CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

COUNTRY READERS
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS

CURACAO

GRENADA

Eileen R. Donovan	1968-1974	Principal Officer, Grenada, Barbados
Theodore R. Britton, Jr.	1974-1977	Ambassador, Barbados and Grenada
Sally Shelton-Colby	1979-1981	Ambassador, Barbados and Grenada
Andrew F. Antippas	1983	Grenada Task Force, Grenada
E. Ashley Wills	1983	Political Advisor for U.S. Invasion of Grenada, Grenada
Sally Grooms Cowal	1983-1985	USUN Deputy Political Counselor, New York City
Roy T. Haverkamp	1984-1986	Deputy Chief of Mission, St. George's
John C. Leary	1986-1988	Chief of Mission, St. George's
Hariadene Johnson	1989-1990	Development Officer, USAID, St. George's
Mary A. Wright	1989-1991	Political Officer, St. George's
Nadia Tongour	2001-2004	Principal Officer/ Chargé, St. George's

JAMAICA

Perry W. Linder	1961-1964	Consular Officer, Kingston
Nancy Ostrander	1967-1970	Chief Consular Officer, Kingston
Kenneth N. Rogers	1968-1972	Political Officer, Kingston
Bruce Malkin	1969-1972	Rotation Officer, Kingston
William T. Breer	1972-1974	Political Officer, Kingston
Kenneth N. Rogers	1972-1974	Jamaica, Guyana Desk Officer, Washington, DC

Herman Rebhan	1974-1989	General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation, Washington, DC
Donor M. Lion	1977-1979	USAID Director and Economic Counselor, Kingston
Dennis Hays	1977-1979	Consular/Administrative Officer, Kingston
Roy T. Haverkamp	1978-1981	Deputy Chief of Mission, Kingston
Herman Rebhan	1980	General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation, Washington, DC
W. Robert Warne	1981-1984	Deputy Chief of Mission, Kingston
John Todd Stewart	1984-1986	Deputy Chief of Mission, Kingston
David Rybak	1985	Private Sector Officer, USAID, Jamaica
Elizabeth Ann Swift	1986-1989	Consul General, Kingston
Sally Grooms Cowal	1989-1991	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America, Washington, DC
Herman J. Rossi III	1989-1992	Economic Counselor, Kingston
Lacy A. Wright	1991-1995	Deputy Chief of Mission, Kingston
James C. Cason	1997-2000	Deputy Chief of Mission, Kingston

MARTINIQUE

Clinton L. Olson	1952-1955	Consul, Martinique
William B. Cobb Jr.	1955-1958	Consul, Martinique
Frank Snowden Hopkins	1957-1960	Consul, Martinique
Arva C. Floyd	1962-1964	Consul, Martinique
Denis Lamb	1965-1966	Consul, Martinique
Jon G. Edensword	1968-1970	Vice Consul, Martinique

Richard M. Gibson	1972-1973	Vice Consul, Martinique
Michael Norton	1980-1986	English Teacher, Martinique

CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS

ROBINSON MCILVAINE
Caribbean Commission
Washington, DC (1953-1956)

Ambassador Robinson McIlvaine entered the State Department in the early 1950s. Before his career in the Foreign Service, he graduated from Harvard, served in the Navy and worked in both journalism and advertising. His oversees posts included Lisbon, Dahomey, Guinea, and Kenya. Ambassador McIlvaine was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 1988.

Q: *I notice you were with the Caribbean Commission, too.*

MCILVAINE: Yes.

Q: *What was that?*

MCILVAINE: That was a small "United Nations" made up of the dependent territories in the Caribbean. In other words, they were not independent.

Q: *This was the pre-independence period in the Caribbean.*

MCILVAINE: Yes. It had a secretariat based in Trinidad, and the commission was composed of two members, one from each metropole, and in our case, one from the Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico, our reason for being in it. In the case of the British, they had a British ambassador somewhere in the area; the French, the same way; and the Dutch. Then a senior member from one of their island dominions. We had two meetings a year in a different one of these territories each time, and it all had to do with economic development, etc... I was certainly not very well qualified to be on it, but I had enough executive experience and perhaps journalistic, analytic experience to have an idea of what was needed and help find the answers to the problems.

Q: *Do you think it was a very effective instrument for the time, and useful?*

MCILVAINE: Yes, I do, because I think it gave them a lot of experience in running their own things and having a little bit of an international experience before they became independent.

Q: *Within about five years or so, most of them were beginning to move toward independence.*

MCILVAINE: That's right. This was in '53. I don't suppose they got really independent until ten years later or more, but it was the beginning of that process.

ALLEN C. HANSEN
Caribbean Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1962-1967)

Mr. Allen C. Hansen joined USIA in 1954. His overseas postings included Venezuela, Spain, British Guiana, and Mexico. Mr. Hansen was interviewed by Dorothy Robins-Mowry in 1988.

HANSEN: Then I went back to Washington, and Hugh Ryan was area director at the time. Again, there was concern about Guyana going communist, and Hugh Ryan knew that I was one of the few specialists on Georgetown. He therefore assigned me the job of Caribbean Desk Officer in order to utilize my expertise on the country that had been "British Guiana" before independence. Shortly after my arrival in Washington following my academic year in Philadelphia, he sent me to Georgetown to see what we might do to beef up the post. I cam back and recommended that we double the size of the post--from one American officer to two. There was some concern that since this wouldn't take a great deal of money, others in government might think we were not being serious enough with regard to this situation. However, I argued that given the size of Guiana, with a 100,000 population in the capital city and only 500,000 in the entire country, to put more than two officers there would be overkill. For the next ten years or so we probably had two officers there until the post reverted once again to a one-person post, which is really all that such a small country requires in my view.

Q: A major accomplishment.

HANSEN: And that's what we did. But during that time as Caribbean Desk Officer, a most interesting thing to me was that the Dominican crisis broke.

Q: What was the Dominican crisis? This is in 1965.

HANSEN: 1965, right. Cuba again showed its hand. LBJ was president at the time, and a civil war broke out in the Dominican Republic, sometime after the assassination of their long-time military dictator there, Trujillo. It looked like the people who represented the left, and were presumably supported by the Cubans, if not the Soviets, were going to take over. The American government decided that that was not to be and sent in some 22,000 troops to assure that the country's leaders who wanted free elections would be able to hold them. Now, every Latin American specialist knows that the worst thing, from a Latin American point of view, that the U.S. can do is to intervene in another country's affairs, especially military intervention. But we had to live with that. As far as USIA was concerned, Hugh Ryan (Area Director Hewson Ryan) went down with a task force of USIA officers to work on the internal and mammoth external public affairs problems this situation caused.

Q: You mean shortly after the troops landed?

HANSEN: This was maybe a few weeks after the troops landed. Because what happened, there was a stalemate. The U.S., of course, could have just wiped out the leftist revolutionaries, but that wasn't the idea. The idea was to try and see if this country couldn't get back to a democratic form of government with elections and so forth. The way the stalemate occurred was that the leftists held the center of the capital, Santo Domingo, and the rest of the country, practically, was in the hands of the people--some would say Rightists, but certainly the non-revolutionists. So while that stalemate was occurring, the U.S. sent a task force which included the USIA contingent, which tried to get the two sides together and tried to get some kind of responsible local government going that would be viable and where eventually elections could be held. One of the major things that the U.S. Administration wanted to do was to turn this whole mess over to the Organization of American States (OAS) as soon as possible. Eventually that is what occurred. The American troops left as did the Americans who were not assigned to the OAS or to the Embassy, and elections were eventually held. I was involved somewhat in that which I'll explain later. First, when I went down there for about three weeks during the fighting--I say fighting, but it was mainly during the stalemate. But the bullets were still flying between the lines, though the American troops tried to hold ground or make limited advances without killing anyone.

Q: What were the American troops doing?

HANSEN: After they had landed, they protected those areas of the city that were not in the hands of the rebel troops who were fighting against the established government.

Q: I see. Did you have evidence of Cuban intervention or Russian intervention in the situation?

HANSEN: This was what the American government was saying, and I assume they had it.

Q: But you had no first-hand knowledge?

HANSEN: I had no first-hand knowledge, no.

Q: You went down and worked with Hugh Ryan?

HANSEN: Darrell Carter, who was Hugh Ryan's deputy at the time, replaced Hugh Ryan. As mentioned earlier, I was the Caribbean Desk Officer. When Darrell moved up I became his deputy. But my main job during my temporary duty on the island was one of working with the OAS information representative to attempt to locate a usable radio station in the non-rebel zone that the OAS could take over as the "Voice of the OAS." Up until that time the 82nd Airborne Division, which had come in along with the Psyops group, had established a temporary radio station. That was the only radio station in the country that was operating, except for the rebel station in downtown Santo Domingo in the area held by the rebels. All the others were off the air. Eventually we found a suitable station. As soon as the OAS started broadcasting from that station the Psyops group was able to close down and left with the American troops, as did I.

Q: How was it working with the OAS, as a United States Government official and the OAS as an institution? Were there any problems, or did it all go pretty smoothly?

HANSEN: None at that time, and not on the working level, no problems at all. We had the same objective. We wanted the OAS to really be responsible for this. We thought they were the ones that should be--of course, that took the heat off of the United States. Later on I got involved in what I called the "get out the vote" campaign. The U.S. could not openly pursue (nor should it have) an objective of getting any particular person to become president of the Dominican Republic, but this was a country that had experienced so many years of military dictatorship and was unaccustomed to democratic procedures. Furthermore, the literacy rate was very low. There had to be some kind of education training in the democratic processes so that Dominicans could learn what votes and elections are all about. So one of the things we did, we devised some cartoon fashion, very simple, about what you do when you vote and what happens when you vote, and the importance of voting and so forth. This campaign was actually very successful in the Dominican Republic. Some months later, an election was held, and President Hector Garcia Godoy, who had been the provisional president prior to elections, won. Based on the success in the "D.R" the same system was tried in Vietnam but with far less success.

Q: You mean the same use of cartoons?

HANSEN: The same use of cartoons and so forth with Vietnamese characters.

Q: Why do you think it was successful in the Dominican Republic and not in Vietnam?

HANSEN: The two situations were completely different. The Dominican Republic went on to become a democratic government and was not invaded by a rebel army. Of course, in Vietnam, North Vietnam eventually took over.

Q: And did the OAS continue to watch the situation very closely?

HANSEN: They did for a while, and then, of course, they dropped out of it, too, and the country ran itself. An interesting sidelight is that 20 years later, I was representing USIS in a country team meeting as deputy PAO in Pakistan during the absence of the PAO, and Ambassador Spiers at the time, who is now Under Secretary of State for Administration...

Q: Ronald Spiers.

HANSEN: Ronald Spiers. He and most of his State Department colleagues were absolutely upset, is a good word, I guess, the morning after the Grenada invasion. I had been through this, in a sense, in the Dominican Republic. I'll come back to this in a minute. But I said at that country team meeting in Islamabad the morning after the Grenada "rescue mission," "Why don't we just wait and see, because 20 years ago, the U.S. and LBJ were so criticized for sending troops into the Dominican Republic, and yet ever since then, the Dominican Republic has been a democracy. And economically, while it may not be doing so well, it's doing better than a lot of

its neighbors." Of course, what happened in Grenada, at least from my point of view, is that it's a damn good thing we went in. But that's another story.

At the time of the Dominican crisis, one of the most difficult things we had to face as USIS officers is an antagonistic American liberal press. Members of the press, the foreign correspondents, a lot of them--not all of them, would accept as gospel truth anything that the rebel side said, or what they said on the radio or later in briefings. But when the correspondents were getting briefings from American officials or the military officials at the time, anything said was suspect and was often reported as suspect.

Q: That's how it was in Vietnam, too.

HANSEN: Yes, sure. And then I remember, whether it was The New York Times or the Washington Post, but anyway, in the American press, the view was that what LBJ did by sending those 22,000 troops into Santo Domingo put American foreign policy in Latin America back 40 years; that was the expression. It just so happens it was the first time in 40 years that we sent troops into a Latin American country.

Well, less than two years later, President Johnson, in Punta del Este, Uruguay--and I happened to be down there as press attaché of USIS Montevideo at the time--met with every president of every single Latin American country, all of whom attended that historic summit conference. (No such meeting had ever been held before, and there hasn't been one since--at this writing.) So things aren't as drastic as they sometimes are reported to be.

Q: The presence of the American troops was not as badly received among the Latin American countries as made out by the American press, is that what you're saying?

HANSEN: No. At the time, it was received very badly by almost everyone, I think, especially many Latin Americans. But the final result was not as bad as some of the American press would have us believe at the time.

Q: With your year in Pennsylvania and then this assignment in Washington, this was the first time you'd been home in eight years or so, and you had a wife. Was she living in the United States for the first time?

HANSEN: Yes.

Q: Was the cultural shock of coming home very difficult, and was it that much more difficult for her?

HANSEN: I imagine it was, except that it was just another new culture and it wasn't all that difficult to adjust. We had two children by that time and a third one came along.

CHARLES H. THOMAS

Caribbean Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1964)

Charles Thomas was born in New York in 1934. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and then served in the US Navy from 1956-1959. His career included positions in Mexico, Bolivia, Honduras. Ambassador Thomas was interviewed by Thomas Stern in the beginning of June (year unknown).

Q: *Okay. That gets us to 1964 and tell me about how the next assignment came about.*

THOMAS: Well, I just went through the normal process. I didn't try to manipulate it or anything, even if I could have, I'm not sure and ended up as desk officer ARA.

Q: *What desk was that?*

THOMAS: It was the Caribbean desk.

Q: *Caribbean desk.*

THOMAS: Yes. Eastern Caribbean for both AID and State.

Q: *And how long were you on the desk?*

THOMAS: Maybe six months and then I went to the front office.

Q: *And how did the front office job come about?*

THOMAS: Just got recruited.

Q: *One day you got called and said, "Be up here,"?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *Had you had a chance to get to know Mahan while you were on the desk?*

THOMAS: Well actually at that point it was Jack Vaughn.

Q: *Oh. Jack Vaughn. I see.*

THOMAS: Yes. I had known him before. Jack had had Bolivian experience. He had served there before. So he knew that probably. Maybe it was that. I don't know.

Q: *So you moved up to be Vaughn's special assistant?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *I see. Let me go back to the Caribbean experience. This is your first tour in Washington. What do you remember about frustrations or delights?*

THOMAS: That area was not an area of great interest to the seventh floor.

Q: *Or sixth floor either?*

THOMAS: Well, sixth floor. It was to them I'm sure.

Q: *Was it?*

THOMAS: You had general Alliance for Progress activities.

Q: *Guyana was under your jurisdiction?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *So the Caribbean went beyond the islands.*

THOMAS: Yes

Q: *How far?*

THOMAS: It went to the former colonies-the former European colonies.

Q: *I see. Were there a lot of activity on the Guyana while you were there?*

THOMAS: There was quite a bit. Yes.

Q: *Is that what you spent most of your time on do you think?*

THOMAS: No because that was being handled at a fairly high level. We really weren't major players at this level.

Q: *You said you were a desk officer?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *Reporting to?*

THOMAS: We had a-I forgot what you call it-a country director.

Q: *For the Caribbean?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *And he reported to one of the deputies?*

THOMAS: There weren't many deputies in those days.

Q: *Oh this was the heyday of the country director?*

THOMAS: Yes. I think there was just one deputy. Bob Sayre was it.

Q: *I see. Okay.*

THOMAS: Harry Shlaudeman was the office director.

Q: *Was there already a combined State/Aid bureau at the time you got there?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *I see. So you were responsible for both. Well were there any AID programs for the Caribbean at the time?*

THOMAS: Yes. They had some programs.

Q: *Some programs. So you were both an AID officer and a State officer.*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *How did you think that worked?*

THOMAS: It actually worked fairly well. I mean if you assume that the Alliance for Progress worked very well, which it really didn't, in sort of the big picture. My own view on that is that it probably retarded development in Latin America.

Q: *The Alliance?*

THOMAS: Yes. It may have been useful politically but as far as inducing people to really look at the hard situation it did postpone that day.

Q: *Because?*

THOMAS: Because it provided a hope that you could continue with current policy and not pay the political and economic price for real reform.

Q: *I guess you make the same comment about Bolivia?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *And that was for the Caribbean as well?*

THOMAS: That's true everywhere. Yes.

Q: *You generalize to all Latin American on that?*

THOMAS: Yes.

Q: *Was Mascoso, Lee…?*

THOMAS: He had left by then.

Q: *He had left already?*

THOMAS: Who had taken over for him? Bill. He was a Washington lawyer. Bill. Bill. Bill.

Q: *Oh. Rogers.*

THOMAS: Bill Rogers.

Q: *So you didn't have a chance to work with Mascoso?*

THOMAS: No. No.

Q: *We had some military establishments in the Caribbean. Were they any concern or problem for you?*

THOMAS: Well, we were sort of disestablishing ourselves. For example in Trinidad, there still was a Naval station there. They were just phasing out residual activities.

Q: *But the decision already had been made?*

THOMAS: The last thing to go was the officer's club.

Q: *But you didn't have to get involved?*

THOMAS: No. The decision had been made. That was not a problem. And there were other facilities. Again Antigua had something. Basically they countries weren't anxious to kick them out. They wanted them to stay. At that point we really didn't need it.

Q: *Back again to the cultural shock of working in Washington. Did you fall into that bureaucratic pattern fairly easily? Was it a problem at all?*

THOMAS: It was very easy because we didn't have any really tough issues at that point, other than Guyana. And the toughest things on Guyana had already passed. It was sort of residual things. So they weren't issues that required a lot of White House or seventh floor input.

Q: *Or debate with other bureaucracies?*

THOMAS: Yes. A very minor debate with EUR because EUR still had some chunks of Caribbean. I think they still had the Bahamas or something like that.

ALEXANDER F. WATSON
Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Caribbean Nations
Washington, DC (1967-1968)

Ambassador Alexander Watson was born and raised in Massachusetts and was educated at Harvard and Wisconsin Universities. In 1962 he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to the Dominican Republic, the beginning of an impressive career specializing in Latin American Affairs. His other overseas posts include Spain, Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia, serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in the latter three countries. He had several Washington assignments, the last being Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. From 1986 to 1989 he served as United States Ambassador to Peru. Ambassador Watson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

WATSON: '67. I was in a course called I think the mid-career course or something like that. No, basic course two it was called in those days. While I was there I finagled and squirmed and wriggled around and got myself assigned to the Latin American and Caribbean portion of INR where I became the intelligence analyst for I believe initially Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama. At some point when I was there I can't remember if it was later or earlier the Republic of Haiti and I also worked on communist issues at the time. That was reasonably interesting because it gave me access to lots of information about Latin American and contact with not only the operations, but the desk people and regional bureaus in the Department, but also the folks in the Pentagon and DIA and NSA and CIA. A lot of people didn't like INR very much at that time, but for my own development it was quite useful

Q: You were there February '67 to when?

WATSON: Until about I think it was still about July of '68.

Q: We overlapped a bit. I was doing the Horn in Africa at that time I think.

WATSON: I was there and working on those issues. It was a time of riots in Panama and it was a time of the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia. So, I was involved in an analytical way in following those events and writing about them and also I believe the president of Nicaragua died during that time. So, it was kind of fun. I also got some tremendous help from a guy named Bob who has since passed away. He was the deputy director of I think it was called the RAA part of INR who really helped me improve and make much more conscious and coaching my drafting style. I'll never forget that guidance and instruction and very constructive criticism I got from Bob during that year.

Q: During that time talking towards the end of the Johnson administration, what about, sort of moving down, what about Panama. How did we see things moving there at that time?

WATSON: This is when there were some riots in Panama, in '68 if I recall correctly. There was concern that there would be a military coup even though they had no formal military, they had their National Guard. This was 30 years ago and I haven't thought about it very much since then. It was very interesting and the Johnson administration I think was coming to some conclusions that we had to do something about the Panama Canal situation. We had the beginning of some of these ideas that later flourished in the Carter administration resulting in the Carter canal treaties which are fulfilled in their sort of implementation entirety if you will at the end of next year.

Q: Were you sort of as you were doing this, granted you were in the INR at a fairly low level, allowed to think the unthinkable about turning over the Panama Canal or was this in the cards at that time?

WATSON: Well, my recollection really is that what I was thinking about or trying to analyze what was going on in Panama. You had Arnulfo Arias who ran for president many times and won many times and was thrown out every time. I think that he was up until that point that he had won a great deal of turmoil and I don't remember participating particularly in that kind of a policy discussion. My job was more to analyze what was going to happen in the election, what was happening in the National Guard. What kind of political alliances were being formed? What factions were in the National Guard, what political factions outside and those sorts of things as well as, you have to remember this is 1968. There was still a lot of concern about what Castro might be up to and what kind of communist activities were taking place throughout the hemisphere. All those concerns were heightened by the Che Guevara escapade.

Q: Yes. This is where he went and tried to start a peasant uproar, but no one spoke the language in the highlands of Bolivia.

WATSON: Yes, I think it was a fundamentally flawed strategy and without going into this in any detail I think that Castro and Guevara never quite perhaps comprehended that the revolution in Cuba was very different. The circumstances in Cuba are very different from others. Cuba was the most industrialized country in many ways if you will in the sense that from the political point of view the fundamental economic activity was sugar and it was not, they were not campesinos so much, the workers were not peasants so much as a rural proletariat organizing the unions and things which is quite different than a bunch of peasants not organized and are not unionized and are not in industrial situation where perhaps the Marxist analytical instruments were more relevant. They failed I think also to realize that the revolution in Cuba was brought about by the middle class. Castro and his folks were obviously primary irritants to the Batista regime. They got a lot of attention and highlighted a lot of inequity in creating enormous pressure. But the final events which brought down the Batista regime had more to do with what happened in the urban areas by the middle class which withdrew its support from Batista than it had to do at least in those final moments with anything Castro did himself. So, I think imagining that the revolution in Cuba was somehow different than what it was I think you could then transfer it to a place which was dramatically different from the Cuban one, that is to say the interior of Bolivia, I

think was a fundamental strategic flaw on the part of Guevara and Castro really shared Guevara's dream or just wanted to get him out of the country. I think we'll never know.

Q: At the time our mindset was wherever you could strike a match in Latin America and all hell might break loose.

WATSON: Oh, absolutely. I may be critical here in my sort of guessing at some of the hypothetically analytical flaws Cubans and others might have made, but we were sure as heck no better. We were still living in I think as you put it, it would appear that you could touch a match anywhere if it was the right kind of match at the right place you could have a communist conflagration.

Q: How about Panama? Was communism a concern of ours there at that time?

WATSON: Yes, it was, and there was a communist party there and that of course added spice to all of the debates and discussions and the analyses. My recollection is that none of us ever believed that the communist party was any major threat in Panama. Also, although Castro was acting I don't recall at this point being particularly concerned that Cuban influence for that matter, Russian or Chinese influence was viewed in those days as likely to prevail.

Q: In Panama, I can't remember whether these riots that came about were they because of kids at the high school thing with the Panamanian flag?

WATSON: Yes, there was something like that, I don't remember the details.

Q: I was wondering I mean, did the attitude at the desk, did we see that the Americans who were in the what do you call the Canal Zonians or something, did we see them as being a political problem?

WATSON: I don't recall that. I mean I became somewhat more aware of the peculiarities of the people who were called the Zonians afterwards. I don't remember their being a real factor. I do remember that there were folks within the U.S. government both in Panama and in Washington who were really very strongly supportive of the very conservative anti-democratic positions and sort of viewed the national guard as really the only defender in the final analysis of interests that we shared.

Q: What about turning down to another responsibility was Nicaragua. This was high Somoza time wasn't it?

WATSON: Right. And before _____ took over it was these, it was the… I'm trying to remember the president was not a Somoza. He was another guy and I just can't remember his name right now. There were three, I guess there were three Somoza brothers, it's hard to recall all this. One of them had died I think and there was another guy who was serving as president, clearly a creature of the Somozas. At that point there wasn't really insurrection, but there was lots and lots of verbal manifestations of unrest. There was just a lot of concern over the fact that it was really a dictatorship and authoritarian regime although it was not by any means as rigid or repressive as

lots of other authoritarian regimes. It was in some ways more clever, but it was a, you can turn this off and use very loosely, it was almost a feudal situation when Somoza was in there owning much of the country, but people weren't actually serfs or slaves. Virtually an entire economy was a Somoza holding.

Q: Was that of any particularly concern of ours or was it this is just the way it is and we just wanted to see things not get too upsetting?

WATSON: I remember sort of being my job being very interesting in this phenomenon. Others were undertaking to try to have an impact and then also the politics of it. Somoza was so clever calling on his West Point background and everything. He had a very wide range of supporters in the United States. It was kind of a difficult situation where you had a guy who was clearly authoritarian. You had certainly a regime that he was in power or this other fellow was in power that was Somoza dominated and it was a kind of regime that was quite acceptable to the United States previously. It was not anywhere near as ruthless and repressive as some of the other military regimes about the region. It certainly was authoritarian and it certainly was anti-democratic. They had elections, but the conditions were such that the ruling party always won and you had all these strong supporters within the United States in both parties. Yet you had sort of a growing awakening in the United States that this was not really what should be taking place. This was 1968. This was a year with radical forces growing in the United States. I think there was a growing awareness beyond strictly radical surface in the U.S. There were times that something was changing, not that we were doing much about it. There was concern.

Q: Costa Rica, was this at that point upheld as the democratic place?

WATSON: Yes, that's my recollection of it, yes. I don't remember spending much time on it because it was so uncontroversial.

Q: Foreign Servicewise, not much fun.

WATSON: Not much fun from the analytical point of view, but a lot of fun to live there.

Q: What about turning to Haiti and the Dominican Republic first. You came in at the aftermath of our intervention there?

WATSON: Well, as you may recall, my first assignment had been there and I left about six months before the civil war which provoked the intervention in April of '65. We're now talking about a couple of years later. It was still reasonably controversial. Latin American circles in the State Department and there was a considerable tension I think between the bureau of intelligence and research and the InterAmerican Affairs Bureau which was a residue of debates during that period a little bit earlier, a year and a half of two years earlier when the intervention took place. I think the people in the intelligence bureau criticizing the analysis, which resulted in kind of a communist panic and anti-communist reaction, and sending of the troops and all that.

Q: As I recall we talked about some people, proponents you might say of a more liberal view that our ambassador who was?

WATSON: Tapley Bennett.

Q: Bennett really shouldn't have called the troops in or something?

WATSON: Yes, there was a lot of that. That was when it was still floating around in the corridors. I mean the events were over and done with, but there were hard feelings, but I was not involved in it. I just heard about them. A very good friend of mine was the desks officer in ARA, and Harry Shlaudeman who was involved in this. I had an interest in things Dominican, but basically the situation was what it was at one point.

Q: What about things in the Dominican Republic at that time, how did we see it?

WATSON: It's a little hard for me to recall the details. I'm not sure, but I think Balaguer was probably the president during this time. He was certainly a decent fellow and I think that everything we were trying to do at this point was to engineer a democratic process which would be legitimate, but still produce results in which the U.S., that you were comfortable living with. I'm not quite sure now anymore when it was the elections took place, Balaguer won them for the first time, but it was around this time.

Q: Our troops were well out by this time?

WATSON: Yes, that's my recollection.

Q: What about Haiti?

WATSON: My recollection was that this was really at the height of the Papa Doc period with great repression everywhere a situation that was deplorable, but not dynamic. I remember it's hard for me to recall now, but if I remember correctly I might have started off in the Dominican Republic and Haiti and then shifted over to the three Central American countries that I mentioned, so I'm not sure that I spent that much time. If I think about it I think I spent much more time in Panama, even Nicaragua, on the overall communist analysis.

Q: On the communist side, here we had Cuba sitting in the middle of this whole situation you might say. How were we covering Cuba in the State Department?

WATSON: Well, we had very active and excellent young officers analyzing what was going on in Cuba as best we could in those days. There was a huge industry in the United States of sort of Cuba watching and Cuba analysis. I guess there still is, but it was even more intense then when it was perceived as a real, vital national security threat. Certainly, the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis and everything and Castro if I recall, I may be wrong, but at some point during this time, Castro either had the leadership of or was certainly very influential in the nonaligned movement which served as a magnifying mechanism if you will to increase the third world influence, certainly. It was very interesting period. People were very concerned about it and Cuba at that time was active at fomenting insurrection in other countries.

Q: When you were in INR how did you find getting good information. You mentioned the CIA. How about the CIA as far as information, not just Cuba, but the whole area?

WATSON: Well, you have to recall this was I think my first exposure. So, this was all pretty exciting to me and I spent a lot of time working on what we call NIE, national intelligence estimates, and I worked on two or three of those. I don't recall exactly what they were on. One was about Panama certainly. Even some of these psychological profiles that the agency produced with the help of psychiatrists and others I believe we did some of those like I think I might have done one on Papa Doc and other individuals. Even one on Castro if I recall correctly. Anyhow, so it was kind of fun. Those were interagency meetings and there was a lot of hassling and haggling over every sentence and every word and there would be footnotes taken here and there and all the intelligence agencies would be involved and then the operational people would have their views. There was a kind of intellectually stimulating time. As I mentioned earlier, some people found INR, some viewed it as kind of a backwater in the Foreign Service, you weren't out there in the action, you were analyzing other people's work and giving your opinions and nobody ever paid attention to you. Well, I'm not sure that was true. I think if you wrote a good paper and it was only a couple of pages long and was on an interesting and timely topic people would take a look at its points and views. But for me I thought it was intellectually stimulating. I learned an awful lot about Latin America. I was taking courses at Georgetown and also at American University in the evening at this point. Even wrestling with these issues in terms of drafting and forcing a kind of analytic precision as well as a writing skill that always could be improved. I thought it was quite interesting.

Q: You did this until '68?

WATSON: Well, then what happened there was one of these great upheavals in the Department. I forget whether this was called Auckland, I think it was when they decided they wanted to have more of, they brought people back from overseas and they reduced the number of positions overseas. So, then you had all of these supernumeries, what do you do with them? You dramatically increase the number of university training positions that were available to Foreign Service personnel and I got one of those. I had the good fortune through a variety of circumstances, unlike virtually anybody else; I knew that after the university year I was going to go to Brazil. This had been worked out by a friend of mine who had been in INR with me and then went into personnel. That's how it happened, that was it so I then was looking for a university, a graduate program as strong as possible in Brazilian studies. At that point the two best were at Stanford and Wisconsin. They had a policy in those days of only sending one person to university training in a given discipline at a given university at a time. I was told Wisconsin was the best place for what I wanted. Anyway, I ended up at Wisconsin.

JOHN EDWIN UPSTON
Coordinator of Caribbean Affairs
Washington, DC (1981-1986)

John Edwin Upston was educated at Stanford University. He began to work for

the State Department in 1964. He served as Coordinator of Caribbean Affairs and served as an ambassador to Rwanda. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.

UPSTON: That's correct. And so there was a clean, clean sweep. I started a private voluntary organization called the Caribbeana--C-A-R-I-B-B-E-A-N-A-- Council to do developmental work in the Caribbean with an office in Barbados and in Washington. We had something called the Caribbean Center, which was in Washington, and engaged in a number of projects, developmental type of projects principally in the eastern Caribbean from the office in Barbados. Although the Caribbeana Council was private and non-governmental we had linkages with State which seconded John Eddy, a fine Foreign Service Officer, to head the Caribbean Center. In the best traditions of bipartisan cooperation Michael Finley and Sally Shelton - two key Carter political appointees were a great help. As a new organization we rubbed a lot of bureaucrats in USAID the wrong way and they tried to put us down. However, we survived and did a number of important things for a free and more economically viable Caribbean.

