernized private sector, could have a major impact. So I'd say those two things gave you hope for the future but again, having worked in Guatemala before I got there, because I had worked with this World Bank program also in Guatemala at a time when it was very, very dangerous in the early eighties. You know you were just glad to see these kinds of lights at the end of the tunnel and just hope that they could hold on to it.

Q: Was this also a moment when, in general, USAID was also trying to increase the role of women in all of these fields who might not have been as involved before?

ARELLANO: Right, exactly. I mean, we had, for example, the Central America Training Program which was again a democracy-building program after the war in El Salvador and after some of the Guatemala situation. Some of these programs actually had… We set quotas for a number of trainees that needed to be females and there were things like that throughout that filtered through all of your programs. In 1993, I went on home leave and when I was on home leave, we were coming back to Guatemala and the deputy director and mission director were both pulled off to do other things. One of them was actually pulled back to Washington after the election of Clinton to do a very important job in Washington. Another was sent to Costa Rica where he was going to be the last mission director before we closed that. So they asked me if I would come up to be deputy director. So I stopped doing that office work and then after three years but that was where you could kind of get a broader look at how we were encouraging women throughout the portfolio.

And there were women in Guatemala who felt very responsible for what they were doing and felt responsible to give back and include women in general and you saw that in some of the think tanks. I worked with a deputy minister of finance who was absolutely terrific and became instrumental in a lot of what we were dealing with. I mean you had key officials. Where we had to insist that more women be included, and the Guatemalans really liked the fact that we were insisting, was with indigenous women. When you looked at the development statistics for the country, the difference between the better-off urban and peri-urban versus the indigenous was startling. The urbanites were able to move forward with a certain dynamism, with employment opportunities and income generation opportunities. But in rural areas there was just a tremendous amount of violence against women. Some of this is due to customs from previous eras, the tribes in Guatemala, which there are numerous, and further divided in so many linguistic groups, well you faced a lot of fragmentation. So the social cohesion when you tried to deal with issues like this that really addressed issues of women but one of the ways you do that is by focusing your programs. And then when the peace talks really looked like they would be successful, and the U.S. started shaping its post-peace strategy, we made sure that we really had a major focus on, not just disadvantaged groups and isolated and marginalized groups, but also women.

GUINEA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER O. SELLAR
Program Officer
Africa Bureau
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Guinea
(1966–1968)

Peter O. Sellar was born in Connecticut and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in American History and Literature and later completed a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. After joining USAID in 1963 as a Management Intern, he served in a wide range of positions over a 30-year career, including assignments in Guinea, Liberia, and Washington. His Washington postings included senior roles in the Africa Bureau, the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Near East Bureau, and the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, where he worked on the Central America Initiative and helped develop USAID's Democracy Program. He retired in 1993 after serving as Senior Program Officer in the Office of Democratic Initiatives. Following his USAID career, he consulted on democracy and governance programs in Guyana and Nepal and authored a paper on USAID's first decade of democracy promotion. Throughout his career, he focused on program planning, democracy promotion, governance, and development policy. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on January 21, 1999.

Topical Focus – USAID Phase-Down, Vocational Training, and U.S.-Guinea Tensions under Sékou Touré

SELLAR: I was slated to go to Tunisia as Assistant Program Officer, which I was greatly looking forward to, but then, as I mentioned earlier, the Program Officer in Guinea had to be evacuated very quickly because his daughter fell out of a window and broke her back. So they needed somebody in Guinea just as I was about to go to Tunisia, and I was offered that job despite my youth and inexperience. Guinea at the time was still a big program. It was the third largest program in Africa when I got there. By the time I left it was virtually gone. It was a phase down situation, and I'm sure they never would have sent me there if the decision hadn't already been made that they were going to downgrade the program.

Q: What was the situation in Guinea?

SELLAR: We were dealing with a turbulent situation in terms of the Government and

Sekou Touré, the president.

Q: This was 1966.

SELLAR: Yes. The Chief of State was anti-American, leaning much more toward the communist side, but he was like a pendulum that swung back and forth. They would occasionally get fed up with the way the Russians were doing things and throw them out and let us back in, and then get fed up with what we were doing and throw the Peace Corps out and throw us out and let the Russians back. While I was there, we had our program and the Russians and the Chinese were also there and official relations were very frosty. Shortly after I got there, there was a staged demonstration against the U.S. because of some paranoid thought in Sekou Touré's mind that we had had something to do with his Foreign Minister having been taken off a plane in Ghana. He whipped up a mob that stormed the Ambassador's residence and terrorized his wife and small child, although they didn't hurt anybody. The people themselves, in fact, were not really hostile, they were quite friendly. This event resulted in the Ambassador being recalled to Washington on consultations for quite a while. I was moved into the residence as a resident bodyguard, because I was the only available male bachelor. We were a joint State/AID operation and all worked in the same building; the staffs of both organizations were fairly small.

Q: To guard the residence?

SELLAR: Really just somebody to make the Ambassador's wife feel a little more comfortable. Just to have a man in the house. That led to some great stories. There were other instances where the Peace Corps was thrown out at one point because they were suspected of something. The government just didn't want American people up country. So we were under house arrest for a few days. A few of us, however, were allowed to circulate and let the Peace Corps volunteers know — many of them lived in isolation — that there wasn't anything to worry about, that nobody was being hurt. Things like this kept happening and they were disruptive to the program. The Guinea government would abruptly decide that Pan Am was doing something wrong and they would kick out Pan Am and invite Aeroflot back in to basically run the Guinean airline. That happened while we were there. All these things were making it difficult to run an AID program and were reflective of tense and antagonistic political relations.

Q: What kind of program did we have; what were we doing?

SELLAR: Well, when I got there we were doing quite a bit. We had a large industrial-vocational training project that was run by the Organization for Rehabilitation and Training (ORT) so we could provide French-speaking personnel. ORT was technically a U.S. organization but in reality got its staff from Northern Africa and Europe. This was a very important project because it was about the only thing in the country that managed to fix things. Electrical, air conditioning, welding, technical level skills. All the useful things, maintenance of heating units, etc.

Q: What did you do in agriculture?

SELLAR: We had research stations upcountry staffed by Peace Corps volunteers. When the Peace Corps was thrown out, we terminated that project. I can't remember anything else in agriculture.

Q: What kind of training did you have?

SELLAR: We had a large training program - 400 to 500 people. We were under pressure to finish it. I spent a lot of time working to phase it down and out so that the people who were training in the U.S. to replace expatriate instructors would come back. We would schedule a year's overlap and then the expatriate would leave. Then we had to bring in technical assistance again.

Q: How did you find the Guinean people to work with?

SELLAR: They were nice to work with. They are very nice people. The problem was that because of the poor political relations between the governments, it was risky for them to become too friendly. So there was virtually no social contact with them.

There was one exception. We had a USIA-sponsored jazz band come through. A big Guinean crowd turned out for that, despite any risks. There was a resident USIA person, but one of my Assistant Program officers had a large house, a perfect spot for entertaining, and we invited a lot of people to a reception after the concert. About a hundred Guineans came. But other than for something like that we didn't see them.

Q: And the living conditions there?

SELLAR: They were okay. The most important thing was just to make sure you had air conditioning. It was so humid all the time. I had a good experience there. There were highs and there were lows. A lot of it depended on the status of my love life, and on which weather cycle we were in. When it wasn't raining all the time, you could get outside and play tennis and sail and take boat trips for weekend swimming and picnics to a nearby island with a lovely beach. It was harder when these activities were shut down during the rainy season.

Q: Any particular crisis or issues?

SELLAR: There was continuous crisis.

Q: Describe some of the crisis that occurred. Were you under instructions to phase down the program?

SELLAR: We knew we weren't going to get money for any new projects. We'd only get money for continuing projects as long as those projects were able to function. The policy context was clear. One time I went to some lengths to get approval for one individual to

go for training back in the States, and sent in strong justification for that. It was approved and then we got a note back from the Office Director in Washington saying "Don't ever do that again."

Q: Were there any kinds of linkups with economic policy changes at all?

SELLAR: If so, that had happened long before I got there. Nobody was attempting to do it during my tenure, though I did have an economist on my staff when I first arrived. But she wasn't really policy-oriented, and the position was eliminated when she left.

Q: PL 480 , were you programming that as well?

SELLAR: We were, and we didn't do that in any enormously coherent strategic way. There just wasn't that much interest, given the fact that we were phasing down the program.

GUYANA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MOSINA H. JORDAN
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
and State Department
Director of the Regional Caribbean Program
Mission to Guyana
Guyana
(1995)

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

Topical Focus – Addressing Intimidation Threats and Fraudulent Elections

Q: OK, well let's talk about the program in Guyana. I mean what was the situation? What was the government and what was going on there in '95?

JORDAN: Guyana is located on the coast of South America, with Surinam to the east, Brazil to the south and southwest and Venezuela to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Although Guyana is part of the Anglophone Caribbean, it's one of the few countries that's part of South America. The official language is English, although the majority of the population speaks Guyanese Creole. Guyana has a population of approximately 765,000 people, 51% Indo-Guyanese, 42% Afro-Guyanese, 4% Amerindians and the remainder, Europeans, Chinese and Portuguese. Guyana was originally colonized by the Netherlands, and later, it became a British colony.

The 20th century saw a rise in consciousness among the country's ethnic groups and a struggle for political power between the disenfranchised, non-white class and the old plantocracy. The British responded to demands for reforms by establishing suffrage in 1950 and allowing the formation of political parties. Rival parties emerged based along ethnic lines, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) led by Cheddi Jagan, a Marxist Indo-Guyanese, and the People's National Congress (PNC) led by Linden Forbes Burnham, a leftist Afro-Guyanese. Burnham was the first prime minister at independence in 1966, winning a contentious election in December 1964. I read that Cheddi Jagan, the prime minister at the time had to be forcibly removed from office, because he wouldn't accept the election results. Burnham's two decades of authoritarian rule, firmly established control over Guyana's political and economic life. Intimidation and threats

accompanied fraudulent elections. As opposition to the government increased, the government responded with retaliation and violence. Nationalized industries and financial institutions led to decline in productivity and economic stagnation and decline. Quality of life deteriorated - there were frequent blackouts, shortages in rice and sugar, basic staples and unprecedented emigration of skilled professionals. Three factors that kept the economic decline from becoming a disaster was the flourishing illegal economy, remittances that Guyanese citizens received from relatives abroad and Guyana's near self sufficiency in food production. In 1981, USAID under the Reagan Administration terminated its development assistance program in Guyana.

Burnham died in 1985 and Desmond Hoyte, vice president became the new executive president. In 1980, a new constitution shifted power from the prime minister to the executive president. In the 1985 elections, Hoyte won by 79% of the vote. Hoyte developed an economic recovery plan, negotiated with the IMF and World Bank new loans in exchange for free-market reforms and reversed Burnham's nationalization policies. Hoyte expecting to win the 1992 elections based on the improving economy and free market reforms, lost to Cheddi Jagan who after 40 years renounced his past Marxist policies and embraced elements of the free-market economy.

A new Guyana program was developed to support Guyana's free-market reforms. We started initially in Barbados looking at ways to re-engage in Guyana by exploring improvements in the justice system, in the management of their trade and export program, and in constructing a new drainage system in a section of Georgetown, and in constructing a new power supply grid. In January 1995, I relocated to Guyana, selected an office building, staffed the office, bought and installed equipment and furniture, and implemented the program. Three months after my arrival, I became very ill. The doctors at the Guyana Hospital misdiagnosed my medical problem and after a month of tests and re-tests, my condition became severe, and I was medevaced to a hospital in Miami with pneumonia. I remained in Miami for three weeks and retuned to Guyana to pack out and depart for Washington, D. C.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NELSON C. LEDSKY
Consular/Economic Officer
Georgetown (1959-1961)

Ambassador Ledsky was born in Cleveland, Ohio and was educated at Case Western Reserve University and Columbia University. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1957, serving in Georgetown, Guyana; Enugu, Nigeria; Bonn and Berlin, Germany and in the State Department in Washington. In his various assignments he was closely involved in matters concerning the status of Berlin and West Germany as well as on the persistent Greece-Turkey conflict over Cyprus. Among his other assignments, the Ambassador served on the Department' Policy Planning Staff. Ambassador

Ledsky was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 2003.

Topical Focus - Communism and Ethnic Influences in the Guyana Polity

Q: Why did we have a post in Georgetown?

LEDSKY: We had had a post in Georgetown for many years. While I was there, our principal function was to watch a developing communist movement, which was slowly, but surely taking over the colony. Our chief concern was that Cheddi Jagan, who was presumed to be a communist, would lead the colony to independence and into the communist camp. He did win the presidency in 1992.

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Q: While you were there, were you concerned that Castro might make some inroads in Guyana
or that it might fall to communism?

LEDSKY: I was not concerned. I saw no evidence of the "domino" theory working in that part of Latin America. I was much more concerned that the Jagan leadership would result in a disaster for Guyana, as I believe it did. I was concerned that that country, with much charm and attraction, would end up economically devastated. I did not see Guyana as a part of a vast international conspiracy, led by Castro or the Soviet Union, even though there were many indications that Cheddi Jagan was a communist who would lead the country in a communist direction. But I did not really focus on that possibility. The British, I think, were alarmed by this prospect. They spent much of the two years I was in Georgetown in devising schemes which would have kept Jagan from taking power. I think they were ready to delay independence until the "Jagan specter" was somehow disposed of or until they could devise some way to manipulate the electoral system, which would guarantee the election of a black leader, rather than an east-Asian one. They spent a lot of time on that scheme.

The Canadians were also concerned. I assume that someone in the Washington bureaucracy was concerned, but we never heard about that if it existed. The Guyanese black community was concerned, which may have also been felt by the Washington black community with which it had some close relations. All these parties were concerned about Guyana's future if Jagan rose to power.

There was racial tension in Guyana, particularly between the blacks and the Indians. It was a unique racial divide. The Chinese were not involved, because they were few in number, but quite influential. Guyana was known as the "land of six people." The six were the Amerindians (the natives), east Indians (from India and Pakistan who had been brought as indentured servants by the British during the 19th Century), the Chinese, the Portuguese (who had also been brought to Guyana in the 19th Century as indentured servants by the British), the whites and the blacks. Those were the distinct racial groups that lived in Guyana. Maps used to show Guyana as "the land of six people." The

existence of all these various racial groups was a fundamental problem and remains so today. It is today still the central political problem in that country.

The racial divide had an economic significance. The blacks were all freed from indenture in the 1840s and 1850s. They had all drifted into Georgetown, which made it essentially a black city in the mid-20th Century. The blacks occupied the civil service positions. The city's police force was almost all black. They were the aspiring middle-class. The Portuguese and Chinese were the business community; they controlled manufacturing and trade – both export-import and internal. The Indians were all in the countryside; they managed the rice and sugar plantations. They had immigrated after the liberation of the blacks at the invitation of the British; they lived apart from the blacks. They had become, in the course of the 20th Century, almost half of the population – larger by far than any other racial group. Their birthrate was much larger than that of the blacks. The Indians were perceived as the group most likely to take over the whole country and slowly but surely become the predominant political power. The statistics and the perceptions became the source of the racial tensions. Jagan was the first and only Indian leader to really emerge. He was viewed, as I have mentioned, as a dangerous threat because he was a communist – even if not controlled by Moscow – and he was an Indian. He was a Hindu. He was the leader of the Indian community. He was a new phenomenon and therefore seen as a threat by the blacks.

The Indians had become the majority community during the 20th Century. Cheddi Jagan's election was a signal that they were ready to lead the country. The fact that he was married to a Jewish woman from Chicago, who was a communist, was just another complicating factor. Her antecedents were not a major factor in the political debate, but they were noted and discussed to some extent. Guyanese politics was essentially about race, creating major tensions among the various communities. The British always felt they were sitting on a keg which would explode when they left Guyana. To some extent, that perception did come true.

HAITI

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Coordinator for Latin America
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Haiti
(1993–1995)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – U.S. Diplomacy, Human Rights, and Democratic Transition in Haiti

Q: So, you were there before the leadership was appointed.

LEVINE: Yes. It was the four of us, which gave us kind of an interesting standing because all of us had political rabbis that nobody really knew about except for the folks that hired us. It was not known to the career staff, but it wasn't known to the political staff either. So none of my political bosses at the time, Administrator Brian Atwood, LPA Assistant Administrator Jill Buckley and LAC Assistant Administrator Mark Schneider had anything to do with my appointment.

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I recall going to brief Senate Foreign Operations Subcommittee Chairman Pat Leahy (D-VT), on the human rights situation in Haiti during the mid-90s before the return of democratic rule. The people were suffering from the abusive rule of a military government and at the same time, living under U.S. sanctions that was making a bad humanitarian situation even worse. Much of Congress was skeptical about efforts to dislodge the "de facto" regime and replace it with the democratically elected government led by the exiled Jean Bertrand Aristide.

In the meeting, Leahy seemed concerned about the drift of our policy, well aware of the humanitarian crisis, but skeptical of whether the administration understood the long-term nature of its own Haiti plan and even more important, the overall impact on the foreign aid budget. Mark listened and agreed with the Senator's points while he delivered the brief for more robust diplomacy and aid, ending on a plea for support that would save people's lives. The meeting ended with a still skeptical Leahy, acknowledging the need for a change in policy.

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Q: It's interesting, the Latin American bureau has always been criticized a bit for being insular, but at the same time, it had people who spent long periods of time in the region and therefore, were very knowledgeable, which provided tremendous benefit. That balance between the two was always a tension.

LEVINE: So, yeah, you'll recognize this as really interesting, given the time you served there as the nineties were really the breakup of the old boy network that I heard about but really came to the Agency after.

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I worked with Stacy Rhodes, first in D.C. and then when he became mission director in Guatemala as the peace accords were being signed and then implemented. A lawyer, Peace Corps volunteer and program development officer, Stacy shared with me his strong commitment to development, human rights and bringing people together. We spent time in meetings, cab rides, field trips and more than the occasional baseball game, talking about politics, foreign policy, development and leadership. We still talk about his "dream team" in Guatemala where every officer director went on to become mission director in several USAID posts: Hilda "Bambi" Arellano, Kim and Tom Delaney, Beth Hogan, Deborah Kennedy-Iraheta, Liz Warfield and Ken Yamashita to name a few.

Stacy shared a love of Haiti from his service there and he introduced me to the work of Guy Malary, a Haitian lawyer and close friend, who I later got to meet when he became Justice Minister. Stacy shared the story about how he and Aaron Williams had worked to support Malary in setting up a free legal clinic in the 1980s. Stacy was excited about Malary's appointment to the Aristide government before its overthrow. Sadly, Guy Malary was assassinated in October 1993, about a month after we met at a signing ceremony restarting USAID's administration of justice program.

Port-au-Prince, Haiti
(1994-1997)

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

Topical Focus – Democracy and governance work following Aristide's return, focusing on optimism for rule of law and democratic institutions.

SINGER: I retired, as I said, "under duress" from Cameroon. We took one last African Safari on the way home. We went back to East Africa, and drove around the game areas in northern Tanzania - places we hadn't seen before. Then we came back to the U.S. Shortly after returning, I did a little consulting work. First, I worked for OFDA, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance on the Dart Rwanda team in 1994 in Burundi and Rwanda, and then I worked a couple of times in Haiti with the mission's democracy and governance projects.

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Q: What stands out during that period of consultancies, anything stand out in your mind that is particularly significant an issue?

SINGER: That is a good question. The Haiti work was fascinating. My daughter and her husband both happened to be stationed at the Embassy in Port-au-Prince, our Embassy, for part of one 10-week period that I spent working at the mission there.

Q: Did you make any headway on issues there?

SINGER: It was before the big standoff began. It was when Aristide had just come back into power under American sponsorship. Most everybody thought this was a redawning of democracy, and we certainly hoped this would be the case. American troops came in, peacefully I'm happy to say, but everybody believed they were going to land forcefully

and fight if necessary. President Clinton visited Haiti while I was there. That is the only time I got to shake his hand, when he came in a helicopter and flew around the island. This is when everyone was so happy, and quite self-congratulatory, that we had managed to help out in Haiti without a major conflagration. We had engineered a program to peacefully get rid of General Cedras, the military dictator, and arrange for Aristide to return to his elected presidency. That was a really dynamic, yeasty time in the country's roller coaster history - a time when everything was kind of bubbling up, and the people were excited and optimistic and most hoped and believed that this was the real dawn of democracy for Haiti. So, it was really an exciting time to be there, and to be working on democracy.

Q: What was your view of the fundamental reason why it didn't work?

SINGER: I guess that the local institutions, and the concept of the rule of law, were just not strong enough to stand up yet, and are just not strong enough yet to stand up to the messianic kind of appeal of personalities that prevail in the Haiti's political leadership. Individual leaders weren't ready to take a back seat yet to the idea of rule of law. I am not sure when that is going to happen, but in 1995, 1996 everyone hoped against hope that the time had finally come for it to happen - but it didn't. I guess there weren't enough people used to exercising democratic rights and responsibilities, as such, to succeed in getting the country onto a non-personalistic track so that some kind of a participatory democratic system could evolve. It just hasn't yet happened.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR AUBREY HOOKS
Department of State
Economic/Commercial Officer
Haiti
Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
(1984-1987)

Ambassador Hooks was born and raised in South Carolina and educated at Brevard College and the University of South Carolina. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971 and served abroad in Tel Aviv, Warsaw, Ankara, Port au Prince, Tel Aviv, Rome, Helsinki and Harare. He also had several assignments at the State Department in Washington, DC. In 1995 he was named United States Ambassador to the Republic of Congo at Brazzaville and served there until 1999. He subsequently served as Ambassador to Democratic Republic of the Congo (2001-2004); and as Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire from 2004 to 2007. Ambassador Hooks was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Topical Focus – Haiti's Political Transition from the Duvalier Regime

Q: How did things go after he left?

HOOKS: His departure left many urgent questions: Now what happens? Who takes over? Well, the only institution that could run the country was the military. A day or so after Baby Doc left, Ambassador McManaway said the military did not have the slightest idea of what to do next. They were caught by surprise when Baby Doc left. He asked his staff to develop lists of very practical things that could be done right away; some in the shorter term and some in the longer term. The political counselor, the military attaché and I accompanied the Ambassador in his meeting with the senior Haitian military. We sat around a table and each of us took turns talking about what needed to be done. For instance, I offered a list of things that the military could do within a week, a list of things that needed to be done in the next three or four months, and ideas for them to consider in a longer timeframe over the next year or so. We didn't go out five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years to talk about development issues, but rather practical things that needed attention right away. We tried to give them some sense of the issues they were facing and some things they could do, such as meet with the business sector and reassure businessmen on investments and contracts.

The head of state had just been booted out under non-democratic conditions. What's going to happen to the economy now? You need to reassure. You need to try to maintain your business climate and also provide a level of security. The process of dechoukaj became a phenomenon, which is the Creole word for 'uprooting'. The population was going to uproot those associated with Baby Doc, which of course led to violence and instability. There were frequent incidents of crowds attacking a home of some previous minister and carting him out and beating him and absolutely destroying the house. Haiti had just had a change of a regime that had been in power for 28 years, when you combine Papa Doc and Baby Doc. How do you nursemaid the country to democracy? It didn't go very well.

A new ambassador, Brunson McKinley, replaced McManaway. I think later on the State Department felt that he had not fully understood the situation there. He wanted Haiti to go to democracy on his watch, an expression he used, and I don't think he fully understand Haiti. The United States by itself just can't take Haiti to democracy. It was more problematic than that. Aristide was already on the scene. He was a Catholic priest when I was there, and he was already making outrageous political comments. Many of us felt that he was unbalanced mentally.

Q: He was a thorn in the side of the Americans because he had people who almost worshipped him as a man of the cloth and the people. He had quite a clique supporting him.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DAVID COHEN
Mission Director
Haiti
(1990-1994)

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

Topical Focus – USAID Assistance to Haitian Democracy

Q: Were there major issues in the Caribbean at that time?

COHEN: Most definitely there were. Despite what many might think, the Caribbean is a very disparate region. While the many small countries all offered beautiful beaches and scenic panoramas, they had a great variety of issues and problems. The 1983 invasion of Grenada was still fresh in policymakers' minds, as were the related concerns about the destabilizing role of Cuba in the region Also, Haitian dictator Jean Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier had been overthrown in 1986, and presidential elections were shortly anticipated. Finally, there was implementation of the USG's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), a high Reagan White House priority to fortify the region's economy and stability, especially through private sector development. All of our USAID Missions in the region were expected to support CBI success through various programs they were implementing.

That said, the largest attention magnet in the Caribbean then, as now, was Haiti. This was the era just after the encouraged departure of "Baby Doc" Duvalier. The Haitian interim government had a stated goal of holding free and fair democratic elections. Not surprisingly, this did not happen smoothly. Part of the problem was that much of the nucleus of the vested interests that sustained Baby Doc was still there. This included the legendary Tonton Macoute, Duvalier's violent paramilitary enforcers. Also, there were elements in the private sector who had had their way for a very long time and were very concerned that any kind of democratic government, one that governed by the rule of law,

would be contrary to their interests and a threat to their comfortable lives. While the stability and economic growth such a transition would bring would, no doubt, have benefitted them, they were lifelong monopolists and feared anything that was not an environment fully under their control. With all of this and more, Haiti captured the largest amount of the energy and time of the Office of Caribbean Affairs, as well as the front office of the Latin American and Caribbean Bureau.

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Q: Were there any specific events that happened while you were in this job?

COHEN: There were a number of things. Our work was focused on making sure that our missions had the policy and program support they needed from Washington in order to succeed. There was great interest among some members of Congress – particularly the Black Caucus in the House – regarding events in Haiti. We updated them frequently on progress toward elections and how USAID was preparing to be able to support that process. That said, Haiti's progress toward elections during this period was negligible. Meanwhile, a major hurricane – Gilbert – struck Jamaica. In response, we worked closely with OFDA to support a substantial humanitarian relief effort. Also, to repeat, the White House was very interested in what the region was doing in support of the CBI. For our part, much of the responsibility was in facilitating actions and reporting. I was a featured speaker for several years at an annual Miami-based conference on the CBI.

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Q: And somebody approached you and they said…?

COHEN: In a way. By this time (1989-90), the Agency had started moving to a more structured personnel system where jobs were posted and people could put in bids for what interested them. However, that still did not apply to the senior management group (SMG). For us, the old informal ways of getting considered for jobs seemed to be the way things worked. As I (still) was in the LAC Bureau, I knew best what that region's upcoming openings were, and the people in that bureau knew about me.

I got into discussions about several Mission Director possibilities. Up to that point in my career, probably the most exciting thing I had experienced was being a part of the effort in Bolivia to make the transition from political and economic chaos to democracy-driven stability and growth. To me, this is what we join USAID to experience. It was almost a narcotic-like feeling to witness the incredible transformation that took place in Bolivia

and how relatively quickly that happened. It was so exciting to contemplate how many millions of lives would improve as a result.

With a big election coming up in Haiti, I thought, even though it would be a long shot, if that took place successfully, there was good potential for an historic positive transformation. How could I pass up such an opportunity? Thus, much to the dismay of some friends and colleagues, I volunteered myself to be considered for the Haiti Mission Director job. I certainly did this with my eyes open. From a Washington perspective, I had worked on Haiti and its many issues for the past two years. I understood well what I was getting into. I knew the players, the issues, and the pitfalls. Certainly, I had a comprehensive knowledge of the weaknesses and the threats. With all of that, it was an opportunity I could not pass up.

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Q: So you mentioned a coup d'état. What exactly happened?

COHEN: Let me set the political scene. Incredible for some to know, Haiti was the second country in the Americas – after the U.S. – to win its independence from a European colonial power. In the case of Haiti, that power was France. This happened in1804 following a successful slave revolt let by Toussaint L'Ouverture. Between 1804 and 1915, more than 70 different dictators ruled Haiti. US troops occupied the country between 1915 and 1934. From 1957 to 1986, the country was under the brutal dictatorship of Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier and, following his death, his son Jean Claude (Baby Doc). Life under the Duvaliers was brutal and enforced by the vicious Tonton Macoute, while the level of corruption was incredibly high. Jean Claude's ouster in 1986, helped along with some assistance from the USG, provided an opportunity to put Haiti on a more solid political, economic and humanitarian course.

In the aftermath of Jean Claude, there were a number of interim governments. Setting up a credible election proved challenging, as interests, including many from the Duvalier past, vied for advantage.

About two months before the election itself, there was an attempted coup that was aimed at thwarting the candidacy of the leading candidate, a charismatic ex-Catholic priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. As a priest, Father Aristide was a high profile champion of the poor. He ran for the presidency on an agenda of what he would do to make their lives better. If elected, the masses of Haiti's poor, for the first time, would have a president who would represent and care about them.

Fortunately, the coup, carried out by elements of the Haitian Army, was put down by other elements of the military, along with some strong words and effective diplomacy from the U.S. Ambassador, Alvin Adams. Adams, also known by his Haitian nickname Bourik Chaje – the loaded donkey, had been in the country for about a year. [Note: Adams was quite fluent in Haitian Creole. On his arrival in country, he quoted a Creole proverb: Bourik chaje pas kampe – a loaded donkey never stops, alluding to his (Adams') singular focus on bringing about a successful Haitian election.] Adams was quite high profile, very effective and extraordinarily impassioned about achieving a better future for Haiti (that is, a smooth democratic transition). From day one in the country, I admired the passion and drive that defined Al Adams. He was an interesting man, fueled by large quantities of cigarettes and coffee.

This coup attempt had a profound, enduring impact on Aristide. He had run a good campaign up until then. When the coup attempt took place, it seemed clear to me that Aristide had concluded that he would not survive it. Once the coup ended, he became a lot more guarded and defensive, much less democratic in orientation and quite a bit more threatening to his enemies. The reason I am mentioning these things is because it was this more defensive and threatening Aristide who was elected as president of Haiti.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DAVID COHEN
USAID
Mission Director
Haiti
Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
(1990-1994)

David Cohen was born and raised in New Jersey, where he attended Rutgers University for his undergraduate degree. After graduating with a masters degree from New York University, he joined USAID in 1969. He has held positions in Brazil, Panama, Haiti, and Sri Lanka. He was interviewed by John Pielemeier in January 2018.

Topical Focus – USAID Assistance to Haitian Elections

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Q: And that brings us up to the election. Was USAID engaged with that at all?

COHEN: In the run-up to the late 1990 presidential election, the USAID Mission staff was very focused on working with the donor community which was then, in this

particular context, led by the UNDP. The shared goal was to assure a high quality free and fair election. The multilateral component of the donor group included elements of the UN, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, the IMF and the Organization of American States (OAS). The prominent bilateral components included the governments of France, Canada and, of course, the U.S. Each donor brought different or complementary resources to the table. USAID provided technical assistance through grants and contracts with such entities as IFES (the International Foundation for Electoral Systems) and the international assistance programs of the U.S. Republican and Democratic parties (IRI and NDI, respectively). For one politically sensitive element, USAID provided a grant to the UNDP itself for something that it could uniquely accomplish. Among the areas addressed by USAID assistance were: voter registration, political party building, Election Day observation, ballot printing, and logistics. The good news was that the election was a great success. Turnout was high; violence and intimidation were minimal; and observers from all around the international community were pleased with what they witnessed. I, myself, spent part of Election Day as an observer. I cannot remember ever seeing people as happy and jubilant as the hordes of Haiti's poor that turned out to vote that day. Some people danced while waiting in the very long lines to vote. Others carried roosters, a symbol of Aristide's Lavalas (Creole for "flood") party. Aristide won with 67 percent of the vote.

Q: What happened following the election?

COHEN: When Aristide was elected, donors in general, but especially the United States, were extremely forthcoming in trying to provide the support that would be needed to ensure the success of new government and democracy. Our program budget soared. However, President Aristide seemed less focused on moving forward with the kinds of things that would make the economy grow and maximize benefits to the poorest than had been the passionate agenda of Father Aristide, the poor parish priest. As a candidate, he been very effective at running against the sins and corruption of the past. His vision of the past was very clear. But now, as president, he offered very little in terms of a plan of action for a better Haiti for the future of its people. That malignant vision of the past, that aggression towards the individuals and institutions involved with that were a centerpiece of his "dialogue" with the people. Aristide, a man who was so articulate and soft-spoken in the many meetings we had with him, would become a raging demagogue when out speaking with his constituency. Increasingly, the military and the rich, who had prospered greatly under the Duvaliers, saw Aristide as a threat that needed to be eliminated. And that, I believe, was the core of what generated the coup by the military that overthrew him in October 1991.

LAWRENCE K. CRANDALL
USAID
Mission Director
Haiti
Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
(1994-1997)

Lawrence Crandall was born and raised in Denver, where he attended the University of Colorado for his undergraduate degree. He joined USAID in 1966, and has held positions in Haiti, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. He was interviewed by John Pielemeier in January 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID Programming and the Aristide Government Post Hurricane Gordon

Q: What was AIDS' role at that point in terms of programming?

CRANDALL: There were some legacy projects without much political content in them.. It became obvious that we needed to change the program. While a humanitarian component remained, AID couldn't ignore the demanding political objectives of the Clinton Administration. Essentially, we had to restore democracy and its key institutions under the Aristide Government. To the dismay of some people in AID we started making those changes. We started a project to help reconstitute the Parliament. We created another to develop the Ministry of Justice. We had an elections project that through the Elections Commission conducted five elections while I was there. For the most part, AID made the important calls on program content. There was little or no meddling by other actors. The Aristide Government had no money in its coffers and no way of raising any to pay salaries and basic services like trash collection. We drafted a balance-o -payments grant to help kick start the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank. We provided three tranches of $15 million each with policy changes required.

In November after Aristide returned, Hurricane Gordon hit Haiti. An estimated 1200 people were killed and there was physical damage over much of the Country. The storm came during the night, and the next morning I called Prime Minister Smarck Michel and said, "Mr. Prime Minister we just had a big weather event. Your Government must show the people you can help." He said, "I don't know what to do. I was a grocery store owner before I became prime minister. What do I do?" I replied, "Stay put for a few minutes and I will get back to you." I called the Ambassador and said, "We need a chopper to get the Prime Minister and President out for an aerial assessment and then we will come back and determine next steps." The helicopter was quickly provided by the 10th Mountain

Division. We (the Ambassador and I) put the President and Smarck aboard and flew over damaged areas. Smarck asked many questions because he was an intelligent man. The President sat dumbstruck and didn't say a word for the whole ride. We were up for about an hour and a half. We returned and landed in front of the Palace which later was pancaked by the earthquake. The president descended and broke into tears and did a fast walk to the Palace front door and never said a word.

I turned to the Prime Minister and asked him to call a cabinet meeting that afternoon and told him I would be there to talk about what the Government and donors could do. He called a cabinet meeting and I showed up at 2:00 that afternoon. We went around the table and I asked each minister who might be involved what they thought they could do. None of them thought they could do anything because their ministries were so weak and poorly staffed and without budgets. I told the Prime Minister I would contact as many donors as possible and ask them to give credit for their inputs to the Government. Several bilaterals and UN agencies pitched in. At the cabinet meeting I realized Smarck didn't know how to run a meeting. I talked to him later and asked questions about his experience. He said, "Larry, I am Smarck Michel the grocery store owner. This is all I have ever done. I sold gas for a while but that didn't work too well. I am friends with the President and he asked me to take this job. I am out of my depth." I told him that if he wanted I would attend any cabinet or other meetings he desired and help him with organization.. I did that for three months and was the de facto chair for the cabinet meetings during that period. It quickly became apparent to me that this was going to become a political problem if Haitians found out an American was doing this. We agreed that I had to make a graceful exit. And I did. This story should give a sense of how pathetic that Government was. Smarck was a good man and he recently passed away.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR SALLY GROOMS COWAL
Department of State
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America
Washington, D. C.
(1989-1991)

Ambassador Sally Grooms Cowal was born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1944. After graduating from DePauw University she joined the United States Information Service as Foreign Service Officer. Her service included assignments as Cultural and Public Affairs Officer at US Embassies in India, Colombia, Mexico and Israel She subsequently held a number of senior positions in the Department of State, including Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs and Deputy Political Counselor to The American Ambassador to

the United Nations. In 1991 she was appointed Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. Ambassador Cowal was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy August 9, 2001.

Topical Focus – US Establishment of a Relationship with the Aristide Government

Q: Let's talk about the other problem child you haven't mentioned, Haiti.

COWAL: Well, that was a real problem child, too. It provided some really exciting moments. Haiti was pretty much the exception to the rule of political appointments in the Caribbean, because, A, it was problematic, and, B, the million-dollar contributors didn't really want to go to Haiti. We sent a number of good career people. The one I worked with most closely was Al Adams. Adams was kind of a cowboy in some ways. He didn't really fit State Department molds very well. He replaced a guy named Brunson McKinley. He had been very status quo, very State Department, very buttoned-down and buttoned up. He was in the mold, at a time when there was a military dictator in Haiti and a lot of ferment, but not a lot of progress. Adams got there and first of all learned some Creole. He was as fluent as his predecessors had been in French, generally, but he learned enough Creole to become a sort of important public figure, because he could go out and make speeches, or throw Creole words into his speeches. More importantly was that behind the scenes he put together a very interesting alliance of the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) representative, who generally, at least in those days, was considered to be the UN representative in the country. He ran UNDP but he also was the sort of doyen of the UN diplomatic corps. Al added the German ambassador, the French ambassador, and papal nuncio, I believe. The five of them became a little rump group on Haiti, meeting I wouldn't say secretly, but certainly not publicly. They would meet up at the U.S. ambassador's residence, which was one of these grand things built in the days of the proconsuls. I think it's the twin of the residence in Cuba, actually, one of these massively "let's show everyone how important we are and build ourselves a 50-room mansion in the hills overlooking the city." These five guys, and they were all guys, would go up there, I don't know, once a week, twice a week, three times a week. I don't know that it's ever been written about – not to my knowledge, but I haven't stayed tuned in, and you may have interviewed Adams or somebody else. Adams retired, I think, after Haiti.

Q: He's in Hawaii now.

COWAL: That would not surprise me, but I don't know that. Al had a very interesting State Department career. He had been a deputy executive secretary at the Department, and he hadn't had a very traditional career. He'd been in Djibouti. He'd done tough jobs, not particularly tied to a regional bureau, just sort of a troubleshooter. I don't know

whose idea it was to send him to Haiti, certainly not mine. He went to Haiti about the time I went to Washington, and he put together this rump group, and I think they really engineered the military dictator who was in power at the time.

Q: What was his name?

COWAL: His name was Avril, A-V-R-I-L, General Avril. Not having been a longtime specialist on Haiti or the Caribbean, I don't remember exactly how Avril got there, probably because somebody else got exiled. They were stacked up in the Dominican Republic like cards, all of the ex-dictators of Haiti, sort of waiting to be called back. I think by the time I got there they had enough for a bridge game, certainly, and maybe a poker game. But they all sat over there. Avril was the man of the moment, and we had all aid and so on suspended, as did the French, as did others, giving aid to nongovernmental organizations, but not through the government. But we didn't spend it all with the nongovernmental organizations, either, so we had $60 million or $70 million sort of in a reserve fund that we were sitting on. These guys essentially, I would say, jawboned Avril out of a job, very peacefully. As they got their own coherence – I would say this is about a year into my tenure, so maybe '90, maybe somewhat late into 1990. They finally had a few sessions with Avril, and they persuaded him that whether in his own best interest – and maybe they offered him a deal. I suspect there was some sweetener in it for Avril. Exactly what that was, I wasn't party to. But one fine night, around 2:00 in the morning, he decided that he would leave, and we got the call. If we could send a plane, he was prepared to go to the United States. Indeed, the next morning at sort of first light, we dispatched a plane and flew him back to the United States, and quite how all of that happened, I don't know, although I went to Haiti two or three times and was always invited to join this group in their little discussions. I think that was a very fascinating little episode in U.S.-Haitian relations. That paved the way for an interim government, and then a preparation for elections. The elections took place in early '91. To everyone's surprise, at least to the United States' surprise, they delivered not Marc Bazin, who was a World Bank economist and who had very good relations with us and the French and everyone else, and was quite the man around town and represented I can't remember which political party, but sort of a very good, well-established political party. Those elections delivered Father Aristide, affectionately known as Titi, and his Lavalas movement, which in Haitian Creole essentially means the unwashed. So it was a real populist movement, and Aristide was elected and Jimmy Carter went for those elections, under the Carter Center's election surveying project.

Q: He monitored a lot of – a very positive force in this business.

COWAL: Right, and he and his people certified that the election was free and fair, and walked over that night to tell Aristide that they considered him to be the legitimate winner of these elections. Then that put us in a period, which I was very involved in, which was essentially trying to establish a working relationship with this government, which had no people of experience whatsoever. The person I most dealt with was another priest, who was kind of a minister without portfolio, a very smart guy.

Q: Eminence grise?

COWAL: Sort of an eminence grise. He was older than Aristide. There was something wonderful about it, and then there was also something very disturbing about it. What was wonderful about it was the people who never thought that this would happen, and never thought, really, that they would be in power, who had been either in the opposition, formed or unformed, for their whole lives, suddenly found themselves talking about "us" and meaning the government of Haiti, and being quite delighted and thrilled and overwhelmed by that. The disturbing thing about it was there were a lot of things they just didn't have the expertise to do. Yet they were extremely reluctant, and for some good reasons, and some, I suppose in retrospect, not so good reasons to take advice or help from anybody: from the French, from us, from the UN, from anybody, because they were so worried that it would once again turn into the kind of government they didn't want. So the sad history of it is that after six or eight or 10 months – well, things began to happen much sooner than that. The boats stopped. One of the big aggravating causes for the United States to want to see this military dictatorship – and this gets back to how illegal immigration affects our policy in the Caribbean. In the days of Avril, the end of Avril, and of course we were providing no aid and assistance, because we wanted to give some pressure on this military government. But the unintended consequence from our point of view was these refugees were pouring out in boatloads, just pouring out, in unseaworthy craft, obviously, and U.S. policy was for the Coast Guard to stop them. But then under the international laws of refugees and so on, they all had to be interviewed, and if they were considered to be seeking political asylum ...

Q: If they're economic refugees or political refugees.

COWAL: They were either economic or they were political, refoulement I think is the term. So they all had to be interviewed, and then the question was where they would be interviewed. They were taken either to Guantanamo Bay, where the Navy did not want them, they were interviewed onboard the Coast Guard cutters. There were three options of what to do with these people who were found floating and heading for the United States. You could put them onboard a Coast Guard cutter, but you would often have 200, 300, 400 people crammed into one of these little boats, and Coast Guard cutters, as you

know, aren't very big. Both from the point of view of practicality and logistics, and from the point of view that they looked like slave trading ships once you got 400 Haitians on them, it wasn't a very good option. And they all had to be interviewed, and you had to get INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) agents to interview them, to seek from them what their cause for migrating was, or you had to take them to Guantanamo Bay, where the Navy did not want them. This is of course way pre-the Taliban, before we had wonderful caged facilities for such people. Then we had no facilities, really. Or you had to take them to Miami and put them in, I think it's called the Chrome Detention Center in Miami, which first of all was overloaded, and secondly, just by taking them to Miami put in process a judicial process in which they immediately gain rights to a certain number of immigration hearings. In other words, once they came to Miami, even if in detention, which they were, as compared to the Cubans, who of course once they touch their foot on the soil are paroled in and on the way to becoming American citizens, which is another issue of great annoyance in the Caribbean. But even though they didn't get that kind of preferential Cuban treatment, at a minimum they become guests of the federal system for at least 18 months to two years, as the process wends its way through the administrative and judicial proceedings and it's decided whether they have a legitimate claim to stay in the United States or not. None of these was a good option, and that's certainly one of the reasons we were wanting to see democracy come to Haiti. And after Aristide was elected, for about, I suppose, a month or two, there were no boats. There was some great optimism, and of course it was misguided optimism, as it always is. If he had been Talleyrand, I don't think he could have turned around Haiti in two months. And, certainly, as Jean-Bertrand Aristide, with an inexperienced government, he couldn't turn it around in two months. So, within two months, the boats were out on the water again, but this time, the first couple of boats we said, "Well, obviously, all these people have to be escorted back to Haiti immediately, because they couldn't be fleeing an oppressive government. They've got a democracy, this guy has been elected." So the first couple of things, it gave us quick answers. By about the third or fourth month, the bush telegraph going around said, "Oh, you've got to say it's a political reason, and the political reason is that you voted for Marc Bazin, and you are now being discriminated against or persecuted or something." So people got these tee-shirts printed up, and they said, "I voted for Marc Bazin," and they would get on the boats with these tee-shirts. After about the second or third one, I said, "If that many people had voted for Marc Bazin, he probably would have won." But it was much harder, then, for them to sustain this claim to a well-founded fear of persecution. At any rate, the economic problems continued, and, in fact, deepened after Aristide got in office, and that led to his first overthrow, which came in September of 1991, after about six months.

AMBASSADOR CLAYTON E. McMANAWAY, JR.
Department of State
U. S. Ambassador
Haiti
Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
(1983-1986)

Clayton E. McManaway, Jr. was born in North Carolina. He graduated from the University of South Carolina and served in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in Phnom Penh and Saigon, and as Ambassador to Haiti. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Topical Focus – Haitian Overthrow of President Jean Claude Duvalier

Q: You hit there at a key time, but as you were going and when you arrived, what was the situation in Haiti from the perspective of the United States?

McMANAWAY: The situation was that Haiti was sort of stumbling along and had been doing so for some years. It was still the poorest country in the hemisphere and was not improving a great deal. There was only one sector of the economy that was improving and that was what we call the assembling center which was essentially American companies setting up plants to partially assemble things to be brought back to the U.S. for final production. Everybody knows the story of the baseballs, I guess. All of our baseballs, including the pro baseballs, are made in Haiti. The problem that we faced immediately was that there was a group on the Hill, not just the Black Caucus, although some of the Black Caucus, Fauntroy in particular was active. There was also a group of staffers over on the House Foreign Relations side who were interested in Haiti and had become active. They had decided that it was time to do something about the human rights situation in Haiti and the lack of any political progress in the sense of movement towards properly elected democratic system. They wrote into the AID legislation...in fact, just as I was leaving to go down there...they wrote in language that was the toughest language I think that existed anywhere at that time. In fact, in talking to the staffers later, I think they were a little aghast at what they had done and realized they had gone a little too far, but it was already there. It called for political parties and certification by the Department of State that there was progress in these directions and human rights in order to continue the AID program. This was put into law just as I was going to Haiti and became the centerpiece the whole time I was there.

Q: Before you went out did you talk to both the staff members and their principals and say, "What do you mean by this?" There must have been implications there that there was 57 a good possibility that aid would be cut off. Was that acceptable?

McMANAWAY: It wasn't acceptable to the administration. The administration fought it. Something else had gotten the attention of the administration that year on the aid bill. I forget what it was, but it was bigger than Haiti and nobody noticed this until it was too late. They couldn't do anything about it. It slipped through the normal give and take on the aid bill with the staffers and the Congress itself. It caught the administration by surprise. Haiti wasn't the only country that had these certifications. The general position that the administration was taking at that time was that all of these certification requirements were unconstitutional in the sense they tied the hands of the President too much. So the position that the administration was taking was that they were going to fight all of these, Haiti being among them. I didn't think that the administration was going to be successful, so I felt it was incumbent upon me to warn the government of Haiti, Duvalier and his principal ministers, that this legislation was now in effect. In the spring I was going to have to submit a recommended report that would go to the Congress. Even though the administration was not pleased, the report would have to be taken seriously. My initial courtesy calls turned substantive right away.

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Q: Were you talking to the church, the Roman Catholic church?

MCMANAWAY: Yes, through the Nuncio.

Q: How did they see things playing out? What were they after?

MCMANAWAY: Same way. They saw it exactly the same way. There had to be this change and it was leading to his departure. Or it was going to lead to his departure or a great bloodshed.

Q: Were any of you thinking how do we get this guy out? What would our role be?

MCMANAWAY: Oh, yes. We were very worried about... There is an incident in Haitian history that was on my mind very much just before we intervened in 1915. It was the public dismemberment of the president, the crowd tore him apart literally. Sam was his name. I particularly didn't want that to happen on my watch.