During that time I became a part of the government in exile, and the Republican National Committee had working advisory groups that were active for virtually every element of the U.S. government interests. I was a member of the National Security and International Relations Council of the Republican National Committee, but then there were similar groups for health, education, trade, national security, just across the board. The Chairman of the Republican National Committee at that time was Bill Brock, and there was an Executive Secretariat, so this was a very, very active government in exile.

So obviously because of my interests in the Caribbean and the fact that I was the President of the Caribbeana Council, I became somewhat of a spokesman within this 'government in exile' for the Caribbean. This was at a time when U.S. interests were deteriorating. Michael Manley was then the Prime Minister in Jamaica. There was a lot of political problems in Jamaica. Maurice Bishop was starting to rumble around in Granada in the eastern Caribbean. And there was basically a very unhealthy trend that was starting to develop throughout the Caribbean which had been pretty much ignored as a focal point of U.S. interests.

So as we got near the election period, Senator Tower, who was then United States Senator from Texas, asked me to come down and testify before the Republican platform in St. Petersburg, Florida, and it was that testimony in part at least that put the Caribbean in the Republican platform of 1980, and it was that policy that was established in the Republican platform of 1980 which then led to the Reagan administration's Caribbean Basin initiative. In fact the private initiatives of the Caribbeana Council and other private groups 'paved the way' for the Caribbean Basin Initiative - a government program. So when President Reagan was elected, Tom Enders, who was then the Assistant Secretary for Interamerican Affairs, asked me if I would come back as the Reagan administration coordinator for the Caribbean in the State Department.

Q: *What was the attitude? Here was a bunch of new people coming in, and at the top at least with maybe the exception of Alexander Haig not ones that had been part of the in and out of government and all in dealing with foreign affairs. You had had a lot of experience especially with things like the United Nations, which the Reagan administration was very dubious about.*

Did you find you had difficulty with this particular crew at the top in explaining, you might say, the facts of the international world?

UPSTON: I didn't have any problem basically with people at the top. One of the reasons for that is that I reported directly to Tom Enders, and Tom Enders, of course, was well regarded within the administration, had the full confidence of Secretary of State Haig. But he was a career Foreign Service officer whose interest and work had been primarily in the economic side of things in addition to his having been Ambassador to Canada, but he respected my years of experience and my knowledge of Caribbean issues and I didn't have any problem at all. I did detect as time went on a certain subtle resistance and subtle animosity within the State Department building toward political appointments and political appointees.

Q: *More than you had noted before?*

UPSTON: Far more than I had noted before, and I think that one of the reasons for that is because of certain inherent insecurities that were developing within the career service itself. No, I felt in my particular area, which was specialized in the Caribbean, that the people at the top were very receptive. But - Stu - I think that what hurt me was that a 'few' in the building resented my position and considered me an 'outsider' - although I had spent most of my adult life in service at State. These few labeled me as a Helms (Senator Jesse Helms) agent. This did not make life easy or pleasant.

Q: *I speak as a non-Latin American person, but looking at it, it seemed that in the transition, whereas in the other areas of the globe, regional bureaus, it was a normal transition. Ambassadors went in, people went in, people went out. There was change in personnel. But in Interamerican affairs, known as ARA, it was a very bloody affair practically. I mean it seems like there was real animosity about one group replacing the other group more than anywhere else. Did you find that? Or was Caribbean affairs sort of not involved in that?*

UPSTON: First of all, the Assistant Secretary in those days was Tom Enders, who was a career Foreign Service officer. He abolished the traditional idea of having regional deputies, so in the past there had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary for this part of the ARA region and a Deputy Assistant Secretary for the other part and so on. He abolished all those and had the Office Directors reporting directly to him. He had a Senior Deputy, who was across the board, Steve Bosworth who I had mentioned earlier who then went on to be head of the Policy Planning Staff, and was Ambassador to the Philippines. A very, very talented career Foreign Service officer. And then the other person in the so-called front office was Ted Briggs, once again a Foreign Service officer and the son of Ellis Briggs, who we had talked about in an earlier context.

So these were all career people. A position of Coordinator for Caribbean Affairs, which I occupied was a Deputy Assistant Secretary level, but it was not Deputy Assistant Secretary because he didn't have them. Enders didn't have regional deputies. The only other political appointees in ARA were General Gordon Sumner, who was a consultant and who was sort of in and out on special assignments, and Bill Middendorf, who was the United States Ambassador to the Organization of American States. So there was not a large number of Reagan administration

political appointees who descended on ARA at least in Washington, in fact, just Bill, Gordon and me.

Q: *Mr. Ambassador, as you look back on your period of service as Coordinator of Caribbean Affairs, what is your greatest satisfaction?*

UPSTON: The tradition particularly of the Commonwealth Caribbean - the former British colonies, in personal freedom, a free press, a parliamentary tradition of government, free enterprise. These institutions which were in danger, have been protected and in many ways strengthened in countries like Jamaica, Grenada, Barbados, Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Dominica. Castro's political influence has been dramatically reduced. Economically the Caribbean is stronger today. Puerto Rico is a much stronger 'Caribbean partner' in the region. Also, the satisfaction of working with colleagues in ARA like Don Bouchard, the Bureau's executive director - Bob Ryan and others. Also and important. Andy Antippas while he was Chargé in the Bahamas, and I helped to start 'Operation Bat' the first really successful drug interdiction program in the Bahamas and out islands. I flew several Bat missions going after the drug running. It was great!

At the same time most of the U.S. ambassadors in the Caribbean had no previous Caribbean experience. And the Caribbean was an Administrative priority. You figure it out! It is interesting as to how the system works - that Bob Ryan, Myles Frechette, Brandon Grove and I - all Caribbean experts - ended up in Africa as ambassadors.

Q: *What are your disappointments as you look back?*

UPSTON: The tragic plight of the poor people of Haiti. That's one. On a broader note I think we could have given greater strength to the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Politically, I think we could have handled Maurice Bishop (Prime Minister of Grenada), better. But Stu, these are all involved subjects. Let's move on.

RICHARD T. MCCORMACK
U.S. Ambassador to Organization of American States
Washington, DC (1985-1989)

After attending Georgetown University, Mr. Richard T. McCormack assumed a multitude of administrative roles for the Nixon Administration in addition to serving under Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania and Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Mr. McCormack's career also included positions as the US Ambassador to the Organization of American States as well as Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. Ambassador McCormack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: And you were OAS Ambassador from when to when?

McCORMACK: From 1985 to 1989.

***

Q: Today is March 31, 2003. What at that time was the position of Ambassador to the Organization of American States?

McCORMACK: The OAS ambassadorship is a job that allows you to have direct contact with all the countries in the Western Hemisphere and to address multilateral issues that are of mutual concern to all members. Of course, the key bilateral policy position in the Latin American region is essentially the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. The OAS Ambassador is generally an implementer of policy rather than a maker of policy. It is a job, however, that allows you to be a troubleshooter when things go off the rails, which they did in some cases while I was there. It also gives you an opportunity to sit at the policy table and offer your own thoughts and suggestions on what might be done about the problems that exist in the region.

***

McCORMACK: The Organization broke up into blocks. The group of eight comprised the major countries of Latin America. They tended to have closed meetings before the General Assembly to coordinate their positions.

Q: These countries were…

McCORMACK: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, and Columbia. That was the group of eight. They were the big ones. After coordinating certain issues, they would present us with a unified position. Then there were the Central American countries, and they also tended to operate as a bloc as did the Caribbean countries. I tried to make it my business to visit every country in the OAS every year if I could to see their people and leaders. I spent a lot of time in the Caribbean. Each country, large or small, has one vote, as Jova noted.

Q: Was Canada a member at that time?

McCORMACK: No. I traveled around these countries, getting to know their problems, being their friend, and assisting them in Washington to the degree that I could. Because we had a very popular Caribbean Basin Initiative program underway, we had strong support with the English-speaking Caribbean countries. I also had personal ties in that region, going back many years, and I used those connections to build bridges to people I didn't know. In Central America, there was a war underway. We often had the support of the Central American countries. At the OAS General Assemblies, the group of eight would try to steamroller the thing and get resolutions passed that we didn't always agree with. I tried to build a competing process so this would not happen. That required considerable effort. John Jova's earlier powerful advice proved to be sound.

***

Q: The Caribbean islands, which were mainly English or a bit French and Dutch but not Latin American. How did they get along with the different Latin culture?

McCORMACK: Different culture and the historical antagonisms between the English- speaking Caribbean and the Spanish-speaking countries went back to the days of the buccaneers. They inherited some of this tension. One culture was Catholic, the other Protestant. I spent a lot of time visiting leaders in every island in the Caribbean, including Eugenia Charles of Dominica. When these good people needed something from the U.S. Government, they would often come to me. I would then act on their behalf.

I want to emphasize one key point. Shortly after I became OAS Ambassador, I said to my staff, "If we are to be successful in this mission, we need to imagine every day as we walk out of our offices that there is an invisible sign above our door: 'If we care about them, they will care about us. If we do this and heed our own advice, we will be successful." That remains the heart of any multilateral diplomacy that is going to be effective for the U.S. . We were largely successful in our mission because we did care about our colleagues and their countries. If the time comes when we forget this, we will be isolated in this world.

The first thing is to listen carefully to what others have to say to us. You would think this practice would be obvious to everyone, but it isn't. This is a very complicated world. You have to act within the limits of what is possible. If you listen first, others will listen to you. You might also learn something very important.

LESLIE M. ALEXANDER
Deputy Director, Caribbean Affairs
Washington, DC (1989-1991)

Ambassador Leslie Alexander was born in Germany of American parents and grew up primarily in Europe. He was educated at the Munich campus of American University, after which he came to the United States and, in 1970, entered the Foreign Service. Speaking several foreign languages, including German, French, Spanish and Portuguese and some Polish, he served in Guyana, Norway, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Haiti, where he twice served, first as Chargé, and later as Special Envoy.. From 1993 to 1996 he served as Ambassador to Mauritius and from 1996 to 1999 as Ambassador to Ecuador. Ambassador Alexander was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

ALEXANDER: To Washington.

Q: To do what?

ALEXANDER: Deputy Director for the Caribbean.

Q: This is your first Washington assignment, wasn't it?

ALEXANDER: Yes it was. Well, actually my second. My first was in the '70s doing drugs, but this is my first mainstream Washington assignment. I didn't want to do this work. I joined the Foreign Service; I wanted to be a diplomat. I used to tell people, for me there are diplocrats and there are diplomats. The diplocrats have their strengths, their talents. They're the ones who go up on the Hill and spend most of their time in Washington and they make the policy. The diplomats are those of us who are overseas, who are comfortable speaking these foreign languages, learning the cultures, operating, carrying out the policy. I felt that my strength was in the field. I guess it's not unlike military people. There are those, a George Patton, who was a warrior, he liked to go out there and fight. There are, like Eisenhower, who were the strategy guys and the ones who would hold together the alliance and let George go out and kick the Germans' rear end, you know? I just was more comfortable being out there in the field interacting with the foreigners than I was here trying to fight inter-agency battles. I just didn't want to do that.

Q: It comes as it comes to all men, that you have to come to Washington to do this.

ALEXANDER: Yes, yes. So I came to Washington.

Q: So you came in '89.

ALEXANDER: In '89, and I stayed until '91, during which time I focused mostly on Haiti because that was the biggest headache of my portfolio.

Q: Oh yes.

ALEXANDER: And we had a few other problems: hurricanes in Jamaica, a major drug trafficker cum prime minister dictator in Suriname by the name of Bouterse, who caused us a lot of problems.

Q: Oh yes.

ALEXANDER: We had an attempted coup in Trinidad led by a Muslim fanatic, Abu Bakr, who I understand is still causing some problems in Trinidad.

Q: Well, let's talk about Suriname first. What was the problem there?

ALEXANDER: Suriname was under the boot of Désiré Bouterse who was a former military, Surinamese military officer, corporal turned sergeant turned colonel turned emperor or something or another. I can't remember what rank it was, but he was a thug. He participated in the assassination of several cabinet members and is alleged to have pulled the trigger himself, while his henchmen killed the rest. They massacred some 12 or 13 of them in the '70s and took over the government. He was in office until the Dutch and the Americans just made it impossible for him to stay. He ran Suriname for probably 12 years or so if I remember correctly, and then stepped down, but very much stayed the power behind the thrown. He became involved in drug trafficking out of Colombia heading principally to the Netherlands, gave shelter to drug traffickers, aided and abetted in the shipments of their product to the Netherlands and to Europe

in general. This was an all around bad guy, accused of all kinds of terrible things, arms smuggling and everything else. He was always there intimidating the government, trying to get the government to do whatever he wanted done to support his particular agenda. So we were frequently at odds with the Surinamese government because they wanted to do things that were just downright illegal or stupid or unhelpful or all of the above and, sure enough, we would always find Bouterse's fingerprints all over whatever they were trying to do or not do. So he was a bad boy that caused the little tiny Suriname to be the source of a lot of unnecessary attention. Not just my attention, but even the assistant secretary's attention. One day, he said, "I can't understand, here I've got all these countries like Argentina and Brazil," and he says, "I spend a remarkable amount of time on this little country of 400,000 people stuck off the northern coast of South America that nobody's ever heard about. The secretary thinks I'm insane when I bring it up, but it's like a thorn in your foot. It's not going to kill you but it's so uncomfortable that you've got to deal with it." That was Suriname.

Q: What were you doing?

ALEXANDER: Trying to keep them on the straight and narrow. Flying down there, trying to buck them up, asking the ambassador to go in and talk to the prime minister and buck him up, and making sure that all the FBI investigations we were running there weren't stumbling all over one another. A lot of small but niggling, irritating issues that we had to deal with and most of them, again, involved the criminal activities of this former dictator who was still the strongman: drugs, prostitution, white slavery rings, arms smuggling, all kinds of crazy things.

Q: Were we thinking of any sort of operation or doing anything like that?

ALEXANDER: Well yes, there was one uncomfortable incident with an operation that came undone. We spent a lot of time on damage control, but I prefer not to get into details about that.

Q: Okay. I think I interviewed somebody a long time ago …

ALEXANDER: It was an FBI sting that went bad, and what made it worse was they didn't clear it with us. They had to come to us after we discovered it, after it was blown, so we had a lot of egg on our face and a lot of damage control there. I won't go into more detail.

Q: I interviewed somebody who was an ambassador there way back and said that at one point the military came in just to take a look at the place because they were causing trouble then and asked could we take it over and answer was sure, we could send a battalion down and take it but then what do you do? And that was sort of the end of it.

ALEXANDER: It's funny though that you cite that, because we actually on one occasion made it known to the powers that be down there that we were going to do something along those lines; we were just going to just take the place over. Not run it, but we were going to send some force down there, kill the bad guys and have our way with them. We weren't, but they believed it, so that gave us six months of tranquility. You can't pull that all the time because eventually, you know, they call your bluff.

Q: Yes. Well then let's go to Trinidad. What was happening there?

ALEXANDER: This gentleman, Abu Bakr, and his followers, they were Muslims but it was more of an ethnic rather than religious thing. They were at odds with the regime and stormed the parliament, killed some people, took the parliament hostage and threatened to kill them all, major crisis, short lived, fortunately. Anyway, to make a long story short, Abu Bakr was arrested, the prime minister and most of the government was freed, and the crisis was averted. But Abu Bakr did have sympathizers in Trinidad and Tobago, mostly among the disenfranchised, but we were concerned because while the British had left behind their former West Indian colonies a strong tradition of democracy, leaders who where minor players were players nonetheless on a big, big stage; players like Michael Manley and Eugenia Charles from Dominica.

Q: Who just died.

ALEXANDER: Yes. These people were well known. Many of them were respected in London and Paris and Washington because they were adherents to democratic ideals. They were defenders of human rights. They may have represented countries that were small and impoverished but again, no one ever accused Mrs. Charles in Dominica of being a dictator and no one in Dominica screamed about human rights being abused or anything. It just wasn't their tradition in most of what used to be called the British West Indies.

Trinidad was viewed as being an extremely stable and democratic country. It is an oil producer; not on the scale of a Venezuela but still, a prosperous country, a model for its neighbors. To have a democracy threatened in this fashion, have someone take over the parliament and try to kill the prime minister was something that concerned us. We didn't know whether this was a one time thing, was this going to spread? Was this a manifestation of a larger problem that had completely gotten by us? We didn't know. There was some concern for a week or so until we were able to sort it out. That sticks in my mind. That I remember very well. It was almost as shocking as the Tejero thing in Madrid. The Guardia took over the parliament there in January of '81; you just didn't expect that kind of thing to happen in a European country. Even Spain. We thought that was all in the past. I think they're, well again, not comparable, but I think the reaction was similar to what happened in Trinidad. This is the British West Indies. I mean, they don't do things like this.

SALLY GROOMS COWAL
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America
Washington, DC (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.

Q: Okay, well, then we'll pick this up the next time about the Caribbean. Did Cuba fall in the Caribbean, or was that off to one side?

COWAL: No, Cuba was off to one side, and so was Panama. If you remember, we had Operation Just Cause during my time.

Q: Well, we might talk about the impact of the Panamanian attack or whatever you want to call it, and also did Cuba, although you didn't deal with it, what kind of role, as you saw it, and then we'll talk about the rest of the Caribbean, and then move onto the rest.

COWAL: We had Haiti and Guyana, the Caribbean Basin Initiative in Congress, so it was an active part of the portfolio, also.

Q: Okay, today is the 15th of July, the ides of July 2003. Sally, we're moving to the Caribbean. You went to ARA, and what was your portfolio?

COWAL: I think is what we talked about last time. I was hired into that job because I had Mexico experience. Although I was not a State Department officer, I had Mexico experience that was considered important as Baker and Bush tried to change around the relationship, or strengthen the relationship, improve the bilateral relationship with Mexico for the first time in 20 or 30 years, I suppose. Although I think later a DAS was picked just for Mexico. At that time, they were not so rich in DASes, so they needed to add something onto the portfolio, and the Caribbean was kind of a stepchild. I must say, I didn't know anything about the Caribbean when I began there. I had maybe been there a couple of times, probably on vacation. I don't think I ever did any work there in all of my years in Latin America, so I got the Caribbean portfolio added onto the Mexican portfolio for no particular expertise on my part. Of course, the way the State Department works, when you're at the DAS level, you have office directors who report to you. They are usually always people who have served pretty extensively in the region, although, I must say, the Caribbean for ARA, or now, I assume, WHA (Western Hemisphere Affairs) – maybe this has changed with Canada in the mix – has always been sort of apart, because it's not Spanish or Portuguese speaking.

Q: Also, I suspect this is a place where they put a relatively junior officer to get some DAS experience, too.

COWAL: I think so, although we were fortunate in having a gentleman named Joe Vasilia, who had a good, rich, I don't know, 20-year career in the State Department, but as I recall, he had never served in the Caribbean either, and he was the office director. Then you add on to that the problem that most of the ambassadors in the Caribbean are political appointees, because it's considered a safe and nice place to send somebody who's been a friend of the president or a contributor to the party, but who doesn't in fact know one hand from the other when it comes to foreign affairs. The thought is, "Oh, send him to Barbados, or send her to Jamaica."

Q: This is when sort of the second rank or third rank of political ...

COWAL: So you get second or third rank political ambassadors, most of whom are disappointed that they're there versus someplace that they've heard of, unless they're sort of California real estate agents and then they think the weather's nice and it'll probably be all right. But most of them are probably trying to get somewhere else, if they have any ambition, and they're a strange bunch, by and large, and they don't know anything about the Caribbean. Then you get Foreign Service officers and the ARA types don't really know anything about the Caribbean, because they've learned Spanish and Portuguese and they've spent most of their careers in Mexico and Argentina and Bolivia, and even Honduras and El Salvador, which are quite different than the reality of either Haiti, Cuba or the Dominican Republic, or the whole English-speaking Caribbean.

So, for Haiti, you usually get a bunch of West African experts who try to make Haiti into West Africa. They recruit them because they have French language skills and they've served in countries where there are black people, so that makes them certainly ready to go to Haiti. Then the English-speaking Caribbean just gets a lot of odds and sods, I would say, people who can't get another job or would prefer to be close to home for one reason or another – aging parents in Florida or something – and obviously, as with all State Department posts, some of them are excellent. Some of them who know nothing about the Caribbean when they come catch it very quickly, learn it extremely well, and that goes for some of the political ambassadors as well. And some of them just stride like colossuses through the landscape, breaking it up as they go, and you run along as the desk or as the DAS trying to pick up the pieces. Generally, I would say, my experience with political ambassadors in the Caribbean was not outstanding, with some exceptions.

Then you try to give them strong DCMs, but you have a problem because the stronger DCM candidates don't really want to go there either. I would say it's, in my experience, one of the least-professionally managed parts of the State Department, given the fact that it has only one real high-priority interest to the United States, and that's proximity. But proximity, as we know, and I talked about Mexico, I think has become much more salient and much more important in the last 15 years than ever before. We have drugs and immigration, and now, I suppose, terrorism, although I've been somewhat removed from the State Department since that became the huge issue that it is. But certainly, as we have, and promote, I must say, through free trade agreements and other things, a much more open border and open flow of commerce, we also inadvertently promote a more open flow of illegal immigrants and illegal drugs.

The other thing of significance to the region is Cuba, which although it was not a part of my portfolio at the time, I suppose watching it and knowing something about it led me some years later to a much more active role in Cuba. Cuba affects the rest of the region in many ways. I think the English-speaking Caribbean is not very well equipped to deal with it. It was either forbidden fruit and there should be something terribly fascinating about dealing with Cuba, and they should do it, and they must get on with it, the way they've never felt about Haiti or the Dominican Republic, which are perfectly willing to have closer relations with the English-speaking Caribbean than Cuba really was, or at least openness in terms of dialog. Or it's the sort

of monster in the closet. They worry about it not so much that Communism is going to engulf them, but more that if we come to a political settlement with Cuba, then the United States' interests, once again as they were pre-Castro, would focus on Cuba. Cuba would get the sugar quota back and that would hurt the rest of the Caribbean. They would get all the tourism that began to spring up in places all around the Caribbean really in the '60s and '70s when Cuba got cut off as the tourist destination. So they love and hate it, and that affects the rest of the region.

That was '89 to '91, and then I went as ambassador to Trinidad in '91. So, really, for those five years of being intensely involved in the Caribbean, you learn that they're all sort of sui generis little rocks out there, that it's hard to put them into one category. That's one of their problems, also, the fact that they have tried through several attempts, starting pre-independence, when they were all British colonies and the British were obviously trying to unload them, and there was certainly interest on the part of most of the Caribbean on being unloaded. It was the age of great independence movements, all of the African countries and so on, and the Caribbean was picking up that wind and wanted to do that. The British tried, I think, very hard to make the whole enterprise more sustainable by making it more united, by having one West Indian Federation, which was to seek independence as a single country, with one prime minister and one cabinet, and elections in which anybody from any country could be the prime minister, but they wouldn't each have their own legislative assemblies and so on.

In fact, that fell apart at the beginning, I think largely because the Jamaicans decided if the capital wasn't going to be in Kingston, which it wasn't – I think the capital was going to in Port of Spain – and the prime minister was going to be a Barbadian, the initial prime minister, then they weren't going to play cricket on that team. So they took their balls and bats and went home, and the other 12 countries – well, it was at that time 10. A couple became independent subsequently in joining CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market), but the others decided, as the great calypso song has it, 10 minus one equals zero. So if they didn't have Jamaica, which was the largest-population country, and the most resources, then it was not going to make it as a West Indian Federation. I think that's been one of the tragedies of that region. So they all pursued their separate courses at great cost. There are great inefficiencies which would not be altogether overcome if you had them together, but it would certainly be ameliorated.

As it is, you have Jamaica with a couple of million people, Trinidad with just over a million, and it drops off radically after that to countries with 200,000, 100,000 citizens. You've got these, as I call them, sui generis little rocks, each with its own mechanisms of government, its own full three branches – an executive, a legislative and a judiciary. Tremendous waste and inefficiency.

Q: When you got there in '89, did we have a policy to try to do anything about this?

COWAL: Well, not really to rewrite history. I think we were encouraging and helpful. There had been some original Caribbean basin legislation passed, which was essentially giving them trade preferences, mainly for assembly industry, for the textile industry, which is important in the Caribbean. We sought to have all of them sort of hang together enough to do one trade agreement with the United States, and then to renew that trade agreement. That was somewhat helpful, then. As drugs became a bigger issue, we certainly tried to provide some of the fiber optic network that would allow the Jamaicans to talk to the Trinidadians or the Barbadians or the

St. Kittians by radio and by fax and by phone.

All roads lead to Miami, but the roads aren't very good that lead between Jamaica and Barbados. To sort of foster and to provide the infrastructure for a better law enforcement network, in our own interest – I think it was in our own interest – but I think what we've discovered with the drug business all over the world is it can't be just coming through you. The beginning, I think, of the whole war on drugs, going back to Nixon, probably, and certainly through Reagan, there was a tremendous dialog of the deaf, where the United States of course – still does, to a certain extent – blames the producer countries. The producer countries say, "Hey, it's not our problem. If your young people didn't want to consume it, we wouldn't be growing it, would we? And besides, we don't have drug addicts. It doesn't affect us."

I think the shortsightedness of that point of view began to be addressed in the years that I was there. The Caribbean are not producers, but there are two ways for drugs to get to the United States. One is through Mexico and the other is through the Caribbean, so I was really handling both sides of that portfolio, therefore very drug related. I think that the transit countries, as well as the producer countries, began to understand the terrible effects, how distorting that amount of money to the Caribbean economies. Suddenly somebody is getting paid enormous amounts of money to close your eye when the boat goes through, or as paid mules and shippers.

They began to catch some of the really low-level folks, the poor Jamaican women who would take a few kilos in their suitcases and go to the United States. Of course, it's much harder to catch the real traffickers, because they're much more clever at what they do. At any rate, I think through our working with all of the countries of the Caribbean, both on trade issues and on law enforcement issues, we have done something to encourage a better dialog between us.

Q: Who was your assistant secretary?

COWAL: Bernie Aronson, who I must say – I don't suppose there's ever really been an assistant secretary for Latin America who spent a lot of time focusing on the Caribbean. There are always more important issues, except Cuba. They spent a lot of time focusing on Cuba, because at least until very recently, and to a certain extent it continues until today, the importance of the Cuban American lobby. That remains important, and it was important in the last presidential election.

Q: It was vital.

COWAL: As we know, it was vital, and therefore was one of the reasons I got more involved in Cuba when I was free from the State Department. It was the sort of negative residual of watching the extent to which U.S.-Cuba policy was manipulated and dominated by the Cuban American lobby in Miami, to the point of doing truly stupid things from the perspective of U.S. vital interests. Although I was not dealing with Cuba, my colleague, Mike Kozak, was, who had the pariah states. His portfolio was to be the principal DAS, and then to have Cuba and Panama, only two countries.

Q: Who was that?

COWAL: Mike Kozak, who is now ambassador in Belarus, I think, who actually was not a career Foreign Service officer, but he was not a political appointment, either. He was a State Department Legal Bureau person, a lawyer, and a very smart lawyer, a very smart guy. He didn't speak Spanish, I don't think, but had these two countries. His job, I think, on the Panama side, was mainly to try to keep SOUTHCOM (U.S. Southern Command) and the military in some sort of box. And on the Cuban side, it was to try to keep the Cuban Americans in some kind of box. So I didn't envy Mike his job, because I thought he had two impossible tasks. If the soldiers weren't marching into his office in a very purposeful way on Monday morning with their brass buttons all shined, heads of SOUTHCOM and so on, especially as we geared up for Operation Just Cause, then Jorge Mas Canosa, the head of the Cuban American National Foundation, was striding in, followed by his minions, not in brass buttons, but in mafia-style suits and ties, right off the plane from Miami. And Bernie Aronson, who was assistant secretary, generally wouldn't see him, or would eventually see them, but Bernie liked four of the five visits to be deflected by Mike.

So I would watch these guys march in. That's the old part of the building that's got walls three feet thick. Nonetheless, through my office wall, I could hear Mas Canosa berating the State Department either for sins of omission or commission, things that we had done that we shouldn't have done and things that we had left undone that we should have done. It was never quite enough, and we got told about it. In many ways because of congressional interests and, I must say, the administration's interest, we had to pay a lot more attention to it than in a rational world we would have had to pay. It didn't directly relate to me but made a very distinct impression on me and did affect other parts of my work.

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.

Q: Were you still in ...

COWAL: I had just gone to Trinidad, but it was very sad to me that Aristide blamed a lot of that on the United States, and what he blamed on the United States was we had never unblocked this aid. Of course, from our point of view, we never unblocked this aid because we never got a reasonable plan for how he would spend the money, try as we did, and we really did. We offered to send people to write the plan, and that was not acceptable, and so then we offered to send their plan writers to plan-writing school, and that was not acceptable. In the six months that I was there after he was in office, despite good will, and I must say it was good will on our side, and I'm sure it was good will on their side, we simply couldn't get to the point of dispersing any money, and that was a factor.

If we had turned over the whole 60 million or 100 million or whatever it was, dollars, as a check, they probably could have sustained this enterprise a little bit longer, but we weren't doing it. Except for a limited amount of economic support funds, we weren't writing those kind of checks. We were doing project assistance.

***

Q: First place, when Aristide first came in, what was sort of the reaction within the State Department, the experts, "Oh my God, who is this guy," the stuff you were getting?

COWAL: Well, essentially, "Oh my God, who is this guy?" I think the CIA was sort of caught flat-footed. I was told three weeks before the election by a good friend of mine who was at the time the foreign minister in the Dominican Republic, who had become a friend because he was very active in Caribbean business affairs and I had worked with him on trade stuff. He had been to Haiti. They were always trying to get some kind of arrangements with Haiti, because there was a lot of illegal migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic. There's a lot of illegal migration from Haiti everywhere else in the Caribbean. That was a problem in the Bahamas. It wasn't just a problem for the United States. It was the Haitians who were desperately poor and needing to go anywhere else they could find a better life, cutting cane in the Dominican Republic, or working in a hotel in the Bahamas or whatever. They did it.

At any rate, my friend, Carlos Morales, had been to Haiti and told me two or three weeks before the election with absolute certainty that Titi was going to win this election. I said, "Carlos, you can't be right. I've got all the intelligence estimates in the world and it says Marc Bazin is going to win by 10 points or five points or whatever it was." He said, "It's not going to happen," and of course he was right and they were wrong. So I think whenever they get sort of a black eye like that, there's a certain amount of resentment.

Q: A little dog in the manger type.

COWAL: So they weren't particularly happy about it, and then I think the military became sort of distraught. They had had at least in the military dictators a good working relationship with the Haitian military, and they didn't have any relationship with this. At the same time, it could honestly be said that Aristide was pretty flaky and not much of a democrat. But I do remember a very high military official ...

Q: On our side.