Q: What did you do?

MCMANAWAY: To the extent that we decided that we would not take him out in the daytime. That we would take him out at night when people were asleep. I was worried about getting him to the airport.

Q: Before we talk about the actual getting him out there, were you sitting around a few months before telling your people: "You know, we may end up getting this guy out. Did you have a plan?"

MCMANAWAY: We had discussed and it sort of jelled very rapidly. When it started going, it went very, very rapidly. Within a matter of two or three months it was over. He lost his mystique and the demonstrations started, he'd reacted to it. He was increasing... The military was backing away from him and he was turning more and more to the Tontons Macouttes.

Q: The Tontons Macouttes. Could you explain what they were?

MCMANAWAY: Well, that was the para-military organization that was set up initially by the father, Francois Duvalier as a counter-force to the military. It was not a military organization in the sense of having battalions, etc. But they were all over the country.

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Q: So then, what happened, from your perspective?

MCMANAWAY: I met, before he left, at the residence clandestinely with a Brigadier General, an envoy from Namphy. This was set up by my station chief. We went upstairs at the residence, at night, I forget what time it was. He wanted to know what it would take for us to recognize the new regime, not realizing that we don't do that anymore. So I laid it out, what they needed to do. There had to be elections, and do this, and this, and this, for a move toward democracy, establishment, honoring international treaties and all these things. General Namphy came on the television the next morning and announced all these things, they were all there. Everything I gave him was in the speech. They had formed this council to govern until there could be elections. And I began working with Namphy directly.

HEADQUARTERS, BUREAUS, & DEPARTMENTS

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Office of Central American Affairs
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Honduras
(1995–2000)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Congressional Oversight & Appropriations – Hurricane Mitch Response

Q: Well, given where we are today, I don't think they were very successful. (Laughs)

LEVINE: True. I think the takeaway was that USAID knows this business well, and making USAID the technical secretariat and lead agency gave us a lot of power. Otherwise, you have a food fight and a "supply push" of solutions that only by luck bears resemblance to the problem as it is on the ground.

I think I had to up my game in terms of representation on the Hill. I went through the entire $911 million supplemental appropriation and created a matrix of every requirement asked of the agency. It became our briefing document of two or three pages of items where Congress said you shall do this, you shall do that, and these are the levels of funding. We would provide periodic updates, walk them through the matrix as a way to structure our response to oversight. Support for the effort was bipartisan, exceedingly supportive of what we did, and appreciative of the absolute transparency.

Q: Since you mentioned the bill, to what extent was AID helping to draft that bill at the outset? I mean, how involved were we directly?

LEVINE: Yeah, I think we shared with them what we would do with the money, what our plans were in terms of reactivation and reconstruction. It ended up being handled as an appropriation, so there was very little—aside from a funding allocation, there was not—there was hortatory language which we took as important, particularly in oversight and accountability.

Additional to the appropriation were allocations for the USAID Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). We also said measures we were taking programmatically to bolster in-country accountability as well as what we were doing on donor coordination. So, these were some of the accountability measures we would share in our dialogue with the Hill.

Q: Okay. And you all were involved—as those provisions got put in, you were aware, you were talking to the Hill about them, so they weren't things that were imposed, particularly. In other words, you were consulted.

LEVINE: I don't think we felt hamstrung particularly by them. Where we were vulnerable and remain so today is we made a big deal about the urgency of getting assistance and getting the supplemental passed. And then, we had to deal with the delay and lag in reprogramming and procuring a reconstruction program. So, the big issue was around the question of "how fast are you spending the money after having politically made such a point of the urgency?"

The first briefings were the hardest to answer "to what extent have you obligated the money that we gave you?" And I remember, the obligations were in single digits of percentage of funds appropriated. So, that was a tough brief. (Laughs)

It got better over time, and it really blended into overall programming. It was two-year money, so it was a sizable injection. It was over $900 million appropriation, most of it going to USAID, with $100 million going to the interagency. Of the amount going to USAID, over $300 million went to Honduras.

Q: I assume that the obligations were done in the field and so at least some of the slowness because missions were trying to consult with their counterparts about needed programs. I assume that Washington sent help to work with the missions?

LEVINE: I recall accompanying a congressional delegation (CODEL) with staffers from the House Foreign Operations subcommittee doing an oversight inspection for hurricane response in Nicaragua and Honduras. I also recall accompanying the administrator to Guatemala and really, again, in the same way of when you take mission directors to the Hill, when the administrator is in the field it's an opportunity for the mission to really shine, and for them to get face time, talking about their programs and giving them insight to really how is the mission really doing to affect people's lives. And so, I had the

opportunity to be, you know, part of those visits and it was a part of my education in terms of how the agency does its best work.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM HAMMINK
USAID
Africa Bureau
Office of Project Development
Washington, D. C.
(1990-1991)

William Hammink studied at the University of Minnesota for both his undergraduate and masters' degrees before entering USAID as an International Development Intern in 1981.
He served in many different positions in several countries, including Swaziland, Senegal, Madagascar, the West Bank and Gaza, Ethiopia, Sudan, and India.
He was interviewed by John Pielemeier in February 2018.

Topical Focus – Early Pan-African USAID DRG Program Development

HAMMINK: Anyway, we stayed in Senegal for four years. And then, because our kids were around five to seven at the time, we thought it's important for them to live in the States for a while, and to go to school in the States. I applied for jobs in Washington, and I was assigned to the Africa Bureau Office of Project Development, or "PD" at the time. And I was the Assistant— I think, what's it called now— The Assistant Division—or Deputy Division Chief in the Central and Coastal West Africa division of PD.

And at the time, Carol Peasley was the Office Director. So, I had the wonderful opportunity to work with Carol then. But there were big changes going on in Africa at the time, and elections were happening in many countries, some more free and fair than others. At the time, in USAID and in the State Department there was a lot of interest in how America and the U.S. government could support not only elections, but broadly good governance, democratic governance, political process reform, independent media, judiciary, and the like.

And so, I was asked by the AA (Assistant Administrator) to work with a team to put together a new division in the Office of Sustainable Development on elections and governance. So, with several other people, we established the first Africa bureau

democracy and governance division. It was the first USAID group to focus on support for democracy and better governance in Africa, with a small budget.

Q: What year was that?

HAMMINK: That was in 1991. And not surprisingly, there was a large amount of pushback. Most people in the Africa Bureau, both in Washington and in the field, thought that USAID shouldn't touch anything political. We do development. We do economic development. You know, economic and social development. But we worked on making the case that economic and social development depends on good governance and citizen voice and choice. We brought in well-known academics. We developed white papers and policy papers on why the political economy is so important. And the importance of the elections, and why we need to support that. We put together some Africa-wide programs with the likes of NDI (National Democratic Institute), IRI (International Republican Institute), and IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems) that missions could buy into.

So, that was an exciting period, because I led the division and was responsible for starting brand new programs in this area. I was working with some terrific folks such as Jennifer Windsor and Anne Williams. We made some mistakes in the early days. We once had a meeting with several State Department Africa Bureau colleagues. We discussed what needed to be done and how we could work together. You know, I look back now, and realize that we should have been more open to working collaboratively and even jointly on programs. Mistakenly, we just said, "Oh, we can do this. We're not going to give you any of our money." And I think, looking back, we should have said, "Hey, how can we work together to achieve common objectives here?" Luckily, that came later.

We established the importance of these DG programs (democracy and governance programming) from an academic point of view and we also showed the conceptual linkages to the rest of our development programs including the need to support elections. Everybody understood that elections do not a democracy make. So, we tried to make the case that USAID also needed to get involved, where we had a chance to make a difference, in all areas of democratic governance, including financial accountability, independence of the judiciary and media, and a strong advocacy civil society representing the interests of citizens and not just those NGOs doing social programs.

This type of DG work for USAID was around in Latin America before that. But I think in Africa, it wasn't until the 1990s that development people started to see the need for USAID to support civil society that advocated for citizens' rights and improved

transparency. Those who are there trying to hold governments accountable for what they promise.

As I mentioned, that was an exciting time but also a lot of work. And then after about a year in Washington—or a year and a half—George Carner, with whom I had worked in Senegal where he was Deputy Mission Director, was at the time the Mission Director in Madagascar. And he— I was kind of ready to get back overseas—

Q: Pretty quickly!

HAMMINK: —as was my wife. So, he recruited me to bid to come out and head up a new combined program and project development office that they had set up in Madagascar. My family and I went out to Antananarivo in the summer of 1992.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

THOMAS REEVE PICKERING
U.S. Ambassador
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
(1967)

Ambassador Pickering was born in Orange, New Jersey on November 5, 1931. Pickering attended Bowdoin College, and then received a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, and attended the University of Melbourne to receive his second master's degree. Pickering was the ambassador to El Salvador, Israel, United Nations, India, and Russia. Ambassador Thomas Reeve Pickering was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 18, 2003.

Topical Focus – United States Relationship with ASEAN and Democracy in Asia

Q: The other side of it, of course, is you cut this off and you've cut off our reaching the officer corps and training them in what we would consider best practices.

PICKERING: True, it's a double-edged sword and it's one that over the years we've used in different ways at different times. You are entirely right that the more we remain estranged from the military, the less influence we are able to have with them -- and in some places they play a major role in politics. Some also question whether or not, even if we are not as estranged we have a significant amount of useful influence with or without the military. New countries immediately post-independence have tended to be more influenced by American training. As things went on and as they become more familiar

with the United States maybe they became less influenced. A lot of idealism has slid away in this process and maybe in the end it was never really all that idealistically dominated; we just happen to look back historically and think about it that way.

Q: How did you find ASEAN as an instrument or as an organization?

PICKERING: ASEAN had its own rules and its own limitations. It was vitally necessary for us to help it prosper and therefore respect them. It did not want to become, and fought very hard to avoid becoming, an instrument of American policy in the region -- another alliance that we could directly or indirectly dominate and devoted to our ends. It was very much focused on its own ends; it was very frustrating that when it took in Myanmar and it was not sufficiently robust or influential to turn Myanmar into the kind of democracy that we hoped for -- that we thought all of the rest of the ASEANs should become. We were frustrated by that. Their view was that this requires long term change. It requires solidarity and strength in the region and these imperatives are much more important than creating as a standard for ASEAN membership and further cooperation the ideal domestic political situation to which a lot of Americans were attached. So we've always been frustrated in some ways by ASEANs ability to accept plural semidemocracies without seeking on their own to become our kind of political players. Of course, among the ASEAN states there was a great deal of mutual respect. There was a full respect there for the independence of each state.

Q: Did we find ourselves trying to make sure that we didn't try to meddle too much in ASEAN or not?

PICKERING: We were careful to understand that the organization itself had purposes and values, which were important to us and we should to be careful not to become, in fact, the bete noir of the organization or indeed a cause for its collapse or failure. We also felt that it was important and significant to use quiet diplomacy in continuing to encourage these states to move in directions that we thought were more compatible with our ideas about democracy.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STEVEN WAGENSEIL
Department of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
Director for Multinational Affairs
(1998-2001)

Steven Wagenseil was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1947. He attended Le Collège Cévenol in France, completed a post-graduate year at Gresham's School in England, and received his B.A. from Yale University in French. He entered the foreign service in 1974, and had postings in Spain, Mali, Zimbabwe, and Senegal. After his work in the foreign service, he worked at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor as the Director for Multinational Affairs, and the Office of Democratic Institutions of Human Rights as the Acting Director. Steven Wagenseil was interviewed by Peter Eicher on January 15, 2008.

Topical Focus – Founding of the Community of Democracies

WAGENSEIL: *** And the idea of the Community of Democracies had been around for quite some time but Secretary Albright -- given her Eastern European origins, I guess -- and Foreign Minister Geremek -- as a Pole, very proud of Poland's transition from the Warsaw Pact environment to the modern democratic European environment -- very much in favor of some kind of organization that would bring together the democracies of the world, to work together to support -- not just to support each other but to support the idea of democracy and the practice of democracy -- and to help other countries become democracies. And so, we had a long series of meetings, there was a method -- First of all, trying to figure out whom should be invited, which countries should be invited.

Q: That's a big question; who counts as a democracy?

WAGENSEIL: That's certainly a big question. I mean, you can easily tell who are the ones and the 10s -- but what do you about the fours and fives, and who writes the scale? Anyway… And so there was quite a bit of agony over that. In fact, as I recall, for the initial meeting - for some reason -- Poland insisted that Azerbaijan be invited, and because Poland was hosting this thing and basically -- we like the Poles and the Poles were being very helpful and very supportive and we wanted to support them and so forth and so on -- we decided, we the U.S. Government, the State Department, whoever, decided not to pick a fight about it.

There was more trouble with the drafting of what became known as the Warsaw Declaration because the meeting hadn't occurred yet. It was only supposed to be a couple of days long. The Community of Democracies had not met so there couldn't be a drafting process where everybody sits down in a big room and throws out ideas for paragraph one and paragraph two. So, in typical American fashion we decided to do it ourselves -- and we did. We, the State Department basically, S/P, with some help from DRL and a couple of other players. This didn't sit well with some of the other countries -- like, for example, our friends the British -- and some of the other European countries who didn't like being presented with a fait accompli, and they said, "How can you have a Conference and have

a Declaration which nobody's ever seen until they have to sign it?" And up until the day of the meeting, the final day of the meeting, there was some of this sort of backstage, backdoor negotiating going on and I think there was one phrase that the Brits -- that we agreed to put in at the request of the Brits. There was a sort of a Convening Group that was tapped to sort of guide this process through its final stages -- it was sort of the Chinese menu: one from column A and one from column B and one from column C -- the U.S. and Poland and I guess Japan would have been involved, India was very much a player and I don't know who all.

But in the final hours the Indian foreign minister said, "There's nothing in here about poverty, there's nothing in here about development." And we said "Yes, that's right," and the Indian representative said, "There must be. You cannot have democracy without development."

And so the leaders of the U.S. delegation went into a huddle in a side room -- off the corridor where the Indian was standing outside as I remember -- and agreed to some kind of language which appears in the final text of the Warsaw Declaration. But the process of preparing that declaration was not democratic. The process of convening the meeting wasn't democratic in the strict sense of the word. I mean, it was a good meeting, everybody said the right things in the intergovernmental context. There was a sort of a tiny little side meeting off someplace else. The ministerial took place at the Sejm -- the Polish parliament -- and there was a side meeting -- in a hotel a mile and a half away or something -- with the NGOs. We sort of said, "Okay, yes, you guys want to have a meeting, that's fine." And the NGOs said, "Wait a minute, this is democracy, aren't we supposed to be involved?" And we said, "This is a governmental meeting, we've got to get started first." The eternal struggle was reflected in that context as well.

Q: But then the organization continues, doesn't it?

WAGENSEIL: The organization continues and it's significantly different than it was -- but back then it was very much just the bright idea of a couple of people: "Let's put a show on, okay, we can use the barn!" -- in the great Judy Garland-Mickey Rooney fashion. And it sort of was like that. It was a bit haphazard in the first iteration. Part of the thrust was that the democracies, the countries in the Community of Democracies, would agree to work together, to support democracy and human rights and the rule of law in other venues, such as, for example, "Wouldn't this be a nice idea in the UN Commission on Human Rights or, lo and behold, in the UN General Assembly or something?" That has never exactly worked because countries fall back to national interests, they fall back 176 to regional group alliances - they fall back to Islamic Conference or Arab League or Latin America Group Partnerships -- and a Community of Democracies doesn't have the

traction that those other elements do. There's been some ability to call upon the CD for support for some resolutions -- and there's one thing in process right now, touch wood, that the CD may actually bring a resolution into the General Assembly this fall -- which, as it happens, I wrote. But never mind; we'll come to that later.

Lloyd W. Neighbors
USIA
Community for Democracies Initiative
Washington D.C.
(1999-2000)

Lloyd W. Neighbors served a wide-ranging career as a U.S. Information Agency and Foreign Service public diplomacy officer, specializing in Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. His postings in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Brazil, Burma, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere focused on cultural diplomacy, media relations, exchange programs, and U.S. foreign policy communication during major geopolitical transitions including normalization with China, Tiananmen Square, 9/11, and the USIA-State Department merger.

CDI was the brainchild of Mort Halperin, director of the Office of Policy Planning. Mort had been involved in foreign policy since the Kissinger days, when Kissinger wiretapped him (laughs) in an infamous incident. He was also a leading member of the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU. Secretary Albright would have given him a higher appointment except for one thing: there was no way/no how Halperin could get approved by a Senate with Jesse Helms in it. Instead he was appointed to one of the highest positions in State that did not require Senate approval: the Director of Policy Planning. Albright and Halperin believed that democratic nations as a group stood unrepresented on the world scene. There was no OPEC or ASEAN or OAS to focus like a laser on the promotion of democracy. The democracies – old, new, and emerging -- needed to form a coalition, a Community of Democracies that would promote freedom of speech and the press, foster open elections, nurture civil society, and strengthen representative government. As an opening gambit, the United States, along with several like-minded nations, would convene a two-pronged conference of foreign ministers and NGO representatives. The goal of this conference: establish a new world coalition to lobby and exert influence on behalf of democratic states.

Secretary Albright put Mort Halperin in charge of CDI. It was his intellectual baby, after all. But as the Director of Policy Planning, he had no time to manage the minutia involved in producing a large-scale international conference. He delegated that responsibility to Penn Kemble.

Penn Kemble was the last deputy director of USIA working under Joe Duffey. Duffey, former president of Amherst, had been the pusillanimous Director of USIA from 1993-1999. Under his clueless leadership, USIA was absorbed by the Borg – the State Department. Duffey left State in 1999, well before the merger, and Kemble took his place, serving as acting Director. But that job was going to disappear in 2000, and Kemble needed a place to land. And that's how he came to be the Special Representative for the Council of the Community of Democracies Initiative.

Kemble grew up politically as a labor activist. Early on he was a member of the Socialist Party of America and was active in the civil rights movement. He worked briefly for the New York Times , but quit because he refused to cross a picket line of striking typesetters. He eventually became a staff assistant and speechwriter for Senator Pat Moynihan. Kemble was a fine writer, a shrewd political analyst, and an ardent supporter of democracy movements around the world. Unfortunately, he was a lousy administrator. At USIA the Deputy Director made the trains run on time, but Kemble had no interest in that – to the great detriment of our organization.

Despite his flaws as a manager, Kemble was a fascinating fellow to work with. He had wide-reaching web of contacts in the political world and academia. He was smart and articulate, an intellectual with a compelling vision of how the world might be made safe for democracy.

Kemble had his mandate and his dramatic wood-paneled office in the 1940's wing of the Department. He still needed two factotums to handle all the work an office like his would generate. And that's where Jeff Brown and I came on the scene, two experienced USIA officers in need of one-year assignments in DC. Jeff was an outstanding officer. He went on to be the Director of the Washington Foreign Press Center, then DCM in Quito and Buenos Aires. At present he is deputy assistant secretary of state for public diplomacy in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

As part of the CDI, Jeff and I were assigned to the Policy Planning Staff, Mort Halperin's bailiwick. We were responsible for helping organize (and partially fund) the World Forum on Democracy, the NGO share of the proposed conference. Halperin also brought two operatives, Ted Piccone and Bobby Herman, to work with him on the political side of CDI. Piccone and Herman had worked with Halperin on programs to promote democracy at the George Soros-sponsored Open Society Foundation.

Because of CDI's emphasis on human rights, freedom of speech, good governance, Jeff and I found ourselves working closely with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,

and Labor. And this gave us the opportunity to see the Bureau's inimitable Assistant Secretary, Harold Koh, in action. Harold had been the brilliant young Dean of the Yale Law School before Albright recruited him for the Department. Koh was one of those fellows that if you were in a meeting with him and everybody was making their points and talking away and then Harold spoke up, everyone would think, "Why couldn't I have said that?" Because you're not as smart as Harold, that's why.

It was a treat to work for Mort Halperin and Harold Koh. Previously, I had always wanted to work abroad, in the field, avoiding the DC doldrums. But this assignment allowed me for the first time to see how the big boys worked, how Halperin, Koh, and Kemble argued, wheedled, and bullied the Department into accepting the Community of Democracies Initiative – a proposal that in the beginning elicited either a yawn or a sneer from our foreign service colleagues.

Jeff Brown and I labored for one year helping to organize the Community of Democracies conference. We had no other issue, no other interests. At first when we approached our State and USIA colleagues about support for CD, we faced strong skepticism. What's the purpose of setting up a new international organization, they would ask. Every time Jeff Brown and I went on one of our propaganda patrols, people would see us coming. Their eyes would roll and they'd say, "Not CDI again. Don't you guys have something better to do?" But we wouldn't quit. We wore them down. Our most effective argument: the Secretary wants this to happen.

Halperin realized from the beginning that CD would fail if it were seen as solely an American initiative. So CD's first effort was to recruit a core group of like-minded democratic nations to act as conveners of the first conference. Our first choice was easy: Poland. Ten years after the fall of the Soviet Union, Poland was thriving, a model for other nations seeking to make the transition from authoritarian state to democracy. On other projects Secretary Albright and Halperin had worked well with Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek . Geremek played a key role in the rise to power of Solidarity and the establishment of representative government in Poland. Albright sounded him out about CD, and from the first Geremek was enthusiastic. Soon Poland agreed to host the first CD conference in Warsaw in the summer of 2000. To fill out the roster of convening nations, we also recruited India, Mali, the Czech Republic, Chile, South Africa, and South Korea.

In addition to selecting and convening the conveners for CD, we spent a lot of time trying to articulate the rationale for CD and explain its goals. Most of this heavy lifting was done by the excellent Ted Piccone and Bobby Herman, but at least on one instance I got involved. The two of them circulated a policy statement, a one-page paper that made the

case for the Community of Democracies. I saw the draft and thought, “Bobby and Ted are usually very good writers, but in this case I think I can do better.” I wrote my own version, and everybody liked it. It became our standard declaration of purpose.

Q: Was this an organization conceived like APEC? Would it have nation states in it?

NEIGHBORS: Yes. It was vaguely supposed to end with the establishment of a new international organization – but without elaborate bureaucratic trappings. States would participate in working groups and regularly have meetings that would encourage the spread of democracy.

After two or three months of hard work, we had decided where to hold the first CD conference and who would host it. We had recruited the seven co-convening nations and held several joint meetings with their representatives. At this point we still had several vexing questions to resolve: Who should belong to a community of democracies? Who do we invite to attend the Warsaw conference? How do you define “democratic nation?” Certainly there were not 100 nations that could be labeled flourishing democracies. But maybe, with a lot of wiggle room, we could identify 100 countries trying to be Democracies.

To help answer these questions, Halperin and Kemble recruited Freedom House to organize the World Forum on Democracy, the NGO conference that would run currently in Warsaw with CD. Freedom House produces a yearly country-by-country report on the state of democracy and press freedom. This made them the ideal organization to help us sort out the guest list for CD, to decide which countries deserved an invitation. This selection process led to a series of acrimonious debates within the State Department, the convening group, and the NGO community.

On one occasion, Penn Kemble, Jeff Brown and I went over to Freedom House to meet with the director (Adrian Karatnycky) and several of his esteemed board members. These illuminati included Max Kampelman, distinguished negotiator of the SALT treaties and Panama Canal Treaty, brilliant labor leader and lawyer and political operative. Zbigniew Brzezinski was there, too (no description needed). The point of the meeting was to get board approval for inviting to the Warsaw conference some countries whose democratic bona fides might be called into question. When we brought up the possibility of inviting Russia (laughs), Zbig went berserk (laughs) , railing against Russia like someone possessed. He was going on and on. Kemble tried to explain: certainly Russia was not a flourishing democracy, but it was doing much better than expected and maybe it needed encouragement from the other democracies. Zbig was not having any of it. And at that point Max Kampelman spoke up and I understood why he was known as a brilliant

negotiator. He was quite elderly at the time, in his eighties, but still able to make the case for Russia and pacify Brzezinski in a way that was charming and efficacious. Finally, and with great reluctance, (laughs) Brzezinski conceded defeat.

Russia got the nod. Singapore and Malaysia did not, and therein lies another tale.

Q: What happened?

NEIGHBORS: Halperin, with the agreement of the CD convening nations, decided he wanted to make a point about Singapore. Singapore pretended to be a democracy, but wasn't. They held elections that only the ruling party could win. People who criticized the leader, Lee Kuan Yu and his party, wound up in jail on trumped up charges. They should not be invited to the Warsaw conference. When our draft list came out, the U.S. ambassador to Singapore, launched a heated rebuttal, asking how we could possibly exclude Singapore from the forum. We did anyway.

After the first three months Jeff Brown and I spent most of our time working with Freedom House to assemble a collection of NGO representatives for the World Forum on Democracy. In the end more than 400 delegates participated. This included, among others, Wei Jingsheng, representing China, though he no longer lived there, having fled the country after Tiananmen. We had representatives of the Taiwan Democratic Progressive Party, including Bi-khim Hsiao, close advisor to President Chen Shui-bian and director of international affairs for the party.

The chairperson for the board of directors of Freedom House at that time was Bette Bao Lord, whom I had known from Beijing days. Her husband, former ambassador to China, Winston Lord, came with her to the Warsaw conference, and the two of them played a key role in the proceedings. George Soros, who had a close relationship with Halperin, helped fund a portion of the conference and also participated as a representative of his Open Society Foundation.

The Peruvian delegation gave us one of the stars of the Forum, Alejandro Toledo. Toledo grew up in an impoverished Quechua Indian family. Two Peace Corps volunteers noted his talent and secured for him a scholarship to study in the United States; he did well, eventually earning a PhD in economics from Stanford. He returned to Peru and went into politics. In 2000 he became a leading opponent of the Fujimori regime, and announced his intention to run for the presidency. (He won the election in 2001, defeating former president Alan Garcia.)

On June 24, the eve of the conference, Toledo and the Peruvian delegation called Bette Bao Lord, asking for an urgent meeting with Freedom House and with the official U.S. delegation. One of their delegation, Baruch Ivcher had been detained by Polish border police. Ivcher was a prominent Israeli journalist, a long-time resident of Lima. He had long been a thorn in the side of the Fujimori dynasty, and Fujimori was looking for revenge. So Peru put out an Interpol alert on Ivcher. He had not really committed any crime, but Interpol could not ignore an Interpol bulletin. Hearing this report, Bette Bao Lord, Freedom House, Soros, and the USG went into action and before long Ivcher was allowed in.

Q: Now, does this organization, the Community of Democracies, continue to exist?

NEIGHBORS: Yes, it does. Since Warsaw, CD has convened six times: in Seoul, Santiago, Bamako, Lisbon, Vilnius, and most recently in Ulaanbaatar. There is now an Executive Secretariat, a Governing Council, and a Global Issues Group.

NEIGHBORS: It was a wonderful experience to work with individuals as intellectually sharp as Mort Halperin and Harold Koh. Jeff Brown and I also worked closely with all of the talented people that Halperin brought into Policy Planning. That included Jim Steinberg, who eventually became Deputy Secretary of State under Hilary Clinton. During that fascinating year, I got to meet and talk to lots of people who were really bright, insiders in the Department, leaders in the NGO world. Because Penn Kemble didn't want to go to Africa, I traveled to Botswana to participate in a conference on democracy. I went to Poland twice. I liked it so much that I later on bid on the job of PAO Poland. And that was going to be my last assignment as a Foreign Service officer. Unfortunately, I had a medical problem, and the assignment got canceled (laughs).

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MICHAEL GUEST
Department of State
Deputy Director for Political Affairs
European Bureau
Office of Regional Political-Military Affairs
Washington D.C.
(1989)

Mr. Guest was born and raised in upper-state South Carolina, with a few years of early-schooling in New Orleans, Louisiana. He joined the Foreign Service in 1981 and worked in various positions in Hong Kong, France, Romania, and especially Washington D.C.

Topical Focus – Supporting Political Shifts for Democracy in Germany

Q: By 1989, the Berlin Wall was falling and in 1991, the USSR dissolved. So it was a time of change in Europe.

GUEST: Yes. In the run-up to the time the Berlin Wall fell, I was RPM's Deputy Director for Political Affairs, in charge of organizing our political dialogue at NATO and at what was then known as CSCE, now called OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. My job basically was to help figure out how to take advantage of that moment, when Eastern European regimes were tumbling, falling. How could we anchor them in democracy? How could we help them understand the new, basically Western path they had started on, a new culture for them?

I ended up as part of our Two-Plus-Four negotiating team, and the go-to guy that traveled with Ray Seitz, Assistant Secretary of European Affairs at the time. I was always on airplanes, traveling with him to Paris and Berlin and London, meeting with key allies and keeping track of a myriad of things to be done to unravel the quadripartite agreement at the heart of Berlin and the Cold War. I also traveled with Bob Kimmet, Undersecretary for Political Affairs at the time, to G-7 [Group of Seven] political director meetings, which were seized with the same issues. Those were very heady days: threading the goals and dialogue from each trip; coming back from one to prepare briefing books for the next; spurring the interagency process to move on issues that had to be worked on. I slept in my office more times than I can remember, showered in the basement gym, wore sneakers to run between meetings. Remember my background — I had entered the Foreign Service essentially to support God and country in the Cold War. And here I was in the middle of this tectonic shift, when suddenly all of those pillars of the post-World War II order were falling, trying to figure out how to make something out of it in a way that would advance American interests. It was head-spinning.

Q: Maybe you can give just a couple minutes about what the actual outcome was. You were working on something called CSCE that became OSCE. In that office, you all were trying to create a different kind of security architecture?

GUEST: Well, "security architecture" sounds really lofty. That's Kissinger stuff. But yeah. I mean, we were trying to make sense of how NATO needed to adapt to the fall of the Berlin Wall. What would NATO's role now be? How could we steer a dialogue to keep Germany in the Alliance, quite frankly, at a time when many were arguing there should be a grand compromise that would move a reunited Germany out of NATO? The Alliance had been critical to our country's security. How could it be configured to ensure continued relevance, and to maintain our interests, in this sudden and new period of history?

Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
First Deputy Director
(2002-2005)

Steven Wagenseil was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1947. He attended Le Collège Cévenol in France, completed a post-graduate year at Gresham's School in England, and received his B.A. from Yale University in French. He entered the foreign service in 1974, and had postings in Spain, Mali, Zimbabwe, and Senegal. After his work in the foreign service, he worked at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor as the Director for Multinational Affairs, and the Office of Democratic Institutions of Human Rights as the Acting Director. Steven Wagenseil was interviewed by Peter Eicher on January 15, 2008.

Topical Focus – Office of Democratic Institutions of Human Rights [ODIHR] Projects and Democratic Development in Europe

WAGENSEIL: ODIHR. But- Or it can be misspelled, which happens all too frequently, including on the occasional armband. But anyway, it is the institution of the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, with a hyphen in "co-operation," the institution responsible for democracy, human rights, rule of law, elections support, the issues of Roma and Sinti, minorities, tolerance and so forth. And during the three years I was there the responsibilities morphed a little bit, moved around, got more attention to minorities and tolerance issues and so forth, which was a result of international and national pressures inside the OSCE's European participating states.

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Q: And so these were issues you'd been dealing with for at least a decade at this point?

WAGENSEIL: Well some of them, yes. I mean, I'd been working on human rights, obviously, democracy promotion, obviously, and the rule of law as it pertains to the human rights environment, minority issues in a world conference on racism, that sort of thing -- but as elements of U.S. foreign policy, not as elements of the policy of an international organization or of all the countries of that organization. The background is that the OSCE participating states had agreed in the early '90s that human rights are an appropriate issue for international concern, not just an internal affair and "You have to stay out of my business." And so the OSCE had adopted a number of documents whereby the states took on obligations and made promises to each other -- and to their citizens -- and ODIHR is in some respects the enforcer of those obligations or the watchman to make sure those obligations are being respected. The most visible element of that is the election-observation missions which ODIHR puts together every year -- a dozen or more

-- in participating states, to observe the elections that those states are holding and to grade them, to comment on them, and to see how well they met the standards, the international standards. ODIHR does lots of other stuff but that's the most visible thing because that's the thing that happens in a lot of the different countries, and voters see ODHIR observers at the polling stations and that's pretty visible.

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Q: You were also developing projects to help countries improve their practices?

WAGENSEIL: Yes, there were a lot of projects. The different sections in ODIHR had different activities coming up. There was one I went to Prague, if I remember correctly, working with offices from national Customs Services on customs inspections and training for customs officers, looking at how to standardize inspection routines and standardize paperwork, that sort of thing. Also projects about the rule of law; working with law schools or lawyers, the bar associations; opposition to political parties and governmental political parties and so forth on rule of law issues.

One of the main challenges, of course, is how do you translate "the rule of law?" What does that mean in French? I got a frantic message from the translators when the interpreters would say "how do you say that in French?" or in Spanish. The rule of law in French is "l'état de droit," a state of laws -- as opposed to "the rule of men."

Q: Interesting.

WAGENSEIL: That sort of thing.

A lot of projects, a lot of activity on elections, obviously. We're not just observing elections but also trying to help governments prepare new election law.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

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

Robert Stephen (Steve) Brent studied at Duke University for his undergraduate degree before joining the U.S. Navy for six years of service.

He then studied at Harvard University for both his masters' and doctorate degrees before working as a staffer for Senator Nancy Kassebaum in 1985 and entering USAID's Africa Bureau in 1986. He served in South Africa, Egypt, and Washington D.C..
He was interviewed by Carol Peasley in July 2018.

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

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

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

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

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

There were lots of teething problems. Implementation units were not the biggest difficulty. They had a lot of trouble getting decent Compact proposals. When Clay went

to one country (I think it was Mozambique), he told the government to write up their desires on a piece of yellow paper; they would start with that. Also, MCC didn't have U.S. contracting officers and didn't know how to do contracts. We helped them with those kinds of things.

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

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

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

One of the problems was that most of the Board members didn't know much about the countries. They had the indicators, but they wanted more qualitative assessments. Andrew ended up mostly filling that role. They would hear the MCC staff presentation and then they would say, "Andrew, what do you think about this?" Andrew would then talk about the country. He often knew the history, the leaders, the development problems, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was not a problem because MCC was going by what the numbers said. One thing that was controversial was how to treat democracy. Because originally the only hard hurdle was corruption, which was decided by President Bush. You couldn't be below the median on corruption. That by itself would fail you. Political rights were one of the indicators, but not a hard hurdle.
But later, because of the Administration's freedom agenda, they made political rights (above the median) a tacit hard hurdle (and I believe later a formal hard hurdle). That hit Rwanda. Rwanda scores well on most of the indicators, but not political rights. So this turned out to be pretty important, especially if we go back to our East Asian cases since none of them were democracies at the time that they did their growth pushes.

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

BRENT: Right.

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

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

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

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

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

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
USAID
LAC Bureau Director
Washington D.C.
Office of Central American Affairs
(1991-1994)

Mr. Rhodes was born and raised in Tuscon, Arizona. He received his Bachelor's at Occidental College and his Master's at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia, attended U.C. Berkeley's Law School, and worked in the legal field before entering the Foreign Service. He worked in various positions for USAID in Haiti, Washington D.C., Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, South Africa. After retiring from USAID, Mr. Rhodes did NGO work for the Institute for International Education and Save the Children, worked as the Latin American Managing Director at the Millennium Challenge Corp, and the Chief of Staff for the Peace Corps.

Topical Focus – Chapultepec Accords in El Salvador

RHODES: It was an exciting time to be there, and a very interesting job, as Washington jobs go. The '90s were the period when, for the first time, all of the Central American countries were becoming formal democracies, through popular, democratic elections. It was the first time ever that all of the governments of Central America were truly democratically elected. But it was a very difficult time for them and for us, as the long, vicious civil war in El Salvador was not over until the negotiation of the "Chapultepec Accords" between the Government and the FMLN, and signed in 1992. The decades-long civil war in Guatemala was still not over, but was being fought at a lower intensity of violence -- and fortunately with fewer human rights violations – than in the 80s. Perhaps most surprisingly, in Nicaragua, the rule of the Sandinistas had come to an end with the astonishing victory in 1990 of Violeta Chamorro and her "National Union" coalition over the Sandinistas and Daniel Ortega, ushering in a democratic era in Nicaragua, which it had not had in many years.

While El Salvador was still not at peace in the early '90s, and was still fighting its civil war, a more moderate, progressive businessman – not tightly linked to the military as those in the past – had been elected in 1989, Alfredo Cristiani. There was also a democratic election in Guatemala, I think for just the second time in some years, essentially a restoration of an 'open' political process and democratic elections. Democracy in Guatemala had been destroyed in the 1950s, regrettably with USG support. But Jorge Serrano had won the Presidency, which unfortunately did not turn out well, as during his difficult term he suspended the Congress and closed the Supreme Court, in what was termed an "auto-golpe" (or "self-coup"), and he tried to rule by decree. A real setback to Guatemala, but Serrano had at least been 'democratically elected.' So you had a lot of promise for progress in the region.

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RHODES: The most interesting of these trips came as an informal, somewhat 'below-the-radar' visit to El Salvador, which ultimately constituted a piece of the ongoing peace process for El Salvador. Negotiations by the government had been ongoing with the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) over many years. The newly-elected President Cristiani had given new hope and energy to the negotiation process, which had not progressed for quite some time. In order to provide incentives to the FMLN to come to the table and sign on to a peace accord, there was an effort by

several key staffers who worked for Senate and House committees concerned with U.S. policy in the region. I was in an important, but not "high-level" position in USAID, well-placed to go on an unpublicized mission to El Salvador with some deeply involved senior staffers, Dick McCall from the Senate Foreign Relations side, and Rick Nuccio from the House Foreign Affairs committee. They were both extremely knowledgeable, forward-leaning, and linked to numerous Central Americans, in and out of governments. Both had been trying to move the peace process forward in El Salvador. They had also developed strong personal contacts, through intermediaries, with some leaders of the FMLN.

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RHODES: Yes, it did. I can't give you a detailed history of it, but that trip was in 1991, and in 1992 the Salvadoran government and FMLN signed the Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico. There was a large international donors meeting held shortly afterwards -- including USAID – pledging large-scale support, in particular to include former FMLN-held areas. The commitments were made in earnest, and among other programs funded and implemented, largely with USAID funding, was a major rural electrification program in the mountain areas of northern El Salvador. There was a huge U.S. government response to help support and implement the peace agreement and to make sure that peace and a democratic process were solidified, after decades of civil war. I believe it was NRECA that implemented the specific program – the National Rural Electrification Cooperative Association. NRECA had been a partner of USAID for a long time, working in El Salvador and other countries. I haven't been back to Santa Marta de Victoria, but I'd love to go! Though I'd rather go by road this time.

HONDURAS

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Latin America Bureau, Office of Central American Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Honduras
(1995–2000)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – USAID Leadership in Hurricane Mitch Response and Reconstruction in Honduras

Q: Where were the dialogues on how that all fit together? Would those take place in the field or were you in Washington involved also through discussions with the Department of Justice?

LEVINE: Yes, in Washington and in the field. It played out in the embassy country team. In Washington, when a mission director would come back to DC, we would meet with ICITAP. There were dialogues where the Office of Central American Affairs was really the mission in Washington in meetings with ICITAP to address issues such as coordination and duplication of effort, getting roles and responsibilities ironed out. This helped when we had to go to the Hill to make sure we weren't sniping at each other or airing dirty laundry.

I remember a vignette in Honduras in this time where there was a country team dispute over the course of the criminal procedures code, and this was a classic case where we had an expert, contracted through the National Center for State Courts, NCSC, a long-time partner, and there was an FBI guy from ICITAP. ICITAP's mandate is looking for congruence between Honduran law and U.S. law. Our approach, advised by our expert and in consultation with the Hondurans, would involve sharing comparative cases of different laws throughout Latin America. We would offer alternatives to them based on

what worked in similar countries. “You could go this way, as they’ve done in Argentina, or you could go this way, as they’ve done in Bolivia. Next door they do it this way.” Then the Hondurans took it to their Congress to decide what law they wanted.

So, you can imagine those disputes coming to the country team and saying, if we let the Hondurans decide what their law should be, this may cause ICITAP agitation in terms of congruence with U.S. law. This is a natural policy debate, and it was appropriate to see that played out in the country team.

It’s a very complex issue with lots of moving parts and reconciling what the U.S. posture should be and how we support it and to what end meant that everybody at post had to be on the same sheet of paper. Beyond the USG players, we had other bilateral and multilateral donors, like the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and the World Bank. I think the walkaway lesson is that it has to get on the screen of the ambassador to reconcile those issues. An effective mission director has to figure out how to make the development case. USAID is not going to win every time, but I think we could win a lot by putting this in the more institutional frame and point to long-term sustainability provided by the buy-in of local actors.

Q: Was the National Security Council very active? Was Central America a frequent topic? Were there a lot of meetings that brought together the various elements of the U.S. government?

LEVINE: This is actually a nice segue to another chapter. The mid-nineties in my career was really about the peace process, and then in 1998, the LAC Bureau’s response to Hurricane Mitch was quite significant.

To answer your question about NSC involvement, I think the resolution and the winding down of the conflicts and the alignment of policy really kept Central America off the NSC’s radar. If USAID and State were aligned, and I think we really were in terms of democracy support, justice, and putting in place the infrastructure to support free and fair elections, we had a real unity of effort. I think this kept it off the radar or off the plate of NSC. It did come up in terms of response to Hurricane Mitch and reconstruction, very much so.

Q: Okay. Well, why don’t we talk about Hurricane Mitch. It was obviously a huge tragedy and a huge issue that you all had to confront, so walk us through how it happened.

LEVINE: Here’s a cliché I can offer. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the worst of times in the sense of a calamitous, climatic event that just did horrific damage to Honduras, in particular, and four other countries in the region. In the immediate aftermath, it was all-hands-on deck for a period of several months in responding and pivoting the program to disaster response. It was my first experience in seeing a fully deployed OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) working in combination with the missions. I realized, as a headquarters person, the difference between when a crisis hits your country, you may be working hard, but it doesn’t

compare to what folks in the mission are doing. Your work is hard for different reasons, but it's not about life and death, or it is at a remove. The first thing you realize is that for Honduras, the Honduras mission had to account for all its people and their families, who were threatened by the storm. What follows is an unyielding optempo of work that follows for several months.

Q: Was Elena Brineman the USAID mission director then. And was Frank Almaguer the ambassador during that period?

LEVINE: Yes.

Q: You said they had to account for their staff. Did USAID/Honduras lose anyone?

LEVINE: You know, I don't recall that we lost anyone, but I know that certainly homes were lost or extensively damaged. What I recall was the best of times, which was really seeing everybody in the bureau pulling together. I think if you talk to anybody who worked in Washington at that time, they would say that working on the Mitch response really broke down silos between offices because we had a common purpose, and everybody was allowed to shine. The technical offices supporting mission programs, the regional offices representing the missions in Washington, it really felt like we were staffing the ramparts together.

Q: Was AID named the lead agency on this?

LEVINE: It was, and if you've worked at AID, this is the model of how you like it to be. Formulating the strategies and the response really started in the mission along with the request for supplemental resources for reconstruction. But there were a lot of recommended solutions coming from the interagency. It started with a cabinet meeting with the president saying, "how can your agencies help with the hurricane response?", which is the natural thing to do. What we learned was that those agencies with an international mandate knew how to work overseas, and those without one didn't. So, we had very good cooperation from USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), the Forest Service, the State Department, and then others who really needed a lot of handholding at every step of the way.

What OMB said is that USAID would be the technical secretariat for the effort and all proposals to do work in hurricane response were run by AID and ultimately decided on by the assistant administrator, with a few exceptions. One was the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers due to the fact that its Latin America headquarters sat in Alabama in the district of the chairman of the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee on Appropriations. State INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) got $10 million because they were able to make the case that crime would rise because of the weakened state of the system and they should do additional programs. Pretty flimsy stuff and they ended up asking USAID for help in programming the money.

Q: Well, given where we are today, I don't think they were very successful. (Laughs)

LEVINE: True. I think the takeaway was that USAID knows this business well, and making USAID the technical secretariat and lead agency gave us a lot of power. Otherwise, you have a food fight and a "supply push" of solutions that only by luck bears resemblance to the problem as it is on the ground.

I think I had to up my game in terms of representation on the Hill. I went through the entire $911 million supplemental appropriation and created a matrix of every requirement asked of the agency. It became our briefing document of two or three pages of items where Congress said you shall do this, you shall do that, and these are the levels of funding. We would provide periodic updates, walk them through the matrix as a way to structure our response to oversight. Support for the effort was bipartisan, exceedingly supportive of what we did, and appreciative of the absolute transparency.

Q: Since you mentioned the bill, to what extent was AID helping to draft that bill at the outset? I mean, how involved were we directly?

LEVINE: Yeah, I think we shared with them what we would do with the money, what our plans were in terms of reactivation and reconstruction. It ended up being handled as an appropriation, so there was very little—aside from a funding allocation, there was not—there was hortatory language which we took as important, particularly in oversight and accountability.

Additional to the appropriation were allocations for the USAID Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). We also said measures we were taking programmatically to bolster in-country accountability as well as what we were doing on donor coordination. So, these were some of the accountability measures we would share in our dialogue with the Hill.

Q: Okay. And you all were involved—as those provisions got put in, you were aware, you were talking to the Hill about them, so they weren't things that were imposed, particularly. In other words, you were consulted.

LEVINE: I don't think we felt hamstrung particularly by them. Where we were vulnerable and remain so today is we made a big deal about the urgency of getting assistance and getting the supplemental passed. And then, we had to deal with the delay and lag in reprogramming and procuring a reconstruction program. So, the big issue was around the question of "how fast are you spending the money after having politically made such a point of the urgency?"

The first briefings were the hardest to answer "to what extent have you obligated the money that we gave you?" And I remember, the obligations were in single digits of percentage of funds appropriated. So, that was a tough brief. (Laughs)

It got better over time, and it really blended into overall programming. It was two-year money, so it was a sizable injection. It was over $900 million appropriation, most of it

going to USAID, with $100 million going to the interagency. Of the amount going to USAID, over $300 million went to Honduras.

HONG KONG

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

HOWARD H. LANGE
Department of State, Washington, DC
Director, Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs
1996-1998

Howard Lange was born and raised in Nebraska. Following his attendance at the University of Nebraska he joined the US Air Force and was stationed in Taiwan from 1963-1967. He then attended the University of Washington before joining the foreign service in 1969. He spent most of his time in the foreign service stationed in East Asia. He retired from the foreign service in 1998.

Topical Focus – Preserving Democracy in Hong Kong

Q: After all, Hong Kong was between the British and the Chinese. What was our role, other than as an observer?

LANGE: We asserted ourselves for two related reasons. First is our abiding compulsion to spread our political culture -- liberal democracy -- wherever possible. Secondly, we have assumed a global role as judge of the state of human rights. Remember that every year we publish well over a thousand pages of text on how think other people in the world are behaving with respect to human rights. We took an interest, almost a proprietary interest, in human rights in Hong Kong. Hong Kong had not drawn much human rights attention during over 140 years as a colony of Britain, but it captured our imagination now that it was reverting to the sovereignty of "Red China". Hong Kong had become a success story, really a poster child of laissez-faire capitalism, a free wheeling environment that capitalism hasn't enjoyed in this country since the days of the robber barons. It exhibited the sort of freedom of expression that one would expect to see in any place that had been absorbed into the British system. With reversion to Chinese sovereignty in the offing, Britain had recently begun to allow limited exercise of the right to vote. The Chinese and British had reached agreement in 1982 about arrangements for reversion. In 1992, Congress passed the Hong Kong Policy Act, which mandates an annual report by the State Department on how well China carries out this agreement with the British, with particular attention to Hong Kong's autonomy, specified in the 1982 Sino-British agreement in very broad areas. Hong Kong is to maintain its own customs territory, which means it has its own trade laws. It handles its own immigration and issues its own passport. In any number of lesser ways, it does maintain a separate identity. A

process is specified by which Hong Kong people will progressively exercise more direct say through the vote in the selection of a legislative council and a Hong Kong chief executive. The process is deliberate, too slow for some in the U.S. and some in opposition parties in Hong Kong. There were also doubts about the democratic credentials of the first
chief executive, who was a business tycoon. He was Beijing's pick, and this rankled among those who thought Hong Kong should be as independent as possible. My view is that in the real world, it made sense in those early, uncertain days that whoever was chief executive in Hong Kong, where China exercises sovereignty, should have a good relationship with Beijing. Otherwise it wasn't going to work.