COWAL: On our side, saying to me, after meeting with him once or twice, that the man's elevator doesn't go all the way to the top. In many ways, that's true, certainly, in the ways of thinking and behaving as we would assume somebody in the modern world needs to think and behave in order to run a government. I remain in Haiti in my present job now 13 years later. We run as an NGO some healthcare projects in Haiti, so I have been to Haiti twice in the last four months or so, and Aristide is still limping along. There is still no real government. The opposition refuses to join in the parliament, because there has never been any modus operandi worked out. So whereas some limited USAID funds are going to the government, most of them are going to organizations like mine and many, many, many other NGOs who provide much of the social services and the healthcare services to Haiti. Aristide has been there now, on and off, for more than a decade, and I think to great cost.

CURACAO

RICHARD SACKETT THOMPSON
Consular Officer
Willemstad (1960-1962)

Richard Sackett Thompson was born in 1933 in Pullman, Washington. He graduated from Washington State University in 1955, after studying for one year at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris, France. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University and obtained a master's degree from Georgetown University in 1980. He spent two years in the U.S. Army in 1958-1960. In addition to Algeria, Mr. Thompson served with the Foreign Service in Aruba, Nigeria, France, Vietnam, and Greece. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 25, 1994.

Q: You were in Aruba how long?

THOMPSON: The post was closed after a year and I was transferred to Curaçao, which is forty miles away and the capital of the Netherlands Antilles, where we had a consulate general. Aruba had been very important during World War II. The oil refineries on Aruba and Curaçao provided a large proportion of the oil that the Allied Forces used in World War II. The Germans knew this and tried to shell them from submarines. There was actually one local citizen of Aruba killed by a shell from a German submarine and there was a street named for him. There were large numbers of Americans there to run the oil refineries, but with automation the number of Americans was dwindling very quickly. The State Department had financial pressures stemming from the need to open embassies in a large number of African countries which became independent in 1960. Therefore they were looking for consulates to close, which has been a recurring theme of the State Department administration over the years. So they closed Aruba after I had been there for a year and I went to a neighboring island.

Q: What was the situation in the Netherlands Antilles at this time?

THOMPSON: Well, I would say idyllic. The Dutch took care of foreign affairs and currency and international trade. They had local autonomy which covered internal laws and regulations. The population was a mixture of Dutch, sometimes who had been there for a couple hundred years, and the bulk of the population were the descendants of slaves who had been brought over two or three hundred years earlier during the time of the slave trade. The native Indians in Aruba, Curacao and many other islands were quickly wiped out by European diseases. But Aruba was undeveloped really until an oil refinery was put there in the 1920s. So it had some of the original Indians living on one end of the island and they were still there when I was there.

Basically it was a nice place to swim, to snorkel, etc. Several years after I left Curacao had some serious race riots and the political situation developed unfavorably, but at the time I was there it was very peaceful.

Q: When you went to Curacao I take it you were servicing many of the Americans still on Aruba. Is that true?

THOMPSON: At the time I came in everyone had a consular tour as his or her either first or second tour. Later in the mid-sixties, when the economy was booming they eliminated that requirement and people went directly into political/economic work. Some years later as the economy slowed down again, they started again requiring incoming junior officers to do a consular tour, and that is the situation today. So I had primarily consular work. It is a rather wealthy island and a lot of local people traveled to the States. So, I had a lot of visitors visas. I had some immigrant visas because the West Indian population had been brought in because they spoke English to run the refinery as lower level workers. So there were several thousand West Indians from places like Barbados and Trinidad in Aruba. But also we had upheavals elsewhere in the Caribbean which affected the work load a great deal. In the Dominican Republic you had people trying to revolt against Trujillo often fleeing as political refugees. There was a regular flow of people from the Dominican Republic coming to Aruba because you didn't have to have a visa to get into the Netherlands Antilles and they often had some tale of persecution which was quite believable and they would get sponsors in the United States for immigration visas. Meanwhile in Cuba, you had Castro. So you had two interesting streams. The Dominicans were usually people from the poorer classes of society, not very well educated and socialists. The people fleeing Cuba usually would put on the visa forms their organizations, the Havana Country Club and Miramar Yacht Club. They were a rather different stratum of society. So, most of my work actually was dealing with the people who were trying to get out of other countries and not the local population of Aruba. And this continued in the second year in Curacao.

Q: You were performing consular work in Curacao?

THOMPSON: I was doing consular work in both places pursuant to the personnel policy at that time.

Q: Any major consular problems?

THOMPSON: Well, in human interest terms you meet a lot of interesting people ranging from Miss Aruba or Miss Curacao going to a Caribbean beauty queen contest on the one hand to one man who I gave a visa to finally with some reluctance. He had his pockets full of marijuana when he entered the U.S. so he got picked up. That was unfortunate. So, you have a lot of human interest stories which you probably had plenty of in your other reporting so I won't try to go into them now. It was mostly routine, but now and then there were some interesting cases.

Q: Who was our consul general there at the time?

THOMPSON: I had two. I had Victor Pallister, who passed away some years ago. A very fine gentleman. And then after him Harry Houston who previously had been an FBI agent and deputy head of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. He was basically an intelligent, tough cop. A very nice guy with a tremendous record collection. They were both fine people to work for.

Q: No particular problems?

THOMPSON: Well, in Aruba there were some very serious personnel problems. There were only three Americans. There is no particular point in going into that, but it was a very unfortunate introduction to the Foreign Service for a young person.

Q: Sometimes you get into these small posts, especially early on, and it is a little hard to know whether this is the life for you or not. Were you married at the time?

THOMPSON: No, I wasn't married. One advantage of the Foreign Service is, if you are in a tough situation after two or three years you will presumably be transferred out of it or somebody else will be and it will get better. Of course, if you have a situation you like you know that will not last either.

JOHN T. BENNETT
Consul
Willemstad (1960-1963)

John T. Bennett was born on January 21, 1929 in Wisconsin. He received his BA from Harvard University in 1950 and his MS and PhD from the University of California-Berkley in 1952 and 1958 respectively. His career has included positions in Tunisia, South Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala. Mr. Bennett conducted his own interview in September 1996.

BENNET: Then we were sent to Curacao. It is a small island, 35 by 5-10 miles, population 150,000, dry and wind blown, covered with divi-divi trees and cactus, and consumed by goats. Its major economic activity was refining oil brought out of Venezuela's Lake Maracaibo. It was also a shipping center, and a tourist center, but with little else. The population was made up of Sephardic Jews who were the businessmen, the Dutch who were government employees and

many of whom had come from Indonesia because of the warm climate (and the cold in Holland), blacks who spoke papiamento (a mix of Spanish, English and Dutch with a local inflection that sounded like Portuguese but was unique) speaking "natives," and British West Indians who were there temporarily since WWII when they were needed to run the refinery.

I was the Consul, under the Consul General and over several "locals" and two Vice Consuls and two administrative officers. The first CG there was a pain. A political appointee, he had worked first in his life for Kellogg (the corn flakes people) and seems never to have learned anything more. We got along but he was terribly sensitive to his and his job's importance.

The office was on a bluff overlooking the city of Willemstad. It had been built by the Dutch out of gratitude to the US for its role in WWII. The CG lived in a house in the same compound, really a very nice residence.

The work was not terribly compelling, but it was fun learning all of the different things that a diplomatic mission did. My primary duty was economic and commercial. But I also filled in for the CG when he was away and covered for everyone else when I had the duty or they were away. I spent hours coding and decoding messages (e.g., long NIACT circulars about nothing requiring our action) and coming in to do crew list visas for ships that were going on to the US. We also had to cover a variety of odd jobs like deaths and the run-of-the-mill tourist or business complaints that walked in the door. I also got to write most of the efficiency reports and push American products and supervise all of the routine economic reporting. We had lots of Navy ship visits which the Curacaons enjoyed, though sometimes picking up the pieces afterwards was bitter sweet--like the time we had to pay for the breakage in the government run call house because the client got nervous at the appearance of the shore patrol, took to the attic and then fell through the ceiling.

I got to know an incredible number of people. Going downtown was a succession of greeting friends, shaking hands, and gossiping. I certainly got to know more people in Curacao than any other place I was assigned. One aspect of this was that the Consul became a member of the Lions club (the CG was a Rotarian). This established the personal relationships with most of the business community. We also dealt heavily with the government, just to keep track of what was happening. This was duly and fairly completely reported. I remember being inspected there and playing down what we did by way of reporting, only to be warned that we needed to do more reporting because something bad might happen. Back to Washington after our tour, I found that a number of things I had written and was particularly proud of had never been reproduced or distributed. So much for more reporting.

One of my government contacts was the chief of police, a very friendly Dutchman. I would not normally have had much to do with him but he transmitted rolls of film of passports of people coming and going through the Curacao airport--primarily to look for suspicious types. We also had to give him a visa waiver, because he was nominally in charge of the government whorehouse.

We had our crises--we always seemed to serve where they existed. Politics in Venezuela flowed across 40 mile strait to the island. The Curacaons depended on the crude for the refinery and

could not afford to guess on who came to power in Caracas. Despite some close calls, they seemed always to get it right. Once a group of Venezuelan opposition people crash landed in Curacao and we had to get them to the US quietly so the Curacaons didn't get cross-ways with the Venezuelans.

Going to sessions of the parliament had a charm of their own. Booze was served on the floor and meetings were long, late, and thirst provoking, so the consumption got pretty high at times. But the Dutch are not angry drunks.

We were still in Curacao, but nearing the end of the two year assignment. I was in the shower, getting ready to go to work. The phone rang and Marinka answered. The consulate had received my orders to go to Saigon. I was thrilled--exactly why I can't remember, but there was always something exciting about going to a new place.

I knew something about Vietnam, but it turned out to be very little and substantially wrong. For example, memory said ships sailed to Saigon, but the map in my atlas was so small, it didn't show the Saigon River going inland to the city itself and I remained in doubt for some time about the actual situation. That was a precursor to the extensive lack of knowledge all Americans shared about that country.

Going home by ship turned out to have its own excitement--we sailed through the armada formed during the Cuban missile crisis.

CHARLES LAHIGUERA
Consular Officer
Willemstad (1966-1967)

Mr. Lahiguera was born and raised in New York. After graduating from Georgetown University and serving in the US Navy, he entered the Foreign Service in 1963. Though he served outside the South East Asia, his primary duties concerned the Vietnam War and its aftermath, particularly refugees. His overseas posts include Germany, Curacao, Vietnam, France, Hong Kong, Thailand and Swaziland, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission. Mr. Lahiguera was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Well, you were there in '66 in Curacao?

LAHIGUERA: Yes, I believe so.

Q: You were there three years?

LAHIGUERA: No, that's another story. I went there as a consular officer and there were only three officers at the post and two American staff so, there were five of us. I enjoyed it. I could write a book about that place alone. While I was there I was still very naive about how the State

Department operated. After I'd been there about six months, we received one of these worldwide telegrams looking for a volunteer for Vietnam. I wrote an airgram and said in reference to their worldwide appeal I would be interested in being considered for an assignment in Vietnam on my next tour and then plunked that thing in the mail. The next thing I know, about three weeks time, I got a cable back from the Department saying warmly we'd accept your offer, you've been transferred to Vietnam. The consul general was a very unhappy man. I'd only been there one year. He said, "you know, what did you expect?" I said my message was that I wanted to leave for there on my next tour, I wasn't asking for a direct transfer. I didn't realize how desperate they were.

Q: Well, let's talk about the time you were in Curacao. What was the political situation in Curacao at that point?

LAHIGUERA: They belonged to the Netherlands. I was actually assigned to the Netherlands Antilles. There were six islands. We got our accreditation from the queen of the Netherlands. I only saw two of the islands. We had a very large American presence on Aruba, which is to the west of Curacao. Standard Oil had a large refinery. Curacao has a large refinery as well, Shell. Shell dominated Curacao. It was a very interesting society. They had a governor and a queen who was a local person. They had their own communist run government and they were all local people. There was a very small Dutch military force. They had a destroyer, a very small navy. It was really quite minimal.

I had the impression the Dutch would have been glad if they had left the Netherlands and become independent. But they didn't want to become independent because they had a fear of Venezuela. They feared Venezuela would grab them and take them or at least take over Aruba and probably Bonaire.

We didn't have any problems at all there. Everybody went to Florida to study or go on vacation. The relationship with the consulate general was very warm. The political differences really were with the Netherlands if there were any or with the other Latin American countries. We were the good guys in Curacao. I remember proposing an idea of having joint marine naval exercise in Curacao where we'd have the marines invade Curacao and everybody thought that was a splendid idea. Then we got a cable back from the Latin American bureau saying okay, we can do that. Of course the following attachés would like to attend the exercise. They included the Venezuelan local attaché. His involvement blew the idea out of the water.

Q: Who was the consul general?

LAHIGUERA: Horace Euston was the consul general. He was a retired FBI officer. He must have had some political connection to have gotten this job. They were charming people and we got along very well with the government at the time.

Q: What about was there an independence movement there?

LAHIGUERA: Not the least. As I say, they didn't want to be independent because they felt if the Dutch left, the Venezuelans would be there. The Dutch supported the government and they gave

them all kinds of study opportunities and scholarships. They had all kinds of programs to help the Curacaoans. I guess they just felt they wouldn't get such a good deal from anybody else and the Dutch really let them do what they wished aside from having them base a destroyer there which I think they eventually sent home.

Q: Was there much talk of Venezuela?

LAHIGUERA: Yes. We had a lot of boats come in from Venezuela selling fruits and vegetables. I would say the average person in Curacao spoke four languages, which I just found amazing. They had a local language and they spoke Dutch and they spoke English and they spoke Spanish. I don't know if I ever met any Curacaoan who didn't speak all four of those languages. They broadcast the television in all four. My children, my oldest one started in a Curacao school. All of the schools started in Dutch. You had Dutch the first year and you started English the second year. I think by the fourth year you were taking Spanish. If you watched their television, they'd have a program in English and the next one would be in Spanish and the next one would be in Dutch. They had Dutch news broadcast and they had English news broadcast. So, it was really very multi-language operation. Very interesting.

Q: The Caribbean tourism business is very strong today, but I was wondering whether it was then.

LAHIGUERA: In fact I would say that it was more important. We got ships in all the time.

Q: It was quite a contrast wasn't it, to have something that looked sort of European all of a sudden. Were there problems with American tourists?

LAHIGUERA: Well, I could spend the whole afternoon.

Q: Well, tell me a story or two.

LAHIGUERA: Well, the Dutch ran a state brothel. They had a lot of merchant seaman. So, they set this place up. The arrangement was that all the staff in the brothel were foreigners. They were all there temporarily. They'd come in by visa and left after just a few months. They were all very closely controlled by the Dutch medical authorities who controlled everybody's arrival and departure. No local personnel were allowed to work there only the foreigners. There were no local women engaged in prostitution. They were very severe about anyone who wanted to be an independent entrepreneur in Curacao. They really had this thing under control. We were involved because we had an arrangement with the police regarding the granting of visas to work in this place. I'd check the names with the police and the police would say yes, we gave them a visa to work there. I can also remember one American problem I had. A fellow who was a member of a very prominent family was mentally unstable and he used to come in the consulate and give us a tirade. He'd throw his passport down and he tore up his nationalization papers. He was a nationalized citizen, but he was obviously not stable. We wanted to send him back. He used to sleep on the street and we wanted to send him back to the United States for medical treatment. The police didn't want to touch him because his family was too prominent. They didn't want to force him to do anything, so I used to try to talk him into getting on an airplane. I

was never successful at it.

CHARLES A. MAST
Consular Officer
Willemstad (1967-1969)

Charles A. Mast was born in South Dakota in 1939. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Calvin College in 1963 he received his master's degree from University of Maryland in 1967. He also served in the Peace Corps from 1963-1965. His career has included positions in Curacao, Teheran, Tabriz, Ankara, Djakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Dhaka, and Bombay. Mr. Mast was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in February 2001.

MAST: I was told that I was assigned to Curacao because of my Dutch background. I've usually felt pretty comfortable with the assignments process, even though I know that there are problems with it, and I guess maybe that's because I started off with a pretty good assignment.

Q: *Well, you were in Curaçao from 1967 to 1969, and what was your job?*

MAST: I was head of the consular section. It was a six-person consulate general, and there were two Americans and four local employees in the consular section that I was to supervise. There was a young American woman who was junior to me, but had been at post a couple of months longer than I was.

Q: *Who was the consul general?*

MAST: Harris Huston. He had been there at that time about seven years, and he was a well-known conservative - I wouldn't say McCarthyite, but certainly very, very conservative, strong anti-Communist - and had been head at one time of security and consular affairs in the Department. The gossip had it that when the Kennedy Administration came in, they wanted to find a good job for him away from Washington and thus sent him as consul general to Curaçao. He was great. He did a great job down there. He was well liked, and I thought he was a good diplomatic manager.

Q: *Well, let's talk a bit about consular work. Visas? What was it like?*

MAST: Visas - we did immigrant visas and non-immigrant visas, but not a lot. Several hundred non-immigrant visas and, I guess 250-300 immigrant visas, which now would be considered a light load for one officer. We interviewed virtually every person. We had time for that. We had a fair amount of citizenship cases. We also had to take care of Aruba and Bonaire and the other three islands. But we didn't have a great budget, so I entrusted the economic commercial officer to handle some consular duties when he traveled to the other islands.

Q: *What about the non-immigrant visas? Were you considered a post for people that sort of had*

to sneak through to go to work, go as tourists and then end up staying?

MAST: Yes, we had to stay pretty close in touch with other posts in the region, such as Kingston or Barbados or Martinique. The Dutch passport holders were not a problem. They were not going off to the States to work illegally. But we had to be careful of the British passport holders because many of them were maids in Curacao and were always trying to slip off and become maids in the United States. Americans who would come down on vacation would often recruit people like this to come up and work for them. And Dominicans and Haitians, they would try us because it was much harder for them to get visas in Santo Domingo or Port-au-Prince. We had a particular problem because Curacao was a large port. There was a quasi-official house of prostitution, actually in the port, and that was usually staffed almost entirely with Colombians or women from Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Q: *Did you have any sort of in with the police? Did they tell you?*

MAST: Yes, we could get some information from Police Intelligence. If we wanted to turn someone down at the counter when we interviewed them, but had questions whether this might be a qualified person, we could ask them to come back a week later after we had checked with the police.

Q: *Protection and welfare - jail, deaths, what sort of things did you have?*

MAST: Not a lot. I remember two or three of them. One, an American who was a small businessman who came down to gamble and was sucked into an opportunity where he got a thousand dollars' worth of chips for a hundred dollars from a casino employee and lost it immediately. He was arrested and sentenced to six months and, I think, lost his business in the States. I visited him often in prison, a fairly nice prison by American standards.

The other one, we had a beautiful young woman - this was I think the first week we were down there - a dancer and entertainer in New York, and she became mentally ill while she was in Curacao. At the Country Inn, where I was living, she was actually dancing naked on the table at three o'clock in the morning. Of course, I was sleeping and missed all this. Basically, I was quite involved with that case, but my assistant, who was a young female, got very involved, and they hit it off well together, and the woman was in a mental hospital for a couple months, but recovered quite dramatically and went back to the States.

We had another death case, I remember, where a young American woman drowned and her husband was unable to cope. It took a couple of days to find her body. In the interim, he went back to the States and never came down for the funeral. She was Jewish so we needed twelve men for the funeral, and we succeeded thanks to several foreign tourists who were shocked that a young American woman should be buried without relatives present.

Q: *Did politics intrude at all in Curaçao?*

MAST: Curaçao was quite a conservative place, but in 1968 there was a little bit of an overlap of the black power movement, which was of course strong in the States at the time. Shell oil was

heavily unionized, and there was a strike going on, and it spilled over into a black power rally and anti-Dutch colonial manifestations. There were fires and rioting everywhere on the island. Of course, we had an enormous number of tourists to take care of. The Dutch police and the Dutch marines were very helpful. We discovered very early on - but of course the tourists wouldn't believe it - that it was not at all anti-American. It was very interesting to be on an island where the demonstrations were totally anti-Dutch. In fact, we knew Dutch friends who escaped violence by speaking English as fluently as they could and insisting they were Americans. But of course for the tourists, there was a lot of concern with what happens when you fall into mob violence. And I learned then that American tourists, particularly the New Yorkers, could be very demanding. They would say, "Well, I'm going to call Senator Javits, and they're going to send a destroyer for me, if you don't get me out of here in 24 hours..." The Consul General got involved with some of this if there were calls from politicians in the States, but most of them I handled myself.

Q: *Did they turn the tourist ships away?*

MAST: No, there happened to be some tourist ships there at the time and the hotels were full of tourists. They must have turned some tourist ships away for a few weeks. I don't remember that particularly, but the tourists were able to get out. It was just a problem for a day or two.

Q: *Were there any manifestations of what is called the Amsterdam syndrome? I think that right about 1969 there were heavy demonstrations about Vietnam in Amsterdam. I think our consul general there was getting pelted with eggs about on a daily basis. Was there any of that spillover?*

MAST: No, we had virtually none. There was no university in the Netherlands Antilles. And the high school kids were not particularly politicized, and I don't think the unions were interested in Vietnam. Their main concerns were with economic benefits and then to a certain extent black power, because the Dutch and the Jews, Sephardics, ran the island. In fact, I remember I got to know one Curaçaoan black service station owner well where I would go to to get my car washed and waxed, and he was a strong supporter of US policy in Vietnam. He would criticize US policy from the right; we needed more troops, more bombing, etc. I almost had to bring him down every time we would talk, and say, "Well, there are other points of view." So I remember it as not at all difficult. I was sort of insulated, working on my visas. So I'd read about US Vietnam policy in the newspaper and periodicals but didn't feel any particular responsibility or any particular concern, I guess, about that aspect of US foreign policy.

Q: *Were we looking at that time for Curaçao to declare its independence and move over to become another independent nation? By this time in the Caribbean so many had gone through that.*

MAST: There were some movements of that kind. Surinam, of course, moved fairly soon into independence. But the Netherlands Antilles was a little more conservative than Surinam on that. They didn't have the resources, the economic base that Surinam had. And I think their *per capita* income was much higher than Surinam. I think they felt they had something to lose. Now you tended to get these squabbles between Curaçao and Aruba, and of course later Aruba declared its

independence from the kingdom and from the Netherlands Antilles.

Q: *How did that play out finally? I mean, is Aruba independent?*

MAST: Most of this happened some time after I left, but as I understand it, Aruba is independent now, although it may still have some tenuous ties to the Netherlands in terms of foreign policy and national defense.

Q: *Did Curaçao cover Aruba at that point?*

MAST: Yes, we had had a consulate general, believe it or not, in Aruba as well because Esso had a very large refinery there and there were quite a few Americans there, but the consulate there closed in the early 1960s. Consequently, we used to go to Aruba periodically to handle citizenship concerns.

Q: *Did you get involved at all in sort of servicing the oil people and all that?*

MAST: Yes, we would do that some. They would come to Curaçao quite a bit because there was a bigger airport in Curaçao, but we would also go to Aruba. I didn't go there very often. I tended to let the vice-consul go. She preferred that, and I wasn't much of a traveler. I had a young child at home, and my wife was teaching.

Q: *Well, then, you left there in 1969, and whither?*

MAST: Well, I wanted to go back to Turkey, so I wrote to Personnel asking whether there was anything available in Turkey. Personnel said, "Well, we don't have anything in Turkey, but how would you like to go into Farsi language training?" So I started Farsi language training in September, 1969.

***

GRENADA

EILEEN R. DONOVAN
Principal Officer, Grenada
Barbados (1968-1974)

Ambassador Eileen R. Donovan taught high school history in Boston when World War II began. After the Pearl Harbor incident, Donovan joined the Women's Auxiliary Corps. She was sent to Officer Candidate School in Des Moines, and came out as a 2nd Lieutenant. After teaching Japanese women for a period, she

took the Foreign Service exam and was sent back to Tokyo to begin her career that would culminate with an Ambassador appointment. She has served in Manila, Barbados, and Japan. The interview was conducted by Ann Miller Morin in 1985.

Q: St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla with dashes between them, St. Lucia and to the associated state of St. Vincent. Now is that the correct way to list this? Take a look at that. I've copied that from what was said about Sally. I want to get that right, so if you can give that to me. In 1968 it was a consulate, is that correct?

DONOVAN: Yes.

Q: And you were the principal officer?

DONOVAN: Yes, and in 1962 it was a consulate general and I was the consul general. And it also included all the other islands for which we always had consular responsibilities.

Q: And that would be that list down here?

DONOVAN: Well it would be, at that time in 1960, it was Antigua, Dominica. They were all colonies then. Grenada, St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. There wasn't any associated state then. And it also included Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands.

Q: Oh, I see. Why did it become a consulate general having been a consulate.

DONOVAN: I don't know.

Q: What are the ground rules for a thing becoming a consulate general? It's just larger, is that it?

DONOVAN: I guess so. We had responsibility for all those other islands, but during the past years this was passed back and forth between Trinidad and Barbados, and at this time we got all of them to keep. I guess that's why they made it a consulate general. I'm not sure though, just making it up.

Q: That sounds like a reasonable assumption.

DONOVAN: So there I got to know all the leaders of all the islands.

Q: You did the political reporting, did you?

DONOVAN: All of it, yes. The first five years. When I went back as ambassador I had two others. So I got to know them very well indeed. I used to slave over classified documents called "political and economic assessments, annual," for Barbados and for each of the others.

Q: Each of the others. You really had a multi load.

DONOVAN: Somewhere along the line in one of your little sheets there you have. "Is there anything you didn't like about the Department?" Well, I didn't like the fact that to all intents and purposes for those first five years, nobody paid the slightest attention to anything I said. [Chuckles]

Q: Is that right?

DONOVAN: You see it was all in a transition.

Q: Going from EUR to ARA.

DONOVAN: They had a very fine desk officer there, whose name I can't remember, in EUR, but he would just put those reports into his file drawer. You see they had no AID program for the area.

Q: That's right. Of course.

DONOVAN: The whole tragedy of that whole area of the world was that the West Indies Federation, which was established in 1958 and which also had Jamaica and Trinidad as members, folded in 1962. It folded up for reasons which are at great length, but I won't bore you with them, except part of it was their insularity. They did have a little thing called USOM which was an AID mission to the West Indies Federation but when the Federation folded, they were all in pieces again. I tried to tell the Department during those five years that it was criminal to have taken a fund that was meant to help small business, which was a fund that was subscribed to--it went to the Federation of the West Indies--to turn that money back to the Treasury just because there wasn't any Federation of the West Indies. The islands were still there.

Q: And they still needed the help.

DONOVAN: Even more so. But anyway...

Q: That folded in '62, you said?

DONOVAN: Yes.

Q: So USAID funds were returned to the Department?

DONOVAN: Yes. That was a special fund. But I figured then that I didn't have much clout, as they like to say now, that nobody was paying attention to me. But I did know them all very well and know what they needed and what their gripes were. I kept them friends with pleasantries, platitudes, and no promises. They would all say, what do we have to do, Miss Donovan, go communist to get U.S. attention? I'd say, “It begins to look that way.”

Q: There's a bitter truth to that, isn't there?

DONOVAN: So anyhow, I came back after five years and I was to be assigned somewhere in the Far East. I don't know where. Then it had gone over to ARA, the whole thing. So I went up and talked to a man who was deputy assistant secretary of State for ARA, and again, I didn't have anything to lose. I was leaving the area. So I talked with him for about an hour and I told him all the mistakes that we had made or things we had done or not done, things we had done or failed to do with this [area]. And how it was a shame because the British--even though we had our head in the sand and would not face it--the British were giving up these places. They were all going to be independent, as well as Barbados within a few years. They were right in our backyard. They were sitting athwart--I love that expression, I used it--athwart the entrance to the Panama Canal, with Cuba at one end and Guyana at the other end which was also getting close to being a communist state. And we were just ignoring them. All they needed was a little encouragement, or some kind of an AID program that they figured out themselves, or something. So this man listened to me and he said, "Well, you know so much about it, instead of going to the Far East, why don't you stay here? Can we make you assistant director of the office of Caribbean Affairs. But you don't have to bother with Haiti and the Dominican Republic," which was in their mind at that point. "We'll have a commonwealth Caribbean section and that's yours." So I got that and it included Jamaica and Trinidad and Guyana and what was then British Honduras. That was my place for the next four years.

Q: By this time you were a senior officer.

DONOVAN: I was a 2.

Q: You were there for four more years?

DONOVAN: I was there for a total of four years.

Q: A total of four years and you had been five in Barbados. So you really were the expert on this, weren't you?

DONOVAN: I was indeed.

Q: For goodness sakes! How many other people have that much savvy? Goodness sakes, so you were four years at that job.

DONOVAN: Yes. Barbados became independent in 1966. A delegation was headed by Chief Justice Warren and I went down with him and others to celebrate this. Then they appointed this political ambassador man [Frederic R. Mann] to be the first ambassador there. That was [President] Johnson.

Q: Had he given money, you think, to the Johnson campaign?

DONOVAN: Oh, yes, he'd given thousands of dollars. He's the one who wanted to go to Luxembourg, remember?

Q: Yes, yes. He wanted Luxembourg because it was equidistant between Paris and London.

Good reason for a post. Isn't that something? [Laughter]

DONOVAN: Anyway...

Q: He became the first ambassador.

DONOVAN: So, then Johnson went out and Nixon came in and he had to resign. Then they started looking for someone else. They thought perhaps it would be useful to have someone who purported to know something about the Caribbean.

Q: I would think so, yes. So you finally got your just desserts and went back as ambassador.

DONOVAN: Yes.

Q: Barbados, in Bridgetown. Then the other things we have written out correctly. "Special representative to the states of" and so on.

DONOVAN: That's when I went back. I know that I was among the Department's choices, but I didn't know about the White House or anything else. Alex Johnson was then undersecretary for political affairs. He told me he didn't think I'd have much chance of being ambassador to Barbados, although the Department supported me among others, because the assistant secretary of State, who was a man named Richardson...

Q: Elliot?

DONOVAN: Elliot. Would have the final choice, and that political persons like that usually chose political appointees.

Q: Alex Johnson was telling you this, Alexis Johnson.

DONOVAN: Then came the Federal Women's Award. In the middle there somewhere.

Q: Is that one person a year?

DONOVAN: No. I think it's finished now, isn't it?

Q: It is finished now, yes.

DONOVAN: No, it was about five persons from all over.

Q: All over the country.

DONOVAN: It has to be something federal. Anyway...

Q: You won that.

DONOVAN: There was a letter from Patricia Kipp that was the chairman of the board to the secretary saying that I had won it. By the way, that was the second time the nomination got in, the second year. The first year it didn't.

Q: Oh, is that so? The second nomination?

DONOVAN: It was only the first nomination that ever went in.

Q: I see, the second nomination, but only one got in.

DONOVAN: The letter said they'd like to have the heads of the various departments to act as escorts to these ladies. They asked if Mr. Rogers [Secretary of State William P. Rogers] would escort me. But something happened, he either didn't care to or he was away on business probably, so he assigned John Steeves, director general of the Foreign Service. But somebody had mentioned this to Elliot Richardson who was assistant secretary of State and he said, "I would like to escort her if Mr. Rogers can't."

Q: Did he?

DONOVAN: “Because she's a Massachusetts girl.” He was a Massachusetts man in his spare time. He certainly got a shellacking there, last year didn't he?

Q: Did he not?

DONOVAN: Oh brother, Republicans too. Anyway, he escorted me to the dinner, and I gave a speech, and he said he wanted me to come up and tell him more about the Caribbean, which I did. Always like to talk about the Caribbean. This is just by way of saying that when it came time to be named ambassador, I had the support of the political arm of the Department as well as the career arm. Personally, I think it was Elliot Richardson's support in the White House, because that was before the days of the great October massacre [October 20, 1973. Richardson resigned after Nixon fired Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, who was investigating the Watergate scandal. [Cox had subpoenaed nine presidential tape recordings. The White House refused to surrender them.]. Oh, here's my grandfather. I kept it in this book when I wanted a flat page. That's my mother's father. That's Elliot Richardson, who also swore me in.

Q: Did he? I want to hear about that.

DONOVAN: Here's my mother. And that was the then ambassador from Barbados to the OAS.

Q: Now, when you were nominated for this, you say you were the Department's candidate, which I'm sure you were, but do you know specifically who in the Department was pushing your candidacy?

DONOVAN: No, I don't know if anyone was pushing it. I suppose there's a board or something.

Q: You think pretty much it's Elliot Richardson that...

DONOVAN: I think that's what swung it.

Q: Of course. He had the clout.

DONOVAN: No matter, the Department said or didn't say. I went out to... I'm probably the only woman ambassador that was nominated by a president that got kicked out of the job.

Q: But there's a picture of you with Nixon. Did he receive you at the White House?

DONOVAN: No, out on the western coast.

Q: How did that happen?

DONOVAN: He was out there that summer.

Q: And you went out to see him?

DONOVAN: Yes, and together with four or five other ambassadorial nominees, Toby Belcher, you remember him?

Q: Yes.

DONOVAN: I don't know, the rest of these are political, and me.

Q: Now if you had to go out there, I hope the government paid your way?

DONOVAN: Oh, yes, they did.

Q: Or did you go in Air Force 1 or 2?

DONOVAN: No, no, gee it was so long ago, they paid our way by commercial. That's me giving a speech in Barbados. This is me teaching kids the principles of geometry.

Q: Can you recall the day that you actually were told you were to be the ambassador? Can you recall how that happened? Did you have a phone call, or a letter, or how was it done? Now President Reagan calls up the people and informs them that they are his chosen.

DONOVAN: I was out to lunch somewhere and when I came back there was a press release about several ambassadors, including me. This was the first I'd heard of it.

Q: It must have been a bit of a shock.

DONOVAN: Oh it was. I was very happy. It was like the day I'd passed the Foreign Service orals. So I went into Ted Long's office. He was the boss in Caribbean Affairs at that time. I think he had thought in his mind it would be nice to be ambassador to Barbados. But I don’t know how

far...

Q: It must be quite an exciting time.

DONOVAN: So I said, “They named a new ambassador to Barbados.” He said, "Oh, they did? Who is it?" I said, "Me." His secretary, named Jesse, whom I remember said, "Not you." I said, "Yes."

Q: Not giving you the deference you deserve.

DONOVAN: That was the beginning of it all. This was the day I gave Eddie two million to the Caribbean Development Bank.

Q: Where were those funds from? Was that the EX-IM Bank?

DONOVAN: No, they were from the United States government. They went through the bank.

Q: What fund of the United States, just Treasury? This wasn't under AID, was it?

DONOVAN: I think it must. By that time, yes. That's me presenting my credentials to LeBlanc, the prime minister of Dominica.

Q: Most people have one ceremony that is a big day in their life, but you must have had several ceremonies?

DONOVAN: Oh, I did. I had nine.

Q: Nine! Nine ceremonies.

DONOVAN: These were meetings with the ambassadors to Latin America in various places. See, again, I'm the only woman. All the way through.

Q: All the way through. That must have begun to seem the norm to you. You probably would have been very uneasy if there had been a lot of women.

DONOVAN: This was my officer staff when I went down as ambassador.

Q: Who are those people?

DONOVAN: I've forgotten his name. This is Peter Lord. This is the head of a temporary USIS thing. This is the administrative officer. My boys. I sent this in to the Journal [*The Foreign Service Journal*]. They all have beards. I sent some story about, “The ambassador does not wear a beard” or something.

Q: She's the one without the beard. You had been following this so closely for nine years that it obviously had no surprise for you and you didn't have to do any preparation to go there. Tell me

about your Senate hearings?

DONOVAN: That was Fulbright. And he was so busy castigating Casey who was up for something that he took the whole morning, most of it, while I sat there, perspiring again. Val McComie, the ambassador from Barbados to the OAS, later on to Washington, was up in the back row too. And Fulbright said, "Ahem, so they want to send you to Barbados, do they?" I said, "Yes, Sir." He said, "You know, I don't approve at all of independence for these little islands." I said, "Well, Barbados is already independent and I think, sir, the others will soon follow." Then he made some other remark and that was it.

This was the governor general of Barbados, Sir Winston Scott, who came to our Fourth of July party _____. That's crossed flags for the cake. They had a custom there that when the birthday person cut the cake they were kissed by the honored guest. So he's kissing me. This is the wife of the prime minister. That's me saying goodbye to Cameron. This is out at the naval facility that I told you was part of our responsibility. That's the prime minister.

Q: What was the name of the man who was in the audience when Fulbright was making his tactless comment?

DONOVAN: Val McComie. There we are again with all the ambassadors to Latin America.

Q: And again there you are the only woman.

DONOVAN: Isn't that a nice picture of the American flag and the Barbados flag out at the naval facility?

Q: Beautiful. I'd like to look through that, if I may?

DONOVAN: Sure. If you have time.

Q: When you became the ambassador, what would you say was your most important problem? They had achieved their independence. Let's speak about Barbados now. What was their biggest problem that you had to concern yourself with? Was it to try to get money? Was it that they needed money to build up the private sector?

DONOVAN: They never asked for any money. It was of all things, civil aviation. The prime minister had a bug in his mind about a national airline. We in the Department didn't want to give him the right to run a national airline into the United States, primarily because there was only one plane and even that was leased from Freddie Laker.

Q: Grenada?

DONOVAN: The strong man from Grenada for many years was a chap named Geary who was a flamboyant crook, who nevertheless appealed to many of the people. He was kicked out of government by the British for the crime of “squandermania.” Isn't that a lovely name?

Q: I love it.

DONOVAN: From 1962 to '67. But otherwise he was the boss man there. They let him go back again and he had a group of strong men called goons who treated very brutally any opposition. He was finally...

[INTERRUPTION]

DONOVAN: He led Grenada to Independence, however.

[INTERRUPTION]

DONOVAN: What did I say so far?

Q: You said that he had strong men called goons who beat up people.

DONOVAN: Goons. It was kind of a shame because Grenada is the most beautiful of all the islands. There's no doubt about it. High hills and beaches and things. I went over to the Independence of Grenada as United States government official representative. Originally it had been a couple of congressmen that had been chosen, but the British came out and said they couldn't guarantee the safety of anybody attending the ceremony.

Q: Good heavens!

DONOVAN: So nobody asked them to guarantee the safety, but this scared off a lot of people. It scared off the congressmen, for one thing, and it scared off the official Barbados delegate, who never went. And it scared off a lot of people. I went with my political officer, named George Moose, who was a very fine black political officer. One of the smartest men I ever knew who's now ambassador in some little small African country. Anyhow, we went. He had the celebrations at the Grenada Hilton, I guess it is, right on the beach. And the head table with its back to the beach and I, being the only woman again, well there were other women somewhere, but I was the official representative of the United States and the ranking woman. So of course I sat on Mr. Geary's right. I felt a little bit like I did that day down in Hiroshima in the boat. This is going to be another good way to die. If I were any of those people he's been shooting up, and they were good people, I would be right on the shore in the waves going "AAHHRRRRR" [imitates machine gun noise] at the back of the table. So this is probably my last dinner, but so what?

Anyway it didn't happen. He didn't let them go at all up to the hills where the flags were being exchanged because it was too dangerous. It was a wild and hectic time. The lights went out in the hotel and everything happened. So then I went back home to Barbados and that was early in '74.

Q: Did you have any bodyguards with you to protect you?

DONOVAN: They did send an officer from the Venezuelan embassy, a security officer. But he was so far back in the audience that he wouldn't have been any help to me. He couldn't stand behind me or anything. Anyway I didn't need him. Then just after I left, this young man named

Bishop... Geary went on a visit to New York, he wanted to talk about the UFOs in the United Nations. He was crazy. So anyway, Bishop overthrew him, and at the beginning Bishop headed up a group called the New Jewel movement, in case you people know what that means. It means Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation. He seemed to start off all right. He was a hard-core Marxist and he went from bad to worse until his doings were worse than Geary's, plus the fact that he invited the Cubans in to build this giant airfield. They needed an airfield, but they didn't need that one.

Q: That was military?

DONOVAN: Yes. The only other airport they had was high in the mountains where we would land on our trips and go down these corkscrew roads to town. They could have used an airport all right, but anyway... Then he was overthrown. Well, he was shot and the people who shot him were worse than he was. They were completely dominated by Cubans and Russians too. The governor general of Grenada, whom I had known in the past, begged Great Britain to send some armed forces in to help them, but Great Britain either didn't respond or said we're too far away or something. So then he asked Barbados and some of the other members of this organization of eastern Caribbean countries. You probably know all this story.

Q: But I don't know it firsthand.

DONOVAN: Barbados asked the United States to help. Barbados didn't but it was the woman prime minister of Dominica who was speaking for them. This was all legal under the United Nations and OAS agreements for regional self-defense. Later on it was made to look illegal but it wasn't. It was just as legal [as it could be]. Rather quickly we and the Barbadians and the Jamaicans finally got forces in there and captured these guys who captured him. I think it was a good thing. It’s too bad we had to get into it, because you know most of the publicity has been anti, “attacking a little state like Grenada.” We weren't attacking it. We were, in fact, liberating it. It sounds naïve but it happens to be true. I wouldn't say it if it weren't because I don't usually like anything that Mr. Reagan does, but in this case I do.

Q: But the people who had killed Bishop, had they been his followers up to that time?

DONOVAN: No. Some of them had a couple of years ago, but they'd split.

Q: They were all communist?

DONOVAN: One of them was a man that was a general and had come back after a year of training in Cuba. It was anarchy. There wasn't any government there. I just read an article in the Barbados magazine that I have, just yesterday, saying that “democracy has come back to Grenada.” The people are very happy with the government but they're not happy with the economics. Tourism is just beginning to come back again.

Q: I suppose that's what they mostly depend on?

DONOVAN: No, Barbados now, tourism is the number one industry, above sugar. But Grenada,

it's always been bananas and cocoa. It's called the spice island. Bananas and cocoa and copra and nutmeg. But the prices of all those things have gone way down on the world market and they have 30 to 40% - this is just yesterday I read - 30 to 40% unemployment.

Q: Wow. Gee whiz.

DONOVAN: So they're not getting along very well economically. But it has all the potentials to be the most prosperous of the islands. It's so beautiful.

Q: Is it the only one who went leftist?

DONOVAN: Yes, the only one who successfully went leftist. Dominica had a little flurry there when they had a madman.

Q: They seem to produce a lot of them down there, don't there? Look at Papa Doc. Baby Doc.

DONOVAN: Yes. They had a flurry in Dominica but that passed over, and they had a few so-called black power riots in Antigua. But they were not - they were just little splinters.

Q: You believe these islands, as you pointed out, are strategically very important for bases and that sort of thing, so it behooves us to pay more attention to them.

DONOVAN: Well, I think it's high time. Now we are supposedly doing so. There's a thing called the president's Caribbean initiative, which is getting American companies to invest with them. That's a slow and uncertain process. They'll invest where they can make the most money and that will be Barbados or those places which have the best infrastructure for their purposes. It won't help Dominica much, poor miserable Dominica. I feel sorry for it. It's the only one which has a rain forest and which has very little sunshine and black beaches. There are certain islands which have coral beaches, namely Antigua and Barbados and parts of St. Lucia, but a lot of the others are volcanic. They're black beaches. For some reason tourists don't like black beaches. They want a nice clean white beach. The black beaches are just as clean but it isn't as pretty. And... where was I?

Q: We were talking about the future of these islands and what they can hope for. Do you think tourism is - no you said...

DONOVAN: Tourism is...

Q: For the islands that are attractive.

DONOVAN: Tourism is doing fine in Barbados and will again in Grenada and is doing quite well in St. Lucia.

Q: What is the island where Princess Margaret used to go?

DONOVAN: She goes to a little island called Moustique, which is part of the St. Vincent

Grenadines. Grenada has some Grenadines, southern Grenadines, and St. Vincent has some northern Grenadines. Those are little bitty islands, Palm Island and Moustique and those. Barely little spots in the water. St. Vincent now was practically the only source in the world for arrowroot, which was once used in baby food or something. Then it died out. People didn't use it anymore.

Q: It's very good for making gravies and things.

DONOVAN: Now it has something to do with the high tech industries. So it's coming back again there. That's St. Vincent. They all have a little specialty. Dominica, which I was saying I was sorry for, does have a specialty, called lime juice. You know the famous Rose's Lime Juice, that comes straight from Dominica. But until they get some small industries, that's what they need, small industries started and get some help in doing it.

Q: Are they good at any hand work, weaving, baskets?

DONOVAN: They do a lot of that but that's small time stuff.

Q: That's too small, but what about textiles, lace making, sort of upscale luxury items that would bring in a lot of money?

DONOVAN: No.

Q: They don't do that?

DONOVAN: No. They have a batik industry on the island of St. Lucia.

Q: What do you think is the most important quality an ambassador to these islands should have?

DONOVAN: Sensitivity and understanding. Of course you could say that about any ambassador, but...

Q: Yes, but it's less important in some places. I mean, know-how, a knowledge of economics, is more important, for example, if you're going to other places. Or a knowledge of munitions is important in others.

DONOVAN: No, they need to have a sensitivity and understanding.

Q: Are the people very sensitive and very proud?

DONOVAN: Yes. They're proud and sensitive.

Q: I would expect they would be.

DONOVAN: And they are proud of their heritage, which is justice, social justice, and democracy, law and order. I mean the Barbados House of Representatives, the House of

Assembly, was established in 1639. The third in the New World.

Q: Third in the new world preceded only...

DONOVAN: By the Virginia House of Burgesses, and I think the Jamaica one. It was third.

Q: And that is Barbados?

DONOVAN: Yes. They've always had courts of law. They've always had legislature according to the British parliamentary system. Of course Barbados was never anything but British.

Q: That's right. I see their literacy rate is 99%.

DONOVAN: Well, that's not functional literacy.

Q: Oh, it's not?

DONOVAN: They can sign their names and they can add and subtract. And quite a few of them speak very well and write very well, but not 97%. I've always objected to that. But let it stay. It looks good.

Q: Oh, sure. It seemed extremely high to me. Do these people have an accent? Is it what we would call a British accent?

DONOVAN: No.

Q: It's not that. They're all special?

DONOVAN: It's their own special accent. It's a mixture of British, Scottish, Irish, and African.

Q: It must be charming to listen to. Very musical.

DONOVAN: It is. And they have certain ways of speaking which don't match our grammatical ideas. They have no accusative or objective case. They say, "I like she," and things like that.

***

So, looking back on all the things that I failed to do, one of them was get myself enough clout. When there was a serious about-to-be-happening in Grenada, I sent the first and only flash telegram that I ever sent to Henry Kissinger, to try and get some attention above ARA, which was paying no attention again. I got a reply back from the nice little fellow that was then the director general of the Foreign Service, saying "The secretary is out of the country, but he has asked me to reply to your wire, and as soon as he has come back we'll consider this. In the meanwhile I'll turn it over to ARA." If I'd had more clout I would have sent it first to the president, not to Henry Kissinger, and then I would have got some action.

Q: That's right. Was this when Bishop was acting up, or what was going on?

DONOVAN: To be perfectly honest, I don't remember. I just don't remember, but I know it was a crisis.

***

DONOVAN: Oh yes, we had Peace Corps. That was another place where I sort of was running around with Mr. Barrow, slightly. It was fixed up, though. I read John F. Kennedy's announcement about the Peace Corps in the New York Times. We had no communications other than a one-time pad [simple cryptographic system]. That was all, and the rest would come in by sea mail, I guess. Sometimes it came in a pouch and the Navy would pick it up for us. So I decided this was a great idea and to go right ahead with it. So I went to the other islands and told them about the Peace Corps, and remarkably they were not too interested at first, except St. Lucia. We had the first group at St. Lucia. Then Barrow went to Washington and decided he wanted Peace Corps. He'd never mentioned it before. He went into the Peace Corps headquarters and they promised to send him a Peace Corps contingent to Barbados. Well, he never mentioned it to me and of all the places that didn't need Peace Corps it was Barbados, compared to those struggling little poverty-stricken islands who really did need them. He announced when he got off the plane that Washington was going to send him Peace Corps. Then the other islands got a little bit interested. They thought if Barrow wants them they must- (end of tape)

DONOVAN: Ended up with 400 Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: Four hundred?

DONOVAN: Yes. All the islands.

Q: Good heavens.

DONOVAN: And a Peace Corps director, a controversial lady. At that time some of the Peace Corps volunteers were dodging the Vietnam war, others were not. We had all varieties.

Q: And you had a woman director?

DONOVAN: For much of the time. A black lady. Anyway, she was very active. She was a little bit too active. She'd go over promising the heads of the islands all sorts of things. That worked out all right.

Q: Was is mainly in public health and education that they were working?

DONOVAN: No, agriculture.

Q: Obviously they spoke English, so they weren't teaching English.

DONOVAN: Sometimes they didn't speak too good English, I don't think. St. Lucia and St.

Vincent they spoke a French patois a great deal, not the educated government people. Barbados was the only island that had always been controlled by the British. The others went from hand to hand. Every peace treaty they switched over from France to England. They formed a different kind of government for them each time. So we had Peace Corps. We had the naval facility out there too. We didn't have very many people to run all this.

I have one photo in an era which goes from 1960 to '65--I never had any time to paste pictures, but I think they're all in an envelope--and there's one that shows my staff in 1962. Total including clerks. Now they have 117 people at the embassy.

Q: No, really?

DONOVAN: And they have another embassy in Grenada and another one in Antigua.

Q: What do they all find to do?

DONOVAN: A lot of them are consular managing now. I have skipped over that almost completely. But everybody in those islands wanted to come to the United States and we couldn't take them all. We could take very few and all those that wanted to come... as I say, the only time I ever interfered in a consular officer's job was when there was a young American man that ran a restaurant, and he had a chief head waiter whom I got to know very well, and he wanted to go to New York for the summer. Frank sent a letter saying he was indispensable and he would come back and all this and that. But at separate times my two young consular officers said, “No he won't come back.” So they refused him a visa. That time I wasn't supposed to but--I mean, it's their responsibility--but I kind of overruled them by persuasion. I said, “I'm sure he will. Let him go, we can't keep on refusing everyone in the island of Barbados and all the other islands.” They’d come struggling down. They had no place then on these islands to go except Barbados consulate. So about two months later they both came in to me together, Dick and Bill, and they had '*The Advocate*,' the newspaper of the island, opened up, and they said, “Look” and there was a picture of this big wedding of that fellow getting married to an American citizen in New York. They were right. They were right.

Q: What do you think about the proliferation of the post? Do you think it's just gotten out of hand?

DONOVAN: No, it's probably necessary. I don't imagine half of it is, but the other half is. You see it's all regional. There's a personnel officer at the embassy who's a regional personnel officer and he goes down as far as Guyana and Trinidad. This was my entire staff in 1962.

***

The following excerpts are from an interview with Ambassador Donovan by Arthur L. Lowrie conducted in 1989.

DONOVAN: Grenada, by the way, became independent in 1973 and they had a really strange type named Eric Gairy who had been the chief Grenada politician for years. So, he was then the

Prime Minister of Grenada. So, I went over to the Independence celebrations since I was our representative to Grenada also. There was so much trouble and so much fighting and so much opposition to Gairy in Grenada that the Department decided not to risk the lives of important Congressmen and people to send a delegation. I was the only representative from the United States. Of course, I'd known Gairy for many years by then. He was a friend of mine too, although I thought he was a weirdo. Barbados appointed a Senator to represent it. He said, I'm not going over there and get shot. So, he didn't go either and Grenada's big plans to have the whole world, everybody except the Queen of England at their ceremony, didn't work out.

But the Department did say, however, we will assign a Security Officer from Caracas, Venezuela, to accompany you. I remember this dinner where the ceremony was to take place at midnight and they moved it farther away from the town, out on a hillside, and we had dinner at a hotel on the beach. I was at the head table on the right of Mr. Gairy. There were no windows or screens or anything, just the waves on the beach at our backs. Of course, I couldn't say that the officer from Venezuela was a security guard, so he couldn't sit at the head table. So, he sat somewhere down in the back of the room where he wouldn't have been any help anyway. I thought in just about ten minutes now there's going to be a rat-a-tat-tat. People are going to come up from the beach with machine guns and they are going to decimate this whole head table. I thought, it's been fun anyway. Then the lights went out in the hotel. Everything was going wrong, but they didn't attack. Mr. Gairy said, now you all can see just as well by staying right here and you can watch the fireworks on the hillside. Well, of course, we couldn't see a thing but it didn't matter.

So, then the British accused Gairy of a crime that I've never heard of before or since. It's called "squandermania". It just meant throwing money to the winds that wasn't his and keeping some of it. Then there was a change of government in Grenada and a fellow named Bishop, who was the head of a movement called the "New Jewel Movement", who were out and out communists but they didn't admit it, took control of the government. I never knew him because I left there in 1974, the next year.

But I did know what was going to happen in Grenada. I remember sending it in an airgram. My mother, who lived with me there, was an artist. I'd been telling her about Cuba and Grenada and she drew for me a black and white pencil sketch of Cuba looking over the island of Grenada. They were helping it build a great big airstrip. It needed an airstrip, heavens knows. Instead of that awful ride over the hills on down to St. George's. The road was all potholed. This airport was 10,000 ft and much, much bigger than Grenada's potential tourism. My mother drew this picture of Cuba and then she drew a picture of the big brown Russian bear over the heads of Cuba and Grenada and I sent that in with airgram from Barbados. I think it was probably the only airgram that was decorated with a cartoon as an enclosure. I thought, somebody will pay attention to this. Nobody did. Anyway, what did I do after that? I retired.

THEODORE R. BRITTON, JR.
Ambassador
Barbados and Grenada (1974-1977)

Ambassador Britton, a New Yorker who was born in South Carolina, was educated at New York University and served in the US Marine Corps in World War II and the Korean War. After a distinguished career in the private sector in housing and banking, Mr. Britton served with the Department of Housing and Development as Deputy Assistant Secretary and with the United States Information Program. He also served as US representative in several International Organizations. From 1974 to 1977 he served as US Ambassador to Barbados and to the State of Grenada, and as US Representative to the States of Antigua, Dominica, St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. Ambassador Britton was interviewed by Ruth Stutts Njiiri in 1981.

Q: In these interviews we try to, as much as possible, keep them in the proper time frame. What was our interest in Barbados, Grenada, and the other entities with which you were working?

BRITTON: By the way, since that country came under English rule, the name was Anglicized so it's pronounced Gruh-nada. Like, Antigua is spelled A-n-t-i-g-u-a, but it's pronounced An-tee-ga.

Needless to say, from World War II there was a concern that these islands served as sort of outposts of protection for the US Government. As a matter of fact, on that particular post there were four military installations; two Navy facilities, one missile tracking station, plus a drone launching site. Trinidad at one time was a substantial oil producing country. Going it a step further, those are substantial American Navy bases. There was a considerable interest on the part of the US. We were still broadly expanding our military interests, but suffice to say that we had not begun to cut down on our local military interests. This was in the islands, going from those islands up to the Bahamas and so forth. The Bahamas had substantial military interests, as well as space interests.

So these were some of the things, but, secondly, we were getting a goodly number of people traditionally coming up from the islands on immigration matters. This meant we had to be concerned about what we could do to keep them in the islands, so to speak, and not have them broaching the so-called immigration problems. Jamaica especially was a great exporter of people.

They were beginning to move closer to the US. For example, during my time, the islands systematically gave up the pound as their anchor currency, and went to the American dollar. So we had a number of interests, not an overriding one, but, nevertheless, as these countries became independent they had the same size vote in the general assembly as the US. We had to be concerned.

Q: Where was the embassy located on Barbados?

BRITTON: Bridgetown, Barbados. Barbados has no cities, by the way, only parishes similar to counties. Bridgetown had been the principal community.

Q: How did you find the embassy staff? You were sort of the new boy on the block, did you find that it gave you good support? Were there good people there, not so good, how did you find it?

BRITTON: Fortunately, by the way, one of my long-time friends had come down as the Peace Corps Director. He was a Foreign Service information officer with the US Information Agency. This was helpful to me, both in terms of having a friend, but, in addition, an experienced person and, finally, a person who was experienced in public affairs. My deputy chief of mission was excellent, a person by the name of John Simms. I helped him in many ways. By the same token, from that point on it kind of, you know, the rest of staff were not necessarily the most aggressive or the most supportive people. I had to, hopefully, earn their loyalty and goodwill. Some were hopeless cases, of course. I think there might have been some hostility.

Q: Looking at this from the overall point of view, at some posts there is a tendency not to put in the top-rate people. Barbados would be a place where you might not be getting some of the top-rate people, possibly because the problems weren't major there, as compared to other places.

BRITTON: They can rise to the surface. The Cuban airlift was going through Barbados, among other things. A Cuban plane was sabotaged, you know, it exploded and it crashed. But you're absolutely right.

I remember the clerical secretaries up at the State Department who knew me--I tend to be as friendly as I can with all people regardless of rank or station in life--said, "When we heard that a certain person was going out of here to the field, we jumped for joy. When we heard that he was going to your post, our hearts sank because he was a pain in the neck." That person was eventually helped out of the Service by another ambassador he worked for because he tended to be a real problem. Yes, the staff varied from excellent to not so excellent.

Q: John Simms, as I recall, went on to bigger and better things.

BRITTON: John had serious problems in South America. He was involved in delivering a man by the name of August Ricord who was one of the leaders in the so-called French connection drug smuggling case. John tried to get this man, who was eventually sentenced to 25 years in jail, back into the States into American hands. John succeeded by working with the host government, but it also caused difficulties for his ambassador, who had resisted this. By the same token, it earned him a negative reputation as one who would go against his ambassador if he felt he was right.

And, by the way, John had some other problems, domestic. We never talked about them, but he had domestic problems. In those past days, if one had problems with one's spouse, one also had problems with one's boss. You could be expelled from the Service, or put out of the Service, if your spouse was not a very cooperate person. Usually this meant men because there were no women Foreign Service people, by and large. John had that kind of problem, marital problems. He really was having problems, but I found him to be excellent support. He knew his business-he'd been in the Service a goodly number of years. So I not only recommended him for meritorious awards, but also was successful in many respects of getting his promotion, which meant that having gotten a promotion, he was then saved and not subject to being discharged

from the Service by virtue of failing to move. So I was very happy with John, and I'm always grateful to him for his help to me.

Q: Could you describe the political situation that you faced when you were on Barbados and Grenada?

BRITTON: The one thing that aptly described the status of Barbados-American relations had to do with the word "destabilization."

Q: You're talking about Jamaica really, aren't you?

BRITTON: Well, more or less, Barbados. The prime minister of Barbados was a very knowledgeable, wonderful person who, I think, because of a sort of socialist background, never felt quite comfortable with the American government under Richard Nixon. I think Republican politics automatically kind of caused his antennae to go up. So he was cooperative, but . . .

Q: His name was Errol Barrow.

BRITTON: Errol Walton Barrow. He was a little bit cautious and concerned and, needless to say, he possibly had good reason to in the sense that Barbados is a very delicate country. It goes back to 1625, when the first government to form there, or the first communities were formed there. It was always under British control, colonial status. It had a long history of self-government and had become independent in 1966. Errol Barrow had personally worked out the arrangements. He was very proud of his country and recognizing that Barbados had limited resources, other than human resources, he had to do all that he could to protect them. In this sense, by the way, Barbados had a reputation for always being a country ahead of other countries down there. They always seemed to keep themselves afloat even though they had very limited resources and, by the way, only 166 square miles of land area, 250,000 people roughly.

In the case of Grenada--I was the first ambassador accredited to Grenada--it was headed by a person who was not well-educated by American or British standards. Eric Matthew Gairy, who had been a union leader, a teacher, but who felt himself very much on the rightist side. He was very comfortable with the Republican administration. Unfortunately, because he himself seemed slightly erratic, and because he had come to office at a time when there was some considerable turmoil in Grenada, he was dismissed by the American government, as such.

He often, of course, asked for more economic assistance there, he asked for cultural programs, he asked for an embassy over there, he asked for US military presence. We dismissed him out of hand. By the way, all of those things are in place over there now.

But he's out of office now. As a matter of fact, I understand that he's either blind or near blind. I regret that very much. He was not much of a success in politics after the American arrival there.

Q: Let's go back to Barbados and destabilization. What was that about?

BRITTON: Prime Minister Barrow sometimes campaigned against the US on the basis that the CIA was attempting to destabilize many of these countries because of their relationships with other countries, particularly Cuba. He did not hold very much brief for Cubans, per se, but he respected Cuba's right to exist as a country. As a result, anything that infringed on Cuba had its effect on other countries down there. Each country was expected to not be friendly with Cuba, and Barbados asserted its independence of that. So he was constantly concerned that the CIA might do things to undermine Barbados' status. I presume, other than the commercial side of it when the Cuban flights were coming through Barbados en route to Angola, it was as much of a defiant show of friendship or independence as it was for the commercial benefits. As I say, he was constantly railing against that. Personally, he was friendly to me. We had a little situation at one point, but we were always the best of friends.

Q: What was that situation?

BRITTON: This had to do with airline rights. It came about in 1976. We were going towards the bicentennial then. By the same token, American Airlines and Pan American had been negotiating to substitute American for Pan American landing in Barbados. Normally, this is a pro-forma procedure, but Barbados was seeking to establish its own airline at the time. Mr. Barrow happened to have been a pilot. He had been personal pilot to one of the leaders of the British Air Force, had quite a bit of experience. He was also a law school graduate in Great Britain.

In seeking to set up this airline, it did not meet the test that the then American Civil Aeronautics Board required of a foreign carrier. It must be 51% owned by foreign nationals, and so forth. Barbados said it had purchased its airline for $250,000, which normally gets you a good supply of gasoline for the airline. By the way, the name of the organization was Caribbean International Airways, which in the Lexicon of an abbreviation of international carriers would have made it CIA. [Laughter] So they changed it to International Caribbean Airways.
The CAB was not impressed with the presentation made to them and insisted on additional information, so they would not give Barbados clearance to land, or recognition as Barbados' national carrier. With that, they refused to give American Airlines a long-term, you know, considerable rights. They gave them a three-months landing right--and also Eastern Airlines. I then went public with a protest that American carriers were being singled out for discriminatory treatment. I'm against discrimination of any kind. That then caused a reaction from them. I said that I thought they ought to rethink that, and not put the carrier in the position of having to make a choice between the Bicentennial traffic and Barbados.