Given its iconographic status, there was a great deal of attention in this country to Hong Kong. There was pressure from some quarters on the Hill that the United States should declare that Beijing was in breach of the terms of the '82 agreement with the Brits, even though the party directly involved, Britain, was not going to take that step. We decided not to involve ourselves in that question, I think wisely so.
Considering all of the doubts that the PRC organism would be able to tolerate the introduction of Hong Kong into its system, or that Beijing might smother the goose that was laying golden eggs, the reversion went pretty smoothly. The PRC handled it carefully. For the reversion ceremony in June 1997, Madeline Albright went to represent the United States. The Chinese army had sent a token garrison, but they stayed in their barracks at the time, and I believe there continues to be little outward sign of a Chinese military presence there.

Hong Kong had considerable economic difficulty growing out of the 1998 Asian financial crisis, but had a period of recovery from that and generally speaking has done pretty well
financially and politically, much better than I think critics had anticipated. The long term is another question. As other Chinese coastal cities, notably Shanghai, become economic powerhouses, they could become effective competitors. Hong Kong's boom years may not return.

HUNGARY

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

KEITH C. SMITH
SEED Program
(1987-1992)

Keith C. Smith built a distinguished Foreign Service career spanning Latin America, Europe, and Eastern Europe from 1962 onward. His work included political analysis, Cold War diplomacy, democracy promotion, and security affairs, with postings in Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Hungary, and Portugal. He also served in senior State Department roles focused on NATO, the Falklands War, Northern Ireland, and post-communist democratic and economic development in Eastern Europe.

Topical Focus – The SEED Act and America's Role in Eastern Europe's Transition

Q: Having got caught up in the whole collapse of the whole system essentially, starting in November of '89.

SMITH: November of '89 was a key period that changed the direction of my career. After spending a year in the Latin American Bureau, the Berlin wall fell and Soviet control over Eastern Europe collapsed. We watched television at home every night as events unfolded in Berlin. It was an emotional time for me and for many others who had lived under communist regimes in East Central Europe. In June of 1990, I was approached by Ambassador Robert Berry, who was putting together a team to work on East European assistance. The group was to work directly under Deputy Secretary of State, Larry Eagleburger. Congress had only shortly before passed the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) program, with an initial appropriation of $300 million to provide U.S. assistance to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The objective was to give these countries a hand in converting their communist systems to democratic market economies. We were somewhat naïve in thinking that the relatively small amounts of money we could give them would change things rapidly, but it did help these countries somewhat with the painful transition. The SEED program was only about one-twentieth the size as the Marshall Plan had been. But it was exciting adventure for all of us who were involved in the program. Sometimes, however, it was quite confusing for the proposed beneficiaries.

Q: Well you did this from when to when?

SMITH: From mid- 1990 to mid-1992, I worked under Barry and Deputy Secretary Eagleburger.

Q: I've interviewed Bob Berry and we served in Yugoslavia together at one point, as a vice counsel. You've already explained a bit, but what were you specifically doing?

SMITH: At first, I was given the task of drawing up a long term plan concerning economic and democratic development activities that the U.S. should undertake in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. We tried to differentiate between economic restructuring, democracy building, and education/training. Also, I was asked to oversee much of the activities in Eastern Europe of USAID, our assistance agency. Because USAID had had no prior experience working in Eastern Europe and State had little experience in delivering foreign assistance, it was a challenge for everyone. Our office was charged with setting assistance policy, and USAID with transforming the policy into effective assistance programs in the three countries. Not surprisingly, USAID had its own ideas concerning what should be done. Many USAID people didn't even want the U.S. to be involved in Eastern Europe, because it was not one of the world's most poverty-stricken areas. Some of the USAID people were not comfortable giving money to what they saw as a political program. Those in the USAID leadership, however, were very much on board with the SEED program and they were a pleasure to work with. I learned a lot regarding development issues, and I hope they learned something about Eastern Europe from me.

The SEED program's budget, at least for the first three years, was approximately $350 million. We had to make decisions quite rapidly because the situation in Eastern Europe would not wait and we knew that Congress would not appropriate large amounts for more than a few years. It was particularly interesting to deal with environmental and energy issues and to work with people from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). USAID energy specialists assisted with energy efficiency programs. Eastern Europe had been one of the most energy wasteful regions in the world. Under communism, no one tracked the cost of individual energy consumption. We provided assistance to journalists' associations in Poland and Hungary. We tried to avoid giving balance of payments support to governments, but we did set up enterprise funds, that provided loans to small and medium sized enterprises. We had a $250 million enterprise fund in Poland alone. I think it was very successful. It has now been liquidated and the funds turned over to the Polish American Freedom Forum, who are engaged in a terrific job of outreach to the people of Ukraine and Belarus, and to Russians in the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad. I visit the Forum in Warsaw from time to time. During the early 1990s, we established several enterprise funds in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DONALD B. KURSCH
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
Hungary
Budapest, Hungary
(1986-1990)

Donald B. Kursch was born in New York in 1942. He graduated from Harvard University in 1964 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1964 to 1965. His assignments abroad after entering the Foreign Service in 1966 included Zurich, Budapest, Moscow, Frankfurt, Bonn and Brussels. Mr. Kursch was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Topical Focus – U. S. Support of Hungary's Transition to Democracy

Q: Did we get involved by having non-governmental agencies coming in to show them how to
run elections and that sort of thing?

KURSCH: We had programs with the Democratic and Republican Parties' Institutes, and the
National Endowment for Democracy. There was also a lot of NGO activity. … The AFL-CIO
was also very active. I remember that their president, Lane Kirkland, came to Budapest and that I had a reception for him. There were also numerous congressional visits. I had four CODELs in
one week, two arriving at the same time. We had an enormous amount of Congressional interest in Hungary at the time because it seemed to be on the tip of what was happening. Things happened quickly. I can remember one man who had been one of the few professors at Karl Marx who had not been a Communist all who suddenly became the foreign minister, I mean this was quite something. It all came out very well. Mark Palmer, our Ambassador, was a great
optimist. He really did—and still does--believe in if you give people freedom, they'll do the right
thing. He made Hungarians believe in themselves and became a great inspiration for them.
Hungary has had a very tragic history. They have the worst won-lost record in war of any European Country; I think they were 0 and 7 going back to the 15th Century. Thus they were

always on the losing side,. unlike the Romanians, who seem to know when to change sides.
Hungary even had a pro-fascist coup in 1944, so you know they have a poor sense of timing.

Q: [laughter]

KURSCH: In many respects it's amazing that they still exist as a country. Mark Palmer inspired
the Hungarians to have more confidence in themselves. One thing he did that was that I think
was a pretty clever idea, We came up with the idea of bringing the Peace Corps into Eastern
Europe. I recall that this came out of a brainstorming meeting, and I don't know exactly whether
I said it or he said it, whatever, but we agreed to try and bring the Peace Corps to Hungary. He
wrote to Paul Coverdale (later a US Senator from Georgia), who was the head of the Peace Corps, from this contact we developed the first agreement to bring the Peace Corps into Eastern Europe. I remember going out to welcome the initial group of volunteers. This made me feel really good.

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Q: Now, we're getting up to the time when you left there in 1990. Was there anything else at that point that we haven't talked about in Hungary?

KURSCH: Well, one of the things I was very excited to be involved in was working with some of the new people who were coming in such as Arpad Goncz who was President of Hungary from 1990-2000, and who became a friend of mine. He was a dissident who I met at a street demonstration and became president. At the Embassy we were very involved in getting American companies to invest in a new, democratic Hungary. I was involved with the efforts of General Electric to buy out the Tungsram light bulb factory. General Motors was another big investor. So we were engaged with American business very heavily and encouraging, talking up Hungary, and encouraging the Hungarian government to be accommodating and to promote an American business presence. I think we were very successful in that regard.

ROBERT E. MCCARTHY
USIS
Public Affairs Officer
Hungary
Budapest, Hungary
(1988-1992)

Mr. McCarthy was born in Toronto, Canada in 1942 and was raised in New York City. He graduated from Fordham University and entered the Foreign Service in 1973. McCarthy served in the former Yugoslavia, Moscow, Leningrad and Budapest. He also held positions in Washington, DC. McCarthy was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Topical Focus – Early U. S. Relationships in Supporting Hungarian Democracy

Q: How about the non-governmental organizations? You know, the legal ones, there are all sorts of...

McCARTHY: Absolutely.

Q: How did that work out?

McCARTHY: We tried to identify good, non-governmental organizations that we could work with in Hungary. And we did. There was one called, DAC, Democracy after Communism, for example, that we worked with on legal matters, just sort of coordinated on issues. The SEED organization (Support for East European Democracy) was a non-governmental organization. And there were the non-governmental organizations that were involved from the United States. For example, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute. Once we got into having elections, they were extremely good, coming in, working with the opposition parties. There were hotels, resorts, that were not used, they were off-season, on Lake Balaton. They'd bring everybody down - politicians, campaign managers - and they'd have a seminar for a week or two weeks. They did great, great things. They'd have the same expert coming back in who was very knowledgeable. And we would not try to compete with that. We would see that was happening and we would think that was great, and we would look ahead to where we could make a difference - After Parliament is elected, then what? And so, in advance of the elections, we worked with Parliament on a parliamentary reference service, like a congressional research service, something of that nature. We got a good program going, partly because a flight was missed, a flight was diverted. The chancellor of the State University of New York and a small delegation were flying to Poland and their flight got diverted. So we met for dinner since they were in town anyway. They

were talking about this legislative support program they had in Chile, run out of SUNY Albany. And it sounded great. So we explained what was going on in Hungary and that there were going to be these parliamentary elections and we'd need something like that. And the long and the short of it is that USIA funded that individual - who'd done that Chile project - to come to Hungary and work with the parties, and work with the library that was attached to the parliament and get ready for this congressional research service. This, then, was followed up by an AID grant to SUNY. AID sent an American expert in to be resident for a year, and when our Congress, with Congressman Frost at the head, decided to have a big project to help east central European parliaments with information systems, we had something to build on and excellent contacts. So non-governmental bodies were important. There were other NGOs from outside, like the German Marshall Fund that were very active and very good. There must be others; none strike me right now. Our desire was always to include them.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR ROBIE M.H. "MARK" PALMER
Ambassador
Hungary
Budapest, Hungary
(1986-1990)

Ambassador Palmer was born into a Navy family in Michigan. He was raised both in the US and abroad. He was educated at Yale and Kiev University. He became a civil rights activist and entered the Foreign Service in 1964. He served in New Delhi, Moscow, and Belgrade and held an ambassadorship in Hungary. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Topical Focus – Early Stakeholders in Hungary's Democratic Transition

Q: We've already talked about the situation there. What were you packing in your ambassadorial attaché case as far as an agenda? Everybody has one. What did you want to accomplish?

PALMER: Well, I've had this sort of civil rights thing in me since I was in SNCC and CORE at Yale. I thought, "Well, finally, now I'm running my own show overseas." In Moscow, I'd been in the political section and done the dissidents, you know, etc. In Yugoslavia, I'd been particularly been interested in the internal political stuff. Anyway, so I thought, "This is really terrific. Now I can make the whole embassy focus on this stuff." Fortunately, I had people in the embassy who were sympathetic to that also. So, when I arrived, the first thing that I recall at least, was to ask my political officer to gather the number one dissidents in the country for dinner in the Gellert Hotel dining room, which was a very public place and sit down with them and say to them, "I'm here and I'm

yours." And that's what I did, in the presence of course of monitors, of their watchdogs and mine. So that was one part of what I wanted to do. Another part of what I wanted to do, which is what every good ambassador wants to do, which is to build out the bilateral relationship in all of its dimensions. And I certainly started out trying to think creatively about what could be done. I had early on gotten to know George Soros, here in America. We worked very closely together to do things I wanted. It occurred to me fairly early that it would be good to have a business school there, an MBA kind of school which didn't exist anywhere in the communist world. I went to George and asked for the money. After much fighting - because he had never given more than about 30 or 40 thousand dollars to any individual thing up to that point - I finally bludgeoned out of George 10 to one matching. He agreed that if I could raise four million dollars, he would put up $400,000 to build a business school. And I did. I raised the rest of the money, no U.S. government money at all. I didn't go there with that, but very early after getting there, I had that idea and did make it happen relatively early on.

Q: Where did Soros' money come from?

PALMER: He's a trader/ investor, both trades in commodities and currencies, stocks and bonds, he's a hedge fund manager. It's also his own money. He started with virtually nothing and built up what has been the most successful single investment vehicle in modern financial history along with Warren Buffett, I guess, but George is broader than what Buffet does.

Q: How does one raise non-government money as a government official?

PALMER: Go around, put your hand out, beg with everybody. Completely unlikely sources and obvious sources. Foundations, other ambassadors, bankers. I mean, anybody, I hit up everybody I could find.

Q: With the business school, did the Hungarian government go along with it?

PALMER: Yes, and I don't recall any skepticism, either. They didn't go out of their way to help it happen. I'm sure there was a little bit of nervousness probably by somebody, but there was never any criticism, never any praise either but never any criticism.

Q: From the beginning, was it going to be a school that was based on the Western system? I would think it would have to be.

PALMER: Yes, absolutely. We partnered with Pittsburgh University, with their business school. We brought in American professors from Pitt and from other American business schools to team teach with Hungarians. The idea was to make it a regional business school so we, from the beginning, had students coming from a variety of countries, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, etc. So let me think what else were my things that I wanted to do in the beginning. A broad bilateral agenda I wanted very much to do. I guess I was not particularly interested in the larger questions of Hungary in the world. I mean Hungary and Western Europe, Hungary and the Soviets. We did spend some time on that.

I got to know the Soviet ambassador well. We even ultimately ended up doing some things together. I tried to get close to the leadership. I got to know Kadar fairly well and had access to him whenever I needed it. I got to know all the hierarchy within the Communist Party and played tennis with them very regularly. So I tried to play both sides. I think when the crunch started to come in '88 and '89, that was important that I had in depth relations with everybody. I think and hope that they all trusted me because I was very up front about what I thought Hungary's future was.

Q: You said that civil rights was a major concern. On the ground, what did you find was the situation there and were you able to do anything?

PALMER: Well, I remember at this dinner at the Gellert, I asked Janos Kis, who was the kind of godfather of Samizdat, and…

Q: Samizdat means "self publish." It's the underground paper.

PALMER: Right…of the dissident community such as it was in Hungary. And it wasn't very robust. I asked Janos what he wanted, what I could do to help? He said they'd been having their passports taken away, that they couldn't travel. So if I could manage to get their passports back, that would be a good thing. So I said, "That's fine and I will certainly work hard on that, but surely we can be more ambitious than that. Why don't we start thinking about how to get some trade unions set up that are independent of political parties eventually, some independent media? We should be thinking a whole range of things here beyond just getting your passports back." Janos was sort of nonplused by this. He didn't really think that was something that was going to happen very quickly. I don't think he knew how to come to grips with what I was saying. And of course, I didn't either. I mean I was willing to say that, but then to actually get about doing it wasn't so clear what you could do. So I guess what I'm saying is that the movement at that point was pretty minimal…there were some very, very good people. And they had been trying. But there wasn't much in the way of organization. The most interesting thing that started to come about then were the environmentalists. There was this growing controversy about the dam on the Danube River with the Slovaks. So they had a cause that was sort of a legitimate national cause, that the Commies had a hard time putting down. They were the first ones who actually demonstrated in the streets so I did spend some time with them. Ultimately, I actually helped to create a regional environmental center which the U.S. funded most of in the beginning which provided some resources for them for that movement.

Q: I would have thought that your working with the dissidents would have caused a certain coolness in the relations with the Hungarian authorities.

PALMER: From time to time, it did and they complained. Gyula Horn, who was then foreign minister and subsequently has been elected a leader of his country in the democratic era. Anyway, Gyula complained to Jim Baker personally about me at one point and I was recalled to Washington and reprimanded. So there were times when this surfaced and it wasn't always easy to deal with.

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Q: Bush came in '89, so Baker was secretary of state. It was in '89 that you were called back?

PALMER: Yes, in March of '89.

Q: Yes, this was before the whole place imploded or exploded or whatever the whole of Eastern Europe. Was it that we weren't sort of supposed to be sort of stirring up the natives, is that it?

PALMER: Right. That was the concern. Horn said that I was making it more difficult for them to deal with the Soviets. He said that the Soviets were focusing on me and what we were doing. He said that the Soviets were saying that we - the U.S. - were destabilizing things and that they - the Hungarians - weren't standing up and stopping it. Rude Pravo had an editorial, the main communist newspaper, calling for my being thrown out and the East Germans had also attacked me. During a visit to Washington in 1998, Hungary's President Gonz, a former dissident, commented to Vice President Gore in my presence that I had been "The best Governor that Hungary ever had."

Q: Well, this is quite a bit of a focus on one lowly ambassador in Hungary, in a way. I mean to have the Czechs and the East Germans come in. What were you doing that was enough to raise a stink?

PALMER: Well, not because I was doing it alone. Obviously, there were much larger forces at work. I was part of this process of trying to help the democratic forces in Hungary get organized and make demands. This is including the fact that I marched in the street in March of '89. I went out and walked with the opposition for four hours through the streets of Budapest. I was filmed by ABC and others doing this and was on Hungarian national television. But I think that if you looked at it through the eyes of the East Germans or the Czechs or the communists in Moscow, here was an ambassador who was sort of not acting in a traditional fashion for an ambassador and was getting away with it. They were all worried about their own internal situation - particularly the Czechs and the East Germans - and the prospect for them of getting kicked out of power. They all saw themselves as one, you know, all the East German leaders, East Europeans saw themselves as part of the same thing - and that if any one of them got thrown out it could start a domino effect. So they talked a fair amount among themselves, the leaders of these countries, the security services. They didn't like change agents, let alone dissidents or, in my case, an embassy. The French press called me the "proconsul of Hungary" during this period, that I was like a proconsul, that I was dictating what was happening. And it is true that I had, we had considerable influence, but we had it because of these larger things that were going on. So, anyway, I look back on this period with great pleasure. I know it wasn't the normal way people do things in diplomacy, but Harry Barnes had done some things like this in Chile. And I think the Foreign Service in its finest moments does do these things.

Q: Were you sort of holding seminars with the opposition and the dissidents telling them what they should be doing?

PALMER: Right, including in my living room, yes. We brought people in to train them. I brought people in from the AFL-C.I.O., from the National Democratic Party Institute, the Republicans, etc. to train them in trade unions and party formation. You know, how do you do all of these political things? How do you organize trade unions? We became increasingly and extensively involved in setting up a democracy.

INDONESIA

N/A

IRAQ

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES KUNDER
USAID
Assistant Administrator
Asia and Near East Bureau
Afghanistan and Iraq
(2002-2004)

Mr. Kunder was born and brought up in Rochester, Pennsylvania and came from a Serbo-Croatian and Italian background. After receiving his Bachelor's from Harvard University, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps before pursuing his Master's at Georgetown University. He worked as a staffer for various offices across the Senate before joining USAID. He worked in various positions in the USAID Bureau of External Affairs, Asia and Near East Bureau, and as Acting Deputy Administrator. He also worked in the private sector. Mr. Kunder was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2022.

Topical Focus – Civilian - Military Cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq

KUNDER: That's a really great question and a complex question. Let me do a couple of different quick observations. Number one it wasn't nearly as bad as it was in Vietnam. Where armed USAID personnel were out on patrols. Most of the names of people, USAID officers who died in the line of duty in the lobby of the Ronald Reagan Building are from Vietnam. I think in historical terms, I think a lot of people perceive it that way. But in my view, USAID had done more than that, in terms of integration with the military. On a second topic. As I mentioned earlier, civil military relations have been a part of what I've done for a long time. And so, my view and certainly Andrew Natsios, his point of view, was that USAID should be part of the National Strategic picture, we should not be an isolated NGO within the U.S. government. Integration with the military is something that we both advocated in the sense of, again, not to bring USAID under the military because we consciously resisted the military put forward a number of very interesting proposals to create at each geographic combatant command U.S. Pacific Command U.S. Africa Command and so forth a military led team that essentially made a lot of sense, organizationally. What DoD proposed was that each headquarters would have essentially a small U.S. government integrated team. Somebody from Treasury, somebody from Commerce, somebody from USAID, somebody from the State Department. And they would then help the commander plan operations, taking into account both civilian and military capabilities of the U.S. government. Organizationally, we thought it made a lot of sense. But Andrew and I resisted that tremendously in the interagency, because we thought it was unconstitutional, you're essentially bringing the civilians under military control. And unless it was a wartime situation, we didn't think that made any sense. We resisted some of those. But in terms of integration, I had a lot to do with creating what's now called the Office of Civilian and Military Cooperation at USAID, because I wanted to place, just like the State Department places POLADS,

political advisors, in the front offices of each of these four-star generals and admirals scattered around the world. I wanted Senior AID Foreign Service officers sitting there as well. So that military official could be informed by a development perspective. In terms of the generic linking of the two into strategic planning purposes, so development would be integrated into military planning that was going on on a separate track from Iraq or Afghanistan, and I think it was just an accident of history that you happen to have two people well actually had three people in the top ranks of USAID at that time, all of whom had military background, Andrew Natsios, Mike Hess, and I.

Q: Mike who?

KUNDER: Hess, he was head of the DCHA (Disaster, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance) Bureau, at that time and a former army civil affairs officer. He really was into this civilian integration stuff. And we created this office of civilian military cooperation. That was going on separate from Iraq, it might have been reinforced by Iraq and Afghanistan. But then the military and again, they're always thinking about how to bring all the—more than State and USAID. They're thinking about how to bring all the elements of civilian power into play, when there is a conflictive environment somewhere. And so then they came up with the concept of—how can I forget the term, these teams that were in the countryside—

Q: It'll come to you.

KUNDER: It'll come to me in a second. Creating an integrated team in each of the hotspots in Afghanistan and Iraq. And that was a tremendous pressure. Send us a couple Senior Foreign Service officers for each one of these teams. That is CERPs, that was the Commander's Emergency Response Program. They created money to do their own development type work, handing out money to civilian organizations, that was the CERP program, which was a real challenge to USAID. Because these guys didn't have a clue, right? Somebody would come and say, we need a school in our village. And the U.S. military officer in charge would say: Here's some money. Good. That's great. What about teachers? What about revenues? What about community support? What about the location of the school? What about where the girls are gonna be? I mean, they didn't know enough to ask, they didn't know what they didn't know. Right? So yeah, great idea we need a school. Great. Yeah, here's some money. By the way, we'll be patrolling your village. If you see any bad guys, let us know. That was going on, a tactical military quid pro quo for development assistance. Then they created these Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs provincial reconstruction teams. To their credit, they wanted USAID officers, we didn't know that, it would have taken several hundred Foreign Service Service officers just to staff their request for Iraq and Afghanistan. And we didn't have them and that became a source of enormous frustration. We ended up hiring contractors, washing them gently through USAID training. And then they represented USAID in Kandahar, or Mosul, or someplace. It was a structural disaster. Some general would see me at some National Security Council session and tell me, your guy in Mosul, in northern Iraq, he told me that this and this didn't seem to make sense about how AID works. And yeah, because the General was right. The guy didn't have a clue how USAID works. We

just hired him somewhere. A lot of times we hired ex military guys, because how many people are ready to go to Mosul? Right and be under shellfire. And I would say that's a very good question you're asking about civilian military integration, cooperation. I look at it as a bi-level issue. On one level, there's a sort of a need, in my view, for systemic integration of the two at the strategic planning level. And that's what I think we're accomplishing now by sending AID Foreign Service officers to U.S. Pacific Command headquarters in Honolulu. So that right there in their planning office, they've got an AID person who can inform them of a development perspective. And there we are sending career Senior Foreign Service officers to those important positions. But then, at another level, during Iraq, Afghanistan, where there was this chaotic need for hundreds of officers to serve in these provincial reconstruction teams, and that was a chaotic, counterproductive type of civilian military integration.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES KUNDER
USAID
Asia and Near East Bureau Assistant Administrator
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(2002-2004)

Mr. Kunder was born and brought up in Rochester, Pennsylvania and came from a Serbo-Croatian and Italian background. After receiving his Bachelor's from Harvard University, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps before pursuing his Master's at Georgetown University. He worked as a staffer for various offices across the Senate before joining USAID. He worked in various positions in the USAID Bureau of External Affairs, Asia and Near East Bureau, and as Acting Deputy Administrator. He also worked in the private sector. Mr. Kunder was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2022.

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Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Chief
Governance Division, Center for Democracy
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Iraq
(2000–2007)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across

Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – U.S. Democracy Promotion and Reconstruction Efforts in Iraq

Q: Yes; it was a very mixed bag. There's a difference between humanitarian assistance and democracy.

LEVINE: Right. And so, if you're sitting—so we created a—what was called the Conflict Stabilization and Governance backstop, CSG Backstop 76. And that accorded with the formulation in DCHA, which doesn't exist in the field. And so, the theory of the case was that in the course of your career you would likely spend time in a stable developing country, a country in transition, and at some point in your existence it would encounter a natural disaster in which the skills of a humanitarian response officer would be needed. The problem is that that's not how we staff—that's not what the Foreign Service tends to do. It staffs heavily in the steady state development country and the bulk of positions are democracy officers, and there are very few U.S. direct hire humanitarian response devoted—it's all program-funded contracted personnel.

Q: Yes.

LEVINE: Which makes sense for surges and everything else. So, there was a classic disconnect of form following function in the creation of the backstop, which they're in the process, as I understand it, of unwinding today.

The other structural problem is that the policy around democracy issues in specific countries really calls for an assistant administrator to represent that area and so, we were always underrepresented, I thought, by level and bodies in the interagency meetings when we were in DCHA. That—not everybody agrees with that view, but I think for folks who come out of that tradition, they certainly felt different, could point to examples of that happening.

The dominant policy issues were in Iraq and Afghanistan, What I observed was that when the country goes to war and it's a military mission under the direction of the Department of Defense, the concerns about reconstruction, post-war what happens next were not adequately addressed, even by the best efforts of the State Department up to the Secretary of State. And that all has been well-documented. What I would say was that AID had tried and failed to get its best analysis into the interagency deliberations to raise some of the issues that were likely to unfold and did unfold.

Q: I believe there was an AID task force that was doing some planning for what would happen after the invasion of Iraq. Were you involved in any of that as an AID person or was anyone from the Democracy Center there?

LEVINE: For AID, there really was no center of gravity. Two stories – one involves the operational level where we were able to communicate—I would say, not influence—

because I don't think we influenced that much. The State Department organized a Future of Iraq Task Force that did a very thoroughgoing, sector by sector, political and developmental analysis of what would be needed. This is a very familiar situation of AID trying to get its views into policy discussions with the State Department. At this time, the State Department was having the same trouble getting its views on policy into deliberations at the Department of Defense.

Q: Right.

LEVINE: So, we were now twice removed from the center of gravity. I remember the one apocryphal story about someone asking, "Where's the interagency on Iraq?" The answer was simply stated "The interagency is Wolfowitz," meaning it was the undersecretary for defense policy who was basically making the decisions. So, there was effectively no interagency that we could plug into.

Remember, there was the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) that was stood up right after the invasion. At that time, USAID had its first responders from the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). But these folks were not working on longer term reconstruction issues.

Q: Right. My question really is, did you have any personal involvement in any of this or did your office?

LEVINE: I have two war stories. The then-National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice asked Larry Diamond, a colleague from her days at Stanford, to go and be an advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority. Larry is a renowned expert and democracy advocate and had been a speaker at our annual conferences and we knew him quite well. He did us the favor of stopping by for a consultation before he took the job and I recall then DG Director Jerry Hyman sitting in Jerry's office and talking. We were discussing the question "What's the fundamental governance problem in Iraq?" You had these three very distinct ethnic groups—Sunni, Shia and Kurds—trying to hold power collaboratively in a way that keeps the country together. And in all the planning and all the things about what they were doing in terms of the strategy, very little was being done to address that fundamental governance problem. Instead, our military was focused on the question, "How do we get U.S. forces out as quickly and as safely as possible?"

What DOD wanted was evidence of civilian activity and stability. They asked AID to design and deliver a local government program. They wanted to make sure that civil society is activated so we got resources to work with civil society. Let's do rapid community reintegration, so there was a sizable OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives) effort. All good things that helped on that mission, perhaps, but not really touching the central issue of the governance problem. All this was remarkably frustrating, but look, our own secretary of state could not get his counsel listened to, so what was AID's democracy office going to do?

The second story came later once we had reopened an embassy and USAID mission and AID/Washington was asked to evaluate the democracy and governance office's first strategy. And with great ceremony, it was brought to Washington for technical review. But it was a bit of a charade in the sense that all the key decisions about USAID strategy had already been made. This was really to satisfy the bureaucrats. We were smart enough to ask, "Do you want us to review this?" We were told, "We want nothing less than a full, candid, technically sound evaluation." So charged, we went off and did our job. We identified significant issues, we made technical comments for the benefit of your colleagues working at the mission, and we presented them at the strategy review.

It was evident that we were basically listened to politely, but it was clear that we weren't getting anywhere in terms of getting our issues considered. At the end of the meeting, the mission director said we would take this all back with us but the strategy had already been approved by the State Department and the commanding general there! So, we were disheartened by that, but that was my kind of teachable moment there when your influence is so circumscribed.

Q: So, if you all realized that you weren't going to have much impact working on Iraq, were there other countries or other issues that you spent particular time?

LEVINE: That's exactly right and that's what I took away from that issue. It definitely informed my thinking about Afghanistan. I knew that in Iraq and Afghanistan technical issues were going to be among the last considerations of policy there and so, we would work in those areas based only on demand signals from the missions, where a mission colleague needed help for a particular problem or wanted us. But it ended any kind of entrepreneurial leadership because there wasn't a lane for us. It was the first time I heard this phrase "stay in your lane." I didn't think that was a good thing.

Q: So, you ended up spending a lot of time on Iraq, even though it wasn't a very satisfying experience?

LEVINE: Absolutely. It was all hands-on deck. It was very frustrating because we were just told to stand up programs.

Q: Right.

LEVINE: But we were told which ones to do.

Q: Okay. So, you were having an impact because you were getting programs started, but they weren't really asking you whether these were the right programs to be doing.

LEVINE: Exactly. Yeah. And the right programs—

Q: Local governance was a big part of the Iraq program. Was that one of the things that you spent a lot of time on?

LEVINE: We were told to run a competition from a short list of offerors to stand up a program on civil society and local government.

Q: So, there were three different projects for which your office did all the bureaucratic work to get those contracts put in place, or grants, whichever they were?

And local government, I know, was a very big one, and that went to RTI (Research Triangle Institute International), I believe.

LEVINE: Exactly. There was also a ministerial program that MSI did, which was very interesting although what we found was that there was basically the inner cabinet, or the power ministries that were off-limits because they were headed by what were seen default actors on the political scene and too hot to touch in terms of the politics. We were left with the peripheral ministries to do, basically public administration programs. And I'm sure, did good work. They just weren't central to the problems the Iraqis faced.

Q: Right, right. Did you make any trips to Iraq?

LEVINE: I did not. I have been to Iraq, but as a congressional staffer in 1988, which was fascinating. Looking back, I was very interested in working on Iraq because not many people had been to Iraq. I really was quite interested in not just the governance division, but the office as a whole because I thought we had a capability to offer.

Q: Now, as I recall, there was an Iraq task force in Washington that in 2004/2005 met on an almost daily basis with the administrator. And were you involved with that task force?

LEVINE: No.

Q: They would just come to you if they needed something from the Democracy Center?

LEVINE: Exactly. Jerry Hyman participated in those meetings as the DG office director. I remember Wendy Chamberlin was very involved in representing the agency. I recall a quote she used during interagency budget deliberations: "You've created the neutron bomb budget. Where are the people?" The budget was heavy on infrastructure and building things, but no kind of engagement with the Iraqi people.

Q: (Laughs) Yes. Well, it doesn't sound like it was a very fun experience for you, that you spent most of your time on something that you felt you didn't really have any influence on.

LEVINE: It was a real education, and certainly when you disagree with a policy, some folks sort of turtle and don't get involved. We didn't really have a choice. You make the best technical recommendations you can and then, if they go against you, you salute smartly and execute, and that's kind of what we ended up doing.

Q: I recall that President Bush declared democracy as one of his highest priorities. And I remember sending a note to Andrew Natsios asking if he thought the Office of Democracy

should be buried in this big DCHA bureau, or should it be pulled out to show the priority that the president had given to it? Obviously, he didn't agree with my assessment.

But I'm just wondering, since it did get such a high profile from the president, did that filter down to you all in any way?

LEVINE: Absolutely. I think rhetorically the Bush Administration's language on democracy was probably the strongest we've ever had. The problem was that it became inextricably fused with the invasion of Iraq. And so, democracy promotion was fused with regime change. It lost all of its potency and all of its kind of bipartisan support. I think it's unfortunate. There would have been a different narrative had we not elected to invade Iraq.

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Q: Did your office do much with the two behemoths, Iraq and Afghanistan? Or were they pretty much handled by other people? Just curious if you have any insights on those.

LEVINE: The answer is yes in the case of Iraq, and no in the case of Afghanistan. In the case of Iraq, there was a call in the late going, not in 2003 but more in the 2009-2010 period for a conflict assessment, which was sort of a bust in that our staff could not deploy outside of the Green Zone. People had to be brought in. What I recall being the major finding was that our presence was a defining factor of the conflict in that the heavy Green Zone occupation footprint was a source of many complaints among the Iraqis we talked to. Our team couldn't deploy meaningfully to really talk to Iraqis in terms of the Iraqi political situation, not discounting the fact that the Iraqis we talked to had a real problem with the U.S. footprint.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR L. PAUL "JERRY" BREMER, III
Coalition Provisional Authority
Chief Executive Officer
Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq
(2003-2004)

L. Paul "Jerry" Bremer III was born in Hartford, Connecticut. He earned his bachelor's degree from Yale University before graduating from Harvard University with his master's degree in 1966, after which he joined the foreign service. Ambassador Bremer held positions in Afghanistan, Malawi, Sweden, and Iraq and served as the Ambassador to the Netherlands from 1986-1989. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Topical Focus – Post-Saddam Iraqi Civil Society

BREMER: There was not a long history of sectarian violence in Iraq. If you look back, intermarriages between the Sunni and Shia sects have been going on for centuries. All of the major tribes have both Sunni and Shia members. I met scores of Iraqis where the man was of one sect, the spouse another. Arabs married the Kurds. So there has also been inter-ethnic marriage.

On the other hand, the Saddam dictatorship lasted three times as long as Hitler was in power in Germany, just to give a sense of impact of his tyranny on Iraqi society. Saddam's rule was an extremely violent and polarizing experience for all Iraqis. Saddam's government had been predominately Sunni. Moreover the Sunnis had been in power in Iraq for centuries, under the Ottomans, the British, the Hashemites and for the last 30 years under the Baathists.

So Saddam's overthrow signaled a basic structural change in Iraqi power relationships. Our objective was to help the Iraqis move toward representative government. Representative government means majority rule and majority rule necessarily meant the Shia were going to have much more authority in post Saddam Iraq than they had ever had. This fundamental shift in power relationships certainly unsettled a lot of Sunnis. I think the Sunni boycott of the first elections in January, 2005, was an indication that they really hadn't understood that from now on the way you get power is not through bullets but through the ballot box. Fortunately, they reversed that boycott in the provincial elections just now in January, 2009. Our difficulty was first to try to get the Shia to understand that majority rule means respect for minority rights. You can't just run roughshod over the Sunnis now. It does not mean majoritarian rule. The complementary task was to persuade the Sunnis that they could advance their interests peacefully. .

At a minimum we were able to get enshrined in the interim constitution the principles of minority rights, individual rights, and the rule of law. Of course a constitution is only a piece of paper and it has been hard for successive Iraqi governments to actually implement it fully. This is not something that happens overnight. If you look at other post-conflict countries, the process takes a long time.

There were tensions already between the Shia and the Sunni communities and between the Arab and Kurdish communities. We tried to moderate those, first, by reassuring the Sunnis there would be an appropriate place for them in the new Iraq and, secondly, by cautioning the Shia that they had to take into account minority rights.

Q: Had there grown up sort of a non tribal middle class business people? I mean, you know what I mean; one that was beyond the tribal thing or did tribalism rule?

BREMER: My first Foreign Service post was Afghanistan so I often think about the comparisons. Iraq is a less tribal society than Afghanistan and also much more advanced economically. After the Second World War Iraq was the most advanced country in the Middle East; it had a middle class, had women in positions in both the private sector and government, had lawyers and doctors and great universities.

Q: Very literate too.

BREMER: Very literate, lots of artists too. It was the first Middle Eastern country to join the IMF, the first to have television. This was an important society.

But the Baath Party's political repression had a devastating effect on Iraqi society. Secondly, Saddam's economic mismanagement and in particular inflation during the war with Iran in the '80s did what inflation always does. It destroyed the middle class. A lot of middle class Iraqis left Iraq in the '80s and '90s. So there had been a significant depletion of what you might call moderate, more secular, less tribal elements of society. Still, 70% of the population was urbanized. It is the opposite in Afghanistan which has about 25% to 30% urbanization. Most of the territory that is today Iraq has been, for better or for worse, under some form of effective control from Baghdad for millennia. Kabul has never had that kind of the central control in Afghanistan. Still isn't today.

So there was and is a broad middle in Iraqi society which we tried to encourage and I think that sector has begun to be a bit more effective in trying to assert a moderating, less sectarian influence on Iraq society -- at least as we speak today.

KENYA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

KIERTISAK TOH
USAID
Mission Director
Kenya
Nairobi, Kenya
(2001–2005)

Dr. Kiertisak Toh was born in Bangkok, Thailand, and began his career there in 1967 under USOM, USAID's predecessor. After moving to the U.S. in 1968, he earned a PhD in economics from the University of Maryland. His first role with USAID was in 1980. He subsequently served with USAID in Liberia, Niger, Kenya, Malawi, the Philippines, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and Washington, D.C., holding various roles from Program Economist to Mission Director. He retired in 2005 and worked as a consultant and university lecturer. Kiertisak Toh was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2018.

Topical Focus – U.S. Role in Kenyan Democratization - Early 2000's

Q: That was a good idea. So, then you returned to Kenya after home leave. This was sort of five years later and you're returning. Were there significant changes in the country or the program or anything that was noteworthy or did you feel like you were coming back into something fairly similar?

TOH: Yes. Several things were different. The major one was the Embassy bombing in August 1998 – August 7. I was in Malawi at the time. And so, one thing is the bombing and the- kind of the anxiety all the FSNs went through and then Sept. 11. The second thing was the fact that we would be having an election coming up in December 2002. There was optimism in the air of the end of the Moi regime. And third, our working relationship with the government which I found out later was a disappointment especially in contrast with my experience in Malawi.

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Q: At this time in the early 2000's, was the United States Government still pushing the Kenyans for more political freedom and more openness and more respect for human rights? Was that still part of the U.S. dialogue?

TOH: Yes. We had a strong ambassador there. A "Big Man" Ambassador.

Q: Ah, that's right, yes, former assistant secretary.

TOH: He was particularly keen on the corruption issue, on human rights violations, and

at the time on the upcoming general election in December 2002 and President Moi had agreed to step down by following the constitution.

Q: Corruption issues, that's right, yes.

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Q: Let me- looking at your CV there's- you mention the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which also began under President Bush.

TOH: Yes.

Q: And so, there must have been early discussions in Kenya although you probably did not qualify for a compact because of governance and corruption concerns, but was there discussion about what they referred to as-

TOH: Threshold.

Q: -the Threshold Program and could you talk about that a little bit?

TOH: Right. I was more involved in the Threshold Program in 2004. I believed that Kenya should be part of the Threshold Program given that Kenya in 2003 had a new government. The Moi government was replaced by the government of the opposition party, President Kibaki. In fact, President Bush even invited Kibaki to the White House, as a show of U.S support. Potentially, there was room for reform.

Q: Okay.

TOH: I thought they could use the resources for some of the economic reform activity which will also support or complement the IMF program on good governance.

Q: Right.

TOH: I discussed with the new permanent secretary in the finance ministry with whom USAID worked quite well when he was the permanent secretary in the ministry of agriculture. I encouraged him to submit a proposal for the MCC threshold program. He eventually submitted the proposal that built on the IMF program focusing on strengthening financial management and public accountability, as well as the procurement system. This was under the Kibaki government.

Q: Because the submissions were to USAID because USAID was managing the Threshold Program for the MCC. Okay.

TOH: Yes. He submitted the proposal and we submitted it to Washington with our endorsement for consideration. I thought it was a very decent and strong proposal. USAID/Washington sent a one-person team to Kenya to discuss the proposal. I could be wrong about the sequence and timeline on this. I think initially it was not approved, but

later it was approved in 2005. By that time I had left Kenya already.

Q: Yes, I think it's interesting because you were seen as being someone who always thought there was a possibility to work constructively with the Kenyans, but throughout your multiple terms there was always a strong view on the part of some of the major actors to not give Kenya a chance. That was a battle you constantly fought.

TOH: Yes. One of the problems I had with the MCC approach was its cookie cutter or blueprint approach. They assigned scores to some selected indicators of a country and tried to make decision on whether to approve a proposal based on -

Q: The metrics.

TOH: Yes, MCC loves metrics. I have nothing against quantitative indicators. They are helpful in the hands of the right people who understand these indicators, who know how these indicators were derived, know the limitations. These indicators tend to be backward looking. My understanding is the Threshold Program is supposed to identify countries that have potential and evidence of commitment to implement reforms. The indicators should be more forward looking – ones which are difficult to come by and require informed judgement. I would love to see an independent empirical study of how well the cookie-cutter-cum-metrics approach has turned out.

Q: So, you're saying that there should be more subjectivity though on the ground knowledge of the countries.

TOH: Well, not necessarily subjectivity, more in terms of informed judgment in a country specific context. The quality of governance of a country is more difficult to quantify. I do not think that the person visiting Kenya at the time was well equipped to do that. He was there for a day or two – I supposed on the way to South Africa, maybe. It was a perfunctory review.

Q: But I think the State Department in general has had a very strong position on Kenya for a long time.

TOH: Yes.

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Q: So, anyway, but it turned out to be fine.

Okay, we are resuming. So, Kiert, any final thoughts you have about Kenya? And I guess maybe one sort of general thought was you were in Kenya three times, comprising about 10 or 11 years, and just your thoughts on the Kenya government, its commitment to economic reform and the change you saw take place over a 15, 20 year period. Do you think it was a government that we should have been supporting more over the years to help them implement reform.

TOH: That's a difficult what-if question. Let me put it this way. Despite the harsh rhetoric from Washington of not supporting the government many of us in the field never really stopped working with the political leadership, the professionals in various government ministries or agencies, and other public institutions. Those of us who have lived and worked in the field missions know well that governments are not monolithic. There are reformers in the government as well as rampant rent-seeking behavior, and political corruption. The same thing in the private sector and in nongovernmental organizations, and even in donor organizations. For example, in Kenya we had a case where a World Bank employee took kickbacks from private contractors, I believe in an infrastructure project. It was ironic, however, when we bypassed government by programming USAID funds directly to NGOs or contractors, these NGOs and contractors often worked with their counterparts in the government as necessary. In effect, they are our agents. Some of these NGOs, particularly large American international NGOs in sectors like health, population, democracy and governance would mislead and gave the impression to the government that they were "donors", when in fact the real donor is the American government and American taxpayers.

Despite Kenya's checkered record in democracy and governance, one of the most successful aspects of the USAID long-term investment in development is local capacity building and institutional development. The focus of energies and investments in these two areas positively affected every sector of development that USAID supported. Most importantly, the professionals and the institutions we invested in have, in turn, facilitated a long-term perspective on development, an acceptance of the need for sustained investment, and conditioning it the exercise of patience. The success, in no small measure, is due to continuity: a long-term commitment to stay the course and have patience with development investment that works.

Because I can see that we want to have effective policy dialogue. Sometimes it requires the other side to share a common frame of reference, values, and speak the same language. I think results from USAID support in activity like participant training and human resource development matter. For example, Wangari Maathai, the late environmental and political activist who bravely fought the Moi Regime, founded and led the Greenbelt movement, a political and environmental nongovernmental organization. She is the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her courage and leadership. She was one of the beneficiaries of USAID participant training support. There are many others, but she's the most obvious-

Q: Representative of other people.

TOH: Yes. So, I think the long-term institutional and capacity building is a good thing although it's difficult to measure or quantify, particularly in the short term. Despite all the issues we have had on the political front with the Kenyan Government, governance reform and progress in democratization continues – occasionally, two steps forward, one step or one step-and-a-half backward. Over time I think more representative government slowly has emerged. The seeds have been well planted in Kenya today, for example with its new constitution, devolution of authority to subnational governments, the creation of a

more effective and efficient tax system – the value-added tax more than a decade ago. USAID assistance has played a role in all these reforms and institutional development. It is still work in progress, but I'm quite confident that these changes will endure, not always in a straightforward-

Q: And not always smoothly but it is stronger.

TOH: Yes, it's stronger.

Q: It's certainly better than the Moi period.

TOH: Right

KOSOVO

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CRAIG BUCK
USAID
Mission Director
Prishtina, Kosovo
(2000-2002)

Mr. Buck was born in Mississippi in 1944 and joined USAID in 1969. His postings abroad include Turkey, Uganda, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Kazakhstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Topical Focus – International State-Building and Economic Reform in Kosovo

BUCK: In a way, Kosovo, to me, was the opportunity to set up a state, an economic entity, as you would like it, that is, to build your dream economic structure. UN resolution UNMIK Resolution 1244, that created UNMIK, or the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, was responsible for the province upon the conclusion of the bombing campaign. It had four pillars, or four areas of responsibility: economic development and growth, civil society, the humanitarian situation, and government administration. And each of those pillars, as we called them, had an organization that was assigned to carry it out. On the economic side, the European Union was to take the lead.

So, I think it's important to realize when, at the conclusion of the campaign, there was no government. In Bosnia, there had been a government at the signing of the Dayton Accords. In Central Asia, there had been a government and institutions that existed. In Kosovo, there was not. There was not a Ministry of X. There was not a power system. The Kosovars had gone through 10 to 12 years of apartheid. They had been thrown out of government jobs, and all formal employment, for 10 years. Serbs had carried out those functions. At the conclusion of the campaign, by and large the Serbs left. There were no institutions. So, the international community had the opportunity to work with the Kosovars in coming up with economic and commercial and political systems, and judicial systems, that would meet their standards. In many respects, we had the opportunity to play God. As I said, on the economic front, the European Union was to take the lead. There was a deputy special representative, who was responsible for getting EU to set this up. Well, if I complain about USAID being slow, the pace of the European Union is glacial. So, very quickly I brought in a team of people. At one point, I had 65 contractors on the ground, and we established the institutions of economic governance. We drafted the law for the Central Bank, establishing a central bank, and we staffed it. I named the first governor of the Central Bank. I put a number of people to set up the banking system, to work for him. We set up the Ministry of Finance, wrote the law that established the Ministry of Finance. We set up a treasury function; we set up a budgeting function; we set up a taxation function; we set up an analytical function, analysis and a forecasting unit.

Then we brought the Kosovars in. First of all, we consulted with them on, conceptually, on what we were doing so that they bought into the process. Of course, the United States could do no wrong by the Kosovars. In a place that was putting up statues of Bill Clinton, and his picture everywhere, anything that we said was fine. But then we staffed these organizations with Kosovars, and we spent an enormous amount of time training them, getting them up to speed. Actually, it was not all that difficult, because Kosovars, like the Bosnians, were oriented towards – understood Western institutions. Many of them had either been expelled, or had been working in Western Europe. They were all quite well trained, literate people.

So, we really set up the organizations that were needed for a market economy, the foundation for the legal and commercial codes, contract law, the judicial system, and the rule of law.

Q: The one thing I'm most curious about, of all those market mechanisms or all those economic mechanisms, is the taxation system. Because you could have a failure more quickly than anything else if people feel that it's unfair, or they avoid it, or, you know, they don't understand it or it's too complicated. How did you develop the taxation system? Did it proved to have ?

BUCK: Okay. The taxation system, initially, as many other countries in these circumstances did, focused on customs revenue. It was the easiest thing to tax. It required not a lot of sophisticated machinery. You took what existed already within the European Union, took those systems, put it into place, trained the people, and boom: you can collect customs revenue fairly quickly. After doing quite a bit of analysis, we determined that the best thing – Now, customs taxes are good for quick revenue generation, but as a long term means of collecting revenue, they are not efficient, and they are not progressive. There are a whole lot of problems with them.

So, we decided that the equivalent of a value-added tax would be the most appropriate thing. But that then required training personnel, and so we spent about two and a half years getting the system developed, refining it, getting people trained, and applying it. I don't have the precise data at hand, but in the first year that the United Nations Mission in Kosovo was in operation, it paid 100% of the costs of governmental administration. I mean, it paid for the police, it paid for the tax collectors, it paid for everybody. By the end of the – I think it was by the end the second or third year that we had mobilized sufficient revenue, so that Kosovo itself was able to pay for more than half of the cost of governmental administration and was set on a course to become a balanced budget within a very short period of time.

Q: Which, of course, any new nation needs, in order to establish, you know, a credit rating.

BUCK: One of the most interesting things that we did was, we set up a private bank, the American Bank of Kosovo, and this – As in Bosnia, one of the most urgent needs was employment, and through existing enterprises that either suffered war damage or loss of

personnel or needed new technology. The bank became operational, and was so successful that three years later, an Austrian bank bought the bank from us, paid back Uncle Sam for more than USAID had invested in it, and enabled us to establish an endowment to train Kosovars into the future. So, it was a very successful activity that we had.

BUCK: At the end the bombing campaign, basically, almost all of the Serbs left, except for about 10% who remained up north, and a few enclaves. We tried to work across border, to work in Republika Srpska – I'm sorry, in the northern part of Kosovo. We found a few people that we could work with, and we did so, and worked in a number of areas where, as in Bosnia, we had certain stipulations that minorities had to be respected. Minorities had to be allowed to return, and they had to be protected. We found a couple of – Particularly in the north-eastern – sorry, the north-western – part of the country, we found a mayor and a few other people who would work with us very closely.

But there were the hardliners in the town of Mitrovica, up in the north. There was a deputy special UN representative I believe he had the title of deputy, or special representative there that was constantly frustrated, because Serbia was paying the salary of all the people, and it was, of course, calling the shots. And the mayor of Mitrovica said, "Under no circumstances will you allow Kosovars to return," and so he continued to operate an apartheid city state. But we were in some of the enclaves, where they did allow traffic in and out. They allowed people to return.

We made a very special effort to work with those minority groups, ensure that they were protected, ensure that they had access to resources, particularly the work that we were doing of financing for private sector development, in terms of infrastructure repair, infrastructure development.

Q: Did all of the negotiations you did with the other major entities involved in Kosovo… Did that have an effect on USAID? In other words, creating new networks, at least in Europe, that could deal with similar situations – Was that at least an outcome of what you did in Yugoslavia?

BUCK: Let's take the area of democratic development and free press. In Bosnia and in Kosovo, we worked with organizations that were promoting free press, promoting laws that governed the broadcast and print industries, that ensured their freedoms. Our people worked with a variety of organizations in Holland and Austria that were promoting these democratic practices. Our people became familiar, I think, with what other organizations were doing internationally to promote these norms. We developed two independent television stations in Bosnia, and set up transmitters to transmit this throughout the province. We worked very closely with the OSCE in doing this, in the financing of these, and in trying to figure out how we could finance private print and electronic media in the future. They've got a very small market, and how could you come up with a means of making them financially viable. We didn't want to have official governmental news stations, but one of the ways getting revenue was to have the government collect a tax on

every television set or every antenna or every receiver that you use. So, we hadn't come up with a solution to that difficult thing, but we worked with our OSCE colleagues.

Q: One other sector I'm curious about is telecoms, because once again, after a war, and when you're rebuilding a society, in a way they can leapfrog over many generations of developments of time and grab what is most modern.

BUCK: That, I think, is great – Kosovo is a great example of that, and during the bombing campaign, or while the Kosovars were out of the country in Macedonia, one of the international telecommunications providers gave a number and a lot of equipment to some of the people that had been expelled from Kosovo, so they could make phone calls in these refugee camp. So, they had a set of equipment of antennas and receivers and what have you to enable families to try to find out where missing members were or to keep up with how things were where they were temporarily settled.

After the people that had been expelled returned to Kosovo, the organizations turned this equipment over to an individual who had happened to work for the U.S. office in Kosovo---when the embassy had had a branch office, attached to the embassy in Belgrade, which had a small branch office in Pristina. That individual took the equipment, moved it to Pristina, and very quickly decided that he could use it. Everybody could make their phone calls, let them know how the family was, if the house had been bombed out of whatever. He then got a group of entrepreneurs to invest, and using the knowledge that he had and the skills that he had, set up a mobile telephone company, which is, of course, the largest one now in Kosovo.

That individual, who I became quite close to, later became the First Kosovar ambassador to the United States. It's a real entrepreneurial success story. We didn't put any money into it. I mean, he used his own resources, his own ingenuity and intelligence to come up with the resources.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CRAIG G. BUCK
USAID
Mission Director
Pristina, Kosovo

Mr. Craig G. Buck, born in 1944 in Jackson, Mississippi and raised in Carthage, Texas, is a retired senior officer at USAID. Following his undergraduate education at Texas A&M, he spent a year conducting research as a Fulbright Scholar in Bolivia (1966-1967) and the following year as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at Stanford (1968-1969). He later earned a M.A in Economics from Stanford in 1980. Mr. Buck first joined USAID in April 1969 as an intern in Turkey (1969-1972) and held postings as a mission director in Uganda (1980-1983), Dominican Republic (1984-1987), Peru (1989-1992), Kazakhstan (1993-1995), Bosnia (1995-1999), Kosovo (2000-2002), and Afghanistan (2002-2003).

His Washington assignments include the Latin American Bureau (1972), Turkey Desk Officer (1972-1976), Office of the Senior Advisor for Narcotic Matter (1976-1977), and Egypt Desk Officer (1977-1979). Following Mr. Buck's retirement from USAID in 2003, he worked in the private sector as a contractor for AID and other developmental organizations. Craig G. Buck was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID's role in economic and democratic development in Kosovo

Q: Okay. So, now let's return to what you're doing with Kosovo, because as much as it has the same sort of post-conflict situation, I imagine its needs and the kind of assistance USAID can give are distinct, in some ways, from Bosnia.

BUCK: In a way, Kosovo, to me, was the opportunity to set up a state, an economic entity, as you would like it, that is, to build your dream economic structure. UN resolution UNMIK Resolution 1244, that created UNMIK, or the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, was responsible for the province upon the conclusion of the bombing campaign. It had four pillars, or four areas of responsibility: economic development and growth, civil society, the humanitarian situation, and government administration. And each of those pillars, as we called them, had an organization that was assigned to carry it out. On the economic side, the European Union was to take the lead.

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In many respects, we had the opportunity to play God. As I said, on the economic front, the European Union was to take the lead. There was a deputy special representative, who was responsible for getting the EU to set this up. Well, if I complain about USAID being slow, the pace of the European Union is glacial. So, very quickly I brought in a team of people. At one point, I had 65 contractors on the ground, and we established the institutions of economic governance. We drafted the law for the Central Bank, establishing a central bank, and we staffed it. I named the first governor of the Central Bank. I put a number of people to set up the banking system, to work for him. We set up the Ministry of Finance, wrote the law that established the Ministry of Finance. We set up a treasury function; we set up a budgeting function; we set up a taxation function; we set up an analytical function, analysis and a forecasting unit.

Then we brought the Kosovars in. First of all, we consulted with them on, conceptually, on what we were doing so that they bought into the process. Of course, the United States

could do no wrong by the Kosovars. In a place that was putting up statues of Bill Clinton, and his picture everywhere, anything that we said was fine. But then we staffed these organizations with Kosovars, and we spent an enormous amount of time training them, getting them up to speed. Actually, it was not all that difficult, because Kosovars, like the Bosnians, were oriented towards – understood Western institutions. Many of them had either been expelled, or had been working in Western Europe. They were all quite well trained, literate people.

So, we really set up the organizations that were needed for a market economy, the foundation for the legal and commercial codes, contract law, the judicial system, and the rule of law.

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Q: Did all of the negotiations you did with the other major entities involved in Kosovo… Did that have an effect on USAID? In other words, creating new networks, at least in Europe, that could deal with similar situations – Was that at least an outcome of what you did in Yugoslavia?

BUCK: Let's take the area of democratic development and free press. In Bosnia and in Kosovo, we worked with organizations that were promoting free press, promoting laws that governed the broadcast and print industries, that ensured their freedoms. Our people worked with a variety of organizations in Holland and Austria that were promoting these democratic practices. Our people became familiar, I think, with what other organizations were doing internationally to promote these norms. We developed two independent television stations in Bosnia, and set up transmitters to transmit this throughout the province. We worked very closely with the OSCE in doing this, in the financing of these, and in trying to figure out how we could finance private print and electronic media in the future. They've got a very small market, and how could you come up with a means of making them financially viable. We didn't want to have official governmental news stations, but one of the ways getting revenue was to have the government collect a tax on every television set or every antenna or every receiver that you use. So, we hadn't come up with a solution to that difficult thing, but we worked with our OSCE colleagues.

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Q: So, earlier, of course, Kosovo has a relatively weak economy, not much domestic economic activity. Had that improved by the time you went back?

BUCK: No. When I was there, frankly, we had spent probably a couple hundred million dollars working on the agricultural sector and, frankly, I don't think we have anything really significant to show for it. I mean you could probably point to one or two success stories, but really we did not find any agricultural areas that would lead to rapid sustained increases in income or export earnings. One of the few areas where we had some success was in development of an independent judiciary with the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and setting up a system that was independent and professional and guided by constitutional norms. So, we were continuing to try to expand that and ensure that all of the people associated with the legal system were trained and

aware are the new requirements and operating underneath them.

We had gotten out of infrastructure rehabilitation, as well as our work, by and large, in the economic policy sphere. So, democratic development. And then AID had gotten involved in primary education at that point – Well, not so much primary education as vocational education, and trying to train people for work within the private sector. Unfortunately, there weren't that many new jobs opening up, and the previous vocational education system had sent people out that were technically trained, but there were no jobs. So, why should you be focusing on that?

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

SUSAN KOSINSKI FRITZ
USAID
Deputy Mission Director
Kosovo
Pristina, Kosovo
(2007-2010)

Susan Kosinski Fritz studied at Rutgers University and American University before entering USAID as a Presidential Management Intern in 1989. She served in many different positions in several countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in May 2024.

Topical Focus – Ethnic Divides, Reconciliation, and Democratization in Kosovo

Q: You were in both places. Wow. But you had been doing a lot of TDY work over the years in Kosovo, so you knew it well. Can you tell us what was the state of affairs in Kosovo at that point? This was now 2007.

FRITZ: Right. It was late 2007. United Nations Special Envoy for Kosovo Marti Ahtisaari from Finland had created a peace plan for resolving the Kosovo-Serbia situation. The UN had been running Kosovo since the end of the conflict and the Kosovars were getting tired of that. They were getting restless and wanted to run their own country. Ahtisaari devised a peace plan, but politically it was not getting approved by the UN so everything was at a standstill.

It was a good plan. The basic idea was to carve out Serb-majority municipalities from

Albanian-majority municipalities to give more local control for the Serbian minority in Kosovo. There were three Serb-majority municipalities that existed already in the north, just south of Serbia. They are probably 99, if not a hundred percent ethnic Serb. Ahtisaari created I think five new municipalities that were carved out of enclaves of Serbs in central Kosovo. I arrived in Kosovo in December 2007. On February 17, 2008, President's Day weekend, Kosovo declared independence. The United States blessed it as long as Kosovo followed the Ahtisaari peace plan. And so Kosovo did and they created these new municipalities. This is where my local government assistance and background, I think helped. I chaired an embassy working group on establishing the new municipalities. It was supposed to be co-chaired with the DCM, but the then-DCM didn't want to do it. So I ended up running this inter-agency working group on these new municipalities and, similar to what happened in Bosnia, they had to have elections but to first create the municipalities. They needed to create the organizational infrastructure because these are new municipalities being formed and they needed help with that. We had a local government project that helped stand up these new municipalities. But as you can imagine, the State Department and the embassy were very interested because it was very political. We also had Public Affairs, the Political Section, and our DG folks as part of this working group. We eventually got a new DCM that was more interested and took an active role in co-chairing the working group. We helped stand up the new municipalities and then helped support municipal elections including in the new ones. The whole effort definitely involved the interagency at the working level, but also at the mission and embassy management levels as well. I think we were as successful as we could have been. I wouldn't say it was a rousing success, but it was good what we were able to accomplish. There was greater Serb turnout for the elections than there ever had been since Kosovo's independence. It was extremely low, but improved.

Q: And one of the challenges was trying to protect the rights of the Serbian population that remained in Kosovo ? Their minority rights?

FRITZ: Right, correct. It was to give them a voice that would have been lost if those municipalities remained majority Albanian. That was the thinking behind the Ahtisaari peace plan. We were just helping to implement that peace plan to give the Serb minority not only a voice in, but control over their own decision-making and resources.

Q: And I assume, although we won't talk about it now, that some of this generated important lessons that were useful when you eventually were in Ukraine?

FRITZ: It's a little bit different, but I guess you could pull some lessons learned from there. It was kind of a different situation, a much smaller country, much more political, much more transparent, and front and center in terms of importance to the Kosovars, to the Serbs, to the Americans, to the Europeans. So everybody was involved or interested.

Q: In general, can you say a little bit more about what the program was doing besides the support for that?

FRITZ: Sure. A big part of what we were doing was helping to reestablish the judicial system. The UN was running everything after the conflict in Kosovo. And before the UN came to run things, the Serbs were in charge. When Milosević came into power at one point when he made his inflammatory speech in Kosovo Polje, saying, that we (the Serbs) will never be taken advantage of again, basically empowering the Serbs to kick out all of the Albanians, the professionals, from the education system, from the government, from the health system. The Albanians ended up running a parallel system with their own underground schools. They were doing everything outside of the government system. And so when the UN started to pull back and the Kosovar Albanians started to take over there needed to be a lot of capacity building. That was a large part of what we were doing, a lot of capacity building, whether it was economic development or anything in the DG sector and local governance or anything really.

On the judicial front, there was a process for vetting all of the judges for a whole new judicial system. There was an application and vetting process that was taking place that mainly the UN was running, but it was running slowly so we jumped in and supported that effort as well. That was big. We were physically equipping court systems, refurbishing courtrooms, installing recording equipment so you could tape court proceedings.

We had a big education program, but not what you would think. It wasn't the soft side of basic education that USAID normally supports. It was infrastructure. Kosovar schools were running two and three sessions a day because there were not enough schools and classrooms. That meant some kids were going to school at night because that was the only time a day that was available. Our program either added classrooms onto existing schools or refurbished classrooms that weren't in shape to be able to be used. By the time I left, we were in the process of planning to build a brand-new school in Pristina. That was something that was hugely impactful. It brought down the number of class sessions from three to two a day or one in most places. I think by the time we finished that project, there were no more triple sessions in any school in the country. So that was, I think, a pretty important effort

We did a lot on economic development. Kosovar Albanians are pretty entrepreneurial and I think in the situation that they were in, they had to be in order to survive. It was very refreshing to see – I did not observe that in other Balkan countries like Serbia or Bosnia. There were a lot of ways in which we could support small businesses to market their goods or repackage their goods, find new markets. We did a lot on the agriculture side to

identify new products that could be grown. I remember kiwis being one where there's a huge market and good climate, soil, everything that would make that a good crop for them. So we did a lot on that side.

And then because the Kosovar Albanians had to work outside the formal system for so many years, there were lots of issues with following rules or having rules, permitting and following permits. A lot of buildings were built without permits. We were trying to help establish a rules-based governance system.

We provided a lot of support to civil society and media as well. My all-time favorite project, the one I'm proudest of, was in Kosovo. In terms of impact, it wasn't broad, but for those we did help, it was enormous. And the challenges we had to overcome were also enormous. It was the most rewarding thing that I've ever been involved in.

During the conflict, the Roma were seen as siding with the Serbs. They felt in danger being around the Albanians so they fled to the north of the country where the ethnic Serbs were. Unfortunately, they had fled to a UN Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp that was situated on a site where a mine had been so they were living on top of lead tailings which was sickening people, especially the kids. Another donor, I forget who it was -- maybe the Norwegians or the Dutch -- had built housing for the Roma in an environmentally clean and safe area also in the north, but the Roma didn't move there. And when anybody did leave this contaminated camp, other Roma would move in. So you had this challenge of first, this is an area of the country that the Kosovar Albanians didn't control because it was in the north. Second, you had a failed donor attempt to resolve the problem. Third, you had sick kids with lead coming out of their teeth and you can imagine how this was impacting the development of their brains.

Q: Why wouldn't they move to where the other housing had been built? It wasn't in a secure area or?

FRITZ: The new housing wasn't located near where they worked. It was in a more remote place than they were used to. The houses they built didn’t have land to grow family gardens which is something they did to supplement their food. I know, it sounds crazy that you wouldn't move to get your kids to a safer place, but they didn't. And you had this empty housing just sitting there.

Peter Duffy, our program officer, was the one who led the effort. He really wanted to tackle this. When I came to Kosovo as deputy mission director he brought it to my attention. We made a pitch to Ambassador Tina Kaidanow who was skeptical because she thought it would be a waste of money. Mostly due to Peter’s persuasive abilities, she finally agreed that we could put $2 million towards the effort with conditions – we’d

need to get the UN to secure the IDP camp so that as families moved out to new housing, new people did not move in. This also would require that the departing family's dwelling would be destroyed upon their departure. Second, we'd need buy-in of the community so that they would move into whatever housing that would be built. I don't remember how and why we ended up with Mercy Corps, but we did. I think they were already active in Kosovo so this was something that fit in their wheelhouse. But the problem was it was going to cost more than the $2 million that we had to do everything. I was responsible for donor coordination for our mission. I reached out to the head of assistance for the European Union who was keen to partner with us. And together we figured it out.

He was able to allocate five million euros. And, overcoming the EU's very strict procurement rules, he was able to basically sole source it to Mercy Corps' European sister organization. Between the two organizations, which were all Mercy Corps, they pulled it off. They found new land that the Roma would move to, that was safe. We were able to involve the UN police so the housing that existed in the camp was destroyed after each family moved and the camp was eventually closed down. The Kosovo government had blood chelation equipment that a donor had provided that they didn't know how to use. We brought in expertise so that they could start treating everybody but mostly the kids who had lead in their blood. We consulted with the community leaders to design housing in a style and place that they would move to. So it succeeded against all odds. It was a shame that those people ever ended up on contaminated land but we were able to do right by them and make it happen. And so like I said, I'm the proudest of that. It was mainly Peter's doing, he really pushed and he convinced Ambassador Kaidanow and she blessed it and we were able to pull it off. My small piece was helping the Europeans to get their money to the table and that was because I had a good partner who was willing to go the extra mile to make it happen on his end. He didn't break any rules, but bent them to make something good happen.

Q: Yeah, that's a wonderful story that bureaucracy can come to the end and do the right thing sometimes.

FRITZ: Yep, yep, absolutely.

Q: That's wonderful and a meaningful contribution. Did you mention that one of your responsibilities was on donor coordination? Just how did the director-deputy relationship work?

FRITZ: So when I first got there, the mission director was Mike Farbman for the first six months. And Mike was an economic growth guy. He assigned me the DG side of the house. I asked him if he would allow me to just use that time to learn from him. I told him that I was happy to be responsible for DG, but I needed to learn about economic

growth as well as how a mission runs, the offices that I didn't engage with, the executive office (EXO) and others. He was great. He said, “Come to any meeting you want. I’m happy to explain anything to you. My door's open. Join any meeting that's on my calendar.” And so I did. I also took that time in the first six months to go to each of the support offices and interview each person on the staff to find out what they did, how they did it, what the office did. That included EXO, financial management (FM), every office. And so that gave me a good grounding to have the broader perspective that helped me hit the ground running as a deputy. Patricia Rader came in after that and she wanted to do things differently. She wanted to be the outside person and have me be the inside person so that's how we divided things. Except I did get to go out and do donor coordination. That was my day out for the week. And it was great! I think that's what I'm best at—internal management. It wasn't such a steep learning curve. I'm an extreme introvert, so it played to my strengths. However, when I became a mission director, I had to be out front a lot more and I wasn't used to it. I hadn’t had that experience. I think I did two public events in the two and a half years I was in Kosovo. So that was something that was hard for me, very hard.

Q: Interesting. I know for introverts, it takes a lot of practice. That I know.

FRITZ: Yep, absolutely.

Q: Right. Well, that really sounds like a fascinating time to have been in Kosovo. I mean, you were there during one of the most meaningful times. I remember reading Craig Buck's oral history and he spoke about how pro-American the population was in the early days after the war. Was that still the case when you were there?

FRITZ: Absolutely. Craig left Bosnia when we were there to go to Kosovo, because that's when the Kosovo conflict had just ended. The Kosovar Albanians are very pro-American. They have a Bill Clinton street. I think they might even have a George Bush street. President Biden came as well while I was there. His son, Beau served in Kosovo so he came out when he was vice president. He knows the Balkans really, really well. And that was a great visit. We renamed the USAID parking lot the Joe Biden Pavilion because that's where we did the all hands meet and greet with the embassy staff. And yeah, they love Americans. If they could be a U.S. state, they would definitely become one.

We had enormous influence. There was a joke actually going around when I was there. Our ambassador at the time, Tina Kaidanow, was the head of the U.S. office that became an embassy once the country declared independence. Tina was a force to be reckoned with. She was perfect for the first ambassador in Kosovo and to help birth that country, to guide them through independence. The joke was that the President, Hashim Thaci, was coming through customs and they asked him, do you have anything to declare? And he

says, “Hold on, give me my phone.” And he calls Tina and asks, “Tina, do I have anything to declare?” Everybody knew she was running an awful lot, advising the Kosovars through their independence. And so that was a special time to be there.

I would say it's very different now. The country has really come into its own. But those early days, it was really birthing a new nation. One thing we did, and this was before I became the deputy, but when I was supporting the mission, we brought together judicial experts from Kosovo and legal experts from the United States. We brought them out to Macedonia and helped them draft a new constitution to get them ready for a new country. And it was all very quiet. We didn't do the drafting. But we supported them drafting a new constitution for their country. We knew it was heading in that direction. And so yeah, that was an important piece of work. And it was two mission staff working very closely with them. One of them is now on the Supreme Court of Kosovo.

Q: One of the USAID staff. Okay, I was going to ask you then about the FSN staff and it sounds like you had a quite extraordinary group.

FRITZ: Yep. Great, great group. Gresa Caka is the FSN who helped on the constitution and she is amazingly talented. She was going to law school at the time. She was working with John Allelo, who was a PSC at the time and has since joined the foreign service. While he was a PSC, John and Gresa were the ones who brought in the U.S. experts and helped manage this process and provided input as well.

Q: Well, it's a real success story.

FRITZ: I think so. We'll see. It remains to be seen. Going back to when we were helping to establish the Serb majority municipalities, our local staff were all ethnic Albanians. And I felt that we needed to have some ethnic Serbs on the staff. The only ethnic Serb was one of the cleaning ladies. And I had such a hard time working with the embassy human resources people to designate a position to be for a specific ethnicity. They said we couldn’t do that. So we included requirements like you have to speak Serbian. A lot of ethnic Albanians, particularly younger ones didn't speak Serbian, older ones, yes. But we ended up hiring an ethnic Bosniak, which was good just to have a diversity of views. And she was excellent. She managed that portfolio working in those new ethnic Serb-majority municipalities. So anyway, that was a challenge. I was talking to somebody recently that was trying to hire an ethnic minority and I think it's a little bit easier today. But back then you couldn't just say we want to hire an ethnic Serb.

Q: What about your implementing partners? Was that a challenge for them as well? Did you have any provisions asking them to seek as much diversity as possible? Or did you just leave it to their judgment if it was needed or not needed?

FRITZ: We left it to their judgment. I would say that, you know, a lot of them brought in more expats because that was easier in a way. I think it was easier having expats, especially from the region. As I mentioned previously, the woman who was the mayor of Zlatograd in Bulgaria became the chief of party of the local governance project in Kosovo. I think that that was almost easier than trying to hire an ethnic Serb because there aren't that many in Kosovo and few, if any, with the requisite skills, and Serbs from Serbia aren't going to come to Kosovo because they've heard it's really dangerous for Serbs. So expats were definitely a better approach to staffing projects.

Q: Given the amount of time you spent in the Balkans, you really have some unique capabilities and understanding of the region.

FRITZ: I love the Balkans. I mean, it is my passion. There are others in the agency, and I've actually tapped into that expertise. Some of the folks I worked with from OTI, Michael Stievater, Jason Aplon, Ray Jennings, these are people I worked with in Bosnia, one of the first OTI programs. When we were trying to figure out what to do to prepare for our work in these ethnic Serb municipalities being created in Kosovo, I called on them. Again, I had only ethnic Albanian staff. I couldn't send them to those places.

I reached out to Michael Stievater, called him to pick his brain. I think he was in Indonesia at the time. I told him, "This is what I want to do. We don't have people in these regions. We don't know what's doable, what's not. And we need somebody to help us figure out what we can do in the north." Initially it was the north. Then we did a second assessment that included the new municipalities in the south. So we quietly hired these former OTI people, I think on a purchase order with a deliverable of a report to tell us what's doable, what's not, what are these areas like, what's the appetite for assistance, what's the openness for assistance in these areas. I would say people like Michael, Ray, and Jason are equally or even more expert on the Balkans than me. So there are people in the agency or who are somehow related to the agency. Michael now works in Ukraine for a USAID contractor. And Jason is working for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva. Ray does a lot of work for OTI still. So there are other Balkans experts in USAID.

Q: Right, so a lot of that was embodied within the OTI structure?

FRITZ: Well, this wasn't part of OTI. This was outside of OTI. These just happened to be OTI contacts.

Q: Yes, right, but OTI helped to create the capability?

FRITZ: Right, yes, absolutely, absolutely, yeah.

Q: Okay, other thoughts on Kosovo. Again, it sounds like there were a lot of successes and in an environment in which there was strong collaboration with the locals. Since USAID is emphasizing localization so much now, were you working directly with any local organizations, or were you working through U.S. implementers?

FRITZ: At that point, it was through U.S. implementers. There was a lot of corruption in Kosovo. With independence came a lot of money. There was a huge concern about ensuring that our funds were managed well and not siphoned off. There was an interesting case of reverse localization. I don't know if we ended up doing this, but as I had mentioned the schools project, as we were building classrooms and schools through our implementing partner, the Kosovo government was doing the same, so it was a parallel effort. But when they saw our schools that were cheaper – we spent less money – and much better built, they came to us and asked, "Can we give you money to build schools?" I don't know if that ever happened, but I think because of corruption, money was probably skimmed off the top. Our implementing partner had engineers checking everything every step of the way and our own staff was doing the same. Our process yielded better quality school structures, buildings, and the government recognized that.

I understand the same thing happened with the Kosovo government giving USAID money for the credit guarantee program. So it's not localization, and it's almost a step backwards. On the one hand, it recognizes that USAID can use these funds better. It's not the best situation. You want the government to be able to do this but in the short term it is a way of getting assistance out there in a way that avoids corruption.

Q: And the country itself recognized this.

FRITZ: Yeah.

Q: Given their recognition of the problem, were you able to do any kind of anti-corruption programming? Or does that kind of programming have any results anyway?

FRITZ: Well, no, I definitely think those kinds of programs have results. We saw really great results in Ukraine, which also has huge corruption. I think it's harder in a country that small, where everybody knows everybody else. And you have a history of people working outside the formal system, because they were forced to. It's really hard to establish formal systems where people follow the rule of law and rules and regulations after that. So in a place like that, it's hard. I just think the institutions were young, people, the experience was undeveloped just because they worked outside the system and you

didn't have people who had been long in the government, managing ministries and things like that. These are all new people. These make it even harder to stamp out corruption.

Q: Okay. Anything else on Kosovo? Because it's a surprising next assignment, not the logical follow on from Kosovo.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

RUTH E. HANSEN
POLITICAL OFFICER
U.S. EMBASSY
BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA
(1986-1990)

Hansen was born in Chicago in 1946 and received a bachelor's degree from Wheaton College in 1968 and a master's in foreign service from Georgetown University in 1970. She entered the Foreign Service in 1973 after working briefly on the Hill. In the Foreign Service, Hansen served abroad in the Dominican Republic, Poland, Panama, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – Rising Ethnic Conflict in Kosovo under Milošević

Q: Did you get down to Kosovo much?

HANSEN: I did. In my first visit, I had the opportunity to accompany the Political Counselor, Dick Miles, and a visiting human rights officer from the State Department Human Rights Bureau.

There were a number of individual human rights cases that were of concern to Washington at the time, but the major issue was the treatment of the ethnic Albanian population, particularly in Kosovo and in Macedonia. There, there was a fairly high rate of arrests on what we tended to consider political grounds, for expression of political opinion, usually having to do with the status of Kosovo. At the time, advocacy of a change from province to republic status was understood as codeword for advocacy of independence for Kosovo and ultimately for creation of a "greater Albania" comprised of Albania, Kosovo, and portions of Macedonia and Montenegro. The Serbian authorities, and by extension Yugoslav authorities, interpreted any discussion of a Republic of Kosovo as subversive and as intended to stir up ethnic conflict. In their minds, the Kosovo and Macedonian Albanians wanted the province to attain republic status, equal to that of the other republics of Yugoslavia, which under the then-constitution theoretically would give Kosovo the right to break away from the federation, which would contribute to the break-up of Yugoslavia.

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Q: What was the attitude of the embassy about the Kosovo issue?

HANSEN: Especially in the first couple of years we were there, I would say it was seen as something of a longer-term issue. Over time and with Milosevic's rise, it took on more immediacy. We often tried to make the case to our interlocutors that, by treating Kosovo Albanians with suspicion and imposing ever more repressive measures in the province, they were creating a self-fulfilling prophesy. If they were concerned about Kosovars seeking to break away from Yugoslavia, Serbia's handling of the Kosovo issue and treatment of ethnic Albanians only made this more likely. No one was persuaded.

In the embassy, I think there was a sense that, yes, at some point it could reach a flashpoint. There had been violence in the province in the past and there could be again in the future, but I don't think it was seen as an immediate threat to stability in the region. And in the event, of course, it was elsewhere in Yugoslavia that the break-up occurred and violent conflict erupted initially. But Kosovo was certainly something we understood as a serious matter. Ambassador Zimmerman took on the issue aggressively and tried to convince Serbia to deal more appropriately with the ethnic Albanians, to respect freedom of expression and so on. Prominent Americans visiting Yugoslavia at that time conveyed similar kinds of messages. It was a sensitive thing. Larry may mention in his transcript that the famous writer Joseph Brodsky visited Belgrade, and Larry managed his program. Brodsky met with Serbian writers and other intellectuals and made the case that they had to come to terms with the Kosovo issue with respect for human rights, to no avail. Joan Baez gave a concert in Belgrade, which was attended by a huge crowd. The audience obviously knew her music and loved her, but she made a comment about the Kosovo issue and the temperature in the concert hall plummeted.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

SUSUMU KEN YAMASHITA
USAID
Mission Director
Kosovo
Pristina, Kosovo
(2004-2006)

Susumu Ken Yamashita was born in Japan in 1952, and lived in many places across the world before receiving a PhD from Johns Hopkins University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1989 and served as mission director with USAID in Kosovo, Colombia, and Afghanistan. Mr. Yamashita was interviewed in 2017 by John Pielemeier.

Topical Focus – USAID and the Reconstruction of Kosovo

YAMASHITA: Direct transfer, that's correct. I was in Kosovo two years. One of the things that I learned about Kosovo is just how important it is for the United States to show moral leadership overseas. In Kosovo we were treated as demigods. Americans were so favored it was astounding, humbling, and, on occasion even embarrassing. I can share with you an anecdote. In the official realm, for example, I remember visiting one of the towns in southern Kosovo. The mayor of the town asked to meet me outside of town, so I did. I got out of the car and he took me by the arm and he started walking me into town. It's a little town with nice clean cobblestones, electric lights, it's very neat, and, appears to be functioning quite well. As we walked, the Mayor said that during the war the people of his town were listening to the BBC radio wondering whether NATO would bomb Serbia. It was Madeline Albright at the time, making the case for NATO intervention, and when NATO decided to intervene, the people of that town were ecstatic. As the bombing campaign against Serbia started, the Serb military came through this town, pushed out all the townspeople in what they called a "horseshoe operation." Imagine a military maneuver where the forces line up in a U-shape formation and pushed everyone out of town to a retention camp. The Military then returned to the town an burned it to the ground destroying everything, including people's belonging, photos, mementos, etc. After the war the townspeople came back and what they found was smoldering rubble. As the townspeople stood around in a zombie-like shock, the first humanitarian assistance workers arrived. They were Americans from USAID, our OTI.

Q: Our Office of Transition Initiatives?

YAMASHITA: Yes. The Office of Transition Initiative, together with Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), were the first to arrive and worked shoulder to shoulder to start reconstruction efforts. They involved all the townspeople in cleaning up rubble, getting the things back together, etc.

Q: Oh my!

YAMASHITA: With tears streaming down his face, he said, "And this is what you see!" And he shows me the cobblestone streets, electric lights, store fronts that are functioning, and he said, "We will never, ever forget what you did for us!"

He said, "we will go to the ends of the earth for you!" To this day whenever I tell this story I get choked up. Years later I met the USAID Director who headed up the operations, Craig Buck, and his Executive Officer, Fernando Cossich. Fernando recalls working first out of Bosnia and later out of Macedonia. In the beginning they were not allowed to overnight in Kosovo. There were no banking services, so he had to carry bags full of cash to pay staff, contractors, and, services. Those were heady times and I think we showed USAID at some of our best. Our commitment and creativity with a singular focus, which was to support and assist a war-torn country.

Q: That's a hard act to follow isn't it?

YAMASHITA: Indeed it is. And it was not the only time that I received such a response. The Kosovars had a heart-felt appreciation for what the U.S. had done to liberate and then re-construct their country. We would follow through and continue our political, financial, development, security, and moral support through the years until Kosovo achieved independence in 2008. That was the year Kosovo declared independence and the U.S. recognized Kosovo the day after. Beyond any official appreciation, the Kosovars had a special place in their hearts for us as individuals. For example, I remember one Saturday my wife and I went to the supermarket in downtown Pristina. When we got to the line at the checkout counter, the people in front of me recognized me from the newspaper and television, and, immediately moved out of the way so I could go first. I would politely decline, saying that I could wait in line like everyone else. Even my response evoked appreciation, and greater stature for Americans. After all, unfortunately waiting in line was not a custom often exercised by some of our colleagues from other nations. I would speak to the USAID staff, especially the American staff, about my experiences, letting them know that in public and in our private lives, we are under a microscope. We are adored and we need to live up to their expectations. So I would urge our staff to behave accordingly.

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Q: Right. Now in terms of your mission operations, how big a staff did you have and what was your budget?

YAMASHITA: Let's see. We had close to 100 staff, with 20 or so Americans and about 80 Kosovars. Our budget was around $200 million per year. With the population of Kosovo being only 2 million the program was quite sizable on a per capita basis.

Q: That's a huge program! What was the content of the program? What was the focus?

YAMASHITA: We worked in all sectors except security. Remember we were involved in nation building in its rawest form. Kosovo had no institutions. In fact, the government was a special United Nations operations, known as the UN Mission in Kosovo, or UNMIK. We worked on political party building, judicial system and access to justice, 44 social sectors such as education and health, economic sectors such as agriculture, private sector, and, energy. We also worked on peace-building and integration at the community level. In addition to residual conflict between the Serbs and Kosovars, there were unresolved grievances amongst the many clans of Kosovars. We were involved with just about every cabinet department, playing a central role in the creation of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Finance, and others. It was truly nation building.

Q: Any particular highlights from the program side that you can recall?

YAMASHITA: There were many. One that stands out is our support for privatization of publicly-owned enterprises. As Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia, publicly-owned

enterprises were the norm. After the war, the international community determined that privatizing these enterprises would be a priority, not just for future economic progress, but also for the significant revenues it would bring to the treasury of this new country. While UNMIK was the chair of the privatization commission, the U.S. had an outsized role and since I was representing the U.S., I ended up being one of the most influential in privatization decisions. I did not have any previous experience with privatization, so I depended a lot on other experts. Critical to my success was the Director of our Economic Growth office, Sharon Hester, who had experience with privatization in other countries and was an exceptional communicator and detailed professional. I tried to balance the interests and priorities of the various actors in the room. The UN, as UNMIK, tried to be the neutral arbiter, while the EU generally supported the views of Serbia, who were not present, and the U.S. tended to ally itself with the Kosovars, represented by a Special Representative of the President. It was an interesting mix of technical content, political maneuvering, and, at times pressuring different sides to come together.

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Q: Good for you! Programs were, I think you said, gradually going down from a high of $200 million to $100 million. Was that simply that it was less of a priority in terms of what was going on in Eastern Europe?

YAMASHITA: I would say it was a combination of things. Partly it was budget priorities out of Washington. As Kosovo inched towards a declaration of independence, Washington felt that the job of the U.S. was done. The EU, which had always been the largest donor, continue to provide support. The World Bank started to provide loans, and the Kosovar government was becoming more and more self-reliant. Still, even as our budgets were starting to shrink, the Kosovar government would frequently look to us for support

Q: Talk about being in the catbird seat. Had you worked closely with the EU before?

YAMASHITA: It was a very interesting situation to be in. For example, when a major delegation from the EU or the World Bank would come to Kosovo, the government would ask for our opinion, including comments on program areas and allocated budgets. Representatives from other donors would frequently come to us for advice on how to approach the Kosovar government and for our support for their programs. I tried to be as neutral as possible and supportive of our colleagues from the other donor agencies. I would always say to the Kosovar officials that in the end it needs to be their decision based on their understanding of what is best for the people of Kosovo. Of course, there were certain times when I could not help myself and share a snarky comment with my staff or with our Embassy.

Q: Were the other donors doing mostly infrastructure?

YAMASHITA: The EU was involved in all sectors, including infrastructure. They were in all of the sectors that we were, but with much greater resources. While we agreed on

most things, on others we had conflicts. Often the EU would want Kosovo to follow the "EU model" on such things as the access to justice, or basic education. Our approach was that the Kosovars should decide by themselves. The U.S. model was often different, but I did not want the whole effort to turn into a EU versus US tussle. The EU insisted on a European model because they felt that Kosovo needed to be part of Europe. Since the EU tended to support Serbia on many matters, the Kosovars were suspicious of EU's motives. This is one of the reasons why the Kosovars often came to us for a trusted opinion.

Q: Were there any clashes between the Serbs and the Kosovars during that period?
YAMASHITA: There was always the possibility, especially around specific dates. Serbia never recognized Kosovo as an independent country, and, the northern city of Mitrovica remains a divided city, with the north controlled by Serbia and the south by Kosovo. A river flows between the two, and a bridge is a reminder of the divide. From time to time there are clashes on either side, with both sides blaming each other. I would not go so far as to say that there were clashes between the armed forces of Serbia and Kosovo.

Q: Did USAID have a role in trying to mediate those kinds of issues?

YAMASHITA: Absolutely. In fact, we had programs specifically targeting, supporting Serb communities in Kosovo, not just in the north, but down south near the border with Macedonia. We would be very clear to the Kosovars about why we were doing this. We emphasized the need for tolerance and inclusion. We reminded the Kosovars that now that the Albanian majority was in power, they could not discriminate against a minority population.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR MARC GROSSMAN
Department of State
Assistant Secretary for European Affairs
Kosovo
Washington, D. C.
(1997-2000)

Ambassador Marc Grossman was born in Los Angeles in 1951. He received his B.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his MSc. from the London School of Economics. Throughout his distinguished career in the Foreign Service, he held positions such as Ambassador to Turkey, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. After retirement, he was asked to serve as the second U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan

and Pakistan. Ambassador Grossman was interviewed in 2006 and 2014 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Topical Focus – Negotiation of the Rambouillet Agreement

Q: What was the status of play when you started the job in '97?

GROSSMAN: When I started the job in '97 the major focus was still on Dayton Implementation. Kosovo was not at the top of the agenda in '97, Dayton Implementation was, and with the leadership of Bob Gelbard and then Jim Dobbins and Jim Swigert, the EUR bureau focused hard on Dayton Implementation. They did a great job and they kept at it. By '98, and of course in '99, Kosovo rises up higher and higher on the agenda. Through all of '98, there are Contact Group meetings and we were trying to get allies to support a robust policy on Kosovo. We saw it as a test of whether the Triple Crown was going to be a useful thing, because if you were going to be successful in Kosovo, there was going to be a NATO piece because you might have to fight. There was certainly going to be a US-EU piece because it was in Europe and there was certainly going to be a piece from OSCE, and you'll remember before NATO got engaged, the OSCE was the leader in Kosovo—the OSCE missions and observers and others. As we turned the corner into 1999, it was clear that when the NATO Summit was convened in April in Washington it was not just going to be about expansion and a major change to the NATO strategic concept summit, it was going to be a Kosovo summit; the new members found themselves quickly to be in an Alliance in combat.

Q: Could you describe sort of your, both role but impression of the players in this?

GROSSMAN: Secretary Albright, I think, sensed early on that there was going to be a conflict in Kosovo. And what we had to do was work our way through every other single conceivable alternative in order to get the allies and to get NATO to come to a similar conclusion. We used to go to Contact Group meetings month after month. They were dreadful. We wanted action in Kosovo and everybody else wanted to keep talking.

Q: Would you explain what the situation was?

GROSSMAN: Well as I remember it, the situation was that Milošević was actively—my perspective anyway—was actively proceeding with ethnic cleansing verging on genocide against Kosovar Albanians.

Q: I've interviewed (William G.) Bill Walker, who was the OSCE observer at the time, who called it genocide.

GROSSMAN: Secretary Albright got it right when she said, "We are not going to allow people to be put in railway cars in Europe for a second time in the 20th century." That crystallized it for me. This was about Milošević and it was about genocide and it was about Kosovars and it was about the future of that part of Europe.

And then we went to Rambouillet. Rambouillet was a castle-like place outside of Paris, a half-hour, 40-minute, drive. There had been a G-7 meeting there once, I believe. We got to Rambouillet and the Serbs were there, and the Kosovars were there, and the Contact Group was there. It was a surreal experience in the sense that we were in this beautiful place and the French had catered it beautifully and we went to session after session where we just couldn't break through to any settlement. They were the worst two weeks of my diplomatic life until 9/11; there were worse weeks in terms of wars and killings and assassinations, but in terms of pure diplomatic frustration, Rambouillet tops the list.

Q: Was it on both sides; the Kosovars and the Serb side?

GROSSMAN: Both. They were both pursuing the interests as they saw them. The Kosovars were, I thought, more flexible than the Serbs.

The structure of the negotiations worried me. There were too many people, too many groups, and too few clear objectives. I was probably wrong about this because I misjudged the politics, but after a day or so at Rambouillet, I advised Secretary Albright to leave and only return if there was likely to be an agreement. I said it was better if I took the blame for failure rather than her.

But she had a different vision and her vision was that we had to do everything we could and be seen to do everything we could so that if Rambouillet was a failure then there were no further excuses against military activity. And so we worked at trying to bring Serb and Kosovars to some agreement. I remember in the last couple of days at Rambouillet there was a document, but I can't remember the details and it was just an immensely frustrating two weeks. And it failed. I can remember flying home on the airplane from Paris and we landed at Andrews and Jim Dobbins and I had decided that as we landed at Andrews, he would take over the day-to-day running of Kosovo because I was trying to organize the NATO summit and do a million other things. I can remember landing at Andrews and Jim had been sleeping on the floor of the aircraft we said, "Here we go, this is going to turn into a war so now we have to do our best in the circumstances." And that's what we did.

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Q: What was your impression of the Kosovar representation and the idea that would this be an independent state or part of Albania or somehow unwillingly join to Serbia?

GROSSMAN: The people we met clearly had as their long-term goal to be independent. At the time, our objective was to see if we could keep them connected to Serbia in some way, consistent of course with their physical safety and create some political space for them to breath, because that seemed like a good interim step. My view at the time was that, when it came for a vote, because that's what was envisioned by the failed document at Rambouillet, if democracy had been building up in Serbia and Kosovo, that would help answer the questions about what the future would look like. So, if five years from then, five years from '99, Milošević was still the boss in Belgrade and Belgrade was still an

authoritarian state and still making trouble all around, then the Kosovars were going to vote for independence and we'd probably support them. If, on the other hand, five years hence or six years hence, I think it was five because in the document, there was a democratic Belgrade and a democratic Serbia and a less authoritarian Serbia and people were free then, that there was a chance then that both people in Belgrade and people in Pristina and around in Kosovo might think differently about their options. I also thought that if Serbia could be a more normal place, the prospect of EU membership might also be an incentive. So far, that's not turned out to be true, but that was my vision at the time.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

RUDOLF V. PERINA
Department of State
Chief of Mission
Yugoslavia
Belgrade, Yugoslavia
(1993-1996)

Ambassador Perina was born in Czechoslovakia when that country was under communist control. He escaped with his family to Morocco, then Switzerland and finally the United States. The ambassador was educated at the University of Chicago and Columbia University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1974, Mr. Perina specialized in Military-Political Affairs at posts abroad, including Moscow, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna and Belgrade. In Washington he served on the National Security Council, specializing in Soviet issues. From 1998 to 2001 Mr. Perino was US Ambassador to Moldova. Ambassador Perina was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Topical Focus – Dayton Peace Accords

Q: How were the Europeans dealing with this situation?

PERINA: Well, everyone would wring their hands when Kosovo was mentioned, but the Europeans by and large did not know what to do. One got the impression they were secretly hoping that in fact the Serbs would keep the Albanians in line so that there would not be an explosion. Some Europeans were reminded of ethnic minority problems in their own countries and had a lot of sympathy with the Serbs. The most active European diplomat was the British Chargé, Ivar Roberts. As far as I know, he was the only other diplomat in Belgrade other than myself and the Russian Ambassador who on occasion had meetings with Milosevic. But even he underestimated the Kosovo problem. We were the most engaged Embassy on Kosovo, though even with us it was a secondary issue in comparison to Bosnia.

The real difference in approach to Kosovo between us and the Europeans was shown after the Dayton Agreement. Here I have to jump ahead a little. Basically, Milosevic made the Dayton Agreement possible. He was the key person who forced the Serb delegation to accept the agreement. Even Holbrooke recognized this. Milosevic did this because he was not a Serb nationalist but rather a self-serving opportunist. He believed that if he helped Dayton succeed, he would be seen in the world as a peacemaker and given legitimacy and respect, the sanctions on Serbia would be lifted, and his role in starting the whole Yugoslav conflict would be forgotten and forgiven. This is what he most wanted and why he helped Dayton succeed. The problem was, however, that we were committed to our promise to the Albanians that we would not forget Kosovo. So after Dayton we did not lift all of the sanctions but rather stated that an outer wall of sanctions would remain until the Kosovo issue was resolved. In effect, the economic sanctions were lifted but the political sanctions, such as non-recognition of Serbia-Montenegro, remained. Milosevic was furious when he learned that some sanctions would remain. He felt that he had been tricked, and it was the beginning of his falling out with Holbrooke.