There was a great need for domestic carriers on the American scene because of the bicentennial, and it would have been very easy then to shift, because they have to make deployments of materials, and people, and equipment, and so forth. I said that it was my considered judgment that the general counsels or attorneys for airlines would not let them make long-term commitments based on a three-month flying permit, that they would tend to be a little bit more cautious. I thought this would hurt Barbados, and I suggested strongly that they should reconsider it, because it really was not helping Barbados. Well, they took it on the basis that I was interfering in the internal affairs of Barbados, and the P.M. attacked me on radio, TV and--Rediffusion the wired radio down there--and said that if I didn't like it, I could always pack up and go home. I had calls from throughout Barbados to say that I was right. Interestingly, it turned

out that the entire airline industry, British Airways and others, had been undergoing some of this same kind of, for lack of a better word, harassment, uncertainty. So they were happy that someone had finally spoken out, and they and other foreign carriers suddenly called me to thank me for speaking up on their behalf. I became sort of a hero of the airline industry. I never had to worry about a first-class seat anytime I took a plane going anywhere. [Laughter]

As I say, people were very much favorable to me. The P.M. and I remained good friends. He had his difficulties. When I had some problems, I think it was not too long after that, I lost my oldest son, my namesake, and the biggest floral tribute came from the government of Barbados, the Governor General sent a special note, they sent the ambassador to the United Nations to speak at my son's funeral. By the same token, I have to say he is not just an ambassador. He was President of the Oxford Union. He is currently the foreign minister, and had been the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

So it was not just a typical ambassador, he was a very outstanding person. But we remained friends, and before Errol Barrow was voted out of office--not himself, but his party--he gave a speech at the dedication of a little landing ship tank, which I had helped them to secure. He went out of his way to say that I had done more for Barbados, and perhaps the entire Caribbean, than any ambassador ever posted down there. He pointed out the cultural things I'd brought to the island, the financial help, the military help, the economic help, and so forth. So we were good friends.

Q: I was doing some research before this interview, and there was this Cuban airlift of troops to Angola. Barbados had an airport which brought them closer to Angola.

BRITTON: Yes. It was the last island stop prior to Africa.

Q: Then it ceased, apparently on protest from the United States. Did you get involved with this?

BRITTON: Very much so.

Q: What happened?

BRITTON: We were getting the regular requests from the State Department to protest to the Barbadians that this was an unfriendly act of sorts, you know, to allow the Cubans to land in Barbados and to continue these flights. The notes were going over, representations were being made to the foreign minister, but nothing was being done. Actually, the prime minister also held the defense portfolio. By the way, he died in 1987, I believe. A very untimely loss. He was a good person. But I can say this now, although we were making the representations, they were not getting very far. I always remember that one day--it might have been in mid-summer or early summer--we were having lunch, just the three of us, Earl Barrow, his wife and myself. It was his birthday--again, a measure of our friendship that we were having lunch over at the prime minister's mansion. I said, "Errol, I can appreciate the situation Barbados has been in. When the Cubans come through, you charge them landing rights, you sell them fuel, you sell them food, you sell them cigarettes, whiskey, almost anything that they want to buy, and you take in a goodly amount of money. Believe me, as a small country, I can understand that this is necessary,

and that you do have a need for funds. You don't get that much support from other governments in terms of economics." I said, "However, it is beginning to move towards the tourist season, and you're going to get a large number of tourists coming down. As you know, your largest number of tourists at this moment are from America, and next Canada, and Europe. God forbid it should happen, but if one of these nights one of these Cuban planes lands here and it gets blown up or something like that, your tourists are going to fly to the four winds. Now, God forbid it should happen. In fact, I would never want to see anything like that happen here. But you are pushing it to the limit, that you can create, as far as I'm concerned, problems for Barbados. I'm speaking to you only as a friend. I think you may want to reconsider it, and suggest that maybe it's time to take your winnings and that's about it."

So that night--he didn't comment--he went on the air and denounced the Cubans for using the airlifts and for using the Barbados facilities for military purposes. He said that they were a peaceful country, they were members of the non-aligned movement, and they didn't appreciate that, and unless the Cubans stopped it immediately, they would break relations. That was the end of it.

Q: So it was really a matter of persuasion, rather than holding off and saying, "If you don't do this, we'll do this," or something like that?

BRITTON: Diplomacy is form and it is substance, and it matters sometimes beyond that. The fact that one could have a good relationship can mean all the difference. For example, I use to spend some Friday afternoons, around 12 to 2 or thereabouts, down at one of the little restaurants in Barbados. Why? Because during that time many of the ministers of government, as well as the opposition would drop in there for drinks or lunch, and it was a chance to talk with them. Quite often they would invite me to come over to the parliament during their sessions to sit with them for lunch--I mean the government. So these are the kinds of things you build your relationships and your friendships on so that you can influence the course of events without necessarily having to go public, which is how a diplomatic document is, and which sounds as if it's country versus country.

Q: You said that Barbados was an active member of the non-aligned movement. One of the efforts that every American ambassador has to do, particularly when the United Nations meets, is trudge up to the foreign ministers, or the presidents, or prime ministers of a country and say, "Would you please vote the following ways." Often these have very little to do with the country involved. How did this work?

BRITTON: When the United States wants to take a position vis-à-vis a given subject or issue, it notifies all of its ambassadors to make representations to the foreign ministers of their host countries to support the US on this given issue. Now, we can easily be misled, because the United States is very mechanical, highly electronic, and so forth. We can send out telegrams, telexes, and so forth, and reach our people immediately. Other countries do not have all these kinds of things. In fact, I suspect some of them have to use commercial telegrams, which are expensive. So two things happen; one, you can contact your foreign minister who can then convey to his ambassador at the U.N. his position on a given issue. By the same token, the foreign minister himself may attend the session as representative of his country, or some other

minister, or, indeed, the prime minister himself. Errol Barrow used to go directly over to speak to the United Nations.

Finally, there are those representatives who are in the United Nations who have a great deal of autonomy and, either because of abdication or absence of influence from their home country, are sufficiently powerful that they can take an independent position, because they have that kind of relationship with their people back home. So this is actually how it works. If the US wants a given position, number one, the impetus will come from the Secretary of State, probably with the support of the US U.N. representative. But it means several ways of achieving support from the home country, as well as from the local country. Sometimes, obviously, there are quid pro quos.

Q: How about in Barbados, did you find yourself having to get much involved in the UN votes?

BRITTON: Yes.

Q: Were they responsive, or did you ever get in the quid pro quo business?

BRITTON: Never in a quid pro quo. But by the same token, I remember that the Barbadians--who, by the way, are innately conservative, more conservative than, say, the British, from whom they derive much of their cultural heritage--were never ones to jump up and down enthusiastically and say, "This is what we'll do. Yes, we'll do it." They would listen very politely and then make their decision. In my time, I thought that most of the decisions went to the support of the US.

Q: You mentioned the United Kingdom. Barbados is part of the Commonwealth, is it?

BRITTON: Yes it is. Grenada is too.

Q: Rather than an ambassador it would then be the High Commissioner, wouldn't it?

BRITTON: Yes, in part. In the Commonwealth, the countries send High Commissioners to each other, where both recognize Queen Elizabeth as Head of State. The UK, Canada, Barbados, and Grenada, among others, exchange High Commissioners.

Q: How about the British role there? Did you find that because the British was such that, what the United Kingdom wanted was more important than what the United States wanted?

BRITTON: No. Stewart Roberts was the British High Commissioner and we were very good friends, as well as Larry Smith from the Canada High Commission. We were all very good friends. We would walk into each other's embassies, you know, no formalities, just free to talk. There was not greater sense of relationship with England as with the US. I would think that Canada had a little bit more of a positive edge. Their foreign policy seemed to be less bellicose.

Q: This was under Trudeau at that time. So it stood a little bit to one side.

BRITTON: Yes. Now, keep in mind, from Prime Minister--what's his name, prior to Trudeau? Not only Lester Pearson, but others.

Q: Diefenbaker.

BRITTON: Diefenbaker. They were regular visitors to Barbados.

Q: [Laughter] Of course, this is the idea, to get the hell out of Canada during the winter.

BRITTON: Yes. They would come down for their vacations, holidays so to speak. Then Errol Barrow would see them in the commonwealth meetings, and commonwealth meetings of finance ministers, because Errol Barrow was finance minister. They'd see them at other meetings. There was much more camaraderie between Canadians and Barbadians. Canada would readily accept the Barbadians coming up for any kind of reasons, medical treatment, what have you. It was cheaper, of course, to go to Canada. Quebec Air, Ward Air, Air Canada, all flew to Barbados from Canada. So there was a closer relationship.

Q: What happened in June of '76? There was an election in which Barrow, after being in there many years, lost out and G.M.J. "Tom" Adams of the Barbados Labor Party came in. Was there a change in relationship at that point?

BRITTON: Between the US and Barbados? No. I had a good relationship with Tom Adams. By the way, his mother and I were also very good friends. She was the wife of Sir Grantley Adams, who was the first and only Prime Minister of the Federation of the West Indies. So I knew Tom, but I had this relationship mainly out great respect for his family. When Tom came in, I knew a goodly number of his people. Some people said, and erroneously so, that the BLP was my party, because they leaned more towards the Republicans and they got along much more with the United States. That wasn't completely true. I mean, I was friends with all of them, but some said that the BLP got into office because of their friendship with me. But I didn't influence that. I would say that the death of the Governor General just about that time also had a significant impact on it. He and I were very, very close friends. He was the first black Governor General of the country and was a much respected and much loved personality. He died just as the transition was going on. In fact, two weeks after my son died he sent me a very long letter and flowers. He'd been trained, by the way, at Howard University in medicine.

Q: I noticed that in October of '76 there were two Americans who were kicked out of the country for supposedly trying to destabilize his government. What was that all about? I have the names, Robert Vergo and Gary Kopaladora. Does that ring a bell with you? I just saw some notice in the paper.

BRITTON: No. Are you sure they were in Barbados?

Q: Maybe I got it wrong. How about with the government of Grenada?

BRITTON: Those people were over in Grenada.

Q: Maybe it was Grenada. Did you have much of a problem there? Later on we ended up sending troops in there in '81 or '82.

BRITTON: I'd say it was about '84.

Q: It was '84, I guess. That's right. At that point, was this just a relatively quiet area with no particular concern to us?

BRITTON: Grenada was weak. It had no defense force; it had a small police force. Barbados, by the way, trained police for the entire Caribbean. Grenada was weak; economically it was poor and backwards. So it was very easy for individuals to come in and offer money to tempt officials, I think, or to do things and it wasn't easy to apprehend them. For example, I think those two persons--it's hard for me to remember, but if I can recall--they might have some kind of so-called gangster connection.

Q: I think these were two men who were wanted by the FBI for bad checks on race tracks.

BRITTON: That's right. I remember it now. They were in Grenada. They Grenadians were not anxious to deliver them over to the FBI. There's always an assumption that somebody has been paid off, and it can happen. But I'm not quite sure that the extradition treaties were necessarily proper. I don't remember everything about it. It's something that we, as Americans, can get righteously indignant about that say maybe Americans have done and have suddenly said, "Well, we should have them brought back here", we assume that another country is willing to forego its rights to please America.

Q: As a professional Foreign Service officer, I know exactly what you mean. We tend to expect much more of other than we are willing to . . .

BRITTON: Well, we apply our own local standards. We are very insular in that sense. Whenever a person says, "Well, he was put in jail without being charged, and he was held without being given a right to a lawyer, or read his rights."

You have to ask, "Wait a minute, what do you think you're talking about? This is not America."

"Yes, but their's is a small country and we can just wipe them off." This kind of thing.

Q: It's a very difficult thing to get across. In reference to that, how much interest at the time was there from the State Department under Henry Kissinger and others with what was happening in the Caribbean? Was it minimal?

BRITTON: Minimal, because there were other problems--the detente situation in the Soviet Union. I remember during that time, for example, President Ford landed in Vladivostok, which I don't think any foreigner had gone into Vladivostok since the days of Lenin--nor since! [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter] I don't think so either.

BRITTON: So there were problems with that, and they were coming through the relationship with China. George Bush had gone over there as head of the US liaison office--it wasn't an embassy. Israel and Egypt were still kind of cranking up at each other. So they had some major problems, plus Mexico was a continuing problem.

Q: Central America was not aflame, as it later became, so that there wasn't much attention. Did you feel the hand of Kissinger on what you were doing?

BRITTON: I thought that we had such excellent representation in Barbados that it wasn't necessary for him to get involved. He could sleep peacefully knowing that I was down in Barbados. [Laughter]

It is a test if there's a country undergoing a lot of turmoil and attacks on the US, or something. You ask, "What are you doing to present out position down there? Why are people so hostile?" And, by the way, if they're hostile towards an ambassador, they can be doing all of this without regard to the country. Suffice to say, we were having good relationships. In fact, I knew Maurice Bishop well in Grenada and had a very good relationship with him.

Q: He later turned into getting into the New Jewel movement.

BRITTON: It wasn't later, it was previously. You see, during the sort of disturbances leading to independence in 1974, before Grenada became independent, one person was killed in that uprising and that was Maurice Bishop's father. He was killed by the person who later became the Commissioner of police. Okay. There was a commission out of the Caribbean headed by the former chief justice of Jamaica. His name was Dufuss, the Dufuss Commission, which didn't exactly exonerate this person, but it at least let him get off the hook.

Now, when the New Jewel Movement came in and took over during the absence of Gairy, the one person that was killed during that disturbance was the chief of police, who, of course, had killed Bishop's father.

Bishop himself was a well-educated person, a law school graduate from the English system, very calm and dedicated person, who would work very consistently for what he thought was a better Grenada. It's sad that events overtook him. It wasn't that he was such a harsh person that he was killed by his enemies who were irate over his being mistreated or something like that. His problem was that he was too good for the crowd that he was with.

Q: At the time, did you have much of a problem with American tourists getting into difficulties? Did you spend a lot of your time trying to get them out of trouble?

BRITTON: There were times when they had problems, but basically their problems were minor. I remember that I earned the hostility of one of my officers down there. An American called him on Sunday morning to ask him for help, because he needed some proof for one of his children to get back into the States and he had none. His children weren't being allowed on the airplane because one didn't look exactly like him, you know, and his wife, they being blond, he was

brunette. So it was something in which I really felt that the embassy should have gone out of its way to help him. The duty person refused to deal with him, and told him to come into the office on Monday morning. Well, if you miss a plane on Sunday morning, and you come into the office on Monday morning, you will not go out until Tuesday morning.

Q: Very expensive.

BRITTON: Yes, expensive and inconvenient. Secondly, we're in there to look out for American interests, as far as I'm concerned, and American interests start with your individual voters. He came in and, of course, we took care of him. I was a little bit concerned that the duty person did not go out of his way. I said, "Now, anytime you need time off you can get it, if there was a real problem say, other kinds of problems, you could have worked out something else. But you're the person on duty. If you don't do it, who will?" But it didn't go down well then, and it later came back to haunt me. This person made some disparaging remarks about me later. But that's the kind of thing that you get.

I was always concerned that we look out for Americans' well-being. There were the usual illnesses, deaths of Americans, rarely ever a person being held in jail. Even when some men were unfortunately apprehended in Antigua with substantial quantities of narcotics, they were given a $10,000 bail, which is $5,000 US, and they paid that bail and went out of that country before a twinkle of an eye.

Q: Out of their petty cash fund, probably. [Laughter]

BRITTON: Yes, out of their petty cash fund. They were being trailed by US drug enforcement agents. But those kinds of things happen. There was never a serious problem.

I got into one with Robert Bradshaw up in St. Kitts, the Premier who was giving some of our American colleagues a hard time. I called him, and he used it as a little political ploy to say that the American ambassador called him to try to influence him in these things.

But on the other hand, Robert Bradshaw was the first Caribbean official to visit my residence. Although he was British to the core, he was a very staunch admirer of the US and he treated me royally whenever I went up there. They said, "You can always tell who were his favorites by the way he assigned his people to look after them." He always looked after me.

Q: How about problems with immigration to the United States. Was this a problem for you as the ambassador?

BRITTON: It was in the sense that there was continuing concern with immigration, how people were treated, and so forth. We treated them well, we didn't always comply with their wishes, but we treated them well. Basically, they responded.

Q: We don't have to talk about this, but you alluded to the fact that you had problems with the duty officer who later caused you problems. What I'm really looking at is how the system works,

for somebody who doesn't know anything about the State Department. Can you give some idea what the problem was?

BRITTON: I was talking to John Gavin one day, who was ambassador to Mexico--of course, he had a very close relationship with the US President, which is always helpful because you can pick up the phone and call him. I said, "John, you have a gentleman on your staff who can be a real problem to you. But let me warn you. If he becomes a problem, don't send him back to the State Department, which is your right, because he will spend his time walking up and down the hallways badmouthing you. In the meantime, you will be down here trying to do your job, and there is no way you can deal with it because you can't fight back. You've got to keep that person on your staff and in your sight."

John said, "Yes, I appreciate it."

It's interesting that ultimately they promoted this gentleman on the condition that he retire the next day. There were some problems in terms of his evaluation reports. He had gotten to the extent that even the person who was his boss--he's still in the State Department, a very highly placed person--said, "Oh my goodness. I just can't handle him at all." They were able to get him to retire and leave. In that sense, I had a note from John Gavin after he returned. He said, "I never understood how a worm like that could get into the Department, and just stay there systematically and not be dealt with."

I said, "Keep in mind that those of us who are political appointees come in and we're considered the novices. A person like that, who has survived and gotten through the system for ten or twelve years, is considered a career professional Foreign Service officer."

No one ever mentioned when this gentleman was giving me problems, that my own deputy chief of mission, who had been in the Service some 27 years, had recommended that he be dismissed from the Service. This was in his fitness report, but that would never be mentioned.

Q: There is a problem that there are people who can last. One of the unfortunate things is that--I speak from some experiences as a personnel officer--it's a lot easier to send them off to Barbados than to send them to Moscow or Lebanon, where you really are concerned and you don't want to put somebody like that in the hot spot.

BRITTON: The unknowing chief of mission may utilize his authority or power to deal with such person at a time when that may not be the way to do it. The easiest thing is that he (the officer) be recalled. But that's not the answer.

Q: No. I think this is for passing on to future generations, the idea that sometimes it's better not to send somebody back, and do your disciplining and correction there, rather than let them badmouth you back . . .

BRITTON: Of course, there's a problem too, if you're speaking for the education or edification of future appointees. If the ambassador does not try to run every detail of the embassy himself, he can keep a sort of dispassionate view of how things are done and rely upon his subordinates,

particularly his deputy, to run things, and he can keep a sort of overall, generalized view, and look to his deputy for the performance and proper evaluation. Now, that's always tricky. It works both ways.
Let's say, for example, in my case, I had some hostility to this person in Barbados because of his performance or his approach to things, and that might have been strictly the prerogative my deputy. As it was, my deputy agreed, and he agreed not because he was the kind of person who was currying favor by agreeing, but because he was professional enough to feel this way. As a result, of course, my action should have been his action, perhaps. By taking that action, I opened myself up, because here, after two years, I was still--in fact, less than two years--in a sense, the novice mistreating a career professional. I love the career professionals, and I have great respect for them. In fact, that was part of my problem. I could not understand how a person such as that person could survive.

Suffice to say, I think that it is something that every ambassador has to realize that he has to be very careful about how he uses his authority, as opposed to using other people to achieve the same ends.

Q: I know you are under some time constraints here. Is there anything else we'd like to talk about or cover that I haven't asked about?

BRITTON: I would only say this, in terms of my general pleasure at being there, having the family there. It was a wonderful experience, something I'm always grateful that I was able to enjoy.

My relationship with the Governor General, who while representing the Queen, was also a person who had been educated in the States and while very concerned with his prerogatives, was also partial to me both as a person and my country. I knew a large number of his friends from New York--he had practiced medicine in New York. In addition, by virtue of the way I presented myself, he went out of his way to show himself also as a friend. He would go out of his way to call me at times, or to ask for things, or invite me to places and so forth. I enjoyed all of that.

Q: Looking on it, what do you feel was your greatest accomplishment? What gave you the greatest satisfaction of your time in Barbados?

BRITTON: I think the greatest satisfaction was just being the number one American family in this foreign country, and being recognized as such. Black American children growing up can be made to feel important because they're human beings and because they're accomplishing something or have accomplished something. It's another thing, of course, to see their parents, particularly their father, as a person of some accomplishment having done something.

I have five children. One did not come down, he was the one in service--and a little grandson as well. The fact that they could see their father being as recognized as some one important was the greatest satisfaction to me personally.

There have been very few black American ambassadors. As a matter of fact, at this point, there are 37 living former and present American ambassadors, including the first person ever to be

granted ambassadorial status, Edward R. Dudley, who is from New York. On the other hand, the first black Foreign Service officer who became ambassador, Clifton R. Wharton Sr. is retired in Phoenix, Arizona. There are very few, in fact, at this very moment there are five in post and they're all in Africa.

So Black Americans do not have this kind of interchange with heads of government, heads of state, such as white ambassadors or white Americans do in general. This was very important even in such a case as my meeting Queen Elizabeth in Barbados. The Governor General came along and introduced me. Interestingly, how she happened to be introduced lead to a conversation that must have taken something like five or ten minutes, and by this time my colleagues down the lines, both the resident ambassadors and the visiting ones, were all curious as to what was going on up there. Well, my friend, the Governor General, just enthused over the fact that the Queen should spend all of this time. I pointed out that I hadn't seen her since 1940, and how happy she looked. I always remembered her, her sister, her father and mother, but especially the relationship between herself and her sister, and how happy they seemed to have been. It was just such a pleasure to watch them. This brought back all kinds of memories to her--it was at the World's Fair in New York City--and she just so happy that one could remember that. She said, "But you were so small."

I said, "Yes, ma'am. Both of us were small then." [Laughter] She talked about how happy they were, the fact that it was the last trip she had been able to take a trip with her father, the war began, the fact that he got sick and eventually died, and her responsibilities increased. It was like two people just kind of holding a personal conversation to the exclusion of everybody else. It wasn't a matter of this, that and so forth, but it was just, "I haven't seen you such a long time. What are you doing these days? It's good to see you." That was one of the high points, needless to say. Barbadians ate that up, that the American ambassador should have such a close relationship with the Queen. Obviously, you're nobody unless you're somebody in Barbados. That's the British system, at times.

This made a profound impression and it sort of set the tone for my stay in Barbados. People speculated: "This person must have been either high up in the circles back in the States, or he has some kind of personal presence about him that made it possible for the Queen--she didn't do it as sort of a condescension because he happened to have been the only black ambassador, or that he was a senior, he was the most junior." But the point was that as a person, something came up that captured her attention.

SALLY SHELTON-COLBY
Ambassador
Barbados and Grenada (1979-1981)

Ambassador Sally Shelton-Colby was born in Texas and raised in Missouri. She attended the Southern Methodist University, John Hopkins (SAIS), and taught in Mexico. Over the course of her career, she was a staff member working for Senator Bentsen, a member of the ARA from 1977-1979, and served as

Ambassador to Grenada, Barbados, and other Caribbean Islands. Ambassador Shelton-Colby was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July 1991.

Q: *Okay, well let's come to your appointment as ambassador to Grenada, Barbados, and on and on and on. It was really basically the Eastern Caribbean.*

SHELTON-COLBY: Yes, except for Trinidad.

Q: *How did that appointment come about? By the way, you served there from 1979 to the end of the Carter Administration, in '81.*

SHELTON-COLBY: I suppose my appointment came about because by that time I'd spent about ten or eleven years working on the region, first in an academic context, then with Senator Bentsen, and then, of course, my experience in the ARA front office. The other part of it was that assistant secretaries were changed, and Terry Todman, under whom I had entered, went out as ambassador to Spain, and Pete Vaky came in as assistant secretary. He wanted his own team, which is understandable, so he moved all of us to other jobs. I was offered, actually, three embassies, and I chose this one. And it proved by far to be the right choice, because of Grenada.

Q: *Why did you choose it?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Well, for one thing, the other two embassies had one country each, and this embassy had ten different political entities. I thought it would be more interesting, because the British were withdrawing, I knew that would pose some policy dilemmas for us, and there would be some policy challenge, as opposed to the other two embassies where there really wasn't much policy challenge.

I also knew, liked, and had great respect for the Barbadians. Barbados is highly educated. The prime minister was trained as a lawyer at Oxford, and the foreign minister at Cambridge. Both of them were among the, say, two dozen most intelligent people I've ever met in my life. And Barbados tends to be without the hangups about the United States that Mexico has. It's called Afro-Saxon, or Little England, it is so conservative. Apart from the policy challenges of dealing with the British withdrawal and the coming to independence of these very fragile systems, I felt that, philosophically I was more in tune with Barbados than with the other two countries.

Right before I went down, the Grenada Revolution occurred. I thought that would be a very exciting set of issues to work on. I really did not realize at the time, I don't think any of us did, just how difficult the Grenadians would turn out to be.

But basically that's the way it happened.

Q: *What was the main American interest in that area when you went out there?*

SHELTON-COLBY: I would have to say it was the traditional American concern for political stability and U.S. security in the region. In the event of an outbreak of war in Europe, seventy-five percent of our resupplies of NATO forces in Europe would go from Gulf Coast military

depots, through the Caribbean, and then across the Atlantic. (I've always been curious as to why, and then I realized it is undoubtedly due to the fact that the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have traditionally been chaired by members from Mississippi and Louisiana.) So if there is one part of the world where we do have important security interests, it's the Caribbean, and, of course, Mexico and Canada. With Cuba still being provocative, and with a new leftist government in Grenada, we were getting worried. And, of course, remember that Michael Manley in Jamaica was very cozy with the Cubans.

So we didn't have substantial economic interests. Also, there were the votes in the UN that the now-independent countries would take, and, of course, in the OAS. But primarily our interests related to security.

Q: *Well, then, looking at this, before we get to Grenada, because that obviously took up much of your time, were there any other problems on the security side and all in Barbados or in any of the other little democracies?*

SHELTON-COLBY: We had had for years a Naval facility in Barbados, and a Naval and Air Force tracking station in Antigua. Before I got down there, we failed to reach agreement with Barbados on a renewal of the about-to-expire agreement. The Barbadians thought it was a much more important facility than it really was, and they were demanding huge amounts of money reminiscent of the Philippines. The Defense Department said we're not even in the same ballpark in terms of the rent. We said no, so the Barbadians said fine, then leave. This created a real sour taste in everybody's mouth.

Q: *This had happened before you arrived?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Yes, before I arrived. Pete Vaky said, The one objective that I would ask you to establish is to somehow put this behind us. He said, I don't know how you're going to do it, because real bad blood had been created, but, somehow put this behind us."

I didn't have a clue as to how I was going to go about doing it. I eventually did it, but it was touch and go. It was difficult.

Anyway, there was that specific security interest. We would have liked to have held on to that facility for a while longer, but we were extremely far apart in terms of what Barbados was demanding and what we were willing to pay.

Those talks collapsed early in '79. The Grenada Revolution occurred in March of '79, before I got down there. In fact, Pete Vaky said, "You're the only ambassador I've ever met who lost a country before she even got there."

And, in any event, Ambassador Frank Ortiz, who was my predecessor, had early difficulties with the new Grenada government. So relations between the U.S. and Grenada were tense from the very beginning.

In addition, Stu, the other countries in the region, particularly Grenada's immediate neighbors, were very worried. This was the first coup in the history of the English-speaking Caribbean, a very conservative region. It's part of the Commonwealth, with a very strong respect for the Constitution and the rule of law and order. These are very conservative people, and it came as a shock when the Grenada coup happened.

Q: *Could you explain when and how it came about and what were the dynamics?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Grenada had been run for years by an elected demagogue, a former Black Power advocate by the name of Eric Gairy, whose sole claim to fame was that every year he would go to the UN General Assembly and introduce a resolution to require the carrying out of a study of unidentified flying objects, UFOs, which he strongly believed in. He was extremely popular among certain sectors in Grenada because he had been a Black Power advocate. In spite of the fact that this was a very conservative, pro-U.K. and pro-Western country, he made people feel good about their blackness. That's not really mutually exclusive from being pro-U.S. and pro-U.K. But power went to his head, and power began to corrupt. He shaped a band of thugs, called the Mongoose Gang, and they roughed up a few Grenadians who opposed him, and killed the father of a man named Maurice Bishop who subsequently led the coup against him and became prime minister. Bishop was himself killed in 1983 when a radical portion of his movement turned on him.

In any event, Eric Gairy was a joke as far as the outside world was concerned, but he killed some people and brutalized more in Grenada. The Caribbean itself had done little except to cluck, cluck and wring its hands.

While Gairy was out of the country, in March of '79, the New Jewel Movement, with some support from the Cuban government and with the full knowledge of the Cuban government, moved in and took power. It was bloodless, for all practical purposes.

Again, since it was precedent-shattering, the U.S. and all the neighboring countries, with a strong commitment to the Constitution and to orderly changes of power, got very upset. There was talk in some of the neighboring countries of going in to Grenada. There was a great deal of debate within the region.

Ambassador Ortiz went over to Grenada and had some problems, in part, I think, because of the orders he had received from Washington. In essence, he and the new Grenada government basically didn't get on swimmingly, I inherited these problems.

Q: *In the first place, just a little feel before we get to this, where did you run the embassy from? How did you get around? And also could you give a little feel for...this is a small embassy, your impression of its staff, its competence, and that sort of thing?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Again, there are ten political entities. When I first went there, I think there were three independent countries, another four that were called associated states that were on their way to independence, and then three that were still Crown Colonies. Legally a very

disparate mixture, but basically I was responsible for U.S. policy towards all ten. While I was there, another couple went independent, and seven out of the ten are now independent.

The embassy was on Barbados. I had a staff of a hundred and fifty-five plus a couple of hundred Peace Corps; that's U.S. and local. I combined my political and econ. section, and we had, I think, four people in that section: two political, one econ., and a commercial officer. We had a fairly large consular section and quite a large AID section, because AID handled regional programs for the entire Caribbean in addition to the Eastern Caribbean. Not bilateral aid to Jamaica and the other countries, but regional programs, because one of our objectives was to try to encourage regional economic cooperation, if not integration.

One of the big challenges I had, now with the British withdrawing, was to figure out how to ensure that we did adequate coverage of political developments on the other islands. (Economic developments were less consequential; I didn't really spend too much time working on that.) It was a management nightmare in that respect. About four of the countries were not particularly problematic, but another five were, so I developed a strategy for making sure that each country was visited at least once a month by someone from my political and economic section for purposes of reporting, if not to Washington, then to me.

In terms of transportation, we all flew commercial. The regional airline is called LIAT, which was, as the joke went: Leave Island Any Time. Extremely undependable. The Defense Department said, Look, if you'll agree to create a defense attaché's post, we'll give you your own plane. Technically, of course, it belongs to the defense attaché, but in effect an ambassador can use it any time he or she wishes. I rejected that, because while I knew I wanted to develop a security assistance program, it was to go to police forces and/or a coast guard, which people were just beginning to think about. There were few armies there, and I was afraid, frankly, if I let a defense attaché get in the door, he'd start trying to create armies. That was not in either those islands' interest or our interest. What they did need was a police capability and a coast guard. So I did get the Defense Department to agree to create a Military Liaison office, headed by a Navy SEAL, who was fantastic.

Q: *SEAL (Sea, Air, and Land) being the Navy special forces.*

SHELTON-COLBY: A Navy special forces person, that's right, and he was just the person I needed. He had come out of Thailand, and he had worked with a variety of European governments to help build up the Thai navy. He was exactly what we needed; he was terrific.

Q: *On this, I would have thought that sort of the intelligence side would have been rather important to you, because if there are going to be problems, Cuba was still sort of over the horizon, and so no matter what votes were and all that, the real problem was: Was there subversion going on?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Cuba became an issue in the second half of my time there. The Cubans came into Grenada to start building the now-famous International Airport in Grenada in late '79. And then, in early to mid-'80, I began to pick up complaints from governments of other islands that they were worried about subversive activities. More about the Grenadians than about the

Cubans; the Cubans were visiting these other islands and they were doing it overtly. The other islands were not especially concerned about what the Cubans were doing overtly, but rather about what the Grenadians were doing covertly.

Q: *Was there sort of a New Jewel underground going around?*

SHELTON-COLBY: We could develop little hard evidence; it was mostly suspicion of what the Grenadians were doing. We had very good cooperation from various governments: the British, the Canadians, to a lesser extent the French. The French were very worried about this area because of Martinique. I would from time to time, consult with the French and very frequently with the Canadians and the British.

Q: *We're moving over toward the map, here.*

SHELTON-COLBY: Dominica, which is one of the islands to which I was accredited, is right between the French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique. And, of course, the southern part of that region--Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, and Grenada--speak a French-based patois. So the French had some interest in what was happening in the region, and they were providing assistance to some of the neighboring countries. There was good, if you will, great-power coordination and cooperation and sharing of information, but it was very difficult to develop any information about what Grenada was doing.

Q: *Well, now, why were the Grenadians different? How'd you deal with them, and how did you view them?*

SHELTON-COLBY: The Grenadians came out of the 1960's leftist student movement at various universities like Columbia, Brandeis, New York, London School of Economics. In addition, the Black Power movement in the United States formed some of the leaders in the New Jewel Movement. Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, for example, was educated at the London School of Economics, and the number two, who's currently on trial for his life, Bernard Coard, the deputy prime minister, was educated at Brandeis. They were influenced by the radical student movements in both countries. Let us not forget that in the '50s, '60s, and even part of the '70s, much of the world was anti-U.S., hostile, pro-Third World, somewhat attracted by the Communist model, believed that the quickest way to improve people's lives was through the power of the party. The New Jewel Movement took power in '79, suspended the constitution, threw the governor-general, the Queen's representative on Grenada, in jail, suspended the parliamentary process, and governed in an authoritarian manner. They were very hostile to the United States.

Q: *I assume you could get in there. Could you, or not?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Oh, yes. Yes, I did. I ultimately concluded, however, that they did not want good relations with us. My instructions were to try to get along with these people, to try to improve the relationship. They raised several issues with me, and I countered their complaints with facts. They seemed to accept my explanation, or they requested a couple of things, and I said, Fine, I'll do what I can to help you solve this problem. Then, as soon as I got back to

Barbados, they would be in the press, back to their old lies and myths about what we were and were not doing.

Would you like me to give you a couple of examples?

Q: *Sure, please do.*

SHELTON-COLBY: They argued, for example, that the U.S. refused to give Grenada any economic assistance because we didn't like their government. I said, Look, the facts are that we have no bilateral programs anywhere in the region. Nowhere. But we're putting (I forget what the figure was now) forty million dollars a year into the region. This may not sound like a lot of money, but Grenada has eighty-five thousand people on it. I can't prove it, but I suspect that Grenada, because they had attracted back a number of Grenadian technicians--economists, agronomists, accountants, and doctors, etc., was probably drawing down from the various international financial institutions more than any other island in the region. I would point out that as a matter of fact, that project and this project and the other project here in Grenada (pointing to development projects) are all projects funded by U.S. aid, channeled through the World Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank. And they accepted that while I was in the room with them. Then I'd go back to Barbados, and they'd go back on the radio and TV, saying, The U.S. refuses to give us any economic assistance. In other words, they wanted to perpetuate this lie, because they wanted to feel set upon by the United States.

Another example: My staff and I felt that they were genuinely concerned about Eric Gairy, who was in the States, who claimed to be organizing a force to come back and retake Grenada. Frankly, we didn't want Eric Gairy to come back; he had killed people and abused others. We felt, frankly, that if this group could ever get over its anti-U.S. hostility, it probably would do a pretty good job of running the country, because they were very educated and skilled men, intelligent in spite of their biases. But they convinced us that they really were genuinely worried about Eric Gairy, and they wanted us to extradite him. I said, Well, you can't just ask to extradite him, and then we act. The process of extradition is very complicated. I said, But let me tell you what I can do. In very rare cases the Justice Department, when we want to extradite someone, will send someone down to the country in question and help them prepare a legal case, which will be strong enough that we can extradite the person. Now that isn't done very often, and it's done very quietly, but Justice agreed to do it in this case. So I said, Let me get somebody from Justice down here to help you prepare a case, because he will know what will fly in U.S. courts, and you don't know what will fly in U.S. courts.

They said, Terrific. Very grateful.

So I went back and got someone from Justice to come down. He cooled his heels on Grenada for three or four days, and the government would never see him. Finally, he called me, and I said, Go home. That tells me something.

They continued to flail at us for supporting Eric Gairy and supporting his efforts to come back and retake power. Nothing could have been further from the truth. They didn't want to get help

from the U.S. to prepare a case that would stand up in U.S. courts for extradition; they just wanted to have an issue with which to beat us over the head.

I can go on and on with this kind of thing. They wanted to perpetuate all kinds of lies and myths. To this day there are still a few people around who believe the Grenadians rather than us, even though I've testified repeatedly on these issues.

Q: *One can't do this interview without knowing the future history of where in '83 we actually went into the island. While you were doing it, did we see this as anything more than sort of something we hoped would work out, and we didn't see this as becoming a real focus of our military?*

SHELTON-COLBY: After something of an effort, Stu, which I partially described, to improve the relationship with them, the decision was taken in Washington, against my recommendation, to disengage from Grenada. Neither I nor my DCM could go to Grenada unless explicitly authorized. At a fairly low junior-officer level, it did not need advance authorization. I felt that was wrong, because I felt it was important to keep trying, but also I felt it was important for the ambassador and the DCM to stay engaged with non-governmental sectors in Grenada. But that was Washington's decision, and I simply lost that battle. So we basically disengaged, and we developed a policy of trying to build up all the neighboring countries to show what the neighboring countries that were still democratic and friendly could achieve with us. It was a little hard to do--again, because we had no bilateral programs. I recommended at that point bilateral programs to give me more tools than I had. That decision was subsequently taken, but in the Reagan Administration, and I was already gone. So, as I recollect, there was no consideration given whatsoever to actually invading, because short of a good reason, there really wasn't one. They were hostile, but a lot of governments are hostile, including the Mexicans and sometimes the Canadians. It was after I left that we really began to develop some evidence that the Grenadians were actually training citizens of other islands in subversive tactics. And then, of course, there was an internal revolt, or split, within the ruling New Jewel movement, and the more radical element killed the more moderate prime minister, Maurice Bishop. Washington became concerned about the safety of American students at a medical college in Grenada.

Q: *Was the medical college established when you were there?*

SHELTON-COLBY: It was there; it had been there for a long time.

Q: *Did you have any concern about this?*

SHELTON-COLBY: No, I didn't.

Q: *My understanding, I may be wrong... How did you describe the medical college?*

SHELTON-COLBY: There are any number of medical schools in other countries attended by Americans who can't get into medical schools in the States. The head of the medical college, Geoffrey Bourne, an Englishman, I knew quite well and was very friendly with, along with his son, who was a White House official. They were English by origin, naturalized American

citizens. He constantly was reassuring me that he had a very good relationship with the Grenada government. The students were constantly reassuring me, when I would visit with any of them, that they did not feel in any danger whatsoever. The Grenadian government left them totally alone. So I did not perceive there being any particular threat to them. Of course, there was no violence while I was there.

Q: *Well, looking at this then, were there any other major concerns? We've covered an awful lot, really, about this, but were there any other major concerns in the whole area?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Well, some minor concerns. In Saint Vincent there was a coup attempt during this period. In Saint Lucia we had quite a lot of problems, because a conservative government was voted out, and a somewhat radical, though deeply divided, government was voted in; part of that government was quite close to the Cubans. There was tremendous political instability in Dominica as a thug-run government fell, replaced by a very unskilled and unstable government, part of which had close relations with the Cubans.

So the other part of the area, that is to say, the other islands of the Windwards, had their own forms of instability, although generally within a kind of electoral context. The Caribbean's drift to the left was worrisome to me. Remember Manley in Jamaica. Then, of course, at one point, there was a coup in Suriname, and a conservative, pro-Western government was overthrown by a leftist group there. I think that was in '79 also.

Let me give you one small example of our concerns. Shortly after I got there, Hurricane David smashed into the area and badly damaged Dominica. We mounted a huge relief operation; we had four U.S. military services down there rebuilding the country. A lot of people were killed. I was flying back and forth in charter planes, sometimes in U.S. military planes that came down from Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico. I was flying back and forth, because you couldn't get a commercial flight in there, coordinating this whole operation. The U.S. military did a spectacular job with this emergency, first with an emergency relief operation, and then with a reconstruction operation. I tell you, if there are any saints walking on earth, it's the SEABEES. I mean, they are just fantastic, the Navy construction brigades.

But, in any event, at one point somebody in the Dominican government called me and said, You can ask all of your military to leave, because the Cubans are going to come in and they're going to take over, and we want you all out. This was a cabinet minister. I didn't believe him, because I knew the government was divided philosophically. I said, I will certainly adhere to the wishes of the government of Dominica, (as opposed to one individual) but, I said, I would like to have that in writing. As a matter of fact, he called me from Havana. Of course, the written request never came, because he was speaking for himself, not for the government of Dominica.

There were those kinds of pressures on us from the left. We had, frankly, incompetent government in some countries in the region, which worried us. So it was the combination of inefficient government and instability, together with an aggressive Cuba, that had us all very worried.

Q: *What about when the Reagan Administration came in? You said you served about six months of it?*

SHELTON-COLBY: I think I left in May of the first year of the Reagan Administration. I stayed on for a short while to continue to work on these issues, because it was so turbulent in the region.

Q: *When the Reagan Administration came in, they had some very fixed ideas on Latin America. Not so much Reagan himself, but sort of the staff around him. Did you feel a dramatic change in the atmosphere and all for your particular area?*

SHELTON-COLBY: Not really, I was only focusing on the Eastern Caribbean. The changes that they embraced, I frankly very much welcomed, because they wanted to go with bilateral assistance, which I had been arguing for. And that was the only sort of substantive change, at least initially.

Q: *They were focused elsewhere at that point, anyway; it was Central America.*

SHELTON-COLBY: That's right, Central America, exactly.

Q: *So you didn't feel sort of the cold wrath of the Administration coming in and cleansing the temple or anything like that.*

SHELTON-COLBY: No, I really didn't. They subsequently made some policy choices that I didn't fully agree with, but I wasn't strongly in disagreement either.

Ambassadors can really set the tone as much by style as by policy content. I don't want to identify either the country or the person, but I saw one situation in which an ambassador didn't really want to go to his particular country. He felt it was beneath him, he felt he was destined for bigger and better countries. But he went, and people sensed that he really didn't like them, and didn't want to be there. And they couldn't stand him. To this day one hears stories coming out of that country about this particular ambassador and the gaffes he made and how he didn't like them, and people still resent this all these years later. The person who followed him, perhaps not through any particular merits of his own, but I think genuinely liked the people and genuinely was interested in the people and engaged in the issues, and people could relate to him. And I don't think the policy content was particularly different between the two ambassadors, but they liked the second one. I think both of them were equally skilled at representing U.S. policy, but the first one's style was off-putting, while the second one, to this day, remains very popular.

So, part of it's stylistic, again, to the extent that the ambassador listens and tries to shape a U.S. policy which is responsive to various concerns. Now, obviously, our priority is to protect our interests, not to protect theirs, but sometimes there's an overlap between our interests and their's.

Q: *There usually is. Well, shall we call it, do you think?*

SHELTON-COLBY: I think so. Don't you think we've wrapped everything up?

Q: *I think so. Thank you very much, this has been fascinating.*

ANDREW F. ANTIPPAS
Grenada Task Force
Grenada (1983)

Andrew F. Antippas was born in Massachusetts in 1931. He received a bachelor's degree from Tufts University and entered the Foreign Service in 1960. His career included positions in Africa, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Canada, and Washington DC. Mr. Antippas was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 19, 1994.

ANTIPPAS: Then the Grenada affair happened. I decided that, as I knew how these things worked and as I had been deeply involved in similar circumstances in Cambodia, I would volunteer to go. I thought that I would do anything to get out of Washington and get out of the job on the Mexican desk for which I was really not suited. Who knows? Maybe there would be an overseas assignment as a result of this job. All kinds of dynamics are set in motion when events like this take place. I had experienced this kind of thing before and I had some knowledge of what was happening in Grenada because I had watched this situation develop while I was in the Bahamas, particularly as concern developed about the ultra-Left wing takeover in 1979 in Grenada. The fact that the Cubans were doing things in Grenada raised the question of whether missiles were being emplaced there. Then there was the whole business about an airfield being built in Grenada. As nearly anybody could tell you, this airfield was probably intended to provide a landing place for flights going to Angola in support of the Cuban expeditionary force in Africa.

So I volunteered to go. I went up to the Grenada task force and said, "Look, you're going to need help down there. I know something about running embassies. I'll be happy to go." My offer was accepted, and I went to the house owned by the people I was staying with, packed, said goodbye, and left the next day. In Barbados, just before I reached Grenada, other troops were coming in. The American forces had already landed in Grenada and had cleared the airfield [which had not yet been completed]. I actually arrived in Grenada with the various prime ministers of the Eastern Caribbean area, including Prime Minister Edward Seaga of Jamaica, when they made their first visit. That started that part of my career.

Q: Could you tell me what the situation was and what you were doing?

ANTIPPAS: The whole intervention was very unstructured. The 82nd Airborne Division from Ft. Bragg was already in place by the time I arrived. The initial combat was handled by U.S. Army Rangers and by Special Forces field teams which had gone into Grenada to rescue American medical students who were there and also to rescue the Governor General. After the murder of Prime Minister Bishop and his associates by the Ultra-Leftists it was felt that we had to rescue the Governor General because he was the "link with legitimacy," as the representative of the British Crown and as the link with the constitution. Navy "Seal" teams went into Grenada

to protect the Governor General. Though he was not evacuated, some of the heaviest fighting took place, protecting him at his residence.

I got to know him a little bit because we worked quite closely with the Governor General during the period when I was acting DCM and chargé d'affaires in Grenada. The U. S. representative on the ground was Charles "Tony" Gillespie, a classmate of mine at the National War College and an old ARA hand in the State Department.

It is interesting to recall that Gillespie had accepted the job that Tom Enders had originally offered me in 1981 to be his assistant in the Bureau of American Republic Affairs. Gillespie was a much more skilled bureaucratic "in-fighter" than I would ever be. He did very well by himself in Grenada. I think that he was the one who made sure that I didn't get to meet the new Assistant Secretary of ARA who replaced Tom Enders. Gillespie came out of the reshuffle of the Enders "front office" as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean. While Enders had tried to limit the number of Deputy Assistant Secretaries in the Bureau by not creating a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Caribbean Affairs, Gillespie came out of this whole affair in that position. Gillespie was traveling in the area at the time the events in Grenada took place, so he was "on the ground," as it were.

Q: This is Tape 8, Side A, of the interview with Andy Antippas.

ANTIPPAS: Since Charles Gillespie was "on the ground," he was put in charge of U. S. efforts on the civilian side in Grenada.

When I arrived in Bridgetown, Barbados, I went directly to Gillespie and told him that I was there to help. Anything that he needed to do, I would do it. We weren't particularly friends. We were just acquaintances from the National War College and from the two years I spent in the Bureau of ARA and in Nassau. You may recall that when I first went to the Bahamas, the seven-nation conference on the Caribbean Basin Initiative had taken place. I had "put the arm on the Bureau" to make sure that Secretary of State Haig found some time to meet with Prime Minister Pindling of the Bahamas. In arranging this I had talked to Charles Gillespie and told him that he simply had to "make this happen." We could not let the American Secretary of State come to Nassau and use the Bahamian conference hall and not talk to the leader of the government which owned the hall. However, I had really not had an awful lot to do with Gillespie after that. He was an old ARA hand, of course. He spoke Spanish and was an officer from the administrative "cone." I think that he was a competent enough guy and was clearly the senior man on the ground on the civilian side in Grenada. I had no problem with that.

We flew over to Grenada in a C-130 transport aircraft. When we arrived in Grenada, we tried to "set up shop." We were basically operating with satellite radios--I forget what the designation was. You have a satellite "dish" and can talk to anybody you want to talk with. Your hand got a little tired, holding down the "butterfly" [transmit] switch, if you were talking to the Operations Center in the Department.

We moved from the airport to the outskirts of Georgetown, Grenada, while the area was being cleared, on the very first day that we were there. Two things happened that I got involved with during that first day.

We had learned, through "SIGINT" that the Libyans had received instructions to kidnap an American and hold him as hostage.

Q: "SIGINT" is "Signals Intelligence."

ANTIPPAS: So it was decided that we had better "lock up" the Libyans in their compound. There was a junior Foreign Service Officer, whose name escapes me now...

Q: Was it Larry Rosen?

ANTIPPAS: No. I can picture him now, but he was one of the few people in the world who had ever been on Grenada. I think that this was because he was a vice-consul somewhere else and had to go to Grenada to do consular work. So he more or less knew where some of these places were. He knew where the Libyan Embassy was. I was told to take a vehicle and go back down to the airport and secure the cooperation of the U. S. military in lending us two or three squads of infantry to supply the firepower needed to secure the Libyan Embassy. Others would go off and try to locate the Libyan Embassy and see what the situation was.

I went back down to Salinas Airport, which is where the 82nd Airborne Division had set up its Command Post. The Commanding General was not there, but I talked to his chief of staff and some of the staff officers. I told them what the situation was and said that we very much needed to "quarantine" the Libyan Embassy. We weren't going to "lay hands on them." We just wanted to make sure that they didn't leave the Embassy and go off and do the "nefarious deeds" they had been instructed to do. You should remember that all of the communist bloc countries had representatives there: the North Koreans; the Soviets, of course; and I forget who else was there. It was the strangest crowd you ever saw were in Grenada at that time. It included the Libyans.

I obtained the agreement of the 82nd Airborne Division staff to supply three squads of infantry, or something like that. I think it was three squads to serve for three, 8-hour shifts. I was to find out exactly where they were to go. Of course, we had very limited communications. A lot of the communications were accomplished by simply running back and forth, over terrible roads. I'd never seen roads in the condition of the roads in Grenada. Even in Africa I'd never seen anything like that, with all of those potholes. We were told that there were some Cubans "running loose" in the countryside who might be sniping at traffic. We had to be careful. When darkness fell, you didn't wander around outside of Georgetown, the capital of Grenada.

As I was leaving the 82nd Airborne Division Command Post, I ran into the Commanding General, whom I had not previously met. I recall that Tom Enders had told me that the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne had been the Defense Attaché in Spain when Tom was Assistant Secretary of State.

When I had been shopping around for a job, before the Grenada exercise began, I had tried to get a job in the ARA Bureau. When Enders was "kicked upstairs," he was offered the position of Ambassador to Spain, which he accepted. He told me that he was considering offering me the position of DCM in Madrid, but I hadn't been promoted to senior rank at that point. He felt that I really didn't have enough rank to be DCM in Madrid. You had to have the rank, as DCM, because of characters like this general, who didn't like the Foreign Service and particularly didn't like USIA [United States Information Agency]. He felt that they were all a bunch of "comsymps" [communist sympathizers], fellow travelers, or who knows what.

It turned out that this general went from Madrid to be commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division. We met as I was walking out of the division command post. He said, "Who are you?" I was dressed in a sport shirt and khaki pants. The only badge of authority that I had was a Navy hat, which, I think, had on it the name of the USS COMTE DE GRASSE, one of the frigates which had visited the Bahamas. I identified myself and told him what the situation was and what we needed. His reaction was very quickly negative. He said, "I don't take orders from the State Department." He said, you can't come down here and demand the use of our troops outside of channels. Well, I decided that this was probably not the place to tell this "jerk" off. I was thinking, "Man, your name is mud if somebody is grabbed by the Libyans tonight" if we hadn't secured the Libyan Embassy. Anyway, I thought that I shouldn't pick a fight with this general at this point.

So I drove back to the hotel which we were using as a sort of Embassy. I don't think that we ever did "nail down" the Libyans. I think that they took cover in the Soviet Embassy, as did all of the communist bloc representatives. They were subsequently evacuated from there to Cuba. As it turned out, as things went on, after the initial operations were completed, this was sort of a high-powered position for a major general. When he left Grenada, the Army left a brigadier general in command of the balance of the 82nd Airborne units on the island. But for the several weeks I assisted in running things in the Embassy in Georgetown, the General and I developed a pretty good relationship. There were no hard feelings. But I never really forgot his reaction. In all of the years that I've been associating with the military, during all of those years in Indochina, Japan and Korea, for example, I'd never had that kind of negative reaction from a U. S. flag officer. I think that it was too bad that I'd gotten in touch with a guy like that.

Regarding the other job that I'd tried to get, the position of Principal Officer in Bermuda was opening up. I tried very hard to get that job, because it was still a Foreign Service assignment. I pushed very hard for it. That job came under EUR [the Bureau of European Affairs], because Bermuda is a British Colony. Enders had arranged for me to go and see Richard Burt, then Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. I made my "pitch" to him and said that I would very much like that assignment, if I could get it. I didn't get the job because, as it turned out, somebody in the White House wanted it. The former Director of Legislative Affairs in the White House decided that he wanted to get out of heat of the kitchen for a while. He could have had any Embassy that he wanted. He didn't want an Embassy. He wanted a very soft touch, Foreign Service post, which turned out to be Bermuda. The Department cut short the tour of the Foreign Service Officer who was there, to accommodate this White House guy. It really left a bad taste in my mouth.

In a sense, I was probably well off that I didn't get the assignment to Bermuda because it would probably have been like taking the job as Principal Officer in Martinique. In terms of a Foreign Service career...

Q: It's a dead end.

ANTIPPAS: But I was desperate. I wanted to stay in the area and didn't want to go back to Washington.

Another post that I had a "crack" at was the position of DCM in Bridgetown, Barbados. The Ambassador to Barbados was a political appointee from Indiana. We had become acquainted when I was chargé d'affaires in Nassau. We met at Chiefs of Mission conferences and that sort of thing. He asked me if I'd like to be DCM in Bridgetown. The tour of the DCM assigned there was coming to an end. I said, "Sure, that would be a great job." However, the Ambassador made the mistake of submitting his own resignation before he offered me the job. So I wasn't about to get that "plum." This discussion with the Ambassador to Barbados took place before the Grenada intervention occurred. Anyway, I ended up in Grenada and spent almost two months there.

Q: What was Charles Gillespie's role?

ANTIPPAS: In effect, he was acting chief of mission. The Assistant Secretary of State for ARA, Tony Motley, visited us on several occasions to see what was going on. I think that Charley was given the personal rank of Ambassador to do the job. His basic function was to set up some sort of Embassy in transition, because the U. S. military would not be able to stay there forever. It was not desirable to have them stay there for any extended period of time. The task was to try to pull things together and put Grenada back on the road to political health. There were big problems there. Grenada is just a tiny, little island--the top of a volcano, really, with a population of 100,000.

Aside from the economic assistance that they required, there was high unemployment. Over the years the Marxists had really done the place in to a terrible extent. The late Prime Minister Bishop was genuinely admired as a leader, but he was a Marxist. Of course, the great subject for discussion at the time was that he was on the way to making a deal with the U. S. when he was "killed." The big problem was to establish a police force that could control the place. The police had been disarmed by the Ultra-Leftists.

The other problem was to punish the remaining Ultra-Leftists who had murdered Bishop. We never found his body, though we spent a lot of time looking for it. The conventional wisdom was that after he and his cohorts had been executed in one of the forts--Ft. Rupert, I think it was--their bodies were taken out to sea and fed to the sharks.

I spent most of my time in Grenada helping to organize the Embassy. After Gillespie, I was the next senior officer at the post. After a month there, I decided that I would not try to get the job of chargé d'affaires. We obviously would have a chargé, with the Ambassador in Bridgetown, Barbados, also accredited there. That was how the Department arranged it. There were no schools, and Grenada was no place where I could take my children. Conditions were really

primitive. It would have been a tough situation. We were about 100 miles from Barbados. It was pleasant enough, but pretty primitive. You might as well be somewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. I stayed on in Grenada until early December, 1983.

I think that one of the puzzling things about the Grenada experience was that almost everybody that had been involved, on the State Department side, received an award of some kind--Superior Honor Award or Meritorious Honor Award. I was the only person who was not even mentioned as having been involved, yet I was "running" the Embassy and was one of the first to volunteer to go there. As I had just been promoted and had come out of a chargé d'affaires position in Nassau, I wasn't too worried about this. Nothing particularly good was going to happen to me, anyway, but I considered that this was clear evidence that somebody was "out to get me." Even the janitor got an award for the Grenada operation, presented by the Secretary of State. I found this curious, to say the least.

As it turned out, it took Tony Gillespie two years to do an efficiency report. I didn't get this report--really a memorandum report--until I was in Korea two years later. It was a fair enough and accurate report on my activities but I had to "bug" him to do that, just so that the record would be clear that I had done this venture. I found this a commentary on how things were handled between colleagues. That sort of thing has probably existed forever, but it was my first real experience with a colleague "doing me in" or shunting me aside--making sure that I wasn't going to share in the experience or the rewards. All of the other experiences that I had had in Africa, Indochina, and Japan had been "positive." I had done a good piece of work, been loyal, and had virtually "jumped in by parachute." I was recognized for doing this sort of thing before. I have also been able to recover from career "mishaps." This was the first experience that I had of this kind of thing, and it saddened me. I'm saying this because it's all part and parcel of the Foreign Service.

Q: I understand. This happens. Well, to move on...

ANTIPPAS: The fact is...

Q: That it gets personal.

ANTIPPAS: It gets personal. And I get the message that the higher up you go, the faster it gets personal.

Well, I came back to Washington [in December, 1983]. There were no jobs available as a Chief of Mission or Principal Officer. There was some talk about the ambassadorship in Equatorial Guinea but that was snapped up by the General Counsel of USAID. Your old job as Consul General in Seoul had opened up again. I decided that what had happened during the previous six months was a clear message to me that I was "notorious" and probably wasn't going to get much of anything if I hung around the Department. Since my wife was still pressing me to stay out of Washington, I decided to take the job in Seoul and get as "far away from headquarters" as possible. The assignment became official in December, 1983, and I went to Seoul in January, 1984.

E. ASHLEY WILLS
Political Advisor for US Invasion of Grenada
Grenada (1983)

Ambassador Wills was born in Tennessee and raised in Tennessee and Georgia. He was educated at the University of Virginia and John Hopkins University. Entering the Foreign Service (USIA) in 1972, Ambassador Wills served abroad in the field of public affairs in Romania, South Africa, Barbados, Yugoslavia and Belgium and in India as Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served in Washington as Deputy Director for Southern Africa Affairs for USIA and as Political Advisor to the US Military Commander in the invasion of Grenada. From 2000 to 2003 he was US Ambassador to Sri Lanka. His final posting was as Assistant US Trade Representative. Ambassador Wills was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Embassy…Marine barracks.

WILLS: The Marine barracks, the Marine barracks occurred in Beirut and 200 or something Marines were killed. So this convoy was on its way to Lebanon to evacuate American citizens. At the same time Bernard Coard staged a second coup in Grenada. So the president decided we aren't going to stand for that we are going to divert that fleet to Grenada and see what we can do to put things right there. The ostensible reason for the invasion was that there was a small American medical school located in Grenada called the St. Georges Medial School. This was not really true but there were published reports that these American citizens were in danger somehow. So there was a decision made to invade Grenada. The call that I got at my home that afternoon was from this friend; they needed a political advisor for this invasion. Larry Rossin and I were the two Grenada experts in the government. I can't remember where Larry was. So this guy on the phone said, "there will be an unmarked car in front of your house in two hours. You need to pack for a tropical experience" and that is all he said. I, of course, put two and two together and said we are going to do something in Grenada. Sure enough they picked me up and drove me to Andrews Air Force Base and then put me on a chopper and flew me down to Norfolk where Admiral Joseph Metcalf who was the commander of this squadron of ships was waiting to receive his orders from the White House about an invasion of Grenada. Suddenly I found myself in the space of a few hours going from sitting on a couch watching a Redskins game to briefing the battle staff for an invasion force. There were probably 100 military officers in this room; they wanted to know all about Grenada, where there might be good landing points for Marines. There were two airports; one was being built by the Cubans as a gift to the Grenadian people. The old airport was on the other side of the island and could we land there with helicopters? Who were the bad guys and where would we find them in Grenada? Where were their hideouts and all this stuff? Then about midnight Metcalf and I got on a jet plane and flew to Barbados, then got on a helicopter and went to the helicopter carrier, the Guam, just off Grenada.

Q: The Guam is a helicopter carrier.

WILLS: We got there about three in the morning and the invasion was scheduled to begin at five or six in the morning, I can't remember which. So I had to brief the staff again about where to go. We were making decisions about where to land forces less than two hours before the invasion was going to happen.

Q: Did you have anything to draw on outside of your experience in the field?

WILLS: I had nobody. It was amazing because, well there were so many amazing things that happened in those seven days that I was there. We dispatched, I never will forget, a team of Navy Seals; we actually had three teams of seals and we were trying to preposition them in St. George's itself so our invasion force could meet up with them and they could do some recon and we could figure out where Bernard Coard was and other leaders of the government were. All of the members of one of those seal teams drowned that very morning, my God! Also keep in mind there were Cuban military forces on the island. We didn't know how many, we didn't know where, so it was an invasion done without any planning at all. I remember we had an amazing battle staff; Admiral Joseph Metcalf was the commander. The army commander reporting to him was Normal Schwarzkopf, who later became famous during the first Gulf War. The Air Force commander, he also became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff later on, what the hell was his name. So it was a very distinguished group and me, totally inexperienced in military matters other than being in Naval ROTC in college.

So I asked the Marine commander at one point just before the invasion whether there was something I could do to help and he said, "Yeah, we're going to invade. We're going to land troops at the old airport why don't you come along." So we took a speedboat around the island and joined up with the amphibious force that landed at the old Grenadian airport. We came ashore, there were Cuban troops, and we were shot at. It was the first time in my life that I had ever been shot at. I was there in civilian clothes and the Cuban troops and the Grenadian troops who were there figured if you are in civilian clothes you must be CIA; you must, therefore be unfriendly and we need to kill you; so they kept shooting at me. It was very eye opening. Was it Churchill who said, "You never feel so alive as when someone shoots at you and misses." That's what happened that morning.