But also—and this is where the Europeans come in—most of them did not support the U.S. on the outer wall of sanctions policy. They did not believe that Kosovo should be a reason for further sanctions on Serbia. Most of them started recognizing Serbia-Montenegro and elevating their Chargés to Ambassadors. By the time I left Belgrade, I was one of the few remaining Chargé d'Affaires. This European rush to normalize relations with Serbia and overlook the Kosovo issue was of course the biggest dread of the Kosovar Albanians. I think it was partly because of this development that the Albanians gave up hope that the international community would help them and moved toward developing the Kosovo Liberation Army, which suddenly appeared on the scene about two years later. This was when I was serving as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Department, and it took the entire international community by surprise. Suddenly, the Kosovar Albanians had an army which they had largely secretly put together. It was an amazing feat but also reflected how bad our intelligence was on Kosovo because we were still focusing almost exclusively on Bosnia. But I think I am getting too far ahead. I am sure we will come back to Kosovo later.

Q: OK, so let's go back to Bosnia pre-Dayton. What was the process of getting to Dayton? How did the talks evolve?

PERINA: Well, we have to go back to the visits by Bob Frasure, the Deputy Assistant Secretary who was handling Yugoslavia and whom I already mentioned. Bob started coming out when it became clear that the policy of just delivering threatening demarches to Milosevic was not working, and when Holbrooke became Assistant Secretary for European Affairs and wanted to get more involved in resolving the conflict. Frasure came out as sort of an advance party to meet with Milosevic and explore if there was any common ground for negotiations that Holbrooke would then take over. He made several visits, and in the end we drew up a broad list of principles by which we thought the conflict could be resolved. The bottom line of these principles was that Bosnia had to remain as a single federalist state, albeit Republika Srpska, a Serb entity with

considerable autonomy, could continue to exist within Bosnia. Milosevic agreed to this, and it was the cue for Holbrooke to come in. Milosevic knew this. We had told him that if talks at the Frasure level succeeded, then a higher level representative—understood to be Holbrooke—would come to Belgrade. It was an incentive for Milosevic because he wanted to get the U.S. involved, and he wanted to deal with the highest-level American possible.

He was also at this time trying to clean up his image in other ways. For example, we had a long-standing child custody dispute with Belgrade. An American mother was trying to get her children back from a Serbian father who had absconded with them to Serbia after he lost custody in U.S. divorce proceedings. For about five years the mother with the Embassy's help had been trying to get the children back, with the Serbs always claiming that they did not know their whereabouts. One day shortly before Dayton, out of the blue, Milosevic called me to say that the children had been found and could be returned to the mother. We immediately picked them up and kept them in the Embassy until the mother arrived, about 24 hours later, for a very dramatic and emotional reunion, since they hardly had memory of her. I have no doubt that the Serbs had known for a long time where the children were but Milosevic finally made the decision to return them when he felt it would most bolster his image with the Americans.

I remember Holbrooke's first visit to Belgrade. He stayed at the Ambassador's residence, where I was by that time living. He came with Bob Frasure and it was the first of about 20 visits by Holbrooke during my time, though I did not keep exact count. At least it seemed like 20, if not more. It was a get-acquainted session but basically he hit it off with Milosevic. Then with each subsequent visit he got more and more involved. He started coming out with the interagency team he put together that included NSC, DOD and JCS reps. The JCS rep was a fellow named Wes Clark, who at the time I think was a one star general. It was this group of about a half dozen people, including Holbrooke, Bob Frasure, Chris Hill, Wes Clark as the JCS rep and an OSD rep, that formed the key negotiating team.

This group changed shortly thereafter, however, because of the tragic road accident outside Sarajevo in which Bob Frasure, the NSC rep Nelson Drew, and the DOD rep Joseph Kruzel were killed. This happened on August 19, 1995. The whole delegation was traveling from Belgrade to Sarajevo and had been at my house for dinner the night before. Bob Frasure made his last phone call to his wife from our residence. It was an enormous tragedy. My whole family had gotten to know Bob well from his many previous visits when he stayed with us. We were all devastated, including our daughters. I subsequently flew back to Washington for the memorial service and funeral. I remember telephoning Milosevic that Saturday afternoon to tell him about the accident. I left word with his assistant, and Milosevic called back in about two minutes. He did sound genuinely shocked by the news. He had gotten to know Bob well and I think liked him. He later invited Bob's wife and daughters to visit Belgrade and see where Bob had spent his last days. Bob was replaced on the delegation by Chris Hill, who then came on all of Holbrooke's subsequent visits.

Q: What was Holbrooke's initial impression of Milosevic and how did the talks proceed?

PERINA: Holbrooke had been briefed on Milosevic by Bob Frasure and me and knew a little of what to expect. I think both Milosevic and Holbrooke found each other interesting as personalities and had an incentive to engage one another. Milosevic saw a deal with the U.S. as the path to lifting sanctions and gaining respectability in the international community, and Holbrooke rightly saw Milosevic as the key person to resolving the Bosnian conflict. Holbrooke was the right person for dealing with Milosevic. For one thing, he could simply outlast Milosevic. These negotiating sessions sometimes went late into the night, sometimes until three o'clock in the morning and start again at six o'clock. I think one session went all night. Holbrooke really had the energy to do this. I think Holbrooke also found Milosevic an interesting person. You could engage with him more easily than with (Bosnian President) Izetbegovic or (Croatian President) Tudjman. For one thing, he spoke English so well. You did not need the formality of interpreters. It makes a big difference in discussions. Of course, that does not mean Holbrooke liked Milosevic. I think we all recognized that this was an unsavory man with a lot of blood on his hands. Perhaps because of this, there was a real challenge in dealing with him.

Q: Were you getting much out of Sarajevo and what was happening there?

PERINA: We saw the cables, and we followed all of the press reports. I knew the Ambassador, John Menzies. But until we were together at Dayton, we did not have much direct interaction. The link between all three capitals—Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb—was Holbrooke and his traveling entourage. And one of the interesting things about Holbrooke, which I am sure frustrated a lot of people in Washington, was that he never reported on his meetings through cables. In the 20 or so visits by him to Belgrade, we never did a single reporting cable.

Q: This was deliberate?

PERINA: Absolutely. He always said-- and he was right in this-- that the more you report, the more Washington starts interfering in the negotiations. Interagency groups are set up, instructions drafted and circulated, a lot of people who want to get in on the action start appearing, and generally they are not helpful. What Holbrooke did was to call Warren Christopher periodically and brief him orally on the talks. Than, if anyone wanted a telegram, he would just say that he had already briefed the Secretary and that was that. And he got away with this as far as the State Department was concerned. It was a little tougher with the other agencies, particularly the Defense Department, because they did not trust the State Department, either Holbrooke or Christopher. That is why there were so many DOD representatives on the delegation whom Holbrooke had been obliged to accept as part of the initial decision to launch talks. These people were all doing their own reports back to their agencies in Washington. In particular Wes Clark, as the representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would run off after every meeting to send a report back to his people in the Pentagon. Holbrooke knew this, and it irritated him, but there was nothing he could do about it except—later in the process- start having some

very private, one-on-one meetings with Milosevic to which the agency reps were not invited.

Q: As the talks started, was it almost implicit that we had the option of bombing the Bosnian Serbs if the talks did not succeed? Did Milosevic understand this?

PERINA: Yes. That option was always there, and Milosevic did understand it because in fact before Dayton it happened. We did bomb the Serbs in Bosnia briefly, and there was a huge demonstration, several thousand people, in front of the Embassy. It was one of the few times I was really frightened about things getting out of hand but there was an element of orchestration in the demonstration so that Milosevic did not let it get out of hand. It looked very threatening but remained peaceful. All of this was very ironical because the Embassy had twice been evacuated before the Holbrooke talks when we were threatening the Bosnian Serbs with military action. In each of these cases, all dependents and non-essential personnel were evacuated to Budapest in advance of possible bombing. In each case, the bombing did not happen, and people returned to Belgrade after several days in the Kempinski Hotel in Budapest. After the second time, it became silly, and the Serbs started making fun of it. They photographed the automobile convoy on the way to Budapest and made jokes about it. So then when we finally did take military action shortly before Dayton, the whole Embassy was there and no one had been evacuated. I cannot now remember what finally triggered the bombing but the point was primarily to show the Serbs prior to Dayton that we were serious. Holbrooke wanted to show that there were teeth in the threats after all. But it all happened on short notice and no one had time to evacuate the Embassy when we finally might have needed to do so.

Q: During this time was Croatia brought into the game?

PERINA: Sure. There was another team working with Croatia to try to set up a MuslimCroatian federation in Bosnia to balance off the Serbs in the negotiations. I was not directly involved in this but it was seen as one of the elements needed to make the Dayton structure work.

Q: Was this structure worked out with Milosevic?

PERINA: The basic elements agreed with Milosevic were that Bosnia would remain as a single, unified state consisting of two entities, the Serb Republic or Republika Srpska as the Serbs called it, and the Muslim-Croat Federation. The two entities would have a lot of autonomy, including their own parliaments, but there would be a central Bosnian parliament and governmental structure, a central judiciary and so on. There was a rough outline of the division of powers among these entities and the key institutions that would be created but otherwise all the details were worked out at Dayton. That is where we had the real experts, the lawyers and others to put flesh on the bones.

Q: How did Holbrooke get the Bosnian Serbs to agree to this?

PERINA: Well, Holbrooke rightly did not deal with the Bosnian Serb leaders Karadzic and Mladic. They were simply too tainted by the atrocities committed. That is why he dealt with Milosevic, and why Milosevic was key to the negotiations. One of the fundamental problems through the talks was that we needed to negotiate with the Bosnian Serbs but could not do so directly but only through Milosevic. Milosevic thus knew how important he was to the whole process and hoped to redeem himself and his entire career by helping to make Dayton succeed. There was the one episode that Holbrooke describes in his book when Milosevic persuaded us to have a meeting with Karadzic and Mladic. He organized it at a house on the outskirts of Belgrade. It was the only time that I also met with Karadzic and Mladic because, of course, they were not invited to the Dayton talks. They impressed me as rather sullen and unfriendly. They were, of course, very unhappy with the position they had gotten themselves into. Through their actions in Bosnia, they had become politically radioactive, and thus Milosevic held all the cards in the negotiations, and they as well as Holbrooke were dependent on him as an intermediary.

Q: How did the Dayton meeting come about?

PERINA: Well, once the Serbs, basically Milosevic, agreed to the basic principles and structures of a settlement, it was understood that there would have to be a meeting of everyone involved to flesh out the agreement and sign it. You must remember that all of this took place before Milosevic, Izetbegovic and Tudjman had even gotten together in one room. There were actually many key issues still left hanging before we ever got to Dayton. Dayton was not just a paper exercise of filling in the blanks. We knew that there would be high-level talks as well as much detail to work out. Many people had to be brought together. For a while, there was talk of doing this in Europe, but Holbrooke wanted to retain control of it in the United States. Interestingly, Milosevic also wanted the meeting to be in the U.S. I am not sure how in the end the decision was made for Dayton but it made sense to do it on a military base where facilities would be available and access could be controlled. I heard subsequently that Dayton was chosen because it was Strobe Talbott's home town and he suggested it.

Q: What was your role in Dayton?

PERINA: I was Milosevic's keeper at Dayton. Each of the three chiefs of mission came out with their head of state—Peter Galbraith accompanied Tudjman from Zagreb, John Menzies from Sarajevo accompanied Izetbegovic, and I came with Milosevic. The job was to get them to Dayton and be a contact point in dealings with them. I received permission from the Department to fly to Dayton with Milosevic in the private plane that carried the entire Serb delegation. There were some Serbs who came separately from Bosnia, from Sarajevo, but not Mladic or Karadzic who wanted to come but were told they could not. So the Serb delegation from Belgrade was basically Milosevic and Milutinovic and then some military people and intelligence types. For some reason, Milosevic also took this American advisor Chris Spiro to Dayton. During the talks, I participated in most of the meetings involving Milosevic, though not all because there

were a few meetings just exclusively between him and Holbrooke. As the talks got more detailed, they broke down into working groups of experts in which Milosevic did not participate. I spent a lot of time trying to keep an eye on Milosevic and the Serb delegation, and there was a lot of down time as is usual in these types of negotiations when people just mingled and chatted in the restaurant or coffee bar. Milosevic and the other Serbs of course got a little antsy by being restricted to the air force base, Wright-Patterson. They were always coming to us and asking for permission to leave the base and go into town. We let them do so only once when I accompanied them to a shopping mall in Dayton. It was only about a dozen Serbs, but we had to have a lot of security from the U.S. so the entourage was very noticeable. The Serbs walked around looking at the stores and buying things. Some of the lower-level people bought quite a bit of stuff and were excited by all the stores. I remember that Victoria's Secret caused a stir and a lot of jokes. Milosevic, as I recall, bought a pair of shoes in a department store. I am sure he did not need a pair of shoes but he probably wanted to make the point that he had been off the base and allowed to buy what he wanted. These were, after all, people who for years had been under sanctions. There was thus something symbolic for them in getting off the base and buying things—it documented what they saw as the end of sanctions and of being international pariahs. And of course, there were Serb journalists and TV crews there to report on this. This was the only time we let Milosevic off the base. The Serbs wanted to make excursions a number of other times, but we told them that they could not because of security concerns.

Q: And this was not an idle comment.

PERINA: True. And we also did not want them wandering all around Dayton. That was the whole point of conducting the talks on a military base. But we did forget about one thing—the PX. We learned that the Serbs had started visiting the PX and buying things there, including U.S. military gear and uniforms in fairly large quantities. We had not thought of this, and the image came of Serb troops outfitted in U.S. gear that the Serbs had procured in Dayton. Holbrooke got really upset, and we had to tell the Serbs that they could not do any more shopping at the PX.

Q. Were the Europeans present at Dayton?

PERINA: The key ally and contact group countries were there but with a very symbolic presence. Most countries had just one person to report on events. These people were largely observers—they were not involved in the negotiations, and generally they were out of the loop. Of course, most people continued to be out of the loop because that was still Holbrooke's negotiating style. On the big issues, he would report to Warren Christopher and through him to the President but try to keep as much of a close hold on information as possible. The Europeans were allowed to be there symbolically because we all knew that in the end we would need the Europeans. NATO would have a post-Dayton role, a vast amount of reconstruction assistance would be required, and so on. But by and large, Dayton was a U.S. show, and really Holbrooke's show. I think Holbrooke deserves a lot of credit for what was accomplished in Dayton. Certainly the agreement did not bring love and everlasting peace to the Balkans, but it did stop the

fighting and the bloodshed, and that in and of itself is a very significant accomplishment. Now I also think—and I believe Holbrooke would agree with this—that Milosevic did a lot to make Dayton possible. This does not absolve him of his complicity in starting the whole conflict but it is a reality that should be understood. Milosevic operated much like Holbrooke in keeping a lot of information to himself and not sharing it. He cut the final deal in Dayton with Holbrooke, making an agreement possible. Many members of the Serb delegation did not know what was in the agreement until shortly before it was signed. In fact, there was a rumor that I cannot confirm that at least one member of the Serb delegation, a person from Sarajevo, passed out when he saw the final text. There was a lot of unhappiness with parts of the agreement that Milosevic had agreed to but none of the other Serbs could do anything about it.

Q: What essentially were the parts that made the Serbs unhappy?

PERINA: Well, there was a lot that made them unhappy, including the basic fact that Republika Srpska would not become independent but remain a part of Bosnia. But this was not a surprise to anyone, and all the Serbs knew this was coming. What really upset them were some of the more detailed provisions on return of refugees, property rights and restitution of property. Basically, the agreement said that all of the Muslims who had been ethnically cleansed could go back to their homes and reclaim their property. This would reverse all of the results of the ethnic cleansing that the Serbs had perpetrated. But then in addition, many of the Serbs were shocked to see how the boundaries were drawn between the Serb and the Federation portions of Bosnia, and also of Sarajevo which was divided into sectors. In effect, some Serbs found that they would be living in Muslim controlled areas. The person who reportedly passed out was a rather affluent Bosnian Serb who suddenly learned that his entire estate would be in a Muslim rather than Serb part of Sarajevo. As I mentioned before, Milosevic could agree to such terms because he was not really a Serb nationalist. He did not care that much about Serbs. He cared about Milosevic. He thought that by helping to conclude an agreement at Dayton his past actions would be forgotten and he would gain legitimacy and respect. But he was wrong. Kosovo was still outstanding, and it would prove to be his downfall.

Q: Was he still afraid at Dayton that Serbs might be bombed by the U.S.? Was that also a motivation?

PERINA: Perhaps it was. Certainly bombing was never off the table. But this reminds me of another anecdote about the technical support we had at Dayton from the military, which was really impressive. The process of deciding the borders between Republika Srpska and the Federation was one of the hardest parts of the negotiation. It amounted to sitting down and dividing a country on maps, deciding which side gets this village and that road. Numerous disputes came up. In one example, the disposition of a country road depended on whether it was passable in the winter or not, and there was an argument on how wide it actually was. Well, the U.S. had developed a wonderful way to deal with these disputes. We had virtually all of Bosnia on aerial film. There was a room set up at Dayton with several very large TV screens. In the case of this road, for example, we could go to this room, ask the technicians to find the road, and literally fly over it, even

changing altitude within a certain range. The delegations that saw this technology were really amazed. One day, Holbrooke found a pretext to take Milosevic into this room and show him how it worked. Milosevic was also amazed. But, of course, the film had not been put together for the purpose of helping the Dayton negotiations. It had been put together by our military for the purpose of possible air strikes within Bosnia. Holbrooke knew this, and he intentionally wanted to remind Milosevic of it. I am confident Milosevic understood and got the message. It was in fact very impressive technology for its time. Nowadays, of course, it might not be any more impressive than Google Earth.

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Q: What was your impression of the Milosevic- Holbrooke dialogue at Dayton? Were there shouting matches between them and the like?

PERINA: I never witnessed a shouting match. That was not Holbrooke's style, nor Milosevic's style. Milosevic wanted always to show how unflappable he was. And Holbrooke's real strength was his persistence. He would never give up, even when somebody else might say this is impossible and walk away. It was often just a matter of physical duration and energy. Holbrooke could go on very little sleep at night. I saw this already in his visits to Belgrade. He could go on two hours of sleep at night. Then in the car on the way to the airport he would say "I have to rest for 10 minutes." He would close his eyes in the car and wake up ten minutes later and be all energetic again. Both Milosevic and Holbrooke were like that. But toward the end of the Dayton talks, Holbrooke did put on this big bluff that he would declare the conference a failure unless all three presidents signed on. We in the U.S. delegation were actually instructed to pack our bags and put them on the sidewalk in preparation for pick-up. He wanted it to really look like he was ending the conference and would declare it a failure.

Q: What would have been the consequences? Was there an implied consequence like bombing the Bosnian Serbs again if the conference failed?

PERINA: I never heard Holbrooke say directly we're going to bomb if this doesn't work. But as far as the Serbs were concerned, certainly there was an implication that the sanctions would get worse, the isolation would get worse, and we would under no circumstances allow Republika Srpska to secede from Bosnia. In other words, no matter what the Bosnian Serbs did, they would not achieve their main objective of breaking off from Bosnia. We would make sure of that, not through direct military intervention but rather by supporting the Muslim-Croat Federation and changing the military balance within Bosnia if the fighting continued. So logically, the best deal for the Serbs was what they could get in Dayton.

Q: What was the feeling when the Dayton Accords were signed?

PERINA: They were actually signed twice. There was a signing ceremony at the end of the Dayton Conference in November, and then there was a formal signing ceremony in Paris in December which the French very much wanted. Holbrooke agreed to this because we needed the Europeans to help implement the agreement and also because the

Paris ceremony was pretty much deja vu. The really significant event was when the three presidents signed the agreement in Dayton. Many of the Serbs in the delegation, as I mentioned, were devastated. They saw the Agreement as a total sell-out. But for Milosevic, it was a real moment of triumph. Here he had moved from being a sanctioned pariah to being a peacemaker on television screens around the world. Congratulations to the three presidents came from everywhere, including from President Clinton at the White House. I really think Milosevic believed at that moment that he had managed to change his image and shed his pariah status. But we had not forgotten about Kosovo, and Kosovo was yet to be his undoing.

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Q: In the two months when you were back in Belgrade, how did the Dayton accords go over?

PERINA: Much better with most of the Serbs in Serbia than one would think. They were for the most part relieved that the war was over and that the sanctions might be lifted. I think the Bosnian Serbs were much less happy. The average Serb in Serbia was less supportive of the Bosnian Serbs than many people understand. Sure, there was a sense that Serbs have to support their own against Muslims and Croats. But there was also a real exasperation with the war and a sense that Serbia was paying the price for the likes of Karadzic and Mladic. Most Serbs wanted the war to end and considered Dayton an acceptable and fair conclusion.

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Q: How soon were the sanctions lifted after Dayton?

PERINA: The process of lifting sanctions started right away but it took some time. Lifting economic sanctions is actually not an easy task. In the U.S., it takes a Presidential directive to both impose and lift economic sanctions. Political sanctions are easier to work with. But changes in Serbia were noticeable right away. Within a few months, the economy was remarkably normalized. What did not change was what we called the "outer wall of sanctions," the sanctions we had decided to retain because of the Kosovo issue. These were mainly political sanctions related to recognition of Serbia-Montenegro, exchanging ambassadors and so on. They were largely symbolic, but Milosevic was furious when he realized they would not be lifted. This was the kind of political stigma he thought he had shaken at Dayton. It was the beginning of a real parting of ways between Milosevic and Holbrooke. It also marked a divergence between the U.S. and most of our European allies. The Europeans were not as concerned with Kosovo as we were and did not support the outer wall of sanctions. Most of them rushed to recognition and full normalization of diplomatic ties with Serbia. Unfortunately, this sent just the wrong message to the Kosovar Albanians.

Q: How did the Kosovar Albanians react to Dayton?

PERINA: They were of course disappointed that Dayton had done nothing to address their problems. Suddenly everyone was rejoicing that peace had returned to former Yugoslavia but Kosovo seemed to be forgotten. This was greatly damaging to Rugova's advocacy of non-violent resistance to Serb domination. Some Albanians were saying that precisely the lack of violence in Kosovo made it possible for Europeans to forget the issue. That is why we felt it essential to maintain this outer wall of sanctions. It was a message to Milosevic but also to the Kosovar Albanians that we had not forgotten Kosovo. But it was not enough. It was in this period after Dayton that some of the Kosovar Albanians decided they had to rely more on themselves and started building the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which about a year later took everyone by surprise when suddenly the Albanians had an army.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

VICTOR COMRAS
Department of State
Kosovo War Sanctions Team
Kosovo
Washington, D. C.
(1998)

Victor D. Comras was born in New York State in 1943. Comras graduated from Georgetown University in 1964, the University of Florida Law School in 1966, and promptly joined the Foreign Service. While in the Foreign Service, Comras served overseas in Zaire, Nigeria, South Africa, France, Canada and Macedonia. He also worked on the Law of the Sea negotiations. Comras was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Topical Focus – Shuttle Diplomacy and Strategic Breakdown in Kosovo

COMRAS: The discussions in Belgrade were a real fiasco. Milosevic made only a brief appearance. The real discussions took place at a much lower level. A second meeting was scheduled, but never occurred. In the meantime fighting had intensified in Kosovo and the Rogovo government was being deserted by more and more of its members. It became increasingly clear that neither side had anything to bring to a negotiating table. The Albanians didn't trust Milosevic to carry out any commitments. And it was apparent also that the Rogovo government had lost its own ability to speak for the Kosovo Albanian community.

However, the contact group was not willing to recognize the failure of the process. Rather than abandon this approach, Christopher Hill and Wolfgang Petritsch, the Austrian ambassador to Belgrade, representing the EU, began their own shuttle diplomacy between Belgrade and Pristina. They concentrated on negotiating a framework agreement that would include basic documents related to political and civil institutions in Kosovo.

I have to say that this became a very ludicrous operation, especially against the background of increased fighting in Kosovo, the deterioration of the Rogovo council, the increasing importance of the UCK (and their absence from the process), and the failure of Milosevic to live up to any of his concessions. It was time to call Holbrooke back into the fray.

Holbrooke carried a very stern message to Milosevic. He was directed to make it clear that we were heading toward possible military action. NATO aircraft began to over fly Kosovo. We also began to build up NATO forces in Macedonia.

Holbrooke's instructions were to tell Milosevic that, in order to avoid NATO intervention he had to agree to the introduction of international peacekeeping mission in Kosovo which would include uniform military peacekeepers. Unfortunately, Holbrooke produced something far less. He made an agreement with Milosevic that did not include military peacekeepers. I'm never quite sure whether that was within the realm of the instructions that he had been given or how that played through.

The outcome was a completely civilian peace monitoring mission. It was to be based on the lines of other EU monitoring missions in the region. There would be no armed military elements within the mission. Holbrooke explained that Milosevic absolutely refused to allow any foreign military presence in Kosovo.

I think the mission assigned to the new peace monitoring group was one of the most challenging in history. The mission had an impossible task. They worked hard and honorably. And they reported truthfully on what was going on. But, they were helpless to stem a deteriorating situation. They became the witnesses themselves to growing issues and atrocities. In the meantime Christopher Hill and Wolfgang Petritsch were continuing on their shuttle missions to work out a political framework agreement.

In December 1998 I wrote a memorandum to then Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Marc Grossman regarding my concerns about the negotiating process on Kosovo. I told them I thought the Christopher Hill shuttle mission should be ended. I suggested that we convene an all - Albanian party conference to forge a unity governing council in Kosovo and that we establish a common Nato - Kosovo Council negotiating position paper which should be used in a new round of negotiations held outside of Yugoslavia. The new negotiating paper would be subject to discussion and appropriate revision, but would have the weight of NATO behind it. While Grossman found my paper intriguing, he admitted that he little influence on what was going on with our Yugoslav policies at the time. He promised to convey my memo to others.

Apparently, our Yugoslav team had already decided on a somewhat different course. They did not believe that we should appear to choose sides in the Kosovo crisis. Nor did they favor our working out a Kosovo unity council.

Christopher Hill suggested a somewhat different approach. He wanted to call for an international conference to bring the Albanians and the Serbian Government together to hammer an agreement out under international auspices. I think that's where we should have been at the outset - about a year earlier. But, I believed it was much to late for that now. Anyway, Hill's ideas led to the convening of the Ramboillet Conference.

Q: That was the name of the site in France.

COMRAS: That's right. The Kosovo conference was held at Rambouillet, just outside of Paris. The meeting was ostensibly presided over by the French and British Foreign Ministers as the selected representatives of the Contact Group. In fact, most of the negotiations at the conference were handled by Christopher Hill and Wolfgang Petritsch. Slobodan Milosevic never attended the conference. He sent his Foreign Minister instead.

The conference opened with great fanfare, and the presence of just about all of the Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group countries. There were solemn speeches on the need to deal with the issues and work out a resolution. But, the conference went downhill from their.

It was a very unique conference. It dealt with issues of war and peace. It dealt with headline issues of confrontation seriously involving the interests of the United States, Europe, the Balkans and world peace. But, just about the full contingent of Foreign Ministers left at the outset. The conference was left to be handled by mid-level diplomats who lacked direction or authority.

The Albanian delegation was badly fractured among Rogovo and UCK supporters. The Serbian delegation had no authority to deal. They had to refer everything back to Slobodon Milosevic.

The Albanians hadn't worked out a common position and lacked both a common position and common goals. These ranged from those who insisted on complete Kosovo independence to those willing to accept some form of autonomy. The conference was another complete diplomatic and substantive disaster. The international press saw it for the disaster that it was. The Serbs saw it for the disaster that it was. They took advantage of the discord among the Albanians and were able to leave the conference looking as though they had tried to make a deal, but the Albanians were the hold-outs. When the conference finally broke without any positive result, the blame game began. The contact group realized they needed to develop a common position and hammer out agreement on that position with the Albanians before they could move forward. That meant getting the Albanians to agree among themselves - something I had recommended in my December 1998 memo.

Well, anyway here we were with a deteriorating crisis. Slobo's troops were increasingly active in Kosovo. New Serbian troops were massing along the border. NATO plans were stepping up their over flights. New NATO contingents were moving into Macedonia. Against this background we convened a second Rambouillet Conference. And this time there was a common position presented to the Serbs on a take it or leave it basis. We laid down that kind of line at Rambouillet along with the demand for military armed peacekeepers. It was rejected.

In response to the Serbian rejection, and continued Serbian military operations in Kosovo, We began to carry out a limited air campaign against Serbian forces in Kosovo. We also began to have bombing runs into Serbia proper. A war had begun.

The Kosovo War was conducted from the air. We targeted Serbian troop movements as well as certain support facilities - roads, bridges, supply trains, communications facilities and oil. Serbia has no oil production of its own and relies on imported oil. We view oil as their Achilles, especially when it comes to military activities.

But, as fast as we were knocking out Serbia's oil reserves, Serbia was importing new oil, mainly via barge along the Danube. We had gone to war without seeking to impose any new controls on the flow of oil to Serbia. In fact the only sanctions that were in place at the beginning of the war were the leftover outer wall measures from the Bosnian conflict.

I was always surprised by the fact that we never pushed for new sanctions on Serbia during the run-up to the Kosovo war.

Anyway, only after the air war had commenced did we consider what should be done to stop the flow of new oil into Serbia.

At the time I was serving as the Director of the Office of Canadian Affairs. While I was not directly involved in the Kosovo issue, I continued to make my views known via memos, email and hall and office conversations.

At the moment the war began I was also preoccupied by the decision to move the Office of Canadian Affairs from the European Bureau into an expanded Bureau of Western Hemispheric Affairs. Our office was no longer with the Europeans. It was now with the Bureau that handled our relations with Latin America.

To my great surprise, I received a call from the EUR people to come around and talk to James Dobbins and James Pardue (his deputy) about what was going on in Kosovo. They asked my advice and assistance on developing and implementing a new sanctions program on Serbia. With my agreement they requested that the Western Hemispheric Affairs Bureau release me as Director of the Office of Canadian Affairs so that I could work full time on this project. I guess my exile had come to an end. What started off as a temporary position became a permanent position on Jim Dobbins' staff.

Our first sanctions priority was to stop the oil moving to Serbia. This was to prove a very difficult task - especially so as we were operating without any new UN Security Council resolution upon which to base such sanctions. We also faced the same kinds of problems that plagued the application of sanctions on the Danube during the Bosnian war period. The Danube enjoys a strict freedom of navigation and commerce status. And without a UN Security Council resolution it was going to be difficult to get countries to abridge a right guaranteed in the Danube Convention. Remember, the Kosovo war was a NATO action, not a UN action.

Our problem was to convince the Romanian, Bulgarian and Ukrainian governments to stop the flow of oil up the Danube to Serbia. Most of this oil was coming from Russia. And Russia itself was disinclined to cut off the flow. The Russian people were already expressing great sympathy for the Serbians in this war.

I formed up a new interagency negotiating team involving both the State Department and the Defense Department. We traveled together to Bucharest, Sofia and Kiev to see what could be done. We needed to get agreement from the Romanians and the Bulgarians to work together to cut off the oil flow. They sought to deflect the pressure we put on them and argued that we had to go directly to the Ukrainians and the Russians to stop the oil at the source. But we knew that wouldn't work. We just had to continue to keep the pressure on the Romanians and the Bulgarians, and to play on their stated interest in eventually becoming NATO members.

We also played on their concerns regarding the possible damage done to the Danube and their riverbeds from oil contamination. After-all, a war was going on and we could not guarantee that oil barges on the Danube would not be hit!. What if a barge train on the river was at the wrong place at the wrong time during a river raid. Can you imagine what that would do to the river with all that oil going down the river? Can you imagine what that would do to the ecology of the Danube River and to the region?

I think these issues weighed heavily on the responsible Bulgarian and Romanian authorities. They had their lawyers look closely at the terms of the Danube Convention and agreed that they could take appropriate regulatory steps, under the situation, to insure against such a river disaster. They agreed to turn back any oil barges that might be heading into the war zone.

Once the agreement was in place, and reported. We left the region to return to Washington via London. While in London we received the good news that Serbia had just caved and signed a Military Technical Agreement to end the fighting. I think this was around June 9, 1999. We joked among ourselves that as soon as Slobo heard that he wasn't going to get any more oil, he caved in. But it was still a great undertaking and the team was very pleased with the outcome of it. The issue then became, "What now?"

The Clinton Administration had finally decided that Milosevic had to go. President Clinton made it clear that the U.S. and its allies would not assist or deal with the Milosevic government and that we would work through peaceful means to foster

democratic regime change. So what about the sanctions. The first inclination among the U.S. and other Contact group members was that now that the war is over sanctions were no longer necessary. I disagreed. I thought that sanctions were needed even now - as a main impetus for peaceful regime change. I wrote a memo arguing that targeted sanctions were critical to our accomplishing democratic change in Serbia. Secretary Albright agreed with my position and directed that we continue our sanctions work.

By that time most of Europe had dropped blanket sanctions on Serbia. The situation in Iraq at that time had already led to sanctions being discredited as too blunt an instrument with too much humanitarian fallout. Their was concern that we might cause considerable suffering in Serbia if we maintained too broad a sanctions package. So, if we were going to have sanctions against Yugoslavia for regime change, they would have to be very targeted or smart sanctions.
We had to develop a program that we could sell to our European friends - again we did not have a UN Security Council resolution to work with - that would assist our efforts to getting the Serbia people to dump Milosevic.

The program that was developed was a multifaceted program worked out between the U.S. and the European Union. The objective was to strengthen the Democratic Opposition in Serbia while weakening the Milosevic regime. We would target the regime and its political, military, and bureaucratic support structure as well as its political and financial supporters.

We were going to go after Slobo's money, the money that supported his regime. We included in the target circle those we could identify as providing the political, economic, financial foundations of the regime as well as those supporting the repressive structure Milosevic had created to retain power. We defined a group of about 25 major individuals and companies that were the main sources of revenue and support. Their names were placed on a black list and trade and transactions with them were prohibited. Any of their assets found in a cooperating European country would also be frozen. Their names were also reflected in a blacklist issued by the EU which prohibited trade with them. These measures had a strong impact on Slobo and his financial support. It was beginning to cost more than it was worth to be a friend of Slobo.

Q: Talk about the Europeans. The French and the Germans and the Russians often have varying interests. How much were you able to... Were there some elements of these ones that I mentioned or others that had to be dragged kicking and screaming?

COMRAS: There was a consensus among the critical group - the French, the Germans, the British, and the Americans - on how to move toward regime change. However, there were some differences over where to place the greatest emphasis Some supported a greater effort on working with the democratic opposition. They were somewhat more reticent when it came to tightening sanctions measures against the regime, or withholding assistance for infrastructure projects - for example the reconstruction of bridges over the Danube. But all in all there was agreement on a common approach that contained both aspects - assistance for the democratic opposition and sanctions against the regime. There

were a number of times when we had to get Madeline Albright to intercede at the highest levels to keep the program together, particularly on the sanctions side. It was easier on the democratic opposition assistance side.

The key to retaining broad European Union support for the sanctions against Milosevic was to target them carefully. Exceptions also had to be made to take humanitarian considerations into account. These exceptions involved such issues as providing limited oil to individual towns through carefully managed assistance programs. We tried to give credit to democratic opposition groups so as to increase their influence and credibility.

One of the biggest, and most controversial issues was whether or not to assist Serbia in rebuilding Danube bridges. This was the greatest test of our "no assistance" policy. My instructions were to try and hold back a number of European governments who were more willing to assist the Serbs in rebuilding the Danube bridges. I also had to deal with complaints from the Bulgarians, Romanians and Hungarians that the bridge damage was disrupting so much commerce on the Danube that it had created serious economic problems for them. There was also growing concern that obstructions in the river could cause ecological damage to the river and might hold back the winter ice flow which could result in serious winter flooding. Nonetheless, because of the strong determination of President Clinton and Secretary Albright to the "no assistance" policy, we were able to hold back providing assistance to Serbia for the bridges. I have to say Serbia was their own worst enemy in this regard. They tried to blackmail the other European countries using the Danube by closing the river through Serbia to international traffic. The Russians played no major role in implementing or blocking the sanctions. Nor did they contribute support to the democratic opposition.

Q: Were they opposed?

COMRAS: They remained pretty much on the sidelines during this period. I guess that was the best we could hope for. However, private Russian individuals and companies did seek to take some advantage from the sanctions through black market and gray market dealings. There were a lot of other issues of direct concern to the Russians regarding the status of Kosovo, and what was going on in Bosnia. They weren't opposed to regime change in Belgrade but they were not going to be active participants in taking on Milosevic.

Q: As you were doing this, did you see a change in the Kosovars, the Albanian side? Were they coalescing more?

COMRAS: Initially Rogovo was completely discredited. During the war he had become a political hostage of Milosevic. Milosevic held him in "protective custody" in Belgrade. They got him to go on television to call for an end to the NATO bombing. At the time the UCK tried to brand him as a "traitor."

On the other hand, we also had to deal with some of the radical Albanian leaders with whom we were not comfortable. This included some leaders of the UCK.

After the end of the war the UN, the EU and the United States all worked to develop the growth of pluralistic democratic parties in Kosovo. That effort has had some success. Let's hope it holds.

We're going to be in Kosovo for a long time. There are still a number of intractable issues. But hopefully time and Europe will help begin to heal things.

I've always believed, and I think this view is shared by many others, that there could be no resolution of the status of Kosovo, and no lasting political stability in Bosnia so long as Milosevic was in power in Belgrade. But, in the post-Milosevic era, the stakes are very different. Serbia is less threatening. It is moving slowly toward democracy, a free market economy, and participation in Europe institutions. Within that context, the stakes for Kosovo are moderated. In this context some kind of loose association with Serbia remains possible. This would especially be true if Serbia, Kosovo, and the other former Yugoslav countries all continue their quest for full membership in the European institutions.

Autonomy was impossible for the Albanians to accept in the Serbia of Milosevic but it's not so dramatic a solution in a democratic Serbia that is really part of Europe. I am concerned that a fully independent Kosovo, under present circumstances, could undermine the stability of the region. Kosovo would not be viable economically. Its independence would create serious economic and political problems for its neighbors also. Besides its relations with Serbia, one must consider the impact on Macedonia and its large Albanian minority which might wish to break away from Skopje and join with Kosovo. Then there is the question of relations with Albania proper. This destabilizing effect could reach into northern Greece where there is also a sizable Albanian minority.

I expect that, in time, we will see the establishment of growing economic and political ties between all of Yugoslavia's former provinces and republics. They could all benefit from such closer ties. Such ties would clearly be to their economic, political, and cultural advantage especially given the strong family ties, intermarriage and dependent economies that already exist. It makes sense now that they have gotten rid of the one great nationalistic dictatorial regime that so threatened the other Yugoslavs.

You know, its something of a miracle that Macedonia survived the Kosovo war and its aftermath. Milosevic had warned a number of times that if NATO forces bombed Serbia or Serbian troops in Kosovo, the Serbian army would kick out all the Albanians from Kosovo. They said it. And they did it. Right at the beginning of the Kosovo air war, Serbian troops and local Serbian militias went into the Albanian towns and villages and did all they could to force the local inhabitants to flee southward into Macedonia. Milosevic's tactic was quite clear. He wanted to push the Kosovo Albanians into Macedonia to completely destabilize Macedonia and broaden and internationalize the conflict. This, he believed would lead to an international conference where a settlement would have to be imposed on all of the parties including the Macedonians, the Albanians, and the Serbs.

According to Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov, Milosevic had long planned, that, in the event of a Kosovo war, he would seek to destabilize Macedonia. His plan would be to push the Albanian's south. Divide Kosovo with Albania, cede the western part of Macedonia (and its Albanian majority) to Albania and take the remaining part of Macedonia back into Serbia proper. This seemed to be what Milosevic intended. His first response to the NATO bombing was to force the exodus of Albanians southward.

It was miraculous that Macedonia didn't come apart. One of the reasons they were able to withstand this onslaught was that were already at least semi prepared to handle it. There were British and U.S. troops already in Macedonia at that time. Both governments made a commitment to the Macedonian government that they would share the burden of the Albanian refugees and not allow it to fall alone on Macedonia. Handling the flow of Albanians across the Macedonian border became an international effort and played against Milosevic. Milosevic thought that the Macedonia would either be overrun, or seek to forcefully stop the refugees from entering. He believed that either scenario would cause an uprising among the Albanians in Macedonia.

The Albanians coming across the border we held in NATO run refugee camps close to the border. There was a commitment to return most them to Kosovo as soon as the fighting their ended. Others might be provided refugee status elsewhere. These commitments considerably lessened the pressure on the Macedonian government and assuaged the concerns of both segments of Macedonia's population.

The United States and other NATO countries provided the funds, the camps, and the logistics to handle the refugees. Ironically, the only really negative effect that this had was a perverse one. A lot of the Macedonians were upset that the Albanians were getting so much international support. Many of them felt that they did not receive their share of assistance or consideration from the troops stationed there.

The influx of Albanians into Macedonia and the continuing instability of Kosovo after the war did create or exacerbate a number of problems for Macedonia. It certainly increased tension between the Macedonian Slavic and Albanian communities. Some of these problems were allowed to fester during the period after the Kosovo war. A group of disgruntled cross border Albanians sought to take up the work of the UCK in Macedonia. They formed their own National Liberation Army (NLA) and began to infiltrate into the mountains above the town of Tetevo. They hoped to attract strong Albanian popular support for their movement. This had all the appearances of setting of a new round of Balkan interethnic fighting.

But the NLA never really found the popular base they would need for such a conflict. They never received the same grass-root support that existed for the UCK in Kosovo.

The NLA uprising did, however, force the Macedonian government to come to terms with some of the legitimate Albanian demands. With some negotiating help from the United States and the European Union the Macedonian government made some necessary

concessions in the Macedonian constitution that recognized certain rights of the Albanians that should have been there in the first place. Both sides faced the precipice of inter-ethnic war and both sides realized that was not the course either community in Macedonia should follow. I hope that the country came of this threatening episode stronger and more coherent than before.

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Q: You ended the Kosovo business when?

COMRAS: There is no specific date, but my task pretty continued until Milosevic's handover to the International Tribunal. After the downfall of Milosevic we had begin removing sanctions, but keeping appropriate pressure to ensure that Milosevic was handed over to ICTY. We had a great sense of accomplishment. And I began to think about retiring on a high note.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM WALKER
OSCE
Head of Mission
Kosovo
Pristina, Kosovo
(1998-1999)

Ambassador William G. Walker grew up in New Jersey and California. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961. He was trained as a Spanish language officer and served in Latin American countries including El Savador, where he served as ambassador. Ambassador Walker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Topical Focus - Regional political and Security Dynamics on Kosovo - late 1990's

WALKER: Kosovo lost its autonomy I think it was in '81.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: It was stripped from them. Originally the Kosovo liberation movement, maybe not when the fighters got involved, but originally was to regain autonomy not to succeed from Yugoslavia. By the time I got involved it was we want out, rather than give

us back that autonomy because they saw that autonomy once given can be taken away again. There was a task force that I spent a couple of hours with; here are what the conditions of a real autonomist republic are and here are the guarantees of autonomy and here are the legal precedence for setting up an autonomist province. I didn't pay a hell of a lot of attention to that. There was a task force just on the logistics of setting up a mission. We thought at that point that the verification mission was going to have as one of its responsibilities setting up elections, well, first take a census in Kosovo because no one really knew how many Serbs, how many Albanians, how many gypsies, how many anything were in Kosovo so we thought we might have to do a census. That was going to lead, hopefully, to a province wide election process to see what the people there wanted. There was also a great deal of talk about putting together a police force that was a provincial police force that would replace the bad guys coming out of Belgrade. The State Department was light years ahead of everyone else setting up task forces, trying to determine who would come over. Who would be on my mission to help set up a police force, a police academy. Who in my mission were experts on election processes? I attended a lot of meetings and discovered that there were a lot of people in the State Department, certainly in the European bureau and in the office of the legal advisor, in the international organizations people looking at some of the issues that were now right up front in terms of putting this mission together to see what it was going to do. Of course above it all or off to the side of it all or someplace was Richard Holbrooke who saw himself as the patron saint of this mission, so he was calling up and telling everybody what he wanted and what he thought would work.

Q: Well, when you got there what were you supposed to do? I mean in the first place, you better talk about when you arrived there, what was the situation on the ground and then what were you supposed to do as you saw it or as defined for you?

WALKER: The situation on the ground was very easy. It was a deteriorating military situation with winter coming on and all these people up in the hills with the KLA and the Yugoslav armed forces going at each other and the Yugoslav armed forces, security services, burning down villages, usually saying, well it was a hot bed of KLA activity. This is what drove people out of the villages and up into the hills. It was a nasty military situation, but both sides in one way or another either explicitly or implicitly had said if the other side stops shooting at us, we'll stop shooting at them. So there was this hint of a cease fire and we were supposed to go in and verify whether or not both sides were adhering to this attempt at a cease fire. The basic premise was that we would be a "verification mission." The leadership of the OSCE, the leadership of Europe thought verification was a stronger word. It sounded more aggressive than monitoring mission. I made the mistake of talking about the monitors occasionally and I was reprimanded for not using the proper term, which was verifiers. By that they meant that we would verify

the reality on the ground. If there were violations, if people were not in compliance with their promises not to start shooting at each other we would be able to tell people. The Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement, set certain limits on the number of military and the number of special police that could be in Kosovo. It set limits on what they could do with their forces, what they could do with their heavy equipment, artillery tanks were supposed to be put in cantonment and if they ever took a tank out they were supposed to tell us and we were supposed to verify that it was not being used against villages, that sort of thing. We were also supposed to, at least in the eyes of the people that sent us in there, the leadership of Europe, if not in Milosevic's eyes, we were supposed to make preparations for a census, preparation for elections, preparation for a civilian police force that included Albanians as well as the Serbs. The mission was verification of what was going on on the ground and then planning for some of these other peripheral exercises at the same time the Milosevic agreement with Holbrooke, which was later sanctified by agreements between the OSCE and Belgrade as well as NATO and Belgrade. At the same time we were doing verification on the ground, NATO had permission from Milosevic to overfly either in manned or unmanned platforms, to look down to verify what the verifiers were saying. To be on the lookout for tanks moving or artillery pieces being dragged around. The intelligence that NATO gathered from these overhead platforms plus the reports unclassified, but nevertheless reports that we sent in to the OSCE, would come together someplace and the world would have a pretty good idea of what was going on in Kosovo.

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Q: When you arrived there, you arrived there when?

WALKER: This was November 4 of '98.

Q: What was the situation on the ground when you arrived there?

WALKER: The situation on the ground was a very tentative ceasefire that was probably not being observed by either side when in the vicinity of foreigners. In other words, going in there I couldn't state on day one that there was a lot of fighting going on. There probably was, but we just didn't have people out where the fighting was going on. My impression would be that the KLA was attacking, was provoking, and the government was retaliating very strongly when that happened and refugees were moving up into the hills, but we didn't have many people there in the beginning. It wasn't until we got people out into the boondocks that we started running across real non-compliance with the agreement. For example, part of the agreement was that the security forces from Belgrade would be reduced in numbers, considerably. That all heavy weapons, artillery,

tanks, would go into cantonment and that if any of this were moved, that is the heavy equipment, we would be notified, that we would verify what they were doing with it, where it was going, etc. When the troop withdrawals took place just as we were arriving, I think Milosevic and his government said, ten or twenty thousand troops are going to be pulled back into Serbia proper, the only people who were there to observe this happening were some of the KDOM. I believe we've talked about KDOM before, the diplomat observers who were few in number, but they stood on some of the attachés from the embassies in Belgrade who were down in Kosovo. They stood on the main road from Pristina north that goes up and through Serbia and eventually reaches Belgrade. They counted the number of buses going by and the number of army trucks that went by and made a fair estimate of how many passengers were normally in each bus and therefore calculated that he had in fact withdrawn a good number of his people. We later came to the suspicion that was probably a false count, either that or they went up and then just came back in smaller numbers, smaller groups. I am also convinced that until we got people out into the boondocks where they would run across tanks going down streets where they shouldn't be going down and artillery pieces in places where they were not supposed to be, we weren't able to say that they were doing these sort of things. But as soon as we started getting out people out we noticed a greater amount of non-compliance by both sides, but especially by the government. Whether when we first got there there was this momentary lull or whether it was just out beyond our seeing it, I don't know, but there was never a full blown ceasefire in place, not that I saw.

Q: When you arrived were you getting delegations and making contacts with people?