It turned out after we had secured that airport, it took about an hour and a half, only a few of the Cuban and Grenadian troops were killed, the rest were captured. They flew me back to the Guam because they hadn't found Coard on the other side of the island and Metcalf wanted another meeting of the battle staff. So I went back. It was at that point about four hours into this action that we lost all communication with Washington. I don't know if you remember this or not.

Q: I've heard the story.

WILLS: Here we have all of this money invested in military hardware and ships and fancy communications and we lost touch with Washington for I want to say it was twelve or fourteen hours. It was a long time. From that point forward we winged it; I went ashore in St. Georges. One of my missions was to find this guy this journalist I befriended, Alistair Hughes. It turns out he was in prison. Bishop had thrown him in prison for being an independent journalist and when

the invasion began, I didn't know this at the time, the guards at the prison opened all the cells and let everybody out. So Alistair Hughes walked back to his house, which I knew well but I first went looking for him at the prison and they gave me two squads of Marines. We set off in jeeps driving along as though this was the beach in Miami and we get into another gunfight. There is a Cuban contingent in I guess it was the military attaché's house and they started shooting at us as we are on our way to the prison and the Marines killed them all.

Meanwhile we have helicopters falling out of the sky. Remember the first day we lost five or six Americans; one of these was one of the three teams of Seals? Five, all had drowned that first morning because we didn't know that the place where we had wanted to insert them had horrific undercurrents and these incredibly well prepared athletic guys went in underwater and all drowned before they ever reached the shore. So there were all kinds of things and meanwhile we had no contact with Washington so we couldn't ask for any guidance; we were doing this all on our own. So I went to the prison and the prison was empty. We came back and we've got to find this guy, Alistair Hughes, and I thought maybe he is at his house. So we went roaring off, our little convoy of six or seven jeeps, I went up to his door and tapped on his door and there he was. He was shocked, "What are you doing here?" I said, "We need you to come out with us because the rest of the world, I don't know if you remember that first day or so the rest of the world was horrified that we had invaded little Grenada.

Q: And the Brits were mad as hell. And Maggie Thatcher…

WILLS: And the Brits were and Maggie Thatcher was mad as hell. I knew if we could get Alistair Hughes out who was this venerable journalist and get him in front of the media back in Barbados explaining that what we were doing was justified that all would be well; that indeed was what happened. We flew him back to the ship, I had communication with Barbados, we set up a press conference, we used an American chopper to fly him back to Barbados and he address the international media of whom by this point there were hundreds in Barbados trying to get to Grenada to see what we were doing. Hughes, bless his heart, stood up before them and said, "The Americans have overthrown an evil government. These guys were Marxist thugs and they were running this country in a very dictatorial manner and it's a good thing that they've come." Then the international furor died away. After a week of rounding up the bad guys we went off all over the island finding out where their hideouts were. I said to Admiral Metcalf, "I think it's time for me to go back to Vienna, Virginia, and become a regular person again. He said, "Yes, okay." So they flew me back in a military jet. In the meanwhile I had collected a trophy. One of the guys who had been shooting at us with a Soviet AK-47 had been killed and the Marine officer who had led military action on that little engagement gave me the AK-47 as a war trophy. I thought wow this is cool so I asked Admiral Metcalf how I could get that gun back in the United States. He said, "Well they aren't legal in the United States but we have a bunch of those trophies and we are going to decommission them and throw them in my jet when this is all over with and I'll fly them back to the United States. We will put your name on yours and you can collect it at Andrews Air Force Base." I don't know if you remember what happened but Joe Metcalf had three stars and was up for four stars; he landed at Andrews Air Force Base a week or two later and there were agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco waiting for him because somebody on his staff had tipped off these folks that we were bringing in war trophies which were illegal in the U.S. There was a big scandal and they confiscated twenty some AK-47s

on that plane, one of them was mine, and they confiscated them, denied him his promotion to four stars, reduced him in rank to two stars and retired him from the U.S. Navy within a month or two. He thought he was coming back to this glorious career promotion perhaps to Chief of Naval Operations. Instead, he was humiliated and run out of the U.S. Navy all because he had those weapons aboard his plane. So I never got my AK-47.

Q: What happened to the school?

WILLS: Well that's an interesting story too. As I said, the ostensible reason for the whole thing was that these students were in trouble, in danger. I thought there was only one campus, there was the campus I'd visited a dozen times in the past when I had been on visits to Grenada to check on their welfare. We went there that first day in the afternoon and it was empty. Only then I think it was Rossin who said, "Wait a minute there is a second campus as well." The next day, I guess it was a Tuesday, we had reestablished connections to Washington, I guess we had done some consulting I don't remember exactly how we found out; I thought it was Rossin but maybe it wasn't. But anyway, we learned that there was a second campus. We went to the second campus and that is where all the students were. We collected them all and flew them out to the Guam and then flew them back to Barbados and the United States; about forty students as I recall.

Q: Well I don't know if you had a hand in it or not but I can remember vividly as most did when the first student got off the plane, got down and kissed the soil.

WILLS: Yeah that's right.

Q: Because there had been talk about whether they were fine, but they had no problem and they…

WILLS: But they heard all the shooting going on and they were scared but nobody ever made a move against them.

Q: But the thing was I think there had been anticipation saying, "Well the United States shouldn't have done this and the students will come out and say, what's the matter we were just having a good time," or something like that. But when the student got down and kissed the soil when he got off the plane…

WILLS: Then everybody knew.

Q: It really changed everything.

WILLS: Yeah, it changed everything. I remember that first day was the longest day of my life because I hadn't slept since Saturday night in my home. But the adrenaline was running. We knew that Bernard Coard had captured the governor general of Grenada, this venerable old judge and we needed the Governor-General's permission nominally to carry out this military action but he was under house arrest at his residence. So Rossin flew in from Barbados on an American military chopper, took a lot of fire, the underside of those Huey's is armored and thank goodness

they were because here is Larry Rossin hearing this ping, ping, ping, ping, ping off the bottom of his helicopter. Mind you we had invaded at six o'clock in the morning and this was about five o'clock in the afternoon and Larry Rossin flies in with a letter to the Governor-General's residence. He and a squad of Marines go into the governor-general's residence and liberate him and ask him to sign this letter we drafted giving us permission to invade his country eight hours after we had already commenced operations. So there were all kinds of bizarre little moments like that.

Q: OK, I'm looking at the time. It's probably a good place to stop and we will pick this up next time.

WILLS: So we'll go beyond Barbados next time.

Q: Okay, I will ask did you get any debriefing or anything like that?

WILLS: When I came back? Oh yeah. I briefed at the NSC, I briefed at the CIA, I briefed at DOD.

Q: Well we'll talk a bit about how when you got back after this operation how things were viewed.

WILLS: Yeah, and they gave Rossin and me awards; it was quite an amazing experience.

Q: Okay, today is the 17th of November 2008 with Ashley Wills. Ashley, you came back from Grenada when?

WILLS: Well I came back about ten days after the military operation began. It ended four or five days after it began and I spent three or four days helping the military situate itself for a very short occupation. Then I flew back and resumed my university year at Johns Hopkins SAIS. I did a masters degree in public affairs and my field was international economics. So I did that until the following summer; the summer of 1984 when I was asked to be deputy director of the office of international visitors in USIA. The office director was a Schedule C, a very sweet and smart man who was a bit of an ideologue but in a gentle sort of way.

SALLY GROOMS COWAL
USUN Deputy Political Counselor
New York City (1983- 1985)

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

Q: Well, we've picked up, here are some things. I think we talked about the principals and all that, but let's talk about Grenada. Did you find yourself carrying a special brief for Latin America, in a way?

COWAL: Latin America, and the Middle East, I guess were my two special briefs, and that was based on where I had served, and the languages that I spoke, which were Spanish and Hebrew. The job of the deputy political counselor was to provide the overview and do the supervision of I think nine political officers. So during the three and a half months of every General Assembly, I would supervise a rather large political staff. But because of my interests and my languages and my background, I probably did more with respect to Latin America and the Middle East than anything else. I think the principal reason why I was recruited by Jeane for this position was because of my strong Israeli connections. We came to our biggest disagreements over Central America.

Q: Before we get to Central America, let's pick up some of the blips on the diplomatic radar that happened. Our going into Grenada was one of those. How did that hit you all?

COWAL: Well, if you recall, we had gotten the approval of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, who were our allies and partners in this. They requested the United States to take some action in Grenada, but it was not a UN sanctioned affair, and there was immediately a Security Council meeting called to discuss the situation in Grenada. Our move was primarily defensive, to prevent a resolution against the U.S. action. Of course we could take care of that with our veto power, but we wanted to have as good a show as we could produce of all the reasons why the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States had asked the United States to intervene. Of course, all of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, as you know, are mini-states, all of them former British colonies, all of them pretty much dependent, in the modern age, on the United States for whatever aid and trade and commerce is provided.

Even before this action, because of course they were all sovereign nations, meaning they all had one vote in the United Nations, one of our jobs in the political section was to cultivate those votes, because they were votes that we could generally count on getting. We talked before about the overwhelming power, in the sense of numbers, of the Soviet Union, because they were able to get most of the non-aligned in a knee-jerk way to vote with them on most things. We were always out there looking for the poor guys who would indeed vote with us, and making sure that they were facilitated in every way to do that. I'm not implying exchange of money or bribes in return for votes, but I am implying that our Latin American person, and to a certain extent myself, every time there was an important vote coming up in the General Assembly, we would make sure that all the troops got there in time to vote, were aware of the vote and would show up for it. Because most of the eastern Caribbean states had representatives in New York who could best be described as sort of freelance, part time. For instance, the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was in fact a taxi driver from Brooklyn. And that was very convenient, because if you could get him mobilized, then he would stop by and pick up the representative

from Saint Lucia, and I think at least one other, typically, on his way down to the United Nations. So if you got that one worked right, you could get three votes, instead of just one.

So, needless to say, when it came time, defending this action or presenting this action in the Security Council, it was an orchestrated-from-Washington affair, but we were extremely lucky in that the spokesperson for the Organization for Eastern Caribbean States was Eugenia Charles, who was the prime minister of Dominica.

Q: A very impressive person.

COWAL: A very impressive woman, the way many people in the Caribbean are, extremely well spoken and very well educated, but also with this sort of a bedrock common sense underlying it. I think Jeane Kirkpatrick and Eugenia Charles were quite a formidable team as they laid forth this action and documented a small country, Grenada, sort of running out of control, a radical sort of state. I tend to think, and I think I thought at the time that in terms of the threat to the region, it was exaggerated. But in terms of the threat to the people of Grenada, it was not exaggerated. All of these little mini-states had been set up to be parliamentary democracies running under the sort of British Westminster systems of government, and with having clearly defined roles for the legislature and the executive. Clearly, in Grenada, that had gotten off the tracks. How much the Cubans were really a part of that is unclear to me. It was unclear to me at the time. Certainly the fact that Cuba was a client state of the Soviet Union in those days, receiving I think something like $6 million a day in Soviet subsidies and Soviet aid, they hadn't done very well in many of the larger countries in South America in terms of fomenting the kind of revolution which they would have wanted to see. I mean, after all, Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia trying to get a peasant uprising started.

They hadn't really been very successful anywhere. Central America, in terms of Nicaragua, was still sort of being fought out, but the fact that the Cubans were able to use their relative wealth and power to do things such as build an airport in Grenada was, I think, cause for concern. More positively, and something that the United States has never particularly wanted to give Cuba credit for, was the fact that Cuba provided enormous amounts of medical assistance and technical assistance all over the region. And I think, like any country that has a foreign aid program, does so for a mixture of humanitarian and political aims, and I don't think Cuba was any different. But we became very concerned at the sort of violence that was going on in Grenada, although, I say, violence in these tiny little states is a relative term. Violence is a couple of people getting shot or whatever. Nonetheless, there was an attempt to take over a democratically elected government, and we stood very firmly to say that should not happen, and I think that was absolutely right.

Q: How did it come out in the UN, from your point of view?

COWAL: Well, I think it probably came out all right, but not spectacularly, and I think we at the end overplayed our hand. Because some months after the whole thing was over, we had obtained a copy of – this movement in Grenada was called the New Jewel Movement. And we obtained a copy of the secret deliberations of the New Jewel Party, indicating their goal of takeover and so on. We insisted on publishing this, which was 300 or 500 pages of documentation, and having

the UN send it around as a document to every mission and translate it in various languages. If you read it, it read more like the annals of some high school sophomores having had their first beer. In other words, I think it made the whole thing look somewhat trivial. So I think at the end of the day, we overplayed our hand. I think to restore a democratic government in Grenada was the right thing; to overblow it was the wrong thing.

It took about three days, I guess, and if you recall the ostensible excuse was the American medical students who were studying at St. George's University in Grenada, and that they had to be rescued. In retrospect, it said that that ended the sort of Vietnam syndrome, the fact that the U.S. military could stage a successful operation. I kind of wonder, given the amount of force that was there, the amount of force that the Americans brought in, which was overwhelming. I think it taught some lessons to people like Colin Powell, for instance, who said he never wanted to go anywhere again where there wasn't overwhelming American force. That certainly carried us through into Desert Storm. So I think the antecedents for some of these things, not so much on a diplomatic level, even, but on a military level, were probably laid by the Grenada affair. But for me, we blew it all out of proportion and probably could have solved the problem some other way.

I think the British probably would have solved it another way. We, I think, chose to act in a very strong and somewhat unilateral way, which was characteristic of the Reagan administration. We had some high-minded rhetoric, and I think the extent to which we had a triumph was really the impressive character of Eugenia Charles.

ROY T. HAVERKAMP
Deputy Chief of Mission
St. George's (1984-1986)

Roy T. Haverkamp was born in 1924 in Missouri. He served in the U.S. Air Force in World War II and later earned degrees from Yale University and Cambridge University. Mr. Haverkamp joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Korea, Sweden, Japan, Cambodia, Congo, Benin, Vietnam, Guinea, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Grenada. He was interviewed on April 11, 1994 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

HAVERKAMP: I asked to go to Grenada.

Q: How did that come about?

HAVERKAMP: A friend in Personnel realized I wasn't happy...I appreciated getting the job, because there were a lot of people without jobs, and I am not deprecating that part...and said, "How would you like to go to Grenada?" I said, "I would love to go."

Q: What did you do there?

HAVERKAMP: They told me I was going to go and be Chargé and then the hot shot assistant secretary at the time, Ambassador Motley decided we needed somebody with the title of ambassador. So they asked Lorrie Lawrence to go. Lorrie said he wanted me to go as his DCM. He did a favor for me because I would have been without an assignment. So I went down with him and was DCM. He left after about eight months.

Q: What was the situation there when you arrived? This was when?

HAVERKAMP: I got there in January/February, 1984. We still had some of our military there. You still had the government that had been set up after we took over. The big thing coming up was an election. We had a big AID program there. I think we spent something like $60 million in two years. We built roads and finished off the famous Cuban airport. We did all sorts of other things like training. The task was to restore a functioning democracy in a society that got off to a bad start after independence from the UK.

Q: For the historical record could you give a brief summary of the incident that had brought our military there?

HAVERKAMP: What brought about United States intervention was the murder and overthrow of a popular Marxist Prime Minister, Maurice Bishop, who himself overthrew an elected but terribly corrupt and unstable government led by Eric Gairy, a very peculiar character. Gairy was thoroughly corrupt and a very despicable character and had aroused the wrath of just about everybody in this tiny country. When a young socialist, Maurice Bishop, and a small group of revolutionaries...I forget the numbers but it was around 20...took over the radio station and a couple of other places one day and threw him out, there was general rejoicing. Had Bishop run for election within the first year of his coup he would have been elected unanimously but he didn't. He did not hide his Marxist convictions. He set up his new army and his great friends were the Cubans, East Germans, Soviets and the Czechs. All these people came in. The Cubans built an enormous airport there which they said was for tourists. After four or five years, one of the left wing people in Bishop's own party staged the coup against him in which he was killed along with several other people. Fear and panic spread. Bishop was popular despite his Marxist friends and one party rule.

The President of the United States said that he received a request for help from the Governor-General, through a regional Eastern Caribbean organization. So we sent in our troops. And, indeed, when we did get there we found that there were certain things about the airport that made it less useful for tourism than for troop transport. The fuel tanks were for the kind of fuel that is used on jet prop planes, but not on jet planes. The messing facilities in the airport were the reverse of a normal restaurant which has a smaller kitchen but a large dining area for customers. This had a large kitchen and a very small dining area which meant it was something that you could use to feed troops passing through who did not need tables and chairs. The Cubans had to stop off going to Angola...they were sending troops to and from Angola. They didn't have planes that could fly directly, their Soviet jet props had to refuel to make it to Angola.

When I first heard this I happened to be in a taxi cab coming back from the Hill to the Department and I thought, "We have invaded Grenada?" But when I got down there the people

were extremely grateful for the intervention, every American walked on air. They were afraid and didn't know what was going to happen after Bishop's murder. They felt it was a real godsend for them that we came, of course they also expected we would put them on the road to peace and prosperity.

Q: How long were you there?

HAVERKAMP: Two years. It was a delightful, beautiful little place. It was interesting because it was the big foreign policy victory of the Republican Party going into the 1984 election, so you did have high level interest. The Secretary came, the President came, the Vice President, the National Security Advisor all came. You had a big AID program to get through. And the people were delightful and of course it was good to be in a country, no matter how small, where we were so well liked. Professionally, it was a good learning experience dealing with a failed Marxist state after the end of Marxism.

Q: How many people were there?

HAVERKAMP: I think there were about 90,000 people. It is not the smallest state in the world in terms of population, but nearly.

Q: What would you do for the President, Bush and others when they arrived?

HAVERKAMP: When President Reagan came he met with the leaders of the other English speaking Eastern Caribbean who all came to Grenada. He had meetings with the Grenadian Governor-General, the Prime Minister and addressed an enormous crowd where he was very well received. He was a real hero in Grenada. The others followed the same path only without meeting the other Eastern Caribbean leaders.

Q: But other than that, what was there just sort of smiling and be nice to people?

HAVERKAMP: Well, it was helping prepare for the elections, talking with members of Congress and the press, keeping the AID program on track plus following useless rituals we had to maintain. Things like persuading the government to reduce the civil service, to claim and take back land from squatters for more worthy projects, etc. Obviously, if I was going to go and do all the political reporting, the political officer would have asked for a transfer. I handled visitors and helped the AID people run interference with the government. A Presidential visit in a place like Grenada is not easy. There were not even enough hotel rooms for the advance party that they wanted to send down. But it all worked very well because the government was very friendly, the White House was able to arrange the local scenery to their satisfaction and the President was at his best with the regional Prime Ministers with whom he met. The new freely elected Prime Minister of Grenada fumbled badly with then Vice President Bush by calling our AID program "chicken feed". I can say I advised him against any criticism the day before the meeting, but he was feeling his oats with all the high level attention.

U.S. Special Forces were training special service units, small military units for Grenada and other countries in the area. We gave them their equipment and their weapons and their training.

Training for the islands was done in Grenada, I don't know if we still do, I hope we do because none of them could afford it. One of the big things we were always working with the government was to reiterate that these Special Service units had to be controlled and maintained by them.

Q: So once it disappeared from being on the visitor's route, that was it?

HAVERKAMP: The sharper press people were all convinced that our presence and role were passing phenomena and soon after we left attention would focus elsewhere. Grenada would then struggle with the usual problems of tiny island countries, security development and overpopulation, etc. They were right.

Q: Well then, after that what happened?

HAVERKAMP: Then I went as political advisor to the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic who was also NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic.

Q: Well, you served when to when?

HAVERKAMP: From 1986-89.

Q: What were you doing?

HAVERKAMP: I was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. My job was to support the CINC on political/military developments or political developments that would affect the military in areas for which he was responsible. In his role as one of three NATO Supreme Allied Commanders Atlantic, his responsibilities included naval forces from the U.S., the UK, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Bases in Iceland were also under his command. As you know, France does not participate in the integrated military commands. Nevertheless, French forces do participate in exercises with NATO and the French had an admiral as liaison with SACCANT.

Q: Canada?

HAVERKAMP: Canada, right.

Q: How did you find that you related? You had already gone to this Capstone program which must have been a help.

HAVERKAMP: Oh, yes, very definitely.

Q: How responsive was the military to your advice, counsel?

HAVERKAMP: I worked directly with the Commander in Chief Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic and with anyone else in both commands who was interested or involved with issues which were my responsibility. My first Chief, Admiral Lee Baggett was open, interested, shrewd in understanding political issues, particularly in his NATO role where he had direct access to

NATO defense ministers. He was also responsible for naval and other forces in his U.S. command. He went down three or four times. The main interest there was the military assistance programs. Haiti was always an issue of importance almost above everything else in a sense because after the overthrow of Baby Doc, there was always the threat of conflict, of chaos breaking out to the point where you would have to evacuate Americans, which would be his responsibility. One of my main jobs was getting some of our colleagues to understand that when you pull a string the troops will not come to save you. There are ships and troops that are doing other things in other places. The Secretary of State may make the decision, but he is not going to come down and get you out, it is going to be the Army, Navy and Marines.

Q: Did you find yourself sort of looking for trouble spots and keeping an eye on them? Sort of in a way acting as the emergency, evacuation man?

HAVERKAMP: Not particularly. A lot of people view our i.e. State's relationship with the military as one where you have to look out for potholes, but they are far beyond that. If you look at the military now and some of our colleagues in terms of issues like Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia, the military view is they are anxious and willing to work with us at all stages from planning to execution. Some in State and elsewhere believe the military should just do whatever the civilian authorities over them order them to do. And this is true up to a point, but in America troops are not like Jack in the box. Vietnam showed above all that getting in a conflict that requires sustained conflict without the support of the people and the Congress and where the price in human lives being paid is greater than the interest being pursued, will not have public support and cannot be sustained.

Potholes were not really a big problem. The more interesting parts of the job were helping the CINC in coordinating what he did with State and in getting what he needed from NATO governments.

I was very lucky. It took some time to build my confidence with the CINC, because he was a very busy man. He had about a quarter million sailors, SSBNs, SSNs, aircraft carriers, other ships as well as international and US staffs. You had to make yourself useful to him and that takes time. When I did, he took me with him almost all the time when he met with foreign leaders to talk about almost every aspect of his commands. But as far as understanding and being interested in the political aspects of his command, my first admiral was very, very interested, very savvy and a delight to work for. He was a tough guy who took no B.S. from anybody. He didn't mind laying you out. In fact, I really worried until I got chewed out. Only then did I feel I really belonged. Here all these other people were being laid low and I thought he felt as a civilian I wasn't worth the effort. I was also lucky because most often State was well informed on issues that concerned him.

From my view point that was one of the best assignments I had.

Q: Who was the second admiral?

HAVERKAMP: The second admiral was Admiral Frank Kelso, who later became Chief of Naval Operations. I was with him only a short time.

Q: Was there a big difference working for him?

HAVERKAMP: There was a difference. Admiral Kelso knew the Navy and was a bright guy, but not all that interested in political issues. He wanted to have good relations with ambassadors and NATO defense ministers and he did. As with his predecessor, I had entre whenever I wanted to see him, which was frequently and he included me in meetings on a wide variety of issues.

Q: Just a different focus.

HAVERKAMP: More a different way of dealing with some aspects of his command.

Q: Were you there during and did you have any concern with the Panamanian exercise where we went in and took out Noriega?

HAVERKAMP: No, once it gets on the ground in Central America it belongs to what was called SOUTHCOM, which was a command in Panama headed by a 4 star Army General.

Q: But you were there during the time of the Panamanian thing. I can't think of any place where they needed a political advisor more and apparently they didn't have one.

HAVERKAMP: Well, they did, because SOUTHCOM has a political advisor.

Q: But at the time they didn't have one.

HAVERKAMP: I do not know.

Q: I think it was an interim period. Whatever it was, from the political/military side it was very badly done.

HAVERKAMP: I was not aware of that.

Q: Well then you left when?

HAVERKAMP: I left there in July, 1989 and that was the end.

Q: Why don't we stop at that point.

HAVERKAMP: All right.

JOHN C. LEARY
Chief of Mission
St. George's (1986-1988)

John C. Leary was born in Connecticut in 1924. After receiving both his bachelor's degree and master's degree from Yale University in 1947 and 1959, respectively, he served in the United States Army from 1943-1945. His career has included positions in Cherbourg, Dusseldorf, Istanbul, Tokyo, Ottawa, Vienna, Sao Paulo, and St. George's. Mr. Leary was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in November 1998.

Q: Where did you go after Brazil?

LEARY: I was assigned to Grenada in the West Indies. I came back to Washington for a brief interim period during which President Reagan made a visit to Grenada. It was decided that since I was due to arrive there just about the time that he was, that I should delay my arrival until after he had returned and my predecessor would handle the visit. So we arrived in Grenada in, as I recall, the Spring of 1986. Grenada was an interesting spot because of the history of what was called the "Rescue Mission." Until our intervention in October in 1983, we had not had an embassy in Grenada. It had been covered by our embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados which was responsible for all of the countries in the Eastern Caribbean. But once we went in, in 1983, they decided to establish an embassy there. I was the third incumbent in the job. It was a very small island about twelve miles by twenty, with a population of about 100,000. Because of what had transpired earlier, we had a very active representation there, including a very large AID program, which on a per capita basis was probably the largest in the world. After our military groups had withdrawn, we undertook to complete the airport which the Cubans had started and did various other things to assist the country in upgrading it's development, i.e. building roads, helping to expand the electrical power distribution. We had a very large program of support for the health care system. A very large program run by Project Hope, which sent doctors and nurses to Grenada to work with their counterparts and upgrade the medical system.

Q: What was your title and position were you there?

LEARY: My title was charge d'affaires, but I was the chief of mission. The Secretary designated me as Chief of Mission, but the Department did not submit a nomination for Ambassador to the Senate, probably for domestic political reasons. So my predecessors and I and my successors all went there with the title of charge d'affaires.

Q: And the domestic political reasons related to opposition on the part of some on the Hill towards the rescue mission and towards what we were doing?

LEARY: I think that's correct. I think that it would have been controversial thing if it ever went before the Senate and it was decided that there was no reason for that. Since that time the embassy has been downgraded. At the time I left, ARA (Bureau of Inter-American Affairs) was proposing to reorganize representation in the Eastern Caribbean, making Bridgetown responsible for two or three countries and Grenada responsible for Grenada and St. Thomas and upgrading the embassy office in Antigua to full embassy status and make them responsible for a couple of countries. That idea, which had been agreed in the ARA was finally shot down and it went back to the old pre-intervention status with Barbados in charge of the area. But last I heard we had a single representative in Grenada, who was a member of the staff in Bridgetown and resident in

Grenada.

Q: But at the time you were there?

LEARY: When I was there we had a full embassy with political and economic sections, consular section, large AID Mission, who at one time had six American AID officers. During my time it was gradually reduced. We also had a USIS operation. It was clear this was more than such a small country would normally warrant, and we were gradually paring it down. It was decided that if we were to remain as an embassy, which many people thought would be appropriate, it was thought that we should have other responsibilities in order to use the staff efficiently, but in the end it was decided to go back to the arrangement with Bridgetown to be responsible for the area.

Q: At the time you were there, you were only responsible for Grenada. You didn't have any regional responsibilities?

LEARY: No.

Q: Let's talk a little bit more about the U.S. military presence while you were there.

LEARY: Well we had...none. This was a misconception. Many people thought we still had troops in Grenada, but they were withdrawn very shortly after the intervention. We had a few people there for three or four months that were left behind to sort of straighten out some of the logistical problems that we had. We probably had a lot of equipment and so on, but within no more than six months after the intervention, which was in October 1983, all of our troops had been withdrawn. We had occasional visits from U.S. military forces, including before I left there a series of visits by U.S. Navy ships. We also, through the cooperation of the Grenadian government, used Grenada as a base for certain exercises. I recall one interesting one. We had a squadron of hydrofoils that were based in Florida come to Grenada and spent three months operating there as a test of their ability to deploy to a foreign location. They then set up a tent city and had four, if I recall, of these huge hydrofloats. They travel at great speeds once they get going. They always made it a point to take local leaders on a ride and trips and so on. There was always a very positive reception for these groups. I thought that they were the only country in the world where the graffiti, instead of saying, "Yankee go home!" says, "God Bless the 82nd Airborne Division and thank God for Daddy Reagan."

Q: And "Yankee come back." Why don't you talk a little about the political situation in Grenada while you were there?

LEARY: There was a cres de vue. We had a government headed by a man named Herbert Blaize. He and another Grenadian leader named Eric Gary had kind of traded the Prime Ministership back and forth after independence back in 1974. Gary was in power in 1979 when the Communist uprising took place. Since the Communist uprising... that's the wrong term. Gary's government had become rather corrupt and he had begun to use his political authority to beat up, even literally, on his opponents and he had become quite unpopular. A group of Marxists, headed by Maurice Bishop, who had been trained as a lawyer in London, he had the

support of a large segment of the population. They decided that they were not going to wait until the next election and they tried to get rid of him and a business group took part in the coup. Immediately after this they began to cast out of their group the non-Marxist members, many whom wound up serving long prison terms with no charges against them and so on. And that made those people mad when I was there. This went on for almost four years when there was a dispute within the Bishop Governments' ranks and his number two man, Bernard Coard, took over for Bishop and executed Bishop and some of his cabinet minister in the court which sits above St. George, which is the capital city in Grenada. This is what triggered our intervention. Then Gray took over and was elected, so during the time I was there it was very friendly towards the United States. He was also a lawyer that was trained in London. He was a very bright but simple man and he lived in the Northern island of Carriacon, which is accessible only by boat or small plane. It's a very small island and a very small population. I went on an occasion to visit him in his home and it was a very, very simple, almost ram-shackle house that he lived in with his wife. He was a very shrewd manager of the government. I dealt with him on almost a daily basis during that time, particularly with respect to military deployments and other developments in the region and especially when we were trying to garner votes in various issues in the United Nations. He was always very helpful.

Q: We were talking about your day-to-day dealings with Prime Minister Blaize.

LEARY: Also the chief opposition party had views very similar to the government party. There was very little to choose between them in terms of policy matters it was a matter of one group being in, and the other being out. But the country was quite stable. Although the per capita income was very low, there was never really any poverty. People lived comfortably. The climate was good, therefore you didn't need a lot in terms of clothing and the housing as well was simple. Food grows on trees or in the ocean around them. There was a surprisingly high percentage of property ownership, of land ownership. About 65% of the population was supposed to own some land. What you have is a country that produces certain basic agricultural products, including bananas, cocoa, nutmeg. Grenada produces most of the world's nutmeg. Indonesia being the other major producer and no one was quite sure how these two countries somehow were able to grow nutmeg, but they do. Most of this is harvested and handled by cooperatives, who arrange the sorting, shipment, and export. But also the country receives large amounts of remittances from abroad. Grenadians who have left the country and gone to New York or London or Toronto to make their fortune and are very conscientious about sending money back to their families back home. Speaking of families, also there is a very strong extended family system. I remember talking to some people about the unemployment question down there and in percentage terms there was probably a high percentage of unemployment. But I was told that this is not the sort of problem that it would be here, for example, because families support each other. If a nephew loses his job, he knows he can always go to his aunt's house and get a meal and go down to the sea and catch himself a fish and so on.