WALKER: Yes. When I went through Oslo and met the leadership of the OSCE and when I went through Vienna, one of my major pitches was based on my experience in Croatia, the capitals of Europe like to see you face to face to talk about their specific participation in your mission. This was an even more European mission. It was not with all the UN players. So I foresaw correctly that I would be traveling around, going to the capitals of Europe to get more help, or to discuss the situation. I made a big pitch coming through both Oslo and Vienna for some sort of airlift transportation for me. When I was in Croatia I think I mentioned earlier the Belgian government had put a very nice plane at my disposal. The Belgian air force with pilots would come in and picked me up anytime I had to fly anyplace. At first we thought this was going to be repeated, but the Belgian air force I think was a little reluctant to put their planes into Pristina where a war was going on. It ended up that anytime I needed to fly anyplace I would call Vienna or Major Phillips and then Colonel Phillips would call Vienna and they were always nice and they would rent a little executive jet and send it over to pick me up. Sometimes it would come into Pristina and pick me up. That was when my relations with Belgrade were okay, but any time there was any argument with Belgrade they would say, oh, it's too late to bring

you into Pristina, so you'll have to go down to Skopje to get on these planes. I did a lot of traveling around Europe. I went to Moscow twice. I certainly went to Brussels. I saw Wes Clark. I saw the NATO people. I saw Javier Solana. I did a lot of that. Did a lot of that. It was worth it; it was worth keeping everyone informed.

Q: What type of contact did you have with the powers on the ground, with the Kosovars and with the Serbs?

WALKER: The first two months I would say November into mid-December, a month and a half, something like that, most of my energies, most of the mission's energies were spent building up. When I first got there, within a day of arrival, I was invited to meet with a Mr. Andjelkovic who was a young, Belgrade bureaucrat, I guess, who had been given the title chairman of the Yugoslav government Kosovo commission or something like that and it was supposedly a diverse group of Kosovars plus him to work with my mission. Mr. Andjelkovic was as far as I could see a rubberstamp of any order that came down from Belgrade. I only saw him that once. His commission, his committee, whatever it was, he introduced me to one person who was a Roma, a gypsy, he introduced me to one or two people who he claimed were Albanians. He wanted to show that this was a diverse group of people, but none of them said a word. He didn't say much other than how much he was going to cooperate with us. As I said I saw him that once and never again.

General Lončar was a more formidable figure although he, too was not much more than a message carrier from Belgrade. As a general I ended up only seeing him four or five times mostly when we were complaining about something and I wanted to enforce the seriousness of the complaint. Most of the time my British two star general, General Bi Zed was the liaison to General Lončar. I split up the, since I had these seven deputies, I had to divide the responsibilities. The French deputy who was my "principal deputy" since he had served in Belgrade and at this present time today is serving as the French Ambassador in Belgrade. He speaks a little Serb and claimed to understand the mindset of the Serb. I put him in charge of our relations with Belgrade, with the civilian government in Belgrade. The Russian deputy had come out of being ambassador I believe in Ankara, a nice fellow, a nice Russian, nice Foreign Service bureaucrat, never caused any problems. I put him in charge of relations with the local government structure especially the Serb side of it since many of them speak Russian. My German deputy I put him in charge of the democratization issues trying to put together the wherewithal for an election or census, human rights, those issues. The judicial side of things. Who have I missed? The Italian deputy was put in charge of the police. We thought when we went in we were going to be able to create a new civilian police to relieve the province of the

special police forces down from the minister of interior of Belgrade. That really never got off the ground. So, my Italian deputy I don't know what he did.

Who else? The Norwegian deputy was the chief of staff of the mission, the administrative side of things. Also a two star general. Any other deputies in there? Anyway, it was a rum lot I guess is the way I would put it. That first month and a half, two months, was this trying to put things in place. The way the OSCE recruits people or the way it gets people to work on its missions is kind of a bizarre one in that the OSCE doesn't pay anyone anything so governments contribute in kind. Almost all the people that came in with the possible exception of the Americans were government employees from the various countries most of whom were either military guys, those are the people you can count on to pack up one day and be someplace else the next. In a situation where we were saying we've got to get people in here fast, the quickest way for most governments was to find some of their military and put them in civilian clothes and send them over. Some were Foreign Service Officers from various countries. The U.S. did it a little differently. We went out and hired a contractor; DynCorp is its name, a big Rosslyn or Dulles airport road outfit, a traditional beltway bandit. We just said we need X 100 Americans to do this and this and this. Go find them and planes started arriving with American policemen and American this and American that. The problem with that is, with that system of recruitment is there is no correlation between what you think you're going to be doing and the people that come in. Again military guys, flexible as they might be, might not have the talents to do some of the things we were thinking we were going to be doing.

I told Vienna every time I went up there and they asked me Walker, what is your philosophy? My philosophy was I want to make the headquarters in Pristina as lean and mean as possible. I want to get as many people out to the rural areas, to the other population centers as I possibly can and I want to do it as quickly as possible. We ended up setting up five regional centers in the five major population centers, Peja, Pristina, Prizren, Gjilan, Mitrovica. Those were the five regional centers. We carefully selected the leaders of those five regional centers. I picked people who were not from the major countries that my deputies came from. I put in a Canadian one, I put in an Austrian one, I put a Dane in one, that sort of thing. Then I told them I want you to do what I've done which is take your people and put them in the principal villages in your region. I told Vienna as well that I didn't want to create zones. I didn't want to have a French zone, a German zone, an American zone, etc. I wanted each regional center to be a mixture of nationalities so that their allegiance was to the OSCE. It worked and it worked very nicely. The first month and a half or so was devoted to that. By the end of that time we maybe had 800 people in place from 25 or so countries. Over the next couple of months we built it up to 1,400. From 34 countries I believe was the maximum number of participating countries. The second phase of being on the ground was when I think we

made the biggest difference. It came about partly by our being better equipped and better prepared to do what we thought we were sent in to do, but also because we picked up some additional things to do that started showing people. For instance the press corps. It went from being fairly cynical about the mission, well, what do you think you can do just by looking through binoculars from a distance? You have no weapons. You have no arms. How can you go in and tell an army one side or the other to stop firing? You're going to just throw your bodies between these two armies? That turned fairly smartly to a press corps that was really favorably attuned to what we were doing. We started getting good press.

KYRGYZSTAN

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ERIC CHETWYND
Research Triangle Institute (RTI) & USAID
Director
Municipal Finance and Management Project (MFM)
Karakul, Kyrgyzstan
(1992–1996)

Eric Chetwynd, Jr. was born in Massachusetts in 1936. After studying Biology at Northeastern University for one year, he served three years in the Army before returning to finish his undergraduate degree and focusing on Economics. He earned a Masters Degree in South and Southeast Studies from American University and later received a Ph.D. in Economics from Duke University. Chetwynd joined USAID in 1962 through the Asia Overseas Intern Program. He worked in Indonesia and Korea. He later served as Deputy Director and then Director of successor offices in the Central Bureau until his retirement in 1992. Post-retirement, he directed the USAID-sponsored Municipal Finance and Management Project for three years, focusing on democratic governance reform in Russia, Ukraine, and Central Asia. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on May 7, 1999.

Topical Focus – The First City Charter in Kyrgyzstan

CHETWYND: The first year after retiring I did a lot of traveling. My wife took the year off from her law practice and we decided to see what retirement was really like. It was good. However, at the end of that year, I was asked by RTI if I would be the Director of a Municipal Finance and Management Project (MFM), which was a $25 million project with technical assistance to Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia. I wound up working intensively the next three years in a part of the world that I had never thought I would see. I remember the first trip to Russia. Ron Johnson, the Vice President of RTI, Ted Priftis, the USAID project manager and I found ourselves standing in front of the onion dome of St. Basils on Red Square and we just sort of looked at each other and said, "Can you believe that we are actually here?" It just seemed unreal. That was a project that drew on a lot of my past experience in municipal development and management. It was a three year contract and, like I said, it was very intense. We had offices in nine cities in this region. Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod and Vladivostok in Russia, Kharkov, Lvov and Ternopil in Ukraine, Atyrau in Kazakhstan and Karakul in Kyrgyzstan.

Q: With personnel assigned to all these areas?

CHETWYND: Yes. We had local and American staff in all nine offices.

Q: What was the project supposed to do?

CHETWYND: The project was supposed to assist the cities in coming up with a system of financial management and municipal management that was more consistent with a democratic system of governance and a free market economic system. We did a lot of computer systems work in these cities.

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CHETWYND: …AID got into a dissemination phase where we spread these MFM activities out to a number of different cities. My successor worked with at least twelve different cities in Russia and got it to the national level in Kyrgyzstan and to adoption by the Association of Mayors in the Ukraine. A lot of national level legislation is still going on today as a result of this project. It was very successful.

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Q: How did you decide? Were these something that they wanted help with?

CHETWYND: We would work with the municipal administration, with the mayors and so on, in an attempt to come up with priorities. They would usually have a wish list of things. The USAID Missions also had their ideas of what the priorities should be. We worked very closely with the mayors and with the Missions and with our contractor resources to come up with priority areas. We had certain mandates within the contract -- municipal finance, municipal management and municipal development. I know that's pretty broad, but would look for those areas of overlap between what the city and the USAID wanted and what the project would allow.

Q: How did they deal with the decentralization of authority? Was that an issue?

CHETWYND: That was an issue in all of the cities. In all of the cities they were fighting for more authority. For example, in Kyrgyzstan we developed the first city charter of the country. The President was very enthusiastic about it and wanted to pick it up as a national model for all of the cities in Kyrgyzstan.

LATVIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR INTS M. SILINS
Department of State
U. S. Council General
Council of Europe
Strasbourg, France
(1990-1991)
U. S. Ambassador
Latvia
Riga, Latvia
(1992-1995)

Ambassador Silins was born in Latvia. When he was 9 years old, he arrived in the U.S. escaping WWII. He completed his studies at Princeton and Harvard Universities and joined the Foreign Service in 1969. In 1990, Ambassador Silins served as the U.S. Representative to the Baltic States and was stationed in Riga Latvia. From 1992 to 1995 he then served as U.S. Ambassador to Latvia. Other diplomatic posts include Saigon, Duc Thanh (Vietnam), Bucharest, Stockholm, Port au Prince, Leningrad and Strasbourg, and several tours of duty in Washington DC. Ambassador Silins was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Topical Focus – Collapse of the Soviet Union

Q: It wouldn't have probably been in your area but were we seeing, at this time, the Soviet empire beginning to collapse? I mean, there are two elements; one, of course, is the Western bloc of Czechoslovakia, Poland and all that, and the other one is internally the Stans and other republics. Were we seeing any loosening there?

SILINS: Oh definitely. It was already clear there was something on the horizon. It was initially no bigger than a man's hand but we felt it was going to turn into a major storm. Remember that Reagan, when he was in Berlin in the summer of 1987, called on Gorbachev to "tear down this wall," so there was already at the highest level thinking that the fundamental structure of the Soviet empire was subject to change. And as I say, while the Baltic States are small in themselves, what I had seen in Latvia was a harbinger, a clear telltale that something very big was striving to burst forth. And while most Baltic Americans were hesitant to predict the immediate success of an independence movement

there, a minority was already calling for it and saying it was going to happen. So yes, clearly something momentous was afoot.

Q: Was there a feeling that time had moved on and with the Helsinki Accords and change in the world and all, that the good old days of running tanks into a country à lá Czechoslovakia or East Germany as a means to control things were probably over?

SILINS: Up to a point, yes. Up to a point. Once it was clear that the Soviets were finished in Afghanistan, with the troop withdrawal beginning in the spring of 1988 and completed the next year, that in itself was the big harbinger of change. And it was clear from what he said and what he did that Gorbachev as Soviet leader would be extremely reluctant to resort to force … Although I must say that in the Baltic States in 1990-91 Gorbachev at least passively acquiesced in an abortive attempt to snuff out the uprisings there by Soviet special forces, the OMON. But things had already changed dramatically all over the map. For example, a country where I served previously, Romania, which had been the home of one of the last Stalinists in Europe, Nicolae Ceausescu … Well, Ceausescu and his wife were snuffed out in the most brutal way, executed by a firing squad, and you couldn't have a clearer signal that something big was afoot. Of course, that wasn't until the end of 1989, on Christmas Day, in fact. In the two years before that, when the trend was less clear, some of us on the Soviet desk and at Embassy Moscow were already brooding about the possible blind alley that Gorby's reforms might be heading into. And we can be sure that conservatives and reactionaries in the Communist Party were, too. It had to do with the seeming incompatibility of democracy with the way Russia had always been ruled, except for that 75 brief interlude just before the Bolsheviks seized power. And the notion of a democratic Soviet Union seemed a contradiction to those who knew – as Gorbachev perhaps did not, given his naïve idea that that Baltic States would willingly become a sort of test bed for Soviet economic reforms – that without the threat of force, the thirst for independence would tear many of the constituent republics away from Mother Russia.

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Q: Well, whom did you deal with when you got there? Was there a government in place?

SILINS: There was a government. What the Latvians and Estonians and Lithuanians did initially was to adapt the elected structures from the Soviet period, the Supreme Soviets, and turn them into representatives of independent governments until sovereign constitutions and parliaments could be set up. So at first we were dealing with people who had been elected under the Soviet era but who had shown a clear intent to make their country independent.

Q: I would think these people would be so tainted that the general population wouldn't accept them.

SILINS: Actually, that turned out not to be the case. And it proved possible to have an orderly transition. In Latvia it worked out better than in some countries with which I am familiar -- Romania, for example. In Romania the old gang clung to power even after they shot Ceausescu and his wife, so the Romanian public, rightly, remained suspicious of them and their goals for a long time. In Latvia it was less the case. There were still groups in Latvia, of course, that showed reluctance to support Latvian independence, mostly ethnic Russians who wanted to retain a strong link to Moscow. Those, of course, roused some apprehensions, but it probably helped that they were represented in the parliament because at least they weren't driven underground.

LEBANON

N/A

LIBERIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER O. SELLAR
Program Officer
Africa Bureau
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Liberia
(1968)

Peter O. Sellar was born in Connecticut and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in American History and Literature and later completed a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. After joining USAID in 1963 as a Management Intern, he served in a wide range of positions over a 30-year career, including assignments in Guinea, Liberia, and Washington. His Washington postings included senior roles in the Africa Bureau, the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Near East Bureau, and the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, where he worked on the Central America Initiative and helped develop USAID's Democracy Program. He retired in 1993 after serving as Senior Program Officer in the Office of Democratic Initiatives. Following his USAID career, he consulted on democracy and governance programs in Guyana and Nepal and authored a paper on USAID's first decade of democracy promotion. Throughout his career, he focused on program planning, democracy promotion, governance, and development policy. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on January 21, 1999.

Topical Focus – Program Office Support and Peace Corps in Liberia

Q: What happened after Guinea?

SELLAR: I left in 1968. I wasn't there for a full two years because things had dried up to the point where there wasn't that much left to do. So they sent me down to Liberia for three months. They had a vacancy in the program office. I found it similar to Guinea, but also quite different. They were so obviously influenced by the United States as opposed to the French cultural influence in Guinea. I didn't like Liberia. They were corrupt. Though I shouldn't say that because I didn't have any firsthand knowledge of it. I did get to make a long trip through the interior of Liberia, staying with Peace Corps volunteers since there were no other accommodations. We had to walk part of the way through the jungle since there was no road. I formed a great admiration for the Peace Corps volunteers, living in isolation from their peers in rural villages and only seeing someone from headquarters once a week with mail. That trip is my most vivid memory of Liberia. Otherwise, it was just office paperwork.

Q: Where did you go after that?

SELLAR: Then I went back to Washington, on home leave, with an onward assignment as the AID Operations Officer for Niger. But when I was back here I met the woman who is now my wife. I wasn't quite ready to ask her to marry me, but also wasn’t ready to go back to Africa without her, so I got myself assigned here in Washington to a temporary position on the Nigeria desk. Then I got myself assigned to the Africa Bureau Office of Capital Development (CDF).

LIBYA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHARLES O. CECIL
Department of State
Chargé d'Affaires
Libya
Tripoli, Libya
(2006-2007)

Charles O. Cecil was born in 1940 in Kentucky into a military family and raised in various states and Germany. He studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He joined the U.S. Air Force and entered the Foreign Service in 1966. He served as DCM in Oman, Mali, and Ivory Coast, was ambassador in Niger, and Chargé d'Affaires in Libya. Charles O. Cecil was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Topical Focus – Indirect U. S. SUpport of Democratization under Qadhafi's Regime

Q: During this time were you able, you might say, to play the Libyan card? Libya does border on Niger, and Libya's a threat or something like that.

CECIL: I guess people were aware of Libya's negative influence in those days, but that didn't seem to overrule the objections that they had on other grounds.

Just to give another example or two. We had proposed under the heading of democracy and governance what was called the Women in Politics program. This was a program that AID had in a number of countries where you would take women who are active in their communities. Some might hold positions in local government or whatever. We have seminars and programs to try to make them more effective, raise their sensitivity, educate them a little bit.

One of our proposals was to have a Women in Politics workshop in Niger. Another to try to strengthen the media. There are quite a few newspapers in Niger, and they managed to survive during this period although there were a number of efforts to punish them. Nevertheless there were several newspapers to work with. There were also NGOs. There were human rights NGOs, for instance. We proposed working with these kinds of organizations. Washington considered the Women in Politics idea for about six months,

or at least we thought they were considering it for that long. I think probably earlier it was put on the shelf and we just weren't told. The result was those other proposals that I mentioned. Instead of Women in Politics and instead of supporting the media and the NGOs, we got the idea of training opposition political party members and training the labor federation that opposes the government. It was always hard for me to understand why Washington paid so little attention, gave so little weight to our analysis. Clearly we were out of favor.

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Q: Had they had some of the same problems or were… ?

CECIL: I think we had more problems than almost anyone else. During Greg Berry's chargéship there were a number of senators and congressmen who visited Tripoli including Senator Biden. I'm not sure if it was Senator Biden who was told this. It may have been another senator, but people were talking about this when I arrived. One of our congressional visitors had a meeting with Qadhafi. Several did, but I mean in this particular case. In this meeting Qadhafi said to the senator that he wasn't sure he wanted a large American embassy in Tripoli interfering in Libyan politics and affairs "the way you do in Cairo." President Mubarak is a frequent visitor to Tripoli, and I suspect on one occasion President Mubarak had complained to Qadhafi about these Americans always pressuring us on human rights issues and democracy and elections. Maybe Qadhafi thought, "I don't want that."

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CECIL:...The Libyans sent several members, General Mohammad Azway. A-z-w-a-y is one way it's sometimes spelled. He was the point of contact for military issues. The defense attaches all talked to him. If I had a military issue, I went to see him. The Libyans like to centralize the contact points. They don't want you running all over their government. They want to know who you're talking to, and they control it that way. General Azway came. Abdulati al-Obidi. I'll say more about him later. That's often spelled O-b-i-d-i. That's how he spells it on his calling card. Sometimes it's spelled O-b-e-i-d-i.

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CECIL:...Under the Libyan judicial system when the appeals court would issue its verdict on the, my notes say December 19, if they once again reaffirmed the death penalty the case would be reviewed by the Supreme Court. All death sentences in Libya must be

reviewed by the supreme court. If the supreme court affirmed the death penalty, then there was a higher body above the supreme court called the Higher Judicial Council. As it was explained to us, the supreme court is the last legal review, but the Higher Judicial Council can review difficult cases in a broader context. They can take political considerations into account rather than solely legal ones, so we were always told that the Higher Judicial Council could overturn any death sentence that was issued.

During all of my time there we were waiting for this case to proceed very slowly. We were told on December 19 in a meeting with Abdulati al-Obidi and some other Libyans… Ambassador Azway who had been ambassador to London was by that time back in Tripoli and filling a somewhat unclear position, but he participated. He had been a former minister of justice. I remember him telling us how quickly this could all proceed. Once the appeals court issued its verdict on the 19th, it would go immediately to the supreme court since the supreme court had already studied the case earlier it wouldn't take them long. They would come to their judgment and then it would quickly go to the Higher Judicial Council if it was necessary, if the supreme court didn't throw out the death penalty. As with everything else in Libya, everything moved very, very slowly.

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Q: What was your evaluation, Chuck, of Qadhafi and his regime, as he affected the regime?

CECIL: Let's divide that into two aspects. There's what we might call the Libyan decision-making process, which I can say a few things about, and then there's the question that occupied every diplomat in Tripoli. That's the question of the succession. What will happen when Qadhafi goes? First, on the decision-making process I think I said earlier decisions are very slow and difficult to obtain because no government official will decide anything important unless he knows it's okay with The Leader. There's no reward for initiative or risk-taking in the Libyan government. There's only risk, only danger, so no official will do anything unless he's absolutely certain it's okay. Getting The Leader's opinion on issues is not always a quick process. Sometimes Libyans are reluctant to present difficult questions to The Leader. They don't want to irritate him or seem to be the bearer of bad tidings or difficult issues. So sometimes there's a delay there.

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CECIL: The question of the succession. That's an interesting word, succession. Qadhafi holds no government position and no party position. There is no party. He likes to speak from this posture, this position. He frequently says, "The government has messed up. I'm not part of the government. I'm here to represent you the people." His only title that's

ever used in Libya is “The Guide of the Revolution,” or sometimes “The Leader of the revolution.” Other than that, no official title. I never heard anyone call him Colonel Qadhafi in Libya. We seem to still do that in the West. If he has no official position, how can somebody succeed to no official position? Nevertheless, he is the decision-maker, so if he disappears, who’s going to make the decisions? That’s a difficult question for the Libyan political system to figure our since they’ve hardly ever done that. Qadhafi has six sons. The oldest is from his first wife. That son is named Mohammed, and he oversees the country’s communications, telecommunications systems, telephone, TV, that sort of thing. He seems to have no political ambition.

I once asked a very respected European diplomat, an Arabist, if the Qadhafi sons would be able to agree on which one should succeed their father. He replied, “’Agree’ may not be the best word, but they will work together. They know if they do not stand together, they will all be thrown out.” There may be some truth in that. There was a demonstration in Benghazi in February of 2006 before I arrived which got out of hand. The intent of the demonstration was to protest in front of the Italian consulate after an Italian minister had worn one of those famous tee-shirts with Mohammad on the tee-shirt, that bad cartoon that I think originated in Denmark but anyway, stirred up people all over the Muslim world. For some silly reason the Italian minister wore it in a public place. The Libyans attacked the Italian consulate in Benghazi and burned it. When they finished with that, they then turned their attention to certain Libyan government offices and attacked them. In the end at least 12 Libyans were killed by local police and security forces. That seems to indicate hostility near the surface against Libyan government interests.

Throughout his history one of Qadhafi’s main problems has been the apathy of the Libyan people. You can read the books written by the real experts, people like Dirk Vandewalle and Ronald Bruce St. John. They talk about the frustration of Qadhafi and his colleagues in trying to get the Libyan people to react and to get engaged politically. They were so apathetic that this was a great frustration. Dirk Vandewalle describes this especially well in his book, A History of Modern Libya. I wouldn’t anticipate an eruption of public dissatisfaction. I think there might be expressions of joy in the hope that Libya would become a less oppressive place, but after 39 years of police state control, the Libyans have been cowed into submission. It’s a rare Libyan who will raise his head and say anything publicly, so I think it’s quite likely that a rather oppressive regime would remain in place for some years even if Saif al-Islam is the front man and even if he does push forward some liberalizing measures. He’s talked about a constitution, for instance, but…

LITHUANIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR DARRYL NORMAN JOHNSON
Department of State
U. S. Ambassador
Lithuania
Vilnius, Lithuania
(1991-1994)

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

Topical Focus – U. S. and Lithuania's Post-Soviet Collapse

JOHNSON: It was a beautiful autumn afternoon, and the parliament building, which is where the government was headquartered in Vilnius, was surrounded by barbed wire because they had been under a form of siege for a couple of years from the Soviet forces that were based there as the Lithuanians marched forward to independence. They had declared independence in March of 1990 but it had not yet been recognized by most countries.

The tensions built as the Lithuanians tried to demonstrate more and more autonomy and a functioning government. On January 13th of '91 just at the time that the Gulf War was flaring up, the Soviets unleashed their tanks on a huge crowd of mostly young people at the TV tower in Vilnius where they were trying to take control of the TV broadcasts. 12 were killed, one died later, and several others were badly injured. Then they stopped. The Soviet tanks stopped at that point, and returned to their barracks in the center of town. It may have been because President Bush called Gorbachev or it may have been for some other reason, but in any case they stopped, and that was the end of that thrust by the Soviets.

One of the things that occurred during the first year that we were there was the beginning of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Of course, we intervened to help make this happen, and the UN was involved as well. Within a few months, the Soviet troops started to leave and the barbed wire came down. At the time that Baker came and for the first

several months when we were there, that barbed wire was all around this parliament building, and you had to be escorted to get through. They also had barriers along the street and big cement blocks. You had to drive a zigzag route to get through those things to get to the parliament building, to get inside the compound. It was a little tense there during the first several months, but we were certainly enthusiastically welcomed by the Lithuanians.

MALAWI

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CAROL A. PEASLEY
USAID
Mission Director
Lilongwe, Malawi
(1988-1993)

Carol Peasley was born in Chicago, Illinois to a military family. She joined USAID in 1970 as an International Development intern. Peasley went on to USAID assignments in Nepal, Costa Rica, the Technical Assistance Bureau, Latin America and Caribbean Bureau, Thailand, and Africa Bureau. She served as Mission Director in Malawi and Russia. From 2003-2005 she served as Counselor to USAID. This interview was conducted by Kenneth Brown in 2015.

Topical Focus – Promoting Democracy in Malawi

PEASLEY: Anyway, back to the more serious discussion of political change in Malawi and the role of the donor community. Late in 1991, the European Union issued a demarche to the
Malawian Government. It laid out a number of actions that the Government needed to take, including release or charging of political detainees, International Red Cross inspection of prisons, competitive Parliamentary elections, and adoption of international standards on rule of law and free speech. All the donors, including the U.S. reiterated these benchmarks over the coming months. The donor dialogue with the Government of Malawi intensified in early 1992, in part as we prepared for the World Bank-led Consultative Group meeting scheduled for May 1992. In either late 1991 or early 1992, the donors took a strong position at the Consultative Group meeting for Kenya – the precedent had been set to use CG meetings to argue for political reform. I recall that the Ambassador and I both wrote formal letters to the Government of Malawi in February 1992 advising them of our concerns. I wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury about the changing criteria for allocation of USAID resources, that the U.S. Government would be explicitly looking at the correlates of democratic pluralism, including freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of press, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Ambassador simultaneously sent a letter to the Minister of Finance urging the Government to take some specific steps prior to the Consultative Group meeting in order to demonstrate its respect for human rights. As I recall, his letter reiterated the points in the earlier European Union demarche; other donors sent similar letters.

As the donors became more vocal, some Malawians also began to speak up. This included a former union activist who had been in exile in Zambia, Chakufwa Chihana. He returned to Malawi and was detained during the spring of 1992. Particularly noteworthy was a Lenten pastoral letter issued by the Catholic bishops of Malawi for Easter 1992 that spoke openly about the inequality and poverty issues in the country, at least implicitly criticizing the government. It talked about the importance of freedoms; it talked about the importance of education for all; it talked about equity. It was a moral/political/development dissertation by the Catholic Church. It was read in churches at the beginning of Lent; the Government of Malawi, causing a bit of a furor, quickly banned it and put the bishops under house arrest. I don't believe anyone has ever discovered who actually wrote the pastoral letter, but many folks believe that the initiative to do it probably started during the 1989 or 1990 visit of Pope John Paul to Malawi. Regardless, the pastoral letter became a huge issue for the donor community. The letter was factual; it candidly addressed the severe poverty issues in the country and it was not inflammatory. By banning it, the Government clearly demonstrated the lack of freedom of thought and expression in the country. By banning it, the Government also made the letter far more significant than it might otherwise have been.

Banning of the pastoral letter also provoked even more warnings by the donor community. As I recall, both the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee wrote letters to President Banda urging Malawi to move towards multi-party democracy and to guarantee basic freedoms. Locally based ambassadors and aid directors met weekly throughout this period to discuss governance and human rights issues. We had a common set of concerns and benchmarks that were communicated to the Malawi Government. These included the points in the original European Commission demarche, as well as new points related to banning of the pastoral letter. The focus was on human rights and basic freedoms, not a specific form of governance. It was made clear that donors at the Consultative Group meeting would link their pledges to Malawian performance on the benchmarks. When we got to Paris, the donors did as we said we would. One by one, the donors said they would reduce their commitments unless certain things were done. The Government of Malawi officials looked stunned and perhaps even surprised that the donors had followed through with their warnings. The World Bank carefully managed the meeting, ensuring that the focus was on respect for human rights, rule of law, and basic freedoms. The chair of the CG from the Bank, Steve Denning, made clear that the donors were not trying to impose any specific form of government, but were seeking a "sea change" in the Government's approach to human rights.

The donors had a common set of benchmarks that had been worked out at post, but we all had slightly different approaches to resource decisions. We at post proposed the U.S. approach that was adopted by the Washington interagency group. We tied future program levels to progress by Malawi; we also noted that disbursements of some of the program assistance/cash transfers would be tied to progress on the human rights front. We had three large programs with policy-based cash transfers: GABLE, the Ag Sector program, and a planned off-farm employment program. We carefully crafted our approach to ensure that programs could continue, especially those with a very direct impact on the poor, but also send a strong message. For example, we did not freeze any disbursements for the GABLE cash transfer. We did hold up disbursements for the Ag program, and ultimately, we ended up terminating the off-farm employment program. I say "we" here, but I did most of this, trying to push for change and therefore threatening to hold back funds, while also trying to maintain momentum on important reform programs. As I look back on my career, I think it was one of the best things I ever did. And, I should also add that I was fortunate to be working for an Ambassador who gave me the authority to define our recommended resource path.

Following the Consultative Group meeting, the Government of Malawi began to take multiple steps: release of many political detainees; ICRC inspection of prisons; greater legal protections for prisoners; greater tolerance for freedom of association, including of a new political party (AFORD); and improved press freedom. New newspapers began to crop up. Expatriate Malawians returned to the country, and several of them started new newspapers. Then, suddenly, out of the blue in October 1992, President Banda shocked everyone by proposing a referendum for March 1993 on whether the country wanted to become a multi-party democracy. Needless to say, he thought the people would want to continue with a one-party system (laughs) or he wouldn't have proposed it.

The donor community came together quickly to help the Malawians organize for the referendum. The Resident Representative of the United Nations, Michael Heynes, led the coordination process. He quickly mobilized a UN team to come to Malawi in November to meet with the Government and budding opposition political parties to recommend how a referendum could best be organized to meet international standards. USAID funded one of the consultants for that team, headed up by the Director of the UN's Electoral Assistance Unit. The team, among other things, proposed that a referendum in March would be too soon; additional time would be needed to register voters and to provide adequate time for debate and planning. The Government accepted the report and rescheduled the referendum for June 1993. The UN Electoral Assistance Unit then mobilized a team to go to Malawi to help with all aspects of planning and conducting the referendum. USAID agreed to provide consultants for this team – they came from the U.S. based International Foundation for Electoral Support (IFES) but were assigned to

the UN assistance unit and had no direct relationship with us. We donors wanted all assistance to be within the UN framework; there were no separate donor-funded entities. The entire effort was in fact probably the best example of donor coordination I experienced in my career. Michael Heynes chaired weekly meetings attended by the locally based ambassadors and aid donors. We really acted as one, rather than the more normal route of everyone wanting to do their own programs and then trying to knit them together. Instead, we all put our resources directly into the UN-led effort.

The referendum took place in mid-June, and it was remarkable how smoothly it all went. Most of the Americans in the USAID mission became observers. That experience remains one of the highlights of my career. I went out before dawn to rural areas an hour or two outside of Lilongwe. It was not yet light, but people were queuing up before the polls opened. We went to multiple polling places throughout the day, observing the long lines and the orderly management of the process, including domestic observers from each side of the issue. Because of the high illiteracy rate in the country, the ballots simply had symbols: a rooster or cock, symbol of the Malawi Congress Party for single-party democracy; and a lantern for multi-party. At the end of the day, we watched the ballots be counted at one of the polling stations, a school building. The room was dimly lit with a couple of lanterns. We sat in the back. Malawian election officials and the domestic observers were at a table. It was amazing to see the pile of ballots dumped on that table – and to see them divided into piles of lanterns and roosters. The lantern pile soon was much larger than the rooster pile. Counts were made and then the numbers called in to election headquarters in Lilongwe. All ballots were then burned. It was probably near midnight by now and we drove back to election headquarters in Lilongwe. The UN team had prepared a sample of the country; as results came in for those polling stations in the sample, they were able to project a winner. It appeared that multi-party had won, but the final results would not be reported until the next night. So, when I went home shortly before dawn, I had no idea what would happen. The next evening, the UN Resident Representative hosted a reception for all the observers and others who had worked on the referendum. President Banda was scheduled to speak on radio during the evening to announce the results. All of us at the reception waited anxiously. When he announced that the people had voted for multi-party, it was an amazing feeling. President Banda had accepted the results, took the high ground, and announced there would be an election in May the next year. I suspect he thought he would win the presidential election. He, of course, did not. But, he had set in motion the whole process of political change in the country. It hasn't been a smooth ride unfortunately, but I am still proud to have been there in the early days, to have played a small part in supporting the change, and to seeing Malawians themselves become more political and to speak out on issues. I remember when we authorized USAID’s Agriculture Sector Program in the field, I asked our senior Malawian FSN in the Agriculture Office, Steve Shumba, whether it would work. I will

never forget Steve's response: "I don't know if it'll work or not, but if it does it'll be revolutionary." I do think that some of our programs really did contribute to revolution in the sense that they gave Malawians a different vision of how things could work and empowered them to lead the reform process. There were a lot of heroes in the country – and it was an honor to know some of them.

I should probably also mention that one of the people I got to know quite well in Malawi was Joyce Banda, who became President in 2012-14. She was married to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Malawi and was a businesswoman in Blantyre. I believe she had a tailoring shop. I should also probably add that she was not related to the then President Banda. Joyce had gone on an IV (International Visitor) program to the U.S. and returned enthusiastic about women entrepreneurship. She wanted to create an association to support women in Malawi. She came to my office one day, very enthusiastic and pouring out idea after idea. I remember feeling overwhelmed. I wanted USAID to help her, but I also knew that it would need to be well defined and relatively modest. This was in part because I couldn't unilaterally decide to fund her new organization. It would have to go through our normal processes – and I knew that staff would be tough critics. Anyway, after our initial meeting, she did present a much more workable proposal to us. We were thus able to give the initial start-up grant to the Malawi Businesswomen's Association. It ultimately mobilized thousands of women and provided microcredit opportunities to many of them. Within a decade, Joyce had won a World Food Prize, entered the political realm, became a cabinet minister and then President. She lost her bid for re-election and is in a somewhat ambiguous position right now because of threats against her by the current President.

So again, the political process has been a difficult one in the country, but I'm confident the Malawians will figure it out ultimately.

MALAYSIA

N/A

MEXICO

N/A

MOLDOVA

N/A

MONGOLIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WINSTON LORD
U.S. Ambassador
Mongolia
(1994-1995)

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

Topical Focus – Mongolia's Democratic Transition

LORD: Although it was obviously not at the top of my list, Mongolia at least deserved attention and sympathy for several reasons.

First, it was the first Asian country to throw off the yoke of the Soviet Union, in 1990 or 1991. You should remember that the Mongolian economy was about 90 percent dependent on the Soviet Union. So this was a courageous move for Mongolia, even in that early period after the disappearance of Soviet influence and empire.

Secondly, the Mongolians have tried consistently now, and for several years, including my term as Assistant Secretary, to promote both economic and political reform. Mongolia is unlike Vietnam and unlike China, which have only gone in for economic reform, and are still authoritarian in outlook. Mongolia promoted democracy at the same time as they promoted opening up their society to a free market, foreign investment, and trade.

Thirdly, Mongolia is sitting out there between these two giants, Russia and China. There is obviously a lot of romance and nostalgia and admiration for these nomadic people, who have lived between these two giants. Mongolia has no human rights problems. They are trying to promote democracy and the free market. Not only should we have some sympathy for that, but also we believed that they could establish a pattern and influence debate about what course much of Asia is going to take. This concerned the issues of Asian values, authoritarianism, human rights, and more political freedom. Mongolia

could be an example, even though a modest one given the fact that while it is a large country, it has a small population of only two or three million people. A successful Mongolia would show that you can have open politics, with free elections and democracy, and make economic progress at the same time. The example of Mongolia could make it possible to counter the Chinese argument - and the phony Asian values argument - that you need stability to make economic progress with "stability" translated into repressive government.

So for all of these reasons, I always worked hard on Mongolia. I labored to get as much aid for Mongolia as possible. Whenever a Mongolian visitor would come to the UN General Assembly or would visit Washington, I would always try to make it possible for him to see as high a level official as possible, like the Secretary of State or the Deputy Secretary. I took two trips to Mongolia. The first trip really demonstrated my commitment. I went in January-February, 1994, when it was ice cold. I went out over the Gobi Desert in a helicopter. I met with all the Mongolian leaders. We had some very interesting geopolitical discussions in the Gobi Desert with their National Security Adviser and their Foreign Minister. I was very moved by the whole experience.

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We managed to get quite a bit of aid for Mongolia, which couldn't absorb all that much. The aid was for energy and for other purposes. The total amount was $10-$15 million annually. Given the shrinking AID budget and the fact that Mongolia is rather distant from the point of view of an average American, we did well. We emphasized to Congress that the Mongolians were trying to promote freedom, as well as the capitalist system. They had no human rights abuses. They had free elections. They went from a communist to a non-communist government. I thought that the Mongolians really deserved our support. Several Senators visited Mongolia and came back supporting an aid program for that country. During the last year I was Assistant Secretary, we got more aid for Mongolia from Congress than we asked for, which is almost unheard of, particularly in a time of declining aid budgets.

Sadly, and as we speak, Mongolia has had some real problems. A certain deadlock has developed between the President of Mongolia and the Prime Minister and Government. The jury is still out on what they're going to do. I spent more time on Mongolia than, perhaps, many people would think that it deserved. But I had a soft spot in my heart for that country, and I thought it was an important example of courageous people trying to move in the right direction.

AMBASSADOR JOSEPH E. LAKE
U. S. Ambassador
Mongolia
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
(1990-1993)

Mr. Lake was born in Texas and raised in Texas and Germany, where his father was stationed with the U.S. Army. He was educated at Schreiner College and Texas Christian University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1962. His foreign posts include Taiwan, Benin, Nigeria, Bulgaria and Mongolia, where he served as Ambassador from 1990 to 1993. In Washington, Ambassador Lake dealt with a variety of issues concerning China and Philippine and served the Department's Operations Center. Ambassador Lake was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1994.

Topical Focus – U. S. Assistance with Democratization in Mongolia

LAKE: By April of 1990, Mongolia established a temporary government and made some minor amendments to the existing constitution through the parliament. The communist party [Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party] set themselves up for elections with opposition political parties in July 1990—immediately following my arrival. At the time of my arrival, there was an interim government waiting for democratic elections—the first democratic elections in Mongolian history.

Q: When you went out there, you obviously had been preparing yourself. What did you consider? Two things: What were U.S. interests in Mongolia? What task did you set yourself about? What were your main goals?

LAKE: Ultimately, from the U.S. perspective, I do not see a U.S. interest in Mongolia—except for a philosophical one. If we as Americans believe in the democratic process, if we believe in the concepts of a free market economy as we say we do, Mongolia is a place we can make a
difference. Therefore, my perspective was that if the Mongolian people voted for a democratic
process, we could influence the process of change in Mongolia. The Mongolian people did, and
we did begin to make an effort to support that process. Ironically, I have no reason to believe that anybody adopted our ideas. Many of the efforts we made in Mongolia, with a much lower level of support, and without the money and institutional organization, were

exactly the same things that were later done in the process of supporting the transition in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. I think the challenge, the experience was crystallized for me in a very telling way in August of 1990. On the day before the first democratically elected parliament was held, my deputy, Mike Senko, received a phone call from one of the members of parliament, an opposition member, who said: "Do you have a copy of Robert's Rules of Order?" And we said: “No.” And he said: “Well, can you tell us how to run a parliament?” These were people who had no idea how a democratic parliament functioned. Supporting democracy was the driving force.

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The key decision on whether the Secretary’s visit was whether we, the observers on the ground, felt that the elections were truly democratic. We brought in four observers, one from Washington and three from Beijing, to look at the political process. Our evaluation was that the election was a fair, open democratic process. Surprisingly so when you consider what they had been through throughout their history.

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Q: Other than you might say your housekeeping things, you know keeping yourself going, what sort of things would you go to the Mongolian government for, how would you do this?

Before I left [Mongolia in September 1990], the Mongolians had elected Ochirbat as their democratically elected president in indirect elections—the parliament had selected him. I attended his inauguration. It was a fascinating blend of Mongolian traditional culture and modern
trappings. The President wore the Mongolian traditional dress—banned under the communists.
Ochirbat appeared for his inauguration wearing the traditional Mongolian del and the traditional
hat. The state seal was presented in a very traditional style, in a formal wooden box. The whole
inaugural process was something which reached back to the roots of Mongolian history. One of
the other currents that was developing in Mongolia at this time was the rediscovery of its own
history. It had been suppressed tremendously during the communist era.

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I was there at a period when a country rediscovered its own history, tried to build a new society on democratic principles, and a free market economy with many ups and downs along the way. We could have done a lot more, we could have accomplished a lot more,

but we accomplished a lot with what we had. Looking to the future, the first question in my mind was what is the American interest, which I think goes back to one of the first things we discussed. The only interest in Mongolia is if we support the ideals of free democracy and enterprise, Mongolia was one of the places we could make a difference. We were still making a difference at the time I left.

MONTENEGRO

N/A

MOROCCO

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER O. SELLAR
Program Chief
Near East Program Office
USAID
Morocco
(1976)

Peter O. Sellar was born in Connecticut and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in American History and Literature and later completed a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. After joining USAID in 1963 as a Management Intern, he served in a wide range of positions over a 30-year career, including assignments in Guinea, Liberia, and Washington. His Washington postings included senior roles in the Africa Bureau, the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Near East Bureau, and the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, where he worked on the Central America Initiative and helped develop USAID's Democracy Program. He retired in 1993 after serving as Senior Program Officer in the Office of Democratic Initiatives. Following his USAID career, he consulted on democracy and governance programs in Guyana and Nepal and authored a paper on USAID's first decade of democracy promotion. Throughout his career, he focused on program planning, democracy promotion, governance, and development policy. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on January 21, 1999.

Topical Focus – Development Assistance in Agriculture, Nutrition, and Family Planning in Morocco

SELLAR: I went to Near East DP and that was not because I wanted to, because I really liked Latin America and the Latin American Bureau and would have liked to have stayed, but I was in the situation where I had to move back into a GS-15 job within one year or lose the grade and lose the pay. Brad Langmaid offered me the job.

Q: He was the Head of DP at that time?

SELLAR: Yes. He offered me the job of Program Chief, which was also de facto Deputy, because he didn't have a Deputy. What I did was supervise on a daily basis about four program analysts and two budget analysts in reviewing and recommending disposition of projects and programs from 15 Middle Eastern, North African and European countries. The total budget was over two billion dollars. In time I also supervised the Bureau Controller when the Controller's functions were decentralized to some extent to the

Regional Bureaus. And, somewhat unusually, I thereby had responsibility for analyzing operating expenses as well as program funds. And also staffing levels as well as program budgets, which was unusual.

Q: That's a big program to be reviewing and overseeing.

SELLAR: Well, it was certainly big in terms of the money. The fact is, many of them were rather small in terms of numbers of activities. Egypt, however, was huge and kept getting bigger and bigger. So, averaging those out, I guess you would say, yes it was a pretty big program. Spain, for example, was just basically a military base payment, and for Israel we just wrote them a check that accounted for a lot of money, but didn't require any programming.

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Q: Well, what about some of the other countries that you were concerned within that office?

SELLAR: Actually, we had a couple of development assistance countries. I tended to concentrate on those. This is the way Langmaid wanted to do it. Initially, we had a very split, sort of schizophrenic situation in the office. Because with the Development Assistance countries, we had to take our tin cup and go begging to PPC for money and fight very hard for whatever money we could get, because the host countries were relatively advanced with the exception of Yemen. The advanced ones were Morocco and especially Tunisia. I think those were the only three. The rest of the program was ESF funded and there was never a question of getting enough money, it was just a question of, in fact, trying to hold the levels down, as I mentioned before. So Brad took that part. He gave me the hard part, the tin cup detail. But it made sense, because the ESF Programs were, of course, the most important. Yet the Development Assistance programs required a lot of time, because you had to have a totally separate budget and do all the same things in terms of programs and missions.

Q: What were the Development Assistance countries that you were working on?

SELLAR: Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. Yemen was a fascinating situation. I spent a good deal of time on it, because its needs were so great. It was sort of rushing headlong out of the fourteenth century, as people put it. It had been completely closed to the outside world for a long time and it had only recently opened up and allowed foreigners in and decided that it wanted to develop. So they needed everything, but we didn't have the budget to do everything there.

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Q: What about some of the other developments in other countries?

SELLAR: The others were much more developed than Yemen. We've already spoken

about Tunisia a little bit. They were always on the verge of being graduated, and we were always having to defend the continued existence of the program. I promoted phaseout internally, but then when I was overruled, I would go forth and defend continuing it up the line.

Q: What argument were you making to discontinue the program?

SELLAR: Just that the money was needed elsewhere much more urgently, and what we were doing there was not all that important in terms of Tunisia's overall economy. We also often had difficulty with programs for lack of French-speaking personnel.

Q: Was there any particular focus of the program?

SELLAR: Again, a good deal of it was concerned with agriculture. We also helped with some planning assistance in the tourism sector, which appeared to be one of their most promising avenues. I think they discovered a little bed of oil at one point, which again, gave them a boost and made the continuation of the program more questionable.

Morocco was an interesting country. Great contrasts between the wealthy few and the mostly poor many. Great contrasts between the pretty sophisticated urban areas and the very undeveloped rural areas, particularly up in the mountains. But they had good farm land along the coast. I know we were working with them on wheat production and livestock. I can't remember too many of the specifics beyond that. There was PL 480 Title II, nutrition and health education and family planning.

Q: There was a political rationale program there at that time?

SELLAR: No. That was a development (DA) program. It was justifiable developmentally. Overall per capita income was sort of intermediate. It wasn't tremendously low, but it wasn't nearly as high as Tunisia or Costa Rica or some of the other advanced developing countries.

MOZAMBIQUE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR DENNIS C. JETT
U.S. Ambassador
Mozambique
Maputo, Mozambique
(1993-1996)

Ambassador Dennis C. Jett was born in Massachusetts and raised in New Mexico. He received degrees from the University of New Mexico and the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa). After a year at the US Naval Academy, he joined the Foreign Service in 1972 and was posted to Buenos Aires. Several assignments at the State Department in Washington DC and Miami were followed by tours of duty at Tel Aviv, Lilongwe and Monrovia. In 1993 Mr. Jett was named United States Ambassador to Mozambique, where he served until 1996, after which he served as US Ambassador to Peru from 1996 to 1999. Following retirement, the ambassador has pursued an academic career, as professor, at the Universities of Florida and Penn State. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Topical Focus – U. S. Support of Peacebuilding and Democratization in Mozambique

JETT: So we had a very clear object lesson in how not to do the peace process. To try to keep the process moving forward, I took every opportunity to drive home the point that the process was at risk if either side held troops back from the demobilization camps. At a typical national day event, the ambassador gives a speech at a big reception that is full of blather and banalities about the great relations between the two countries. I used my 99 Fourth of July speech in 1994 instead to make the point that Mozambique was soon going to have its first elections and when people went to the polls they were going to make decisions on who to vote for and that decision was going to be affected by their perception as to who made peace possible and who put peace at risk by dragging their feet in the process. I did not name the government specifically; but there was no doubt in anybody's mind who I was talking about. That greatly irritated the FRELIMO elite because they didn't want to have the voters reminded of it. Ajello has said he believes the speech saved the process and kept it on track. I still have hanging on my wall in my office the clippings from the government press. One article from the daily newspaper has the headline in English is 'Dennis Jett, Please go Home'. Then the article goes on in Portuguese at great length about why I should go home.

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Q: When you went out there we had a new administration. Was there any thought of doing something here or was this more or less being an observer?

JETT: The main goal was to make sure the peace process was successful and that was the number one objective. That was the key to everything. Otherwise, if they went back to war as Angola had, they would just continue killing themselves and destroying their country and creating a humanitarian disaster, which results in a humanitarian disaster that costs hundreds of millions of dollars. While humanitarian aid is important it is just slapping Band-Aids on the situation. We had to get through the election successfully before there could be any chance to end the war for good and begin to rebuild.

NAMIBIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHESTER ARTHUR CROCKER
Department of State
Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Washington, DC
(1981-1989)

Assistant Secretary Crocker was born and raised in New York and educated at Ohio State University and the School for Strategic and International Studies (SAIS). He served on the National Security Council (1970-1972), as Professor at Georgetown University (1972-1977), and as Director for African Affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Affairs (1976-1980). In 1981 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and served in that capacity until 1989, at which time he rejoined the faculty of Georgetown University. Mr. Crocker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Topical Focus – U.S. Strategy on Namibian Independence

CROCKER: Now, I have to do a little sidebar here. We inherited from the Carter Administration an initiative on Namibia specifically, for Namibian independence, which had been launched by something called the Western Contact Group, which consisted of the Western members of the Security Council in 1978, namely Britain, France, Germany, Canada and the United States. Two of those, of course, are permanent members of the Council and the other two are not.

So we inherited from the Vance period, from Don McHenry, particularly, who had worked this problem, that structure of the Western Contact Group. So one of the early issues that we assessed was are we going to continue to work with the Western Contact Group on Namibia, are we going to press forward with something called "the Western plan," otherwise known as UN Security Council Resolution 435 for Namibian independence, or are we going to abandon it and go in some very different direction? The point I'm making, though, is that Haig understood from the get-go the importance of having allied support for whatever it was we chose to do, so the question then became: what is it we will choose to do? Will we just continue with that Resolution 435 approach, or will we change it? And so we had a ten-week policy review in early 1981 over that precise question.

Q: Well, out of this policy review, exercise of everybody looking at the matter and Namibia, what did you come out with?

CROCKER: Well, of course Namibia is a pretty small place in the broader scheme of things, but it was the litmus test issue and the hot issue, the pregnant issue, throughout

southern Africa and to some degree in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Rhodesia had just become Zimbabwe. Mozambique and Angola were both Marxist ex-Portuguese territories that were in the hands of governments at the time that we viewed as aligned to Moscow. In the case of Angola, very aligned to Moscow.

South Africa was obviously the regional superpower, but it also was a deeply troubled society with a racist system of government. Legislated apartheid was not only evil but it was failing, visibly failing. And therefore the question was, how will South Africa change, what will be the process for achieving change in South Africa?

So this was part of a bigger scheme of things. Our approach was, you don't start with South Africa. You start with the issue that's hot and that's Namibia, because that's the one that everyone's expecting you to address and the one you kind of have to address because of the inherited diplomatic groundwork, the expectations of the diplomatic process. It's a sequential thing.

And so what we said was, we will try to work with the new government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, we'll try to work with the African Front Line States (FLS – Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), we'll try to work with South Africa, to get a negotiated solution in Namibia. But there's got to be something in it for South Africa. It's not going to work if it's just decolonizing the last African colony.

After all, the liberation group in Namibia had not liberated any of Namibia. It was sitting next door in Angola and in Zambia and it was rather feckless, militarily .. So if we want the South Africans to cooperate on a diplomatic approach, there's got to be something in it for South Africa. And by the way, there's got to be something in it for us. As we look across that region at that time, 1980-81, what do we see that might be a positive incentive, a worthy goal, for us? Well, getting the Cubans out of Africa would be a big prize, because they were the only conventional threat that could lead to imposed military solutions next door in Namibia. The Cubans were the only organized conventional force that you could say was in some way going to be able to challenge the South African conventional forces, or to impose their own solutions in neighboring countries of the southern African region when there might be political issues of interest to them. They were a strategic wild card – both for the Castro regime and in a larger sense for the Soviet global enterprise.

So our view was that what had to be done was link a Namibian settlement to an Angolan settlement, in which Cubans would depart from southern Africa on a time phased negotiated calendar of withdrawal. So we said, "We're not scrapping Resolution 435, we are adding a pragmatic reality to 435, which is that there will have to be parallel movement on the Angolan track."

And we set up this construct and then had to try to sell it, first to the allies, then to South Africa, then to the African front line states, including Angola. So it was a very, very ambitious departure. We were saying, "Yes, Namibian independence, linked to Cuban

troop withdrawal from Angola and this will transform the strategic environment of southern Africa."

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER DAVID EICHER
Department of State
Bureau of International Organizations Affairs
African Affairs Officer
Washington, DC
(1983-1985)

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

Topical Focus – U.S. Role in Negotiations for Namibian Independence

Q: Were there talks going on essentially between the United States and Cuba over this?

EICHER: No, the talks were mainly with the South Africans and with the Angolans. I personally was never involved in the Angolan talks at all. There was an informal division of labor within the team, with the Africa Bureau's principal deputy assistant secretary, Frank Wisner, and the Angola desk officer doing most of the talks with the Angolans. Crocker and two or three others, including myself, were dealing with the South Africans and the other so-called Front Line States. And the big goal was to get what we called the "calendario," a calendar, a schedule for withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The carrot for Angola was an independent Namibia, which would make it much more difficult for the South Africans to be able to help out Jonas Savimbi and UNITA, in their guerrilla war against the Angolan government. South Africa was giving assistance to Savimbi through its bases in northern Namibia. South Africa had even occupied part of southern Angola with its own troops, ostensibly to keep out the SWAPO guerrillas who would occasionally try to infiltrate from Angola into Namibia. Anyway, the carrot for Angola was that if Namibia became independent as a result of our negotiations, then the South African forces would withdraw from both Angola and Namibia. They would be a thousand miles from Angola, where they couldn't help Savimbi as effectively. The Angolans had ostensibly brought in the Cubans on the basis that South Africa was occupying part of Angola – as well as to help fight UNITA – and they had said at some point that they wouldn't need the Cubans to defeat UNITA if the South Africans weren't there. So, there was a real incentive for the Angolans to cooperate with the peace process, and to discuss "linkage" with us at the same time they officially rejected it. For the two years I was on the job, the Angolans danced around very adroitly and deftly. They

showed great interest in the U.S.-led negotiations and they did talk regularly with us. They never made flat rejections that would have ended the negotiations. You know, they were sufficiently involved to keep us engaged and believing that progress was possible. And, there was actually occasional progress. The biggest breakthrough we had during my time was what we called the "disengagement." We were able to get an agreement from the South Africans to pull their troops back completely out of Angola into Namibia, and the Angolans to withdraw military from the border areas in return, and to keep the Cubans out of the border area. This agreement really was a big deal. It showed the policy was working and producing results. We thought the disengagement could create the political basis and political will and momentum to really launch into Namibian independence. This agreement was finally nailed down during a wonderful trip I took with Crocker around southern Africa, where we met half a dozen presidents. This was one of my wonderful Foreign Service experiences, being involved in a peace process that was working and meeting with a whole range of prominent leaders that I had been reading about since my university days. We met in Zambia with President Kaunda – I've got a great picture of him serving me tea – and in Tanzania with President Nyerere and in Mozambique with Samora Machel. We even went to Malawi, even though it wasn't regarded as a Front Line State, where we had an amazing meeting with President Hastings Kamuzu Banda, an ancient dictator with a twinkle in his eye, who sang us songs in an African language and quoted stanzas of Caesar in Latin. He gave us a British-style, fancy high tea in one of his palaces in Kasungu, an out-of-the-way little town; I remember that he took five sugars in his tea. I wrote up what I thought was an amusing cable on the meeting, with the subject line "Kamuzu in Kasungu;" I even mentioned his five sugars. All these guys were old-time independence leaders who were still presidents of their various countries. Nyerere and Kaunda were the real leaders of the Front Line States, the ones who mattered most. I remember Nyerere, who we met with in Dodoma, a city in the middle of nowhere in Tanzania, being especially impressive, and especially leery of the American initiative, at the same time as he would have been delighted to see it work. We were able to go to all these out-of-the-way places because we were flying in our own little plane. The African presidents were all very pleased at the South African pull-back but cautious about whether it would really lead to independence for Namibia. Still, it was the only game in town and they admitted it was good progress. They all agreed to support our effort – or at least not to oppose it. So it was a good success. They agreed to continue to pressure the Angolans for progress if we could continue to pull the South Africans back. We also met with the South Africans, of course; that was the first stop. We had to be sure they were really willing to go through with the disengagement before taking it to the Front Line States. The South Africans also produced Jonas Savimbi for us to meet with; we met him at the home of the South African minister of defense. Savimbi was an impressive fellow. So the agreement was reached. The South Africans began to pull back their troops. And, we actually established a U.S. liaison office in Windhoek, both to monitor the disengagement and in anticipation that we would make more progress and it would turn into an embassy at the time of independence. We had discussed this with the African leaders and they didn't object. I volunteered to go out and help set up the office, USLO Windhoek (U.S. Liaison Office), the first U.S. office in Namibia, and to stay there temporarily as part of its staff. Bill Twaddell was the chargé at USLO, I was the DCM. It was just a short-term, six-week assignment but it was

fascinating. I think opening any American embassy for the first time in a new country would have to be interesting. Namibia was doubly so – even though it wasn't actually an embassy – since it was in the middle of such a big political issue and was getting so much international attention, and because the U.S. was the only foreign country really there on the ground and involved in the negotiations. For me it was even more interesting, since I had been working on the negotiations which led to the disengagement and because I had worked on Namibia before and knew the internal scene a little, and how this fit into the bigger picture of the negotiations. USLO got a lot of publicity; there was a lot of hope that this was really going to lead to the end of the Namibian problems. Everyone was very upbeat.

NEPAL

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER O. SELLAR
Consultant
Consultant, Democracy and Governance Programs
USAID
Nepal
(1994)

Peter O. Sellar was born in Connecticut and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in American History and Literature and later completed a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. After joining USAID in 1963 as a Management Intern, he served in a wide range of positions over a 30-year career, including assignments in Guinea, Liberia, and Washington. His Washington postings included senior roles in the Africa Bureau, the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Near East Bureau, and the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, where he worked on the Central America Initiative and helped develop USAID's Democracy Program. He retired in 1993 after serving as Senior Program Officer in the Office of Democratic Initiatives. Following his USAID career, he consulted on democracy and governance programs in Guyana and Nepal and authored a paper on USAID's first decade of democracy promotion. Throughout his career, he focused on program planning, democracy promotion, governance, and development policy. This interview was conducted by W. Haven North on January 21, 1999.

Topical Focus – Review and Benchmarking of USAID's Democratic Development Strategy in Nepal

Q: Right. What kind of training programs did you attend?

SELLAR: During the Near East job, when I was still considered to be executive potential, i.e. for moving up from the GS-15 job that I was in to the Senior Executive Service, I got to go to a management course at the Federal Executive Institute for three weeks. I found that very useful.

Q: What did the Institute focus on in that course?

SELLAR: Well, it was sort of an unusual course. It was run by psychologists, primarily. It had more to do with stress management and getting balance into your life, and effective time management, rather than management theories. Then, in addition to that course, back in 1969, long before I got to DP, I was able to take the intensive six-month

economics course that they gave at the Foreign Service Institute, which was primarily intended for Foreign Service Officers to turn them into Economic Officers. Why they just didn't hire people with a background in economics, I don't know. They took one AID Officer every year into the course, and I got to go one year. That was very valuable for me, because, although I had had some economics in graduate school, a lot of it went in one ear and out the other, because I had had no basic grounding in it; the assumption was that you'd had basic economics, which I hadn't had.

Q: How was this course?

SELLAR: This course was excellent for me, because it didn't assume that you'd had any basic economics, so it began at the beginning.

Q: Very intensive, I suppose?

SELLAR: It was. It was six months of total immersion. They claimed that it was the equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree, just on the basis of the scores that people achieved at the end of the course on the graduate record exams.

Q: It covered all aspects of basic economics?

SELLAR: It did, and it had a section on economic development, which was actually the worst section.

Q: The worst section?

SELLAR: Yes, it was terrible. So bad, in fact, that the teacher who gave it, who was also the coordinator of the whole course, never gave it again. They went out and found somebody else. It was just divorced from reality. Even the Foreign Service Officers knew that.

Q: Not well informed, or what?

SELLAR: Just overly academic, not dealing with real-world issues. But, apart from that it was an excellent course. I felt much more confident and comfortable the rest of my career in AID having had that. Not that it turned me into an economist, but I at least became familiar with the concepts, was able to work with them, and knew the vocabulary.

The other course that I took, which was during my stint in the Near East Bureau in 1980, was a 12-week development studies course. This was an in-service course to basically broaden peoples' perspectives on development, especially narrow technicians. They brought in one very liberal political scientist and one anthropologist to teach that. So it was pretty interesting, because in many ways the course was sort of anti-development.

Q: Were there other aspects to the course?

SELLAR: Well, the anthropologists were very concerned that we never make an intervention until we understood that it wasn't going to destroy something, rather than help it, or destroy something somewhere else that we hadn't thought about. And, of course, many of our interventions and many of the World Bank interventions did that. They had lots of literature on examples of this - cautionary tales - which presumably helped us become aware of things to watch out for. The problem was, they didn't provide you with any suggestions on alternative approaches. The conclusion seemed to be that maybe it was better just not to do anything. This was not operationally practical.

Q: Right. But did it increase your receptivity to local cultures?

SELLAR: Yes. And gave me a chance to do some reading, that otherwise I never would have done.

Q: Was there any particular development theory or concept that they were promoting?

SELLAR: Well, I don't know that there was a single theory. I do remember that the Political Scientist was so liberal that a lot of people in AID when they found out what was going on were alarmed that he might be practically a Marxist. He wasn't really a Marxist, but he was very oriented toward equity issues. I can't remember specifically whether he supported the idea of the dependency theory school of economics or not, but he was probably sympathetic to it, and this, of course, went very much against the grain in AID, where I think the Economists tended to run policy probably to a great extent, and were a pretty conservative bunch. Anyway, those training opportunities were very useful.

I might also mention one other thing that I got to do during my stint in Near East DP, which was to lead an evaluation team to Nepal to study the impact of AID's education program there over the past 20 years. This was an initiative taken by Administrator Doug Bennet. In fact, I think it was probably his major initiative. He felt that more evaluations ought to be done by AID people themselves, rather than by contractors. He thought that, by pulling people out of Bureaus other than the one in which this project or program was being evaluated, he could insure objectivity. That probably wasn't true, but he thought it was. In any event, quite a series of impact evaluations were done with teams that were created in Bureaus other than the one in which the project was to be evaluated. I got to go to Nepal, and that was really a peak experience in my life.

Q: What did you find out about 20 years of education assistance in Nepal?

SELLAR: Well, we entitled the paper, "USAID Education Assistance to Nepal: a 20-Year Beginning." That was because we found that the program had created schools and teachers out of nothing. There was virtually nothing to begin with and now there were hundreds of schools spread throughout the country. The only problem was that there wasn't any equipment in the schools. The teachers tended to show up late, if they showed up at all. There wasn't any real monitoring or supervision. Even the most basic teaching materials just weren't there. So, it was kind of rote learning.

Q: Our program was mostly a school building program?

SELLAR: Well, it wasn't supposed to have been. It was supposed to have equipped the schools, and it was supposed to have provided education for a lot of the teachers in the country. The question, of course, is how can you segregate AID's impact from all the other donors and from what the host country was doing. Actually, that wasn't too difficult a question, because it turned out that virtually the entire education program, including the Ministry and everything else, had been supported with local currency that AID had accumulated in India through its vast Title I and Title II Programs, especially Title I. The currency had been sterilized, because it would have had a tremendous inflationary effect in India if it had been used. Taking a chunk of it and using it for this major program in Nepal didn't really put a dent in the Indian surplus, but it made all the difference in Nepal in terms of whether you could do anything or not.

Q: What was the impact of the program after 20 years?

SELLAR: I think the impact was that people were getting some basic education. This was creating some attitude changes that were positive for development. The education had positive impacts on the agricultural sector, family planning attitudes, and health practices, and was creating somewhat more equality and respect for women. We used a fairly standard questionnaire in all our interviews. When we got to Nepal there were three of us, and we formed ourselves into three teams of three by adding, first, a woman, since only the women could go into women's houses and talk to them; and second, a Nepali to each team so that we had the language capability. We then went to three different sections of the country and used essentially the same questionnaire. We realized there wouldn't be enough interviews to make it statistically meaningful, but nevertheless it would give us more than an anecdotal idea of what was happening. I got to go trekking in the Annapurna range, which was fabulous just as an experience, being out there and trekking for six days, and then finding the rural villages and visiting the schools.

Q: How did you go about measuring impact?

SELLAR: We just asked the people we interviewed questions like: did your training help you become a better teacher; what's the difference now in education here as opposed to 20 years ago; how would you characterize it? A combination of specific questions and open-ended questions. There hadn't really been any quantitative indicators set for the program in the first place.

Q: They didn't have any data base to work from?

SELLAR: No, which of course is a very common occurrence.

Q: Except, there would have been almost nothing there to begin with anyway.

SELLAR: Very little. We had some data on that. We also looked at the vocational education program. That was a real failure.

Q: Why was that?

SELLAR: Because nobody who graduated from vocational school went out and practiced those vocations. What, in fact, happened was, since it was the highest form of education in the country, the vocational schools were really seen as stepping stones to progress into white collar rather than blue collar occupations, and people were able to make that step. That hadn't been thought through in the beginning. As a result, the program really wasn't accomplishing what it meant to. Anyway, I just mentioned that as being one element of particular interest.

Q: Well, that became a regular official report of the evaluation system.

SELLAR: That's right. AID published all those impact evaluations in a series.

Q: What year was it published?

SELLAR: 1981.

Q: Did you meet with the Administrator? What was his reaction to what you were doing?

SELLAR: Yes, we did. As I recall, he was sort of noncommittal. One of the things that made this evaluation, I think, particularly interesting and important to him was that he was actually considering eliminating the education sector from AID. So this evaluation might have had some impact on that decision. It probably did. That was why the Chief of the Central AID Education Office made sure that he was one of the three members of the team. We came to the conclusion that there was much room for improvement in how we were doing education programs, but that enough was being achieved and it was such an important sector that it should be continued.

Q: Would you conclude that we established the first education program in Nepal in terms of ministry and structure and so on that they have been building on since then?

SELLAR: Yes, yes.

Q: But, it also suggests how long it takes to start from scratch.

SELLAR: And really accomplish something qualitatively, as well as quantitatively.

Q: Do you remember how large the student body grew over the 20 years?

SELLAR: I would have to look it up. I don't know. It was hundreds of thousands. I mean, it really was throughout the entire country. Of course, something would have happened even if we hadn't done so much. The country was at the stage where if other donors had come forth with financing, maybe they would have accomplished something. But, as it was, we did it.

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Q: Did you do any AID-related work after retiring?

SELLAR: Yes, I did a couple of consulting jobs, and wrote a paper on the first ten years of AID's experience with the democracy program. I was also the candidate of a couple of contractors for chief of party for long-term AID contracts, but we did not win either of these.

Q: What was the consulting job you did?

SELLAR: They were both in 1994. I served on a three-man team in Guyana that prepared a draft Project Paper for a democracy program there. I served as the quote institutional development specialist unquote and developed a program for strengthening civil society: community development, NGOs, the media, the university. My second job was in Nepal, where I served on a two-man team to review USAID Nepal's democratic development strategy, recommend any changes, and develop benchmarks or indicators for measuring the progress of the democracy program there.

Q: How did you find the consulting work as compared with being a direct-hire AID employee?

SELLAR: It had both pluses and minuses. The main plus was that the work was almost entirely substantive and hence extremely stimulating. It was also nice to be focused on just one task. Also, it paid very well. The negatives were the marketing that one had to do to get the jobs, and the utter unreliability of AID in scheduling the work or even confirming until the very last minute that I was going to be hired. In the case of the Nepal job, for instance, it was not until I got a call from the desk officer at the airport, after having made my way there through a blizzard, that I knew whether or not I was authorized to board the airplane. This made planning one's life around consulting jobs very difficult.

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Q: In what areas do you think AID has been most innovative, if any, over the years?

SELLAR: Well, certainly we got an awful lot of credit for the Green Revolution. I think that's deserved; we supported a lot of the research that was done at the International Rice Institute. That had, of course, a very major impact in terms of grain production in India and Bangladesh, and turned them around from being heavy importers to being at least self-sufficient, even exporters in good years. I think that the claims that were made for the child survival program as it was publicized under Peter McPherson, were justifiable. This package that we developed of oral rehydration saved millions of lives, and certainly other medical programs that we did saved more millions of lives in terms of smallpox

eradication and huge reductions in measles and some of the other diseases that killed so many children. Those are the two that come to mind. And we certainly have contributed through our family planning programs to reductions in population growth, a very important matter. Then, there are many other smaller examples.

I know that the democracy program, which is much more recent, has had some real impact. There are other donors doing it, but I think we did lead the way. The paper that I wrote on our experience, although used on the Hill to great effect, was actually written for the Development Assistance Committee at the OECD, because they were getting interested in democracy aid and wanted to know what we'd learned. One job I had as a consultant after returning from AID was to assess the validity of the Nepal democracy strategy and recommend any changes, and also to set up indicators for measuring progress of the program. That obviously involved finding out what the other donors were doing, and the Danes had a pretty substantial program. So you would find some other countries doing it. Of course, once the World Bank got over its hangup about political interventions, they were doing things that contributed to democracy. I think it got picked up on by most of the Regional Banks, and private organizations were supported and able to do more than they had done before in human rights and a whole number of areas.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JULIA CHANG BLOCH
Department of State
U. S. Ambassador
Katmandu, Nepal
(1989-1992)

Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch was born in China and raised in San Francisco, and went to the University of California, Berkeley. She held positions in the Peace Corps, the Senate, USIA, and Harvard University before joining USAID in 1981. She served as the ambassador to Nepal from 1989 to 1992. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Topical Focus – Nepalese Democracy Movement

Q: *There was a revolution there when you were there. When did this happen?*

BLOCH: It happened in February.

Q: *How did this impact on you and the Embassy?*

BLOCH: We were working around the clock. We called our Emergency Action Committee together. From all that was coming out of Washington, my first priority was

that all Americans in Nepal were safe. That is no easy matter because Nepal is a tourist destination. But our EAC committee worked very well. My Deputy at that time, Al Thibault, was really terrific. We became the information center for all the western Embassies because most of my colleagues were out at Kathmandu. That's not so much February, everything came to a head in April.

Q: *How did this develop? How did this revolution come about? Was it foreseen?*

BLOCH: It was certainly not foreseen in terms of the results, not even by the protagonists. The Congress Party had been in opposition for a long time, they were either in exile or banned. Many of them were in prison. But at the beginning of February they started marches and demonstrations. Most of the leaders were under house arrest. And things started sort of placidly. Nepalese are not violent people. The demonstrations gathered steam. Partly aggravated at that time by the Indo-Nepal dispute. Where India cut off all but 2 access points or transit points. So goods were scarce, the middle class was getting somewhat disgruntled because of that. I think part of the problem was the way the government handled the protest because they were making no concessions. And by the time they began to realize and talk to the opposition, to take the opposition more seriously, it was getting too late. And that's what happened. About 50 people were killed. And for Nepal that was a horrendous act, to have people killed. The momentum just built. I remember Solarz came in December, Congressman Solarz. And we had a breakfast with the Congress Party leaders. Certainly at that time none of us, including the Congress leaders, predicted that they would in fact, not just succeed but actually win. Because what the Congress Party, even as the momentum gathered, had sought was essentially participation in the upcoming election. They wanted to participate as a party in the coming election. They were not after taking over the government. Partly I think also what was happening around the world.

Q: *We're talking about the fall of the Soviet Union.*

BLOCH: Exactly. Word was getting into Nepal, even the Uhmaru Kingdom of Nepal, and people wanted more say, because it was a very closed society. And the professional began to get involved. Professionals in the medical field, professionals at the Universities, professionals even in the civil service started demonstrating. And as more people were killed, more of the professionals came out.

Q: *Was the Embassy taking sides?*

BLOCH: We maintained a very clear dialogue with both sides. We were one of the few places where there was clear information because we talked to both sides. And we made

sure that our message was: Minimize violation and open dialogue. We were perceived by the revolutionaries as having helped their movement. Congress sent a letter again espousing support for democracy.

Q: *Our Congress.*

BLOCH: Our Congress. But at the same time we never lost access to the government. So again it was a question of balance.

Q: *How did it play out as far as American, your Embassy was concerned?*

BLOCH: Tremendously. Because when the dust settled, the government really sent us all kinds of appreciation letters. And with the new government we had complete access, even with the communists.

Q: *Did this help at all, I mean, United Nations votes are always a big problem, were you able to, how was Nepal united?*

BLOCH: Nepal, of all South Asian countries, I think they supported us more than any others. But that's only one gauge. I think we were able to help them consolidate their democracy. Democracy is very fragile, it's still very new. Still a lot of work remains in the consolidation process. But I think we built probably a model democracy support program. I wrote a paper by the way and USIA commended us for doing that.

Q: *Were they coming to you for advice?*

BLOCH: Absolutely.

Q: *I just came back, I spent the last month, 3 weeks, in Kyrgyzstan where I was one of the many people helping them, my thing was as a consultant on how to set-up a consular service. Many of these countries that are sort of coming out of a different era have found that we act as a sort of honest*

BLOCH: Honest broker.

Q: *A national Peace Corps.*

BLOCH: More than a Peace Corps.

Q: *We only give advice.*

BLOCH: We developed and established a program for what we considered the transition phase and the move into the consolidation phase. We were there immediately because we started work, we had people on the ground helping with the constitutional reform process in May. The revolution succeeded in April, they came to us because we had complete access. They asked us for help. We helped with the constitutional reform phase, we then worked up a program to support the development of the parliament. And we looked at the judiciary because that's another anchor of democracy. We stepped up our exchanges. I got AID to fund USIA's International Visitors. Because we had to get the leadership out, to see the world and broaden their horizons. Because they had no experience, no experience in government.

Q: *As the Mission goes, I take it that because we had a Mission in Kathmandu that we played a much greater role than many others.*

BLOCH: Absolutely. Because I ran an integrated Mission. It was not easy to get AID to support USIA activities. I had to make them see that it was not an AID activity or a USIA activity. It was a democracy support program for Nepal. It was a US democracy support program for Nepal. And we had a task force which I chaired, I think only the Ambassador can chair. Because you've got to make all your components work together.

Q: *Were you getting good support from Washington on this nation building?*

BLOCH: Fairly good, except of course Nepal was never a priority. We could never be considered in the same plateau as any other democracies. You know, money was no problem for Russia or the Soviet Republics or for Eastern Europe. I will never forget that the sort of quasi-governmental institutions that set-up to support democracy, what was it called now, the Democratic, it was a net, do you know what I mean?

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
Deputy Mission Director
USAID
Kathmandu, Nepal
(1986-1990)

Mr. Rhodes was born and raised in Tuscon, Arizona. He received his Bachelor's at Occidental College and his Master's at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia, attended U.C. Berkeley's Law School, and worked in the legal field before entering the Foreign Service. He worked in

various positions for USAID in Haiti, Washington D.C., Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, South Africa. After retiring from USAID, Mr. Rhodes did NGO work for the Institute for International Education and Save the Children, worked as the Latin American Managing Director at the Millennium Challenge Corp, and the Chief of Staff for the Peace Corps.

Topical Focus – Monarchy to Multi-Party Democracy in Nepal

RHODES: Finally, let me mention one other small area of work, because of its ultimate importance to the political development of Nepal. By the 1980s USAID could access modest funding for human rights programming through something called 116E funds. This was thanks to President Carter's foreign policy and it was carried on during the Reagan administration. The State Department had established a bureau for human rights, which provided modest funds to USAID for small rights-related projects. Now, these were small amounts of money, but since we didn't yet have a democracy/governance program or office, I got to manage these funds personally, and developed quite a few good contacts with the legal community in Nepal. I'd been a lawyer, and we had a wonderful USAID lawyer, Steve Allen, who had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal and spoke fluent Nepali. Steve came frequently to Nepal from his post in Bangladesh, and we worked together to cultivate the mission's links to a number of progressive organizations. You couldn't call them human rights organizations per se during this era, but they were pro-democracy and citizen participation groups. One was called 'Leaders', which worked in developing leadership skills for young university-educated Nepalis. Another was the Nepal Law Society, an association of the most distinguished lawyers in Nepal.

Steve actually spoke the Nepali language so well, he was the only American up to that date ever admitted to the Nepali bar; he legally could appear in court in Nepal! I worked with him and we made some small grants from the human rights funds to these organizations just to help strengthen the hand of people who valued and promoted democratic governance, greater freedom of expression and the expansion of citizen participation. While these organizations were not outwardly "political" in nature, they were to become very influential. In 1990, there was a true popular uprising in Nepal. It began as a series of street protests led principally by Nepal's 'communist parties' against the monarchy. These were initially largely nonviolent though very disruptive and bold in their civil disobedience, until there was a violent police/military response. Things took off from there, and it developed into a mini-revolution, with several hundred people killed in the streets of Kathmandu through skirmishes with police/military. The numbers of people involved and being injured or killed grew rapidly, and King Birendra, though he did not 'abdicate' the throne, agreed to negotiate a truce and an agreement to dismantle the so-called "Panchayat system", and to reestablish a constitutional democracy, with a greatly reduced governing role for the palace. The Panchayat system was a Palace- established and controlled political process which basically resulted in a pre-approved congressional body which supported the monarchy. The King agreed to allow democratic elections and to re-establish a multi-party constitutional democracy.

In the aftermath, many of the contacts USAID had developed through the small human rights grants proved very valuable to the U.S. mission, and to the new government of Nepal. The Embassy had been heavily focused on its relationship with the Palace. And as the democratization process went forward, quite a number of the senior, respected lawyers and young leaders that we had worked with became involved in developing the structures for and the content of a new constitution. USAID was asked by the GON to provide international experts in the process, and we financed several highly respected international experts to help them write a new constitution for Nepal which restored multi-party democracy, significantly diminishing the roles of the King and the Palace.

I was very proud of that effort, which significantly grew out of our small human rights grants program. By this time, Kelly Kammerer, who had been both the general counsel and then director of legislative affairs in USAID/Washington, had arrived at post. Needless to say he was extremely enthusiastic about supporting this initial big step in the democratization process in Nepal. In my last six or so months at post, I worked with him on this process, utilizing my fairly extensive contacts with the legal and NGO community. And Kelly went on to grow this early "democracy program" at the Mission.

One of the little-known things about USAID assistance is that sometimes just small amounts of financial and moral support to the right people in non-governmental organizations and the "private sector" can have a major impact on the development of a country. I left Nepal by August 1990, but USAID/Nepal went on to become a major supporter of democracy and governance programs in Nepal, and helped strengthen the new constitutional, democratic government significantly. Nepal remained a "constitutional monarchy" for some years, but later became a more modern constitutional democracy, after a second revolution in which the King was deposed altogether.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
USAID
Deputy Mission Director
Nepal
Katmandu, Nepal
(1986-1990)

William Stacy Rhodes was born in Tucson, Arizona and received degrees from Occidental College and Johns Hopkins University. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia before attending U.C. Berkeley Law School. His USAID career began in 1977, and he held several positions across Latin America, Haiti, Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, and South Africa. Mr. Rhodes retired from USAID in 2001 and worked for several NGOs, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and served as Chief of Staff of the Peace Corps until 2014. William Stacy Rhodes was interviewed by John Pielemeier in 2016.

Topical Focus – USAID Human Rights Programming in Nepal - late 1980's

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NICARAGUA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARK SILVERMAN
USAID
LAC/DR Central America Finance Chief
Washington, D. C.
(1989-1992)

Mark Silverman was born in Boston in 1947. He graduated with his bachelor's of science from San Fernando Valley State in 1969 and with his master's degree in international affairs from Ohio University in 1976. He entered the foreign service in 1976. His first post was as an intern in Afghanistan in 1977. He worked his way up to being an acting director of mission and the director of USAID throughout his time in the foreign service. He retired in 2007 but came back for short term assignments multiple times from 2008-2015. Mark Silverman was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – USAID Reopens in Nicaragua after the 1990 Elections

SILVERMAN: In early 1990, Nicaragua had its election which resulted in consequential changes to the political situation there. The Nicaraguan election outcome was a surprise to many. Dona
Violetta de Chamorro ran against Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega and won. The second surprise was that the Sandinistas agreed to a peaceful transfer of power. Janet Ballantyne was named the new USAID Director, and she quickly traveled to Managua to put together a short-term strategy for USAID assistance to Nicaragua. The economy was in great danger; in 1990 the inflation rate exceeded 7,000 percent, consumer goods were in short supply, petroleum availability was limited, productive capacity was falling, and consumers were hurting.

I believe the last USAID mission closed its doors in 1980-81. As there had been no USAID presence in Nicaragua for almost ten years there was a need to immediately find some temporary office space and the embassy provided an office for USAID to use. LAC sent me to Managua on the first of several priority visits to lend a hand and support Janet's efforts to launch the short-term strategy, help start designing critical program components and support actions to establish the USAID presence. USAID sent out a world-wide cable requesting volunteers for Nicaragua and there was a terrific response. With staff arriving in Managua on short term visits, the embassy office space became

inadequate for the growing mission. Nevertheless, a series of program and project proposals were rapidly developed and submitted to Washington for review and approval. On another visit I helped draft a second balance of payments/cash transfer program document and upon returning to Washington the LAC Bureau accelerated the review and approval of the program and a major disbursement was made four days after approval. This required close coordination with the office of management and budget and the treasury department. The National Security Council [NSC] staff demanded a daily report on what USAID was doing to help Nicaragua which required drafting summaries of actions on all initiatives ranging from developing new primary education textbooks to promoting democratic initiatives. They also wanted to know what USAID was doing to help reactivate the Nicaraguan economy which was in freefall. Fortunately, Jim Michel was the interlocutor with the NSC, and I only had to produce the briefing materials. Washington approved an initial total of $300 million for the Nicaragua program and the task was to help ensure that projects and programs reflected Administration priorities and demonstrated that USAID could respond quickly to foreign policy priorities. Coordination of Washington based work with State, the NSC and with USAID senior leaders on a daily basis was, to say the least, stressful.

An example of one initiative that USAID carried out early on was developing new primary school curriculum by designing new textbooks with nonpolitical content. If you have ever seen the primary school textbooks that the Cubans helped Nicaragua develop in the 1980's you would see some interesting political educational concepts.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Latin America Bureau, Office of Central American Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Nicaragua
(1995–2000)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across

Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Post-Conflict Governance, Authoritarian Regression, and Development Challenges in Nicaragua

LEVINE: You can see almost as a class that moved up through the ranks. But by the time I was there, Liliana Ayalde (later an Ambassador to Paraguay and Brazil) had gone to Nicaragua as mission director. Elena Brineman was director in Honduras and Marilyn Zak was in Nicaragua. These women, along with Janet Ballantyne, were really the first generation who kind of took the reins of power during that time. So the old boy network was on its way out.

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I met Ambassador Liliana Ayalde in the early 1990s as she completed her tour in Managua. She had been one of the staff sent to reopen the mission following the election of Violeta Chamorro in 1990. She became my boss in the Office of Central American Affairs in 1995. We spent a lot of time on Capitol Hill advocating for our programs across Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. Liliana was really a "secret weapon" dispatched to handle some of the more delicate and politically sensitive programs, not just in Central America, but the entire region. In this regard, she regularly traveled with First Lady Hillary Clinton when she traveled to the region. Her Nicaragua experience resulted in her becoming a point person for briefing an often hostile and suspicious Republican oversight staff on our programs there. Her mastery of the details of our programs, extensive network of contacts and her unflappable diplomatic skills made her the perfect interlocutor. While things got hot, I never saw her sweat. Not once. I benefited from her knowledge, great management instincts and her insights into Latin culture and language, which made me better at my job.

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When George Carner took over in Nicaragua, he once sponsored a reception in my honor when I came for a visit. I was a bit overcome. That started a week-long evaluation of preparations for the upcoming regional elections. George introduced me to high-ranking officials, sharing the agenda with me and asking me to take the lead where my rough Spanish was put to the test. I felt that I only partially returned the favor when I escorted him to the Hill on his next visit to D.C. During those reciprocal visits, he shared his career insights along with his philosophy of his development career, his broad experience and future plans.

Elena Brineman hosted me in Tegucigalpa on a number of occasions. Again, we traveled widely throughout the country and she shared with me how the mission's programs were arrayed against the development challenges of one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere. Her background in health as well as DRG, along with her earlier service in

El Salvador during the war made her impressive, but her incredible work ethic and commitment to development made her unforgettable to me.

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Q: Let me ask a question about Nicaragua. Was Ortega in or out during that period? It's a country that's been flipflopping back and forth and struggling, and not particularly going in the right direction. And I'm just wondering what it was like during this period.

LEVINE: Arnoldo Alemán was president during the Mitch time, and subsequently was convicted for all sorts of malfeasance. I've watched Nicaragua for a long, long time, and it was a revolutionary situation that struggled to be a democracy and then we have witnessed that window of opportunity close. Now a new generation has been born under an authoritarian system. In subsequent roles in the democracy office and conflict office, I have had opportunities to look in on things. What I recall about that time was that there was still an overhang of our program in Nicaragua was much smaller than it had been previously in comparison to the other countries, which really was a Cold War overhang, that there was a still very competitive political process, but growing signs of authoritarianism and backlash. And it became, in essence, a winner-takes-all political situation, but I would call it now with *mano duro* (strong hand) policies. While it was historically clad in ideological terms, I think people who have watched this now conclude it's just about power. The ideology is a thin veneer and it's really two *caudillo* (strong man) clans dividing up the spoils and screwing the people. What I've watched in my career is that a whole generation of folks have been locked out of political and economic life in favor of this elite-based power struggle.

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Q: Did we see any of this in El Salvador during that period? Gangs and violence have plagued the country in recent years. Did we see any early signs of that? Also, I gather a lot of the issues today in Honduras revolve around drug trade. I'm just wondering whether we were looking at those issues then, about the drug trade?

LEVINE: There were drug cartels transiting the region, but it was not in the headlines. There was always a fear that the isthmus was highly susceptible, mostly because it was ungoverned space with vast coastlines that were very permeable. The drug trade was definitely much more of a growing presence through the late nineties and early 2000s. I had a chance to go back to Nicaragua about ten years ago, so that would have been twenty years after my first visit there, ten years after my first visits, and there was a concern about crime. Now, I think there was some intermingling between right-wing paramilitary forces and criminal gangs, and I think that just accelerated after the conflict, when the ideological fires were put out. Rather than ideology, there was greed. Greed and all the other elements such as weak institutions, little law enforcement, ungoverned spaces, and people with money and power.

Q: Right. And Hurricane Mitch might have even contributed to some of that as well, right? Because I would have thought a lot of infrastructure got destroyed and—

LEVINE: There was a concern about a weakening of the country's ability to respond post-conflict to issues of crime. I don't think people experienced the level of insecurity that would have motivated them to leave as we see today.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STANLEY ZUCKERMAN
USIA
Director of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs
Washington, DC
(1989-1992)

Mr. Zuckerman was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and educated at the University of Wisconsin. After service in the US Army, followed by newspaper reporting and a position with the Governor of Wisconsin, he joined the USIA Foreign Service in 1965. He subsequently served as Information, Press and Public Affairs Counselor in Congo, Belgium, Mexico, Canada and Brazil. He also had several senior level assignments in Washington at USIA and the State Department. Mr. Zuckerman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – U. S. Public Diplomacy in Nicaragua

Q: While you were there, in the first place I guess when you came on board, Nicaragua was still ticking away wasn't it? I mean you talk about you know, the transition from your perspective from the Reagan to the Bush administration in Central America.

ZUCKERMAN: Well I wasn't in Washington during the Reagan administration. I don't know if there would have been too much difference in the way Nicaragua was handled. We had a post in Nicaragua consisting of one American and a number of Nicaraguans, but it was very difficult to get things to them. We did manage through neighboring posts, usually through Costa Rica, to get materials in. Our post in San Jose was working with Costa Rican radio, giving them materials that were broadcast and heard in Nicaragua. It was indirect, but made a difference. With a presidential election was agreed to by the over confident Sandinistas, we started conducting some training classes in the techniques of campaigning by satellite, held at our Embassy in Managua for invited members of the opposition. We were able to bring people who were experts in monitoring elections into our Washington studios who could exchange ideas with the Nicaraguans. Their experiences weren't always appropriate for conditions in Nicaragua, but at least there was a level of contact that added to the confidence of the opposition. I remember that after the election, when I was able to go down there, we were enthusiastically welcomed by the Chamorro people. I remember there was one thing we did right after the election, or not

long after the election, when Denny Martinez, a great pitcher who was from Nicaragua, pitched a perfect game.

Q: Who did he play for?

ZUCKERMAN: He played for Montreal, and he was the first Nicaraguan to play for a major league baseball team. We wanted him to do a WorldNet interview for the Nicaraguan press. They are great sports fans there and the country adored him. He could have been elected president. He had a very compelling personal story, having overcome alcoholism and rebuilding his career. His family was still living in Nicaragua and he said he would do it. But I remember that the team was traveling to Los Angeles, and we had to arrange for a complicated hook up from a studio there to get the signal into Washington and then to Nicaragua. Our facilities were in the US Embassy, but even the Sandinista press came. In the middle of it, in walked President Chamorro and made a statement so moving, thanking him for raising the spirits of all Nicaraguans and for representing his country so brilliantly, that Martinez was in tears. And even the Sandinista papers had to carry the story, along with her praise of Martinez and of how much he had contributed to the new spirit of democracy in Nicaragua.

NIGERIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DENISE ROLLINS
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Nigeria Program/PD Officer and Office Director
Washington, D. C.
(2000-2004)

Denise Rollins studied at Howard University and Johns Hopkins SAIS before joining USAID in 1987. She served in a number of different countries including Jamaica, Uganda, Ghana, South Africa, and Bangladesh, retiring in 2014 before being called out of retirement in 2015 to serve as the Senior Coordinator for the Ebola Task Force. She fully retired in 2016. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2023.

Topical Focus – USAID Support of Governance and Anti-Corruption Nigeria in early 2000's

Q: Since the return of democracy and the election of Obasanjo is what prompted the massive increase in the AID program, were you also doing DG (Democracy and Governance) work in the country and if so, can you talk about what you were doing?

ROLLINS: Yes. So, NDI (National Democratic Institute), IRI (International Republican Institute), and IFES were grantees in implementing projects in Nigeria. They strengthen the capacity of state legislatures to develop and implement legislation, conduct research, and create constituency services and training. We couldn't work in all thirty-six states, but certainly in Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Jos, and a couple of states in the delta; I can't remember the exact number. Each of the three organizations received about $5 to $6 million and collaborated on developing skills, teaching state and national legislatures how laws are made, how to draft legislation, and how to review legislation by different committees. There was lots of training.

The most essential DG program during that time was the creation of the anti-corruption commission called the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. It had teeth and pursued corrupt officials, and it is still in operation. And they are still filing cases against lawmakers.

Q: But that was something that we helped to create at the outset?

ROLLINS: We started it. We started it with the government. Yeah, Obasanjo wanted this because Nigeria is known for corruption; it is like a second name for the country. This commission was designed to root out corruption. And they took on some significant, high-profile cases and won.

Q: Was Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in the ministry of finance then? Did you all work with her in those early days?

ROLLINS: Absolutely, we worked very closely with her. I'm trying to remember if she was there my first two years or my last two years, and I'm drawing a blank on that. She was Minister of Finance while I was posted to Nigeria. She was very well respected and significantly influenced the president and the country. When she spoke, everyone listened. Nigeria was trying to diversify its economy because many influential people stole oil proceeds. That is how we started with cassava and working with farmers to increase export crop production to earn foreign exchange. There were also efforts to start an apparel industry in the delta, which never got off the ground. There were so many ideas floating around.

Everybody wanted to find ways to increase employment and income. But Nigeria has power issues and outages all the time. Trying to run a factory without reliable electricity is unworkable. Most companies and wealthier households use generators, but generators are expensive. It is costly and inefficient to try to do business there. I am not sure how much impact our economic/agriculture programs had in Nigeria, like in Ghana. In Ghana, we helped farmers export their plentiful and super-sweet pineapples to Europe. Then, they added other fruits and vegetables to their exports, started producing juices and chocolates, and expanded. This has allowed small producers to earn higher incomes. While Nigeria's most significant exports are crude oil, minerals, and the like, the proceeds accrue to the government.

Q: So, was USAID doing a lot on private sector development and economic growth programming then?

ROLLINS: Definitely. Former President Abacha had nearly emptied the national coffers. There was just so much corruption- stealing the oil revenue- that Nigeria was in a bad situation then. So, focusing on the economy was so important.

Q: Right. But it is also important to note that the anti-corruption work that we started with them is continuing today and is probably one of the important contributions of the AID program during that period.

ROLLINS: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DONALD M. BISHOP
Department of State
Country Public Affairs Officer
Nigeria
Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria
(2000-2002)

Donald Bishop was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1945 and grew up in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. He has a BA from Trinity College and an MA from Ohio State University. He joined the United States Information Agency in 1979. His overseas posts include Hong Kong; Seoul and Taegu, Korea; Dhaka, Beijing, Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria; and Kabul, Afghanistan. Mr. Bishop was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

Topical Focus – U.S. Relations with Nigeria

Q: Well, when you got there, how stood relations between Nigeria and the United States?

BISHOP: The dictator and true thug Sani Abacha had died in 1998, and I heard several versions of what happened on his final night with the Indian prostitutes from Dubai. During the Abacha years, the U.S. had put the diplomatic relationship with Nigeria on minimize, and the Embassy had grown smaller as programs were cut. After President Obasanjo was elected, the relationship began to grow back. This meant that during my tour the Mission faced two parallel problems -- one, to grow, with all the work of justifying new positions, recruiting and assigning people, finding housing, and garnering the funds to support more people at two greater hardship posts. The second was to move the Embassy to Abuja.

Two years into what Nigerians called “the democratic dispensation,” relations with the U.S. were positive. Even so, there were some “only in Nigeria” tensions, some odds and ends. There was a section of learned opinion in Nigeria, or let’s say the opinion-forming classes in Nigeria, that still regarded us as one of the imperialist powers. They were outspokenly suspicious of every U.S. initiative. Every landing of a U.S. military aircraft, for instance, gave them evidence that we wanted to establish bases in Nigeria.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

HELEN WEINLAND
Department of State
Consul General
Nigeria
Kaduna, Nigeria
(1991-1994)

Ms. Weinland was born and raised in New York and educated at Mount Holyoke College and Ohio State University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1974, she served in Zurich, Berlin and Prague and at a number of African posts, including Lagos, Nigeria; Kigali, Rwanda as Deputy Chief of Mission and Kaduna, Nigeria, where she served as Consul General. She also served in Washington as Desk Officer for the Philippines, Nigeria and Zimbabwe as well as Officer for United Nations Affairs. Ms. Weinland was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Topical Focus - USAID Interest in Supporting Civil Societies

Q: What were your major functions while you were there, your major interests?

WEINLAND: Well, first and foremost was the move to democracy. Lannon Walker even before I got there, had worked with USAID to design a program whereby USAID would fund a program of some millions of dollars to support civil society institutions like co-ops, women's groups, a bar association, the development of a free press. I can't remember all the categories but there were about six or seven different categories of civil society institutions for which we were funding travel to and from the United States, all kinds of assistance from private groups like the League of Women Voters and the NDI, the National Democratic Institute, those two institutes. I can't remember if there was a labor union component to it, there may have been. Those kinds of institutions we were trying to bring together in cooperation. That was one of Walker's big initiatives and I think one that ultimately was not very successful.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

LAWRENCE COHEN
Department of State
Economic Counselor
Nigeria
Lagos, Nigeria
(2000-2002)

Mr. Cohen was born and raised in Pennsylvania and was educated at Dickinson College, and the Universities of Pennsylvania, Tel Aviv, Chicago and Northwestern. Entering the

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

Topical Focus – Conflict and Corruption in Nigeria

Q: Was this because of thievery or terrorism?

COHEN: Terrorism, no. Criminal behavior: carjackings, theft, mayhem, certainly. Nigeria at that time was not a terrorism-ridden place. This was out-and-out crime conducted with no ideological bent. The trip between the Ikoyi/Victoria Island and the airport on the north side of mainland Lagos was nerve-racking and revealing. I suspect driving techniques so prevalent now in Iraq and Afghanistan were perfected in places like Lagos.

Pardon the cliché, Lagos is a teeming city, Africa's largest, densely populated with incredible, unspeakable poverty. It has suffered from decades of notorious corruption. When we arrived in 2000, the country had only recently emerged from a long dark dictatorship. The last dictator, Sani Abacha, died in June 1998. Semi-democratic elections -- I will not say democratic but pseudo-democratic – were held in May 1999. A former army general and military ruler during the 1970s, Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba, was overwhelmingly elected president. I use the word democracy with small letters.

With Obasanjo's rise as a democratically-elected president, hopes for Nigeria were high in Washington. For over a quarter century, the USG possessed a very jaundiced view of Nigeria. The U.S.-Nigerian relationship had been particularly rocky during the tenure of Sani Abacha (1993-1998.) Now, times had changed. The USAID program was beefed up. I believe it reached an annual level of $100 million during our tenure there. President Clinton visited Nigeria a week or two before we arrived. His visit was warmly received by the Nigerian people.

Q: Was there much payoff going on?

COHEN: Absolutely. But in Nigeria there was never enough money to satisfy everybody. That would have been impossible. Under the dictatorship of Sani Abacha, the scope of corruption was beyond imagination. From 1999, under President Obasanjo, corruption had been reined in compared to the Sani Abacha regime. But graft was still enormous and it went very high up in the governmental hierarchy. Transparency International (TI), the

international anti-corruption NGO founded in the 1990s, usually rated Nigeria at the very bottom or close to the bottom of its corruption index every year. We in the west usually perceive corruption as an individual's peccadillo. However, in my experience, most corruption is institutional. It is structural. Accusing a particular person of being corrupt misses the point. The system is often corrupt. For one to survive and even thrive, corrupt practices must be employed to some extent. Salaries are inadequate. Rent seeking opportunities are too tempting. Families, clans, and tribes must be provided for. I do not know if President Obasanjo was especially corrupt; in fact, he was one of the founding members of TI. However, his vice president, Atiku Abubakar, suffered from a reputation of corruption. Many Nigerian governors led very lavish lifestyles. Patronage was widespread. To survive and rule in a place like Nigeria, within a very corrupt system, leaders had to manage their environment.

Q: What about Nigeria's military? Were they dominated by any particular group?

COHEN: I cannot tell you much about the military. In Lagos I did not associate with them. I never dealt with the Ministry of Defense. But I can remark on the role played by the military in the region. President Obasanjo sought to expand Nigeria's regional leadership. While governed by military dictators, Nigeria did not exercise much African leadership. But with Nigeria's democratically elected government, Africans welcomed greater Nigerian leadership. Under ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), President Obasanjo sent a contingent of Nigerian troops to Sierra Leone as peacekeepers. This was pretty remarkable. A couple of years earlier, Nigeria would never have been invited to provide peacekeepers. Now Nigeria was taking a lead role. Unfortunately, many Nigerian soldiers sent to Sierra Leone contracted HIV. The incidence of HIV within the Nigerian military rose rapidly because of these deployments.

Q: One of the most important foreign relations overseas is between a consulate and an embassy. How did things work between the two?

COHEN: Generally with difficulty, occasionally with crisis, and every once in a while with camaraderie. The relationship was stressed for a multitude of reasons. Start with a large embassy in the country's largest city, Lagos. A small liaison office is located in the new capital, Abuja. Because of the sour bilateral relations during the Abacha years, the liaison office was intentionally kept small and insignificant. The USG did not want to offer any legitimacy to that dictatorship by having an embassy in the capital. So we kept a very small office in Abuja. Obasanjo becomes Nigeria's elected president. Our bilateral ties warm up. President Clinton decides to relocate the embassy to show our support for the new government. Many embassies have already made the move to the capital. It is the right decision.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

LEON WEINTRAUB
Department of State
Political Officer
Lagos, Nigeria
(1982-1984)
Deputy Director
West African Affairs Bureau
Washington, DC
(2000-2002)

Mr. Weintraub was born and raised in New York City, educated at Hunter College, Brooklyn College and the Universities of Pittsburgh and Wisconsin. After service in Liberia with the Peace Corps he entered government service, first with the Navy Department and then with the State Department Foreign Service. His service in Washington and abroad involved him with a variety of countries and issues including African Affairs, International Organizations, Narcotics and Peace-Keeping operations in Africa. His foreign posts were Bogotá, Tel Aviv, Lagos, Quito and Geneva. Mr. Weintraub was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus – Post-military Transition in Nigeria in the Early 2000's

Q: How did we view the president of Nigeria at the time you were there?

WEINTRAUB: Well, I guess there were two schools of thought. One was that- (end side one, tape seven)

One view was that he was no different than any other. He said the right words but he lived off corruption as much as anyone else. And the other view saw him, in fact, as someone who -- given serious constraints on how much he could do -- nevertheless was sincerely a committed individual who wanted to bring about democratization and clean government to Nigeria, at least by Nigerian standards. This was the man who had earlier assumed the power of military leader of Nigeria in the '70s after one of the other military leaders was assassinated, Murtala Mohammad. And in the late '70s he voluntarily stepped down. I mean, this was after Nigeria had had a military government for over a decade. In the late '70s he voluntarily stepped down, and there was an election in '79. He retired to his farm in order to be a chicken farmer. And said okay, I'm out of politics now. This was something practically unheard of anywhere in the third world where there had been a military coup.

Well, that second republic lasted from 1979 to 1983. Another military government took over on December 31, 1983, following elections in August that year that were heavily criticized for being unfair if not downright fraudulent. That military regime, in one form or another, lasted to the late 1990s. Its various leaders – both the military leaders themselves and the former elected officials who worked with them during that period -- were seen by many as so tainted by allegations of corruption that nobody could trust them or wanted to trust them. Obasanjo, by contrast, during his time out of office, the '80s and '90s, had gathered a reputation as somewhat of an elder statesman, one of the few African leaders who stepped down -- even though he in fact had been a military leader, nevertheless he stepped down voluntarily. So he had gathered about himself an aura of the elder statesman. He had served on a number of committees for the United Nations, been an envoy or two for the secretary general of the United Nations. He had been invited to attend meetings with Jimmy Carter, and other NGOs. He had a persona as one of the wise men of the continent and the elder statesman, as I said. So he had a nice, kind of a clean reputation going into those elections in 1999. So I kind saw him as operating in a tough environment but he himself wanted to do the right thing; given the environment of Nigeria he was the best of the lot, he was the best that we could hope for the future of Nigeria.

Q: What- well, let's talk about Nigeria first. What was the situation there and what were our concerns?

WEINTRAUB: Well, since the time I had served as a desk officer and again more recently, Nigeria had once again made a transition from military rule to civilian rule. The Babangida government was in power when I was there as a desk officer but now it was following the elections of '99, and the current leader of Nigeria was, and still is, President Obasanjo. He had been recently elected, so Nigeria was then as now under a democratically elected government. If anything, though, corruption and the scams had gotten worse, the allegations of drug smuggling had gotten worse. At the same time, we were heavily involved with Nigeria and other members of the regional or I should say the sub-regional organization known as ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, E-C-O-W-A-S.

(1985-1988)

Ambassador Leader was born in Pennsylvania and raised in Ohio. She was educated at Denison University, the University of Chicago, and the Columbia University School of Journalism. After work in the private sector and with the US Department of Education, she joined the Peace Corps, serving in Kinshasa and at headquarters in Washington. Joining the State Department in 1982 he began her career in which she was to deal primarily with African concerns, both in Washington and abroad. His foreign postings include Kinshasa, Ouagadougou, Lagos and Marseilles. In 1999 she was appointed Ambassador to Guinea, where she served until 2000. Ambassador Leader was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Topical Focus – Democracy and Human Rights Fund Programming in Nigeria during mid-1980s

Q: In 1985 you arrive in Lagos. What was Nigeria like then?

LEADER: In some ways, it was already somewhat dangerous. I recall that there were some incidents that people at the embassy faced. One fellow had his car hijacked at gunpoint. There were other incidents involving guns and foreigners and Americans. It was an extremely lively place. The Nigerians loved talking to foreigners. As a political officer it was so easy to get information because everybody wanted to tell you their side of the story. If you didn't come to them, they would come to you, because you had to know their point of view. But while it was very easy to get information, the harder part was to assess it. Everybody was telling you their particular side of the story. This was not long after a coup. The president, Babangida, had come to power about six months before I got there. He was promising a return to democratic rule and political stability. The people who had been in charge of political parties were already starting to maneuver. I had the good fortune of being sent up to Kaduna one summer when there was a gap between the consul generals who were the principal officers there. I was able to go around and talk to all of these would-be political leaders and send in reports of their aspirations and what they were envisioning. This was very welcome and very much appreciated throughout the U.S. government. Those reports put Kaduna on the map at that time. It was a very exciting time. The Nigerians in the south were very vivacious and fun loving. They liked to have foreigners at their events, and when I say "events," I mean their weddings, their chief inductions, even deaths. They wanted you always to come to their events and so we got involved in a lot of these kinds of things. You really got into the culture. I worked with the Democracy Fund. By that time, we had the Democracy and Human Rights Fund. I worked with people who were human rights activists. There was a woman who was very involved… She was the Nigerian representative to the African-American Institute and she was very involved in trying to reach out to women on democracy. We funded a project that she had and funded some human rights projects. We were very busy and very involved, very engaged.

AMBASSADOR PRINCETON LYMAN
U. S. Ambassador
Lagos, Nigeria
(1986-1989)

Ambassador Princeton Lyman was born and raised in San Francisco. He was educated at Stanford University, University of California and Harvard University. In 1961 he joined the Agency for International Development (AID), where he served as Program Director in Korea and Ethiopia. In his long and distinguished career, Ambassador Lyman held a number of high positions at AID Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well as with The Department of State. After serving as Ambassador to Nigeria and later to South Africa, Ambassador Lyman was Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations from 1996 to 1998. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus – USIS and Support of Nigerian Media

LYMAN: But on the whole, our relations with Nigeria were good. One thing I did with Babangida, which my successor did not do, was to meet with him alone. I almost never took any of my staff to these meetings. He usually didn't have anybody with him; except Mohammed from time to time. I never mentioned these meetings in public, nor did I share the substance of the conversations with any other ambassadors. Not many people saw the president; some of my fellow ambassadors complained about that and therefore I did not tell them of my meetings. The British High Commissioner and I were the only foreign representatives who had regular access. We protected that and I think it made a lot of difference. I gave a lot of speeches. I talked about democracy, but I was careful in my remarks not to slam the government. That I think also added to the confidence that Babangida had in me. As I said earlier, later Babangida went off the tracks for a lot of different reasons, but for some time he did a fine job in my eyes.

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Q: Please talk a little about the Nigerian media.

LYMAN: The Nigerian media is very sensationalist. It is very political. All the newspapers are owned by major political figures. I had good access to the press; it printed a lot of my speeches. Once I gave a speech on US-Nigerian relations and I touched on the wheat import ban. I mentioned Section 301 of the trade act, which called for some retaliatory sanctions against major embargoes. The media picked up this minor point that

I had made and accused me of threatening sanctions against Nigeria; it pointed out that we didn't apply sanctions to South Africa, but here was poor Nigeria and we threatened it. My remarks became a major flap. I sent my speech to Babangida and he saw that the press was making a mountain out of a molehill and cut off further media discussion of my comments. He had that kind of influence on the media. But the press was very sensationalist. We had good USIS programs which worked with the press. But the media was a frustrated group unhappy with a military dictatorship. They had limits on their freedom. At the time, we witnessed the blossoming of news magazines, patterned after Newsweek and Time. One was called Newswatch or something like that. I think the magazines were better than the papers. They did some quality work despite being under pressure from the government; in fact, from time to time, they were closed down. That became a real human rights issue that we worried about. We kept in close touch with them and I spent a lot of time with magazine staff members because their articles were of such good quality. Magazines became very popular.

PAKISTAN

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM B. MILAM
U.S. Ambassador
Pakistan
(1998-2001)

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

Topical Focus – Re-Democratization of Pakistan After Overthrow of Nawaz Sharif's Government

Q; So Musharraf is in. What are you doing?

MILAM: Musharraf, well we are trying to work with the Musharraf government to nudge it back toward the electoral democracy the Army had overthrown, and to get done things we want to have to have done, and keep it from doing things we don't want to have done. I think for the most of the two years I was there that Musharraf was in power, we talked primarily about Afghanistan, about the Taliban, about Al Qaeda, about catching Al Qaeda guys slipping through Pakistan to Afghanistan. I went to him several times when we were having trouble with the ISI in getting cooperation on catching Al Qaeda guys we thought were around. I think the relationship was becoming what it essentially always had been and should be, a transactional one.

Q: How did we see this? OK Musharraf is in. ISI has essentially been running the Taliban or at least giving support, and that includes Al Qaeda. Was the ISI responding to say Musharraf.

MILAM: I don't know what Musharraf was saying to them. Nothing much changed in the two years I was there. I understood this. Pakistanis thought that it was in their strategic interest to have an Afghanistan next door that was not hostile to them. They thought that a Taliban controlled- Afghanistan that point would not have been hostile to them. They thought they had influence with the Taliban. They thought that they could pretty much get their way if they wanted it there, because they had been so helpful. And

really you know, when you think about where Pakistan comes from, you understand they could not bear to have a hostile Afghanistan on one side and a hostile India on the other. Their eyes started to open about the Taliban in the spring of 2000. What started to open them was the incident where the Taliban destroyed those Buddhist statues. The Pakistanis were horrified by that idea, like the rest of the world. They tried to stop it. Musharraf sent two high ranking emissaries up to see Mullah Omar, one of them being my friend , Moinuddin Haider who had become Home Minister under Musharraf, and the other one being the director general of the ISI, General Mahmoud. I think they went up there thinking that if they asked the Taliban to do something, given their generous assistance to the Taliban, they will do it. Well the Taliban turned them down coldly. I think I started seeing light bulbs going on in their heads that maybe they didn't have as much influence up there as they thought. They were beginning to rethink their relationship with the Taliban. Would it have ever changed absent 9/11? I am not sure. But they were beginning to have doubts about it.

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Q: What about during your time there, were you I mean was the constant theme when are you going to get back to democracy, or did you feel it was going to happen shortly?

MILAM: I actually was a little too confident perhaps. Musharraf said he was going to return to democracy in three years, and I thought he meant it. Actually he may have meant it in his own mind, but he appears to have had a very dim understanding of what democracy really means. I didn't realize at the time that he had a different kind of democracy in mind than most of us have. Pakistan shows no signs of establishing a truly democratic system. I knew that when Musharraf said he was going to have elections within three years of taking over, he meant it; and he did have elections. It is just that the elections didn't produce much of a democracy. But democratization was a constant theme. I know when the President came out that was one of his themes.

Q: We were talking about Musharraf saying he would have elections within three years.

MILAM: Oh yeah, I knew he was going to have elections within three years. That was not a problem, but what kind of elections and where they would take Pakistan was the problem. We kept asking him for that road map I asked him for on the first day I saw him after the coup. We never really got what I would call a road map. But in fact I think we were all confident that he was heading back towards electoral politics. So when he said Pakistan was going to get back to elections in three years, everybody believed him, and it was true, Pakistan had an election at the end of the three year period he had set out. The The election, however, was to elect Musharraf as President.

PALESTINE - WEST BANK/GAZA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHARLES (CHUCK) HUNTER
Department of State
Public Affairs Officer
Israel
Jerusalem, Israel
(2002-2005)

Chuck Hunter was born in Appleton Wisconsin in 1961. He completed his undergraduate education at Lawrence University, where he received a BA in French. He then completed a MA and PHD in French and the Humanities at Stanford University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1990. During his career he was assigned to Egypt, Algeria, Oman, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. He retired in 2020 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 2nd of that year. Chuck Hunter was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2020.

Topical Focus – American - Jewish Relations, AIPAC, Palestine, American Policy Toward Palestine

Q: Did you feel the American Jewish community putting this hand on the scale?

HUNTER: The American Jewish community is a diverse body. That's a point that's important to make, and it's also important to point out that there are many groups of U.S. citizens who have been exercising their right to lobby public officials. The segments of the American Jewish population are not at all unique in doing that. Something that did change over the years is that a greater variety of opinion is reaching the ears of elected officials. There are a number of the American Jewish organizations, such as AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations…

Q: AIPAC is the American Israeli Political Action Committee.

HUNTER: That's correct. They have been around for years and have been adept at laying out their point of view and their aims for U.S. foreign policy. But in more recent years

another segment of the American Jewish population and their supporters have formed 34 organizations like J Street to give an alternate point of view. I think that's a healthy thing. On the other side of the coin—this is something that I've said not just to Palestinian contacts of mine but honestly to contacts in the majority of my postings—there has been a notable lack, for the most part, of organized political activity and lobbying by Americans of Arab heritage. There was never an effective Palestinian-American group that corresponded to any of the Jewish-American organizations that could provide a different narrative for decision makers to factor into policy creation. That, I think, is a shortcoming. Whatever the reasons were that these groups of citizens decided not to get involved—there are several that you could come up with—the impact of that decision, whether it was one taken consciously or unconsciously, was that they weren't in the game, to put it very bluntly.

Q: You mentioned there are several reasons you can think of why they weren't in the game, but can you give some of the reasons why you think they weren't?

HUNTER: I'll do that but with the caveat that I'm not Arab-American and so these reasons are purely speculative. But one example would be a feeling of numeric inferiority. The numbers of Arab-Americans have historically not been large in the United States. There's not been a history on a national level of very much organization even for charitable and fraternal purposes. The Arab world of course is a large and diverse place, and where people come from matters in whether they naturally gravitate toward one another. So that diversity I think may have worked against the ability of…

Q: (Phone rings.) Let me just get this phone here.

HUNTER: Shall I continue?

Q: Yeah, I'm trying to take this. Hold on. That was on my solicitation phone.

HUNTER: Yeah, we're all familiar with those! So I was saying, the diversity of the Arab-American community or even for that matter the Muslim-American community, which obviously goes beyond people of Arab heritage, has maybe mitigated against people's instinct to band together. Those are just a few reasons. I'm sure people could come up with others.

Whatever the reason, the impact—and that's the most important part—has been a near total absence of organized lobbying by people who could come up with counter narratives or alternate points of view to feed into the policy process. At the same time, I should recognize that there are political organizations of Muslim-Americans and of

Arab-Americans, as well as NGOs like the Middle East think tanks and so on, who focus on that region who have done very important and praiseworthy work to create understanding about that region and to interact with members of Congress and administration officials. But in the big picture, no organization has had the same weight over the years as an AIPAC, nor has any group of organizations had the same impact as the Conference of Major Presidents. I think that's an objective statement of fact.

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Q: How did you feel about, say within the State Department, support for the Palestinian cause?

HUNTER: That's a question we could spend hours dissecting and parsing, because you'd have to be very careful on what you mean by "the Palestinian cause." As I was saying, within the American Jewish community—and this would be true within Israel as well—there's a wide variety of opinions on what the appropriate approach is toward the very notion of Israel and what its relationship should be with both its Arab citizens and its Arab neighbors. There's also a spectrum of opinion within the Palestinian population on those very same questions: what Palestinian governments should look like, what the Palestinians' relationship should be with Israel as a neighbor, and with the Arabs who live within Israel's borders.

To take things at the broadest level, once President (George W.) Bush finally did articulate the goal of a two-state solution, which I think was something that came as a relief to most if not all people in the State Department who were focused on those issues, the approach that we then could openly pursue was one aimed at creating two democratic states, side by side and that is an outcome that, while it's still theoretical, is realistic to envision, in my view. There's nothing inherent in the Palestinian character, whatever that might be, that would prevent them from living in a democracy that is worthy of the name. But that diversity of opinion that I referred to has wound up being extremely challenging in trying to bring about a democracy that includes acceptance on the part of all citizens of Israel's right to exist. That difficulty is only made worse by the geographic separation between Gaza and the West Bank and a lot of the economic and social grievances that the Palestinians have.

But to answer your question as concisely as I can, I think people in the State Department working on the Arab-Israeli conflict have seen the Palestinian cause as something that should result in the creation of a State of Palestine run on democratic principles and living in peace and security with its neighbor, Israel. Those were the policy lines that we

repeated over and over again. I think they were appropriately drawn, and ones that I hope will one day in the future reflect the reality on the ground.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JAMES A. LAROCCO

James Larocco graduated from the University of Portland in 1970 and from the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1972. He joined the foreign service in 1973. He worked in Washington, D.C., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Kuwait in different capacities. He was the deputy director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and was the deputy chief of mission in Tel Aviv. He was the Ambassador to Kuwait from 1997-2001. He left the foreign service in 2004. Ambassador James A. Larocco was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Topical Focus – Peace Efforts Leading up to 2005

Failed Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts…again

Q: Looking at your experience with the peace process over the decades, was there hope for a breakthrough during your time as P/DAS? Quite frankly, it was a secondary effort, Right?

LAROCCO: The White House, especially after 9/11, had other priorities, as you would expect. But they also understood the importance of keeping the parties, in this case primarily the Palestinians and Israelis, engaged. As one Israeli pundit used to say, the peace process is a car with no brakes. It can't stop. It either goes forward or backward. The Bush administration inherited a situation where it had gone significantly backward. The failure of Clinton's talks related to either the Palestinians or the Syrians and the outbreak of the second Intifada made any prospects for peace bleak. But an effort had to be made. This primarily rested with State. We went through a series of envoys and commissions, including Mitchell, Tenet, Zinni and an FSO, John Wolf, but there was not much to show for all the effort. The preparation of a roadmap brought new hope, but that stalled en route, never getting much beyond the starting line of the map. I could go on and on with everything that happened, but this is all well documented by many others.

There were several events that I would like to comment on that I believe are not covered elsewhere. I remember Powell calling me up to his office, before he was about to make a trip to Ramallah, asking me an unexpected question: What did I think of Arafat? Of course, I referred him to Bill or David. Both of them were traveling, and he simply

repeated his question, saying he was asking me. I related briefly my experience in the 90s when he came to Gaza, comments by Rabin and other Israelis, and comments by Palestinians I had known well and trusted. I concluded with the words, "He will let you down."

I came away from that meeting feeling that Powell wanted to support Arafat, hoping in fact that using Powell's well known personal powers of persuasion, Arafat might prove a willing and able partner in digging out of the deep hole of the situation prevailing at that time. Powell went out there and literally – and I mean literally – saved Arafat, escorting him down the stairwell out of his HQ in Ramallah, which was under fire. Powell, in my view, made extraordinary personal efforts to reverse the negative trends, restart a meaningful peace process. I recall a conversation with him over the Christmas holidays when Arafat had betrayed the hard work of our envoy, Tony Zinni. If Powell ever had any confidence in Arafat, the repeated frustrations with and betrayals by Arafat shattered that. For the most part, the rest of the period following that was damage control on the peace process.

But…I don't want to leave the impression that all was negative. During this period, we began to focus more and more on building Palestinian institutions of governance and their security apparatus. The Israelis had long contended that the Palestinians were not ready for real self-governance. We understood this, but put the principle and goal of a peace agreement ahead of institution building. Now with the prospect of meaningful progress on the wider issues out of reach, we shifted more toward grass roots development. This has continued to this day, and whenever I visit the West Bank, I marvel at the progress that has been made regarding institution building, security forces skills and economic growth. It is remarkable. One must give the Palestinians themselves great credit, and many attribute this to the focused leadership of Salem Fayyad, but I also believe that our sustained support is an example of well-focused assistance that meets the goal and objectives of all the parties to the conflict.

Because of the second intifada, this was a time where there was a lot of crisis management. Bill Burns went out to Jenin when that was getting pummeled, stood against the ruins and said we must have peace, we must avoid this conflict. I admired Bill for doing that. It sent a strong message to both the Palestinians and Israelis, and was in finest tradition of American diplomacy.

Q: What was the second intifada?

LAROCCO: I won't get into all the history and events leading up to this. Let me simply say that anger was building up in the territories, and all it needed was a spark to ignite.

That spark came from Sharon going to the Temple Mount, the Haram Al-Sharif.

Palestinian anger manifested itself in repeated clashes with Israelis. It was indeed an uprising, and it stayed at boiling point for an extended period.
Sharon, as every prime minister before him, was looking for some way to advance the situation in Israeli's interests, and he revealed a new initiative in late 2003, if I have my year correct, in calling for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. We were aware of this, largely dismissing it as inconsistent with the basic principle of negotiating all changes regarding land, security or peace. This was not land for peace or land for security; this was land for nothing. It made no sense.

Gaza, of course, had been Egyptian-administered territory until the Israelis took over there in 1967. Gaza's connection with Egypt had been long standing, traceable back to the Pharaohs of the 2nd millennium BCE. Gaza was never viewed by the majority of Israelis as either key to their security, as long as there was a Peace Treaty with Egypt, as there was, or important historically, religiously, culturally or economically. Many wished they could simply give it back to Egypt. The Egyptians, for their part, didn't want it back. They had enough problems governing mainland Egypt without having the burden of the Palestinians in general or Gaza in particular in their portfolio.

A negotiated agreement on withdrawal from Gaza was never in Sharon's sights. He sent Ehud Olmert to explain his plan. I recall escorting Olmert in to see Secretary Powell, his first call, and he explained in detail the plan. Powell reacted with skepticism, underlining our belief that a negotiated withdrawal was far preferable. A unilateral withdrawal would yield no guarantees for Israel, and Israel may get far more than what it wished for. Olmert simply responded that this was serious, Sharon was determined to carry it out despite some significant domestic opposition, and he would do it. He hoped to have full U.S. Support.

Olmert then went to the White House, and quite frankly, while we expected White House support, we were unprepared for what happened next. A letter was prepared which went much further than ever before in stating emphatically policy commitments to Israel. Policy is rarely committed to paper in the relations among nations except in the most key commitments, enduring ones, at least it is hoped. But these commitments are usually long debated and negotiated before they are put on paper. This was not. The unwritten, solid, unwavering commitment to Israel was well known and had full bipartisan support in the Congress. Putting this down in a letter was an unexpected move, since without open discussion, Congressional approval or codification in a formal agreement, it could be interpreted as only a statement of the Bush administration, expiring with the end of the administration. I truly believed the Israelis interpreted it as an enduring commitment. I

have not seen how legal experts and scholars view that letter.
In any case, the unilateral withdrawal did take place, and did so peacefully, contrary to some expectations. But not without repercussions. I happened to be on the border at Kerem Shalom when the last Israeli truck passed through and the gates were closed and locked. This was in 2005, and I was director general of the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO). After watching this, I drove along the Gaza-Egypt border, and watched as thousands of Gazans streamed across the border into Egypt. There were people of all ages, some bearing Hamas banners, all very excited.

I recall that our Force Commander, who was accompanying me, was petrified. I said not to worry. I got out of the car, said salaam aleikum, pointed to the symbol on our vehicles, and was delighted to hear the words "EmmeEffeO good!" (MFO good.) They didn't bother us as we continued to drive north along the border, seeing the crowds growing bigger and bigger. We knew the numbers had to be at least in the tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands. It was a nightmare for the north Sinai and for the Egyptian Government.

Of course, the unilateral withdrawal proved rapidly not to be what Sharon had envisioned. But this story takes me beyond my time in the Foreign Service.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DAVID HARDEN

David Harden graduated from Franklin and Marshall College with his BA in 1984. He spent time in the Peace Corps before attending Columbia University. He graduated with his MA in 1989. He graduated Georgetown Law School with his JD in 1994. He joined USAID as a regional legal advisor in 1998. He held the position of regional legal advisor in Bangladesh and Central Asia before becoming deputy mission director to the West Bank and Gaza in 2005. He was also the deputy mission director for Iraq before he became the mission director for the West Bank and Gaza and then for Yemen. He retired from USAID in 2018. David Harden was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2024.

Topical Focus – USAID Activities in West Bank/Gaza 2005

Q: Were we involved with the disengagement process and working at all with the Israelis in that?

HARDEN: You mean, the U.S. or USAID?

Q: Maybe, the U.S. generally and then with USAID.

HARDEN: Yes. 100 percent.

Q: Was USAID involved in it?

HARDEN: Yeah, 100 percent. We were deeply involved.

Q: What were you doing?

HARDEN: So, first of all, Israel's defense forces have a civilian administration function that oversees the occupying and the civil administration of the territories in which it occupies. It's called COGAT. The Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories–

Q: And the territories are Gaza and the West Bank?

HARDEN: Yeah. Right. They are the occupying governing force, for all intents and purposes. They plus, the kinetic fighters have to bring down the settlements, twenty-six settlements. I don't remember how many people. 50,000? I don't know what the number is anymore. But it was not nothing. There were a lot of people and moved them back into Greenline Israel, and they also did the same four settlements in the Northwest Bank. Then the Palestinian Authority needed to kind of come in and fill that vacuum. That meant, governing structures, social services, economic opportunity, and security, and all of that. So that kind of relinquishment of space and the refilling of space was an interagency undertaking and the embassy ran it, but they kept Ward, who was AFRICOM [United States Africa Command] later, was the first U.S. security coordinator that I worked with pretty closely and then Keith Dayton after that. Their job was to prepare the Palestinian Authority security services and just to make sure this transition would work.

Q: Okay, was it moving people as well as overseeing the administrative disengagement or was it also Israelis who had settled in? Were there Israelis in Gaza who were also Returning?

HARDEN: Yes. We didn't have any involvement in that.

Q: But in the new administration of Gazans over those settlements we were involved?

HARDEN: What do you do with all the houses that were left? Okay, what do you do

with all the greenhouses that were producing tulips and strawberries? What do you do with the security on areas that were highly bisected with Israeli Defense Forces prior to Gaza disengagement and where they left and they evacuated. So, the Palestinian forces would have to come in and operate. What do you do with cross border trade? How to protect that and how do you get goods and stuff like that under this new, essentially dynamic?

Q: But this would have been seen as a positive step. Was that correct? By the Israelis?

HARDEN: I thought it was a positive step. I think the Bush administration thought it was a positive step, Tony Blair, who was UK Prime Minister and was also involved in all this thought it was a positive step. A lot of Palestinians weren't so sure, because what the Israelis ended up doing was essentially sealing the perimeter around Gaza except for the very bottom at Rafa and I did a lot of work on Rafa too. Also more or less sealing the access from the Mediterranean. So, the Palestinians would argue at the time that this was an open-air prison.

Q: It was isolating them in a way?

HARDEN: I mean, the Israelis are maintaining occupation by controlling the perimeters and access points. Now, the very bottom though is connected to Egypt. I mean, I was all over– and all the entry points for people and goods, all of that was USAID, a lot of it was USAID, figuring out how to get goods in and out. Which as you can see is still the case, because Samantha Power was in Amman the other day, just saying the exact same thing. I mean, I spent eleven years working on this, bringing in the best technology, taking Israelis to the southern border, to work on movements of trucks, all this kind of stuff. So yeah, so I started during the Gaza disengagement, which was a historically very big event. Of course, the evacuation out of the northern West Bank, which gave us a twenty-year opportunity, which we failed to deliver. In a nutshell, right at that time, we were faced with two questions.
So, during Gaza disengagement with Hamas, basically, in control, we had a decision to make. We had two theories to take, and we applied each theory separately to the West Bank versus Gaza. In Gaza, our theory would be economic pressure on Hamas would yield political change. So, if you put enough pressure on Hamas, they would fail, they would moderate or they would get out of the way. Not an unreasonable theory on what to do, okay. In the same in Jenin in the northern West Bank, equally dangerous place, which was the center of the Intifada, I'm sorry, the center of the suicide bombers, the capital of the suicide bombers, we had a very similar problem, but a different theory. There, our theory was that economic opportunity would yield political change. So, we had a chance to assess these two different theories in real time in similar labs to see

what worked and I've written enormously about this very point. In a nutshell, economic pressure on Hamas was a catastrophic failure. Hamas just got more powerful, and they defeated all their enemies. In the northern West Bank that created a massive window of opportunity for fifteen years, which the Israelis did not follow up on and it's not a substitute for political change, but it created a window for political change that has since failed.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

TERRENCE "TERRY" BROWN

Terrence Brown graduated from Kalamazoo College in 1969 and from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1971. He joined USAID as an intern in 1971. He worked as a loan officer for USAID in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and in the Near East Bureau. He later worked as the deputy assistant administrator in the Asia Near East Bureau. Brown retired from USAID in 2000 before returning as a policy bureau contractor from 2011 to 2018.

Topical Focus – Distributing Aid to Palestinians

Q: Okay an early Clinton Administration priority was the Middle East, clearly, and so all those dollars… The ESF that had been in Central America was now going to…

BROWN: Right. $400 million was going to the Palestinians.

Q: So, the Asia Near East Bureau, which stretched from the Philippines to Morocco…

BROWN: Margaret was the head of the Bureau, and then there was a DAA for Asia and a DAA for the Near East. The Bureau didn't align with the corresponding State bureaus very well. Margaret found herself in some very uncomfortable positions as assistant administrator, dealing with two State Regional Assistant Secretaries and SMEC. She was stretched very thin and needed me to step up. My major State counterpart was the DAS for the Near East Bureau, a political appointee.

There was an AID program of assistance to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza designed and approved for that supplemental of $400 million. Some of those funds had been dispersed supporting the Palestinian police and other costs of the Palestinian Authority, but a lot of it still was not been designed. State was talking about some very strange things to use that money for. We, essentially, at that point, were looking to expand our program with the NGOs we'd been traditionally working with in the West

Bank and Gaza. A lot of it was humanitarian or educational was not clearly associated with USAID and USG support to the Palestinians. It was a group of NGOs, international and U.S.-based NGOs, working there. My job was to redefine the program strategy away from indirect assistance through NGOs and also build an AID Mission that could manage a program of more direct assistance.

Q: In the field?

BROWN: Yes. It was then getting enough qualified staff in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to manage a very different kind of program, including transferring staff from other Posts to the Mission in Tel Aviv.

Q: It was a very small staff, was it not?

BROWN: We had a couple of people in Jerusalem, and a couple of people in Tel Aviv. Managing logistics of the program was complicated by the Israeli security system. Normally you could not travel directly from Gaza to the West Bank.

Q: Was that was an issue? Hadn't there been communication problems between the two?

BROWN: It was very time-consuming. US staff could travel to the West Bank and Gaza, but our Palestinian staff couldn't. The Israelis would not permit residence of the West Bank to travel to Gaza or the reverse. At the most basic level, we had to use drivers from Gaza when we traveled to Gaza but could not use them to drive to the West Bank. In addition, the question was how to make the AID program more responsive to priority Palestinian needs and also make the USG more visible as a source of that assistance. For example, there was a significant sewage treatment problem in Gaza, a problem with access to water in the West Bank. These major problems were not initially part of our assistance strategy.

Q: That the State Department had initially defined? Or that we had not?

BROWN: We had not.

Q: Because we were focused too much on the small NGO, community-based work?

BROWN: Right. Initially the strategy was to increase funding through our traditional mechanisms rather than looking at activities that would be more supportive of the peace process. To reduce the stress with State over the direction of the AID program, I worked to totally redefine our assistance strategy.

Q: How did you do that?

BROWN: One of the ways was identifying a couple of key people to transfer to the West Bank/Gaza Mission. I had authority to encourage people to volunteer to break their current assignment and move to Tel Aviv. Frankly, I raided a couple of missions; didn't make friends of Mission Directors that way but we got the staff that we needed, and then we were able to actually revise the strategy and implement it. I also reduced or suspended current or proposed activities under the old strategy. In one case, I stopped the award of very large technical assistance in health contract meant to strengthen the Palestinian Authority's health capacity. There was no viable Palestinian health authority. So, we just terminated it before the contract was awarded and used the funding for other priorities. These and other steps caught State's attention, and the negative view of the AID program went way down. There were always constant discussions fussing around this or that, but the major discontent was removed. At that time, I would travel fairly frequently to the region, including Cairo, Tel Aviv and Amman. So, I knew… I got to know the Ambassadors in Egypt and Jordan quite well, and the USAID Directors. In Israel, I worked mostly with the USAID Mission Director and less so with our Ambassador in Israel.

Q: Did you have dealings with the consul general in Jerusalem?

BROWN: Somewhat. The space allocated to USAID at the Consulate was literally a trailer converted to basic office space. I think there was room for maybe two people, so the staff for the West Bank/Gaza program was in Tel Aviv, with daily travel to both Areas.

Q: Right, and I think that today, the staff is all in Tel Aviv.

BROWN: I have no idea what will happen after the embassy is moved to Jerusalem. We'll see.

Q: An embassy inside of the consulate.

BROWN: I guess that's right. I don't know what they're going to do, because the consulate is very small.

Q: Yes. So, the program strategy, you began, then, to have it deal more with some of the big-ticket infrastructure items and…

BROWN: We still had some of the more locally grounded activities going, but we were also working with the Palestinian Authority, working with the Palestinians, and other local organizations. It was the most political program I have ever dealt with because, I mean, everything is political there, and the Israelis were never particularly cooperative in terms of things like custom clearances for equipment, visas for technical advisor, building and well-drilling permits and the like.

Q: Right. Did you have meetings with Palestinian leadership?

BROWN: Yes, my main counterpart was the Minister for International Cooperation.

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BROWN: Yes. Actually, I think that was a little more before my time. That was when the US announced $400 million assistance package. The one meeting I had with Arafat began with him asking me for the $400 million.

Q: It's in my back pocket!

BROWN: Exactly. "Where's my $400 million?" Well, it's this way. That was funny, explaining why we were not talking about cash. The meeting was with the Secretary of State, and the Special Middle East Coordinator with Arafat and his team in Gaza. They needed an AID guy at the table to respond to those questions.

Q: So, the relationships, then, smoothed out with the State Department? You did what they needed you to do?

BROWN: Yes. they were satisfied that the AID program was helping Palestinians in key areas like water supply and being a visible USG presence. We had switched from grants to NGO's to contracts for infrastructure. And also, the Vice President was interested in working out an economic partnership with the Government of Egypt, the Gore-Mubarak Initiative.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR EDMUND JAMES HULL

Edmund Hull was born in Iowa and raised in Illinois. He graduated from Princeton College before he joined the Peace Corp in 1971. He entered the foreign service in 1974 where his first assignment was with the Cyrus Task Force. He was a political officer in

both Israel and Egypt over the course of his career before working his way to the position of deputy chief of mission in Cairo, Egypt in 1993. His highest post was as the U.S. Ambassador to Yemen from 2001-2004. Ambassador Edmund James Hull was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus – Implementing the Oslo Accords

HULL: There were, however, challenges. I will give you an example. After the Oslo Accords, the
implementing agreements were negotiated to a very significant extent in Cairo because Mubarak was an acceptable host for both the Israelis and the Palestinians. There would be quick, short-term requirements to help get this Palestinian authority up and operating. For example, Arafat needed vehicles for his security forces if he was going to take effective control of security in the West Bank and Gaza, and we were talking about a need over a matter of months, if not weeks. And, of course, AID's idea of a timeline was a year or two. So we undertook the challenge of somehow coming up with an AID program that could get vehicles on the ground in the Palestinian territories in a matter of weeks and we actually managed to do it by extraordinary effort. I thought this was a shining hour for AID, and I'm sure it was appreciated by people like Warren Christopher. One day when I was addressing an AID retreat, and I referred to this agreement as one of their great successes over the past year. Afterwards, good friends from AID came up to me and informed me that I was referring to what many in AID had seen as one of their great defeats! So I had a reality check on the different cultures at play. Of course, we've seen that cultural battle being fought out in the years since then with AID losing more and more ground to the extent that now it's a shadow of its former self and the Secretary of State has, with the support of Congress, achieved more and more control over AID's functioning.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

LARRY GARBER

Larry Garber graduated with a BA in Political Science from Queens College in 1976 and a combined JD/MIA from Columbia School of Law and Columbia School of International Affairs in 1980. He worked with the International Human Rights Law Group and the National Democratic Institute before joining USAID in 1993. Garber was the mission director for West Bank/Gaza for USAID from 1999-2004 and went on to serve as a deputy assistant administrator for both the African Bureau and the Policy, Planning and Labour Bureau. Larry Garber was interviewed by Alex Shakow in 2018.

Topical Focus – Changing USAID in West Bank/Gaza after 1994

GARBER: Until 1994, when the Oslo Accords went into effect, we had a representative in Jerusalem who was responsible for the West Bank, and one at the embassy in Tel Aviv who was responsible for Gaza. They were completely autonomous and running their programs separately. After the Oslo Accords, we set up a "mission"; Chris Crowley became the mission director. He consolidated the two offices in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. There's an interesting political story about this time, which almost got Brian in a lot of trouble. In '94-'95, they were deciding where to put the mission. When it was an office, it was one or two people working out of the consulate. Chris started looking for an office in Jerusalem, and the backlash was immediate. Warren Christopher the Secretary of State calls Brian and says, "What are you guys doing? You can't rent property in Jerusalem for the Palestinians." Brian says, "I don't know what you're talking about; I'll look into this."

GARBER: As result, Congress passed a law (at the time; it changed 15 years later) that said no U.S. government entity can rent or purchase property in Jerusalem for the purpose of serving
the Palestinian programs. Given that Congress at that point had said the U.S. should move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (which the executive kept waiving), they weren't going to allow the entity that represented the U.S. government to the Palestinians be housed in Jerusalem. So, we had four people, trailers on the consulate compound in Jerusalem, and Chris set up the office in Tel Aviv. By the time I got there, the office had grown to 70 staff.

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GARBER: Someone had told me before I went out there that one of the ways that mission directors are judged is by how many of their staff become mission directors years later. Aaron
Williams was held up for being great at making sure his staff in South Africa had gone on to senior positions in the agency. Ten years later, I can say I had a wonderful team, but it wasn't I that promoted them, but they helped me to succeed – from my contracts officer and my controller, my deputy and others, they were great people who became good friends and I could rely on them. And, the FSNs also became really close friends.
That was challenge number one. Challenge number two was figuring out how was I going to operationalize in Tel Aviv all those things I learned in Washington. A big part of my success was due to the relationship I had with my deputy, Bill Hammink, who became one of AID's all-stars after this stint, but at the time had been a relatively anonymous DG (democracy and governance) officer in the Africa bureau and had just

served as a DG officer in Russia. I'd selected him as my deputy and it turned out to be a fantastic choice. We used to drive into the office every day together and I always felt if you could arrange to drive in with your deputy, that's the best thing you can do because you have a half-hour of just the two of you talking about what's going on in the Mission. That was an important piece of it; we started reshaping the mission to address some of the concerns.

GARBER: The broader context was the Oslo Accords had been signed in '93/'94/'95, then there was a second wind, which resulted from this tough negotiation that Clinton had led at Wye
River. The practical impact of Wye River was that it led to a $400,000,000 supplement for the AID budget. The AID budget had been consistently $75,000,000, which in those days was considered a lot of money, and now we suddenly have a $400,000,000 supplement to spend over three years.

GARBER: So huge new resources and a lot of State Department interest in how we were going to spend this money. There really was a need from the outset for collaboration between
myself and the people running the Near East bureau at State, Toni Verstandig and Jake Walles.

Q: They were in Washington?

GARBER: In Washington. I would deal directly with them, have to brief them and keep them informed. I also had to keep the ambassador and consul-general informed on a regular basis. It was a unique relationship for an AID mission in that I had two direct bosses in-country, the ambassador and the consul-general. I reported formally to an assistant administrator in the Near East bureau, but a lot of my policy-level contacts was to keep Toni and Jake informed.

Q: Was it keeping them informed, or did they play an active role?

GARBER: Initially they played a hyper-active micromanaging role in defining what the $400,000,000 supplemental was going to be spent on. They did not know me and they had very precise ideas of what they wanted to see done.

Q: Did they have a lot of experience in this area?

GARBER: Toni had come from the Hill, Jake had been involved on these issues for 10 or 15 years. They knew the Palestinians and the Israelis. I remember soon after being

announced, I was invited to a meeting that Toni chaired at the State Department with the Israelis who were in town. She just told them what we needed. It was a very impressive performance and I appreciated the role she was going to play, but it was also about telling the Israelis how Toni expected the $400,000,000 to be used. If I remember correctly, I think they had prescribed the six or seven things we were going to do with the $400,000,000.

Q: Is that what you did?

GARBER: It was what we were planning to do. When I got there, yes we were planning a $70,000,000 road from Jenin to Nablus, we were planning an industrial estate along the border between the West Bank and Israel, we were planning this presidential scholarship program, $20,000,000 for that. A big water infrastructure program –

Q: These were all things the Israelis needed to agree to as well as the Palestinian Authority or whoever was in charge in those days?

GARBER: Right, the Palestinian Authority was our counterpart. One of my early meetings was with the minister of planning and international cooperation in Palestine, Nabil Shaath. I said, "Here's what we're planning, but we want to make sure you're comfortable with these things, and here's how we're going to do them." Again there was a certain understanding that this was how the U.S. government operates and there was excitement about these programs – they were going to be a huge boon for Palestine. But they then also had to be cleared through what was called the Coordinator of Government Affairs in the Territories (COGAT), led by an Israeli major-general. They had to approve these projects also.

PANAMA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Deputy Director
Office of Central American Affairs
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Panama
(1993–1995)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Panama Canal Transition and U.S. Development Role

Q: Yes; that's important. After mentioning Costa Rica, I remember there was another Central American country that I think was supposed to close: Panama. Do you recall anything about the decisions about Panama?

LEVINE: One of the things I would like to highlight is really just having the opportunity to visit and see the Panama Canal. There were many U.S. properties that were going to revert to Panamanian control within the Canal Zone, not just operation of the canal. The canal had been operating under de facto Panamanian control for many years, so it was almost kind of a lowering or raising of a flag in terms of the transition of operations. The issues at the time were part of the political overhang of our Cold War policies in the region. The Chinese had bought properties and terminals at each—the Atlantic and Pacific edges of the canal and so, there was a concern about freedom of the seas with these Chinese organizations. It was a concern only on the far right because the fact of the matter is, transit is largely by air or truck. The Panama Canal is not exactly the strategic point it used to be. But still, it will always have a hold in the minds of folks as this strategic asset.

At that time, the Panama program focused on how we can productively help the Panamanians use those properties that will revert to Panamanian control coming out of the canal zone. We were also involved in management of environmentally important areas and tropical forests there. It was a very small platform and program, so really, how do you be strategic in a portfolio that might be less than $10 million?

PARAGUAY

WAYNE NILSESTUEN
USAID
Paraguay
(2018)

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

Topical Focus – Democracy and Governance initiatives in Paraguay

NILSESTUEN: The mission continued to work in democracy and governance, particularly around civil society advocacy. In 2015, after years of lobbying, freedom of information legislation was finally enacted and became an effective tool in exposing corrupt practices. It energized civil society to demand accountability. Suddenly civil society organizations filed many more accusations (*denuncias)* of corruption and abuse of power.

Q: Wayne, can you give us context of what was happening in the government, et cetera, when you came back?

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NILSESTUEN: For more than 20 years Democracy and Governance projects had anchored the Mission's program. The Mission continued to focus on judicial reform. We supported institutions that were responsible for vetting nominations to the judicial institutions including the Supreme Court and lower court judges. The vetting process provided for individuals and civil society organizations to report on alleged corruption which was then subjected to verification prior to making the judicial appointments. The staff and I met with theSupreme Court Justices to advocate they adopt a code of ethics. It was met with a mixed reaction but was later adopted.