They tend to have a somewhat laid back attitude towards life, which was sometimes rather frustrating to us and the AID Mission. One of the big issues was maintenance. We shipped in and installed a new electric power generator for the electric company and within a couple of weeks it was down for service. So we sent in a technician to check on it and he said that the problem was that they were not following the maintenance schedule and changing the oil and that kind of

thing. It was very difficult to get people to understand that something had to be done before the machine breaks down. We had developed a national television station in Grenada. Again, this was shortly after the intervention. We had an American who came down there and with our permission installed a small station that was broadcast only to the small island. He developed a TV ad campaign promoting the concept of management, which I hope had some effect and help to convince them.

Q: You mentioned that the government party and the main opposition party saw many things alike when you were there. The leftists that were active in 1983 and before October 1983, where were they?

LEARY: As I mentioned Maurice Bishop and members of his cabinet had been executed and the executioners were sitting in prison up on the hill. The prison was up on a hill behind St. Georges City, the capital of the country. Which by the way sits in a beautiful bay with high hills around it. It is a marvelous pictorial setting. A trial was going on during most of the time I was there, which resulted, in the end, of about a dozen people being convicted and sentenced to execution. This happened just before I left and after that there was an appeal process, which I understand was successful in changing the sentence to life imprisonment rather than hanging. There were still a few, I would say, mainly young men who were planning to be anti-government and anti-U.S. Many of these, during the Marxist regime, they had built up an army of about 2,000 people out of this small population. Most of them were very poorly trained, but with uniforms and guns. After the intervention they were dismantled and these people were put back in the street basically and there was a group of them that did their best to create problems for the tourists that came to town. They would walk down the main street when there were cruise ships in town, making nasty remarks to people and so on, but they were never really a serious threat. I would say that the country as a whole had rather a conservative attitude, in the sense of being content with their lot. Not anxious to again have the turmoil that they had before.

We did have, among the political leaders, a number of people who had been labor leaders for example. Sir Eric Gary had gotten his start really when he went off to Grenada to Aruba to work for an oil company. He became leader of a trade union there and later returned to Grenada and took up arms against the British who were then in charge of everything. But in more recent years he had become much more low key in his response to such matters. Recognizing that Grenada was independent and that most people were property owners. There was no industry really. People who had formerly worked on British plantations were now independent landowners.

Q: You mentioned that Cuba was building the airport at the time of the intervention. Was their any role, any significance for Cuba at the time that you were there? Why don't you talk a little more about the airport project?

LEARY: As far as Cuba was concerned, they and the Russians and the East Germans all had active staffs in Grenada prior to the intervention. They were removed immediately after that and there was no love lost between them on the part of the Grenadians. That had begun to change however. The current government, led by a man named Keith Mitchell who was a minister in Blaizes' government when I was there, undertook a mission to resume relations with Cuba as part of the policy of opening up the Caribbean. Trying to make the Caribbean once again one

community. I'm not close enough to know how significant that is, or what the general community in Grenada feel about it, but it would not have happened while I was there because of the attitude of the people.

The airport was, and is, a very fine one. A good location with a very long runway. Very well built and the Cubans had started it. There was a fear at the time that it might become a base for Communist bloc military operations. The runway had been pretty much completed before the military intervention, but a great deal of effort had gone into it and when we came in it still needed some work to complete. Our AID program undertook to complete that and to construct an airport terminal, which by the time I had arrived had just been completed and was up and running. Then there was an effort to induce more airlines to begin to use it, for tourism and other things. A rather difficult proposition considering the small size of the country, of course finally limited facilities for tourists. It was a wonderful location, but cannot accommodate large numbers of people. The airline in the area, Liat, the island's Air Transport, flew regular flights in and out. Small planes. But it was only occasionally that larger planes would come in.

We did have an interesting operation there. NASA sent a group down to do a high level air sampling and they used the airport as a base. So for about a month we had one of these very high altitude aircraft, I think it was a version of what used to be the U2. It would take off from Grenada and fly to high altitudes. It's operation involved bringing in special fuels and all kinds of things. It was an interesting operation and once again they were very open to the Grenadian public, giving tours of the aircraft and that sort of thing.

Q: I don't think they took people aloft though, because there was very little space in that aircraft as I remember.

LEARY: Right. The pilot was there by himself with a special spacesuit that they had to wear at high altitudes. Prior to that airport being built, there had been an airport in Grenada. A much smaller one on the other side of the island. And one of the great tourist attractions after the intervention was two Cuban aircraft which had been damaged and were sitting there at the airport. People used to go out and crawl around those and peel pieces of it off as souvenirs and so on.

Q: I think also on the subject of tourism you mentioned cruise ships, which came into the harbor with American tourists and others, of course.

LEARY: We had, during the time I was there, which was '86 to '88, they were a growing number of Caribbean cruise ships that would come in. They would usually come in the morning and people would get off, tour the St. Georges shops, take the little tour of the island and go one of the nutmeg procession facilities to observe that operation, swim at Grand Anse Beach which is a beautiful sandy arch of beach near St. Georges, and then get back on the ships and leave in the evening. At times during the tourist season, we had two or three ships at a time in port. The onshore facilities were limited. When I first got there, there was one major hotel, which had about 100 rooms and a couple others that they were building. Now there are about three or four that can accommodate as many 40 or 50 people. In addition to a lot of small places, many a kind of bed and breakfast places or small facilities with four or five individual cottages. But there was

an ambivalent attitude towards tourism there. Most people enjoyed the income from tourism, but they didn't want to see the island overwhelmed with it and become as commercialized as some of the other favorite tourist spots are.

Q: Were there other diplomatic representatives there?

LEARY: The only permanent representatives there were from the U.K. and Venezuela. Venezuela, of course, not being very far south, and had an interest in the area just off-shore of them. One of the special friendships we developed during my career was with the Governor General of Canada, Sir Paul Scoan. He and his wife were good friends and we have remained in contact. [Ed. note: Mrs. Leary writes that Sir Paul recently finished writing a book entitled Survival for Service: My Experiences as Governor General of Grenada and sent her an autographed copy.]

Q: And others would cover from perhaps...?

LEARY: Others came from other places. We had a regular stream of people, consular representatives or diplomatic representatives from other countries who would call ands say that they would be spending a day in Grenada coming from Caracas, or occasionally Barbados, there weren't many there though, or even the States. They would come in, talk to me, get a briefing on local conditions.

Q: Was security a concern, an issue, there?

LEARY: Not really much of a concern there. We obviously had the usual security at the gate of the embassy compound, which was an old hotel actually. A hotel made up from several cottages. I had my office in one building, and the Consular Section was another cottage, administrative building in another, and so on. I had a guy at my house, but actually security was not a major issue there.

Q: Do you want to talk a little bit more about the regional dimensions, the regional aspects? I recall at the time of the October '83 intervention where kind of an effort was made that we were responding to a kind of call for help from the other countries in the region.

LEARY: That's right. There's an organization of Eastern Caribbean states and at the time we were asked to come in, the chairman of the group, which rotated to various countries, the chairman of the group was the Prime Minister of Dominica, Virginia Charles. She was delegated to the countries when they saw what was happening in Grenada and many of them feared that something like that might happen in their country. They didn't like what was happening. So we were often accused of having put them up to this, but I think it was genuine concern on their part. Virginia Charles came to Washington and made a personal request that we take steps to bring it to an end, which we did.

Q: While you were there did these other regional states visit Grenada?

LEARY: Yes, and we got involved in something called the Regional Security Force, which was

set up after this as well. Each of the small countries contributing, not military forces because they had no military forces basically, but paramilitary groups. Most of them were a special arm of the police force that was designed for riot control and this type of thing. We were providing supplies and advisors to this group. Once a year they had, more often sometimes, they had an exercise where they would join forces and map out a plan to move in to one area or another and often these took place in Grenada, as well as in the other countries but they came pretty often to Grenada.

Also, I recall an interesting development there. The Trinidadian government had been a little bit aloof in our operation in the rest of the Caribbean. We were hoping that they would become more interested in defense of the region. I was asked one day...we were expecting to have a Regional Security Forces operation in Grenada, and I suggested to the Prime Minister that he invite the Prime Minister of Trinidad to come and observe. We decided to work together on the invitation that she sent out, which did not get any results, but he sent a thank you and regrets that he could not come, but it was a step towards inviting that country to join the group.

Q: Was there concern about narcotics traffic through Grenada and if so, did we do anything to try and deal with it at the time that you were there?

LEARY: Yes, that was a concern. Grenada was a little bit off the track because we were at the far eastern end of the island chain, but there was local concern about drug use by the young people in Grenada. Marijuana was used by many, but harder drugs had begun to make some appearance. Not a serious problem by any means at that stage. But there was concern that Grenada would become a transit point for some of these ships that were bringing drugs to the area and they worked closely with our DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] people on this. The Navy was also using some of their patrols in the area to watch for drug traffickers. Prime Minister Blaize's wife attended a meeting in New York with Nancy Reagan and met with the UN, and promoted the "Just Say No" program. Afterwards she came back to Grenada and organized a "Just Say No" program there. I recall one day, that all the school children were out marching to a rally in the central park to promise that they wouldn't use drugs and so on. There was a concern, but at that point only an incipient one, not really serious. But they were concerned, as were we.

Q: Did you actually have a DEA representative in the embassy?

LEARY: No, not inside, but they came in from outside from time to time.

Q: Did you have a deputy chief of mission at the time?

LEARY: Yes, when we first went there, the title of the political officer was deputy chief of mission and then as we began to cut back in staff and so on, they decided that the title would disappear with the change in incumbency of the chief of the political section.

Q: One other aspect of the decision to intervene in 1983 in Grenada was concern about U.S. students in the medical school. Was the medical school still existing while you were there? Were there medical students there?

LEARY: Yes, it did. The medical school was very much a growing concern and I think that it was actually a very good educational facility. I had not really thought much about it before I went there, but I often wondered whether these were serious students or whether they were there more for the sun and surf than the education. As it turned out, I found them very serious and hardworking students. Many of whom were older than normal graduate students. A lot of people that had served in the military, for example paramedics or what have you, and decided that they wanted to become doctors. It would be difficult for them to get into medical schools in the states, so they found this as an alternative. The school had a very nice campus. The faculty was made up of a few permanent people, but mostly they used professors who came down from the States and would give a concentrated course. A one term course in the place of three weeks for example. So that the professor enjoyed a holiday in Grenada and was able to offer his expertise to the students. They had a two year program. They did not get a medical degree from this school. After they finished their two years, then they applied to a medical school, elsewhere in the U.S. or London and sometimes in Canada. And they finished up their medical education at those places.

Q: In effect doing a third year there.

LEARY: Or the fourth. Right. As a coincidence, after we returned and I retired, we acquired a family physician who it turned out had spent two years in Grenada at the medical school there and graduated from Georgetown where he got his degree. So I was quite impressed with the school. It also worked closely with the Grenadian government in the medical field. They had certain facilities at the school that the local hospital didn't have, so they offered the use of its time and equipment.

Q: Okay, anything else about your time in Grenada? How long was that? It was from '86 to '88. About two years?

LEARY: I was there for two years. It was an interesting time because Washington was still interested in what was happening there. Pleasant, although rather confining. I used to say that a two year vacation would be better than a two year tour, but nevertheless we enjoyed it. The people were extremely friendly and we had good relationships with them all.

Q: Were you able to get off the island occasionally?

LEARY: Yes, occasionally we did. We made a trip to Caracas and to the French island, Martinique. One of our grandchildren was born in Austria during the time that we were there, so we made a trip to Europe.

Q: Anything else that we should cover about your time there?

LEARY: No.

Q: After that you retired?

LEARY: That's correct.

Q: From the Foreign Service.

HARIADENE JOHNSON
Development Officer, USAID
St. George's (1989-1990)

Hariadene Johnson received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from University of Texas at Austin prior to joining USAID in 1967. Her career posts included Ghana, Liberia, Tanzania, and Djibouti in addition to serving as Office Director of East Africa for USAID from 1977-1982. Ms. Johnson was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

Q: Let's talk about Grenada, because it had an interesting part of U.S. involvement. What was the situation when you got involved in Grenada. You were assigned there, I guess for awhile.

JOHNSON: My perspective on Grenada was very much from an organizational perspective. I was still wandering around and the Agency didn't know what to do with me. They never offered me a permanent job, so I was taking all these TDY. The feeling that the more experienced I got, the better officer I would be. And, after the invasion of Grenada, the Caribbean had a Regional Development Office in Barbados, which again was a situation where Barbados didn't receive any direct bilateral aid, but had the airplane connections where you could get to the other islands. In the RDO Caribbean program, they had a series of regional projects in agriculture, health, shipping, democracy. The Mission would establish an OYB (Operating Year Budget) for each country within the overall Washington allocation. The individual countries and individual embassies hated it. They felt that they should get their allocation directly from Congress. So, for the two years I was down there was a period where the RDO was trying to keep each of the countries happy with this regional approach. Meanwhile, the State Department was agitating for a bilateral approach. State was getting ESF funds, specifically directed to a country and for, an example, a project to build the road in Antigua. We also ended up with congressional earmarks saying that you will spend X amount of dollars in Y country.

In the midst of all this, when Grenada was originally invaded, the first thing they did after the shooting stopped was to set up a bilateral aid program, which was to help the country. It was set up with an USAID bilateral office in Grenada, St. Georges; it had its own bilateral projects; it had its own allocation of funds from Congress. But, the Associate Director in Grenada reported to the Regional Director in Barbados and for some of the technical specialists would pull on staff out of the Regional Office.

As I heard it after the fact, the Mission Director in Barbados had spent most of his time on Grenada, figuring quite accurately that that was when he got the 8:30 call every morning from the National Security Council saying, what's happened. His visibility rested much more on what happened on Grenada than anywhere else. What was most controversial about it, is that the

reasons we went in with the invasion were threats to the life of the medical students, but also because the Cubans were building this modern airport that they described as a dagger pointed at the heart of the U.S. Well, in the first 18 months, we sent in a report and said the most important economic thing to do was to finish the airport. That the availability of direct links with the U.S. really controlled any other thing they wanted to do in that country. As long as the only way to get to Grenada was to go to Barbados overnight and take an island hopper, they simply weren't going to get the kind of investment and development, etc. etc. etc. So, we wound up finishing off the airport. By the time I got there, it was like two or three years later, the emphasis in Grenada had—

Q: And what year was that?

JOHNSON: I was in Grenada from 1989 to 1990. By the time I came into the picture, the emphasis that was on we have to show we made a difference in Grenada and that the Cubans were bad guys and we were good guys had pretty much evaporated. The RDO in Barbados was trying to reabsorb the island back in to the regional infrastructure. The Ambassador on Grenada was trying to maintain a bilateral staff and bilateral USAID program. The man who had been the Associate Director had his new assignment somewhere in L.A. And, if you were headed down a path of a eliminating the office, it didn't make sense to replace him, because you were moving everything back to Barbados. On the other hand, if you were going to maintain a separate office, then you needed to replace him. So, I was the compromise candidate to go out on TDY. But, I had no dreams of being assigned to that job, so that I wouldn't have any built in incentive to try and keep it on the Ambassador's track.

I knew the RDO Director in Barbados and he trusted me in that I would keep him honestly informed as to what was going on. So, I spent a year in there, (originally supposed to be a TDY of 60 days and they were going to make the decision in 60 days.) A year later I was still out there, because they never could make the decision. They would write briefing memos up through the USAID structure, and from the USAID structure over to the State Department structure. Meanwhile, the political desk officers on the State side were writing briefing papers up to their guys and over to the other guys. Papers would go all the way up to Secretary Eagleburger and we would get a cable saying, it's up in Eagleburger's office, he'll decide in the next ten days and then two weeks later we'd get a cable saying, Eagleburger had to go to Russia and he passed this down to so and so who's going to have so and so take a look at it. It got nowhere. In the meantime, Ford Cooper was the Ambassador, an excellent Ambassador. Despite all of his pulling and tugging, the program gradually became a regional program. The individual direct bilateral USAID projects began to phase out and in their place were components of the regional effort so that you could tell the Grenadians that the same amount of money was going to Grenada. The U.S. government was not losing interest in Grenada and that USAID wasn't pulling out and all the rest of it.

Q: What did we do?

JOHNSON: It started out, like I say, the major effort was on the airport. Once the airport was finished the major effort was to try and get American airlines to fly direct so that you had a direct link between Grenada and the U.S. Ford Cooper, the Ambassador, took a direct role in the

negotiations where he would call up the American airlines and say, OK. what do you need and they'd tell him, well we need this amount of cargo space or this amount of radar control and a tower or whatever. So, then he'd call up the Grenadian ministry and say, okay, this is what you've got, now what are you planning on putting up there. Then he called me and said, USAID put in a control tower. You know, he was the one who was the spider, sort of at the center trying to pull everybody together to get a functioning airport and he eventually did. The American airlines used Puerto Rico as their hub for the entire Caribbean, so you couldn't get a flight directly from New York to Grenada. You had to go to Puerto Rico and then to Grenada; they felt that was better than having to go through Barbados. You also ended up with American airlines essentially wanting a lot of guarantees and concessions from the government, which in the initial years made it much more profitable for American airline and less profitable for the government, in terms of the government waiving its normal landing fee and whatever it was they had.

In addition to the airport, the major push was to try and get American investors to come down and look at investing Grenada and so USAID organized a series of hotel investors who came down and looked at the possibility of investing in hotels. A couple of venture capitalists came down and looked at the possibility of investing in anything. A couple of people came down who were actively associated with cruise lines and wanted the government of Grenada to expand and modernize the port at St. Georges so your bigger cruise ships could come through. They had all the arguments about what a cruise ships with a growing range for passenger traffic and a number of people, a number of visits, and this was the way that Grenada should go in terms of the tourism.

Meantime, I was over in the corner causing trouble. First of all, I'm like the cruise line investors and the guys who came down pushing that. I was telling the government of Grenada to be careful, because, if they base their tourism on cruise ships, essentially the cruise ship has no infrastructure requirements. If you have a cruise ship, a cruise ship can go to any port and if there's a problem with water facility to where your water tanks are contaminated in St. Georges, you know, they just go to St. Lucia. There's another military coup or political unrest in Grenada, you know. Why not go to Dominica. They have absolutely no investment to stay there and work with the government. Hotel investors, on the other hand do. They have an interest in putting up an infrastructure; they've got a commitment; and they're going to stay with you for the long haul.

Plus, which may be less unpopular, so you look at Grenada, there's something like four hundred thousand Grenadians on the island. There are another four hundred thousand who were in Canada, Ballston, and the third place in the Northeast. The Canadians outside the country were shipping funds into the country so you had a major capital inflow coming from them where they would send money for their uncle to start up a Bed and Breakfast, and their aunt to start a little hamburger shop. And, for somebody else, this whole range of small scale entrepreneur activity just growing like mad, being funded by the Grenadians outside the country sending money home. This was far more in Grenada's interest than being nice to Hilton Hotel and having a huge Hilton Hotel bill, which wouldn't create the jobs; it wouldn't have the impact on the economy, and it probably wasn't going to happen anyway, despite the fact that we kept seeing all the hotel letters coming in. One of them actually was Doug Bennett, who had moved to South Carolina and had some sort of intra capital program going and he came down to Grenada on one of these investor

tours. I think, in the USAID in terms of organizing investment groups was really proactive and did more in Grenada than any place else I've been, but I don't think the economic climb-hanger in Grenada was right for the kind of things we were talking about doing. Where we saw investments by Americans and these big scale things, just didn't have the impact that all of the small scale investments of all the little enterprises were having.

Q: Were we doing any local projects?

JOHNSON: I had some training projects; I had an industrial project: what happened was immediately after the invasion went in, they went for capital infrastructure. So, they built an industrial warehouse park; they had built roads all over the island; did community centers and schools, and it was the Dixon Martyr (?ed) approach across the board. And, even continued that pretty much. The preference of the investor self-help fund was for brick and mortar activities. The classic example of the good and the bad, was that they talked the Embassy into funding a two bedroom housing unit that would be adjacent to a community health post. They couldn't convince the government to set up the community health post, because the government didn't have a doctor to send there, because there was no housing for a doctor when he got there. So, the Ambassador talked to the investor on this self-help project of putting up this two bedroom house and then they went on and started discussions with the government to get a rural health post. And, once they got the rural health post they started trying to get the doctor. Eventually, it wound up that it worked. It all fit together, but it was not by any overall, up-front agreement, you know, that if I do this, you do that or the idea is to put a fully staffed health post here and we'll all work on our piece of it. It was local people working on one piece at a time and it worked.

One of the things when I was there that we were working on was to clear the (USAID ed) warehouse out. So, we were doing donations to private volunteer organizations, orphanages, and schools and clinics. One of the things that we found in the warehouse were 20 signs, which were these big metal signs about the size of this desk, which would be what, four by six, complete with the USAID clasped hands and the red, white and blue insignia saying, welcome Ronald Reagan, self -help project number 22 school. Or, self-help project 38 community center. They were ordered and supposed to have been put up all over the island before Reagan came down on his visit in '89, '88 and hadn't gotten there in time. So, they had them all in the warehouse. So, I said, look you guys, it's a shame they didn't get put up when Reagan came, but you spent the money and you can't just leave them sitting in the warehouse, the auditors will kill us. We have to show that we did something with them. So, Felix, our Health Advisor, you know, why don't you start going around and making arrangements and we'll put these up and if the communities wants to have a little ceremony we'll have the Ambassador cut a ribbon or something. And Felix who had worked for USAID, but he was then working for the Embassy, an extremely intelligent, talented young man looked at me like I was crazy. He said, no. I said, what do you mean, no, we have to put these up. Well, you wouldn't want to put them up. I said, why wouldn't I want to put them up? He said, well all those places that we put up that we were so proud of, they haven't been maintained, they need painting, they need shingles put back on or shutters put back on. And, you couldn't have the Ambassador go out and shake hands for this dilapidated project. You'd have to put some more money into it before you could take it, you know, before it's a good opportunity. I said, well think of something to do with these signs then. So, what he

decided to do with the signs, that since the self help program was ongoing we'd use the signs for new programs where we'd put in a community center, painted a school or something.

Q: Was welcoming Reagan on it?

JOHNSON: Do something with them. You couldn't hardly let them sit in the warehouse.
In the industrial park where we'd built the building and put it up and put in the water works, we were also trying to set up within the industrial site a child care center. We would also do baby wellness health activities. The problem with that was that everybody agreed to do it, but nobody could find appropriate funding, because you had the funds that were going into the warehouse that were suppose to be for structural components; you had the funds going in to the regional health projects which were suppose to provide commodities, but they couldn't pay for salaries. I got involved in negotiating with about three different people who were getting USAID funds for three different reasons. How all three of them could work together to come out with the child care center if everybody agreed was a good idea to do. It was probably as illegal as hell, if an auditor ever came down and said, where did you put this dollar, because we were meshing funds from all over the place.

We also had a big push on trying to do eco-tourism. St. Georges itself is a beautiful 17th century city built around a natural lagoon. It goes up the hill to see just an incredible vista and there's a huge fort on one of the points of the lagoon that had originally been built by the Spanish, conquered by the French, conquered by the British, conquered by the French. You know, it sort of changed hands two or three different times and was currently serving as the headquarters for the national police. We began another project to clean it up, reinforce the walls a couple of places, put in lighting, a electrical and lighting system where it could be used for tourism. That was fun. It was something that I don't think USAID would ever have done anywhere else. It was actually being funded in Grenada under a regional project, where I don't know that anybody else knew that we were even doing it until they came down there. But, it was visually an extraordinary attractive site.

Q: Nothing in agriculture?

JOHNSON: A agriculturalist named Oleen Hess who is probably one of the world's leading experts on cocoa was in Grenada working on a cocoa project as part of an agriculture outreach effort working with farmers on the kinds of pesticides that were best to use, and the things that he knew from working around the world in cocoa projects, a different world. Cocoa made a lot of sense for an island economy, because you didn't have refrigeration problems in terms of shipping and exporting it. We were also working with a company known as "Island of Spices", because they produced so much cinnamon, vanilla, nutmeg, everything. One of the things we brought down was McCormick's marketing expert. Got him to come down to the country and take a trip around seeing all the different spices that could be sold by McCormick and offer them easy relationships at a time when our existing relationships in Madagascar were rocking. So, McCormick was interested in developing other sources of supply, and they came down and reluctantly said they just couldn't do it because it was a too small scale operation, in terms of McCormick's bottling plant, grinding factory, etc. that Grenada just couldn't ship enough every single month. So, that one fell through.

But, then they had some Grenadians go to a spice, I don't know, for high tech you'd call it a tech fair. I don't know what you call it for food and spices. But, they basically had a booth at a food and spices thing where they wound up making marketing arrangements with a couple of very small gourmet, organic food types of restaurants and grocery stores. So, they were increasing their exports in agriculture and in cocoa. We were working on the actual health practices and harvesting mechanisms. On the other hand, we worked more on the terms of trying to set up private sector contacts and to provide the government of Grenada with what information we could about world prices, world marketing, what kind of environment did they face when they were trying to market their products. I thoroughly enjoyed it, because it was a solid year that I spent doing implementation. We weren't talking about new projects, you weren't talking about strategy, you weren't talking about where do we go from here. It was just making sure that what's there works well and somebody figures out where you go in the long run.

Q: They did work and were implemented.

JOHNSON: The projects worked. I think it was that Floyd Cooper just could not convince his State Department colleagues to hold the line.

Q: So you were the last USAID person?

JOHNSON: Last USAID person. I ended up closing out the USAID Office. We gave the telephone equipment systems switchboard to Lacenia Jordon up in Guyana and gave most of the office furniture to PVO's and other people around the island. I had the pleasure of working with one of the best, most knowledgeable and trained people I've ever worked with was the Executive Officer in Grenada. He had started life with USAID when he was 16, straight out of high school in Guyana. He worked his way up through the whole USAID hierarchical management system and became the GSO and Exec Officer. He closed down Guyana; he was in Jonestown. He was in charge of the evacuation of the bodies from the Jonestown crisis. He ends up closing down USAID Guyana when we pulled out of Guyana; opened up a Grenada office. In the midst of the Grenada assignment, he got pulled out to Panama to close down the Panama Office, because the Mission Director knew Carl Cullus and had full faith that Cullus could handle it, even though Cullus had no Spanish. From everything I heard he did a superb job. He got rid of all the furniture; closed down the office; found jobs for the employees. From Grenada he went over to Barbados and was the GSO over Barbados and then later I heard that he went back to Guyana when we opened up the USAID Office in Guyana. Anyway, he read more books. He knew every single rule and regulation on the administrative office side and what I could and couldn't do in terms of record keeping and all the rest of it for closing out the projects and closing the office down. The Grenadians were most unhappy. They saw closing the office as closing the USAID program. No matter how much PR, we did about the amount of money, would change their view.

Q: Did we keep going with our assistance?

JOHNSON: The entire RDO Caribbean budget was getting cut, so less and less aid was available, so there was less and less for Grenada. And then, RDO Caribbean got caught in Brian Atwood closing down a small programs. So, essentially they did see the writing on the wall.

Their point was that when the U.S. came in... the first time I was there, I got in a taxi from the airport and said something about the invasion. The taxi cab driver stopped, pulled off the road, turned around and gave me a lecture. It was not a U.S. invasion; it was a U.S. rescue mission and the troops came down to rescue the Grenadians. And, as a side light they helped out the medical students, but it was really like an antique what those marines came to save, because they had been under a 24 hour curfew for a week. The driver objected to me calling it an invasion. So, it sort of reflected everybody in the country and the government. We always saw the U.S. as having come down there to save them. And, as a corollary of that, they really thought that when the U.S. left that Grenada should be like Puerto Rico and that was their definition of success, to be like Puerto Rico. And, the USAID projects we worked on worked, but there wasn't a turn around. It was not a massive program, you know.

Q: You mean we were not prepared to take it on as a commonwealth country?

JOHNSON: Perpetual client. We weren't prepared to adopt it as part of the commonwealth. And, the Grenadians felt very much betrayed that we weren't sticking to the course, that we weren't staying with it. So, I closed down the USAID Office and left. They were not happy campers.

Q: When was that?

JOHNSON: It was in July of '90.

Q: Let's add your last comment about Grenada before we go on to the next.

JOHNSON: I'd never been any place where Americans were not more popular than Grenada. They really and truly appreciated the fact that Ronald Reagan had sent the troops down. They did not feel that it was an invasion. They felt that the troops came to save them and they went out of their way to express appreciation to any American, tourist, government official, or what have you. At the same time, they were bitterly disappointed, because they felt that by coming down there that America had more or less adopted the island and why didn't we turn it in to another Puerto Rico and that Puerto Rico was their symbol for success in the Caribbean.

Q: And all while you were there?

JOHNSON: Yeah, I was there then. I was there '88. So, it's been 10 years now.

Q: Have you been back?

JOHNSON: Never been back. I understand that American airlines no longer flies directly to Grenada, because there weren't enough people to warrant their trip.
Again I was on temporary assignment to Grenada while the State Department and USAID sorted out what they wanted to do about having a staff there. Eventually, they pulled all the staff out of Grenada and centralized it in the Regional Development Office. Essentially, the year that I was in Grenada, the State Department and the USAID went back and forth with policy papers as to whether you needed an independent USAID Office in the Grenada, or whether everything could be handled efficiently and effectively out of the Regional Office of Barbados.

They sent memos back and forth and they'd get up to Eagleburger and he'd send them back and say, work it out. Then, nobody could ever work it out. So, then finally after I'd been there a year, it was clear that they weren't going to be independent and so they phased out the USAID Office and I went back to Washington.

MARY A. WRIGHT
Political Officer
St. George's (1989-1991)

Mary A. Wright was born in Oklahoma in 1946. After receiving her bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas in 1968, she served in the US Army from 1968-1976. Her career has included positions in Managua, St. George's, Tashkent, Bishkek, Freetown, Palikir, Hawaii, Kabul, and Ulaanbaatar. Ms. Wright was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 2003.

Q: What brought about in '89 your movement over to Grenada?

WRIGHT: A very tragic incident had happened in Grenada. Our one political officer in the very small embassy in Grenada had been killed. He was sitting in the office of the commissioner of police office discussing allegations of corruption of an assistant commissioner of police. We felt the assistant commissioner had diverted some U.S. government funds that were to be used for police training. Our political officer was talking to the commissioner of police about this when the assistant commissioner came in and shot and killed the commissioner of police and our political officer. The embassy administrative officer was also in the room and was able to dive behind a desk and was not shot. Our political officer was killed and they needed someone in there pretty quickly. I had served in Grenada seven years before when I was in the military during the U.S. intervention in 1983. So I knew everybody in Grenada. I was just finishing my two-year assignment in Nicaragua, my first tour, so they asked if I would go over to Grenada quickly to help.

Q: So you were in Grenada from December '89 to when?

WRIGHT: Until July, 1991 when I went to the Naval War College.

Q: What was the situation on Grenada when you went back there?

WRIGHT: The intervention by the U.S. in '83 had allowed the people of Grenada to choose its own government and to be without the influences of some very difficult people who had been ruling the country under the New Jewel movement, a "revolutionary Marxist" group that had held power from '79. They had thrown out the long time Prime Minister, a strange character, Sir Eric Gary, who was known throughout the world for first address to the United Nations in which he talked about his strange visions of UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects). *[laughs]*

Gairy was a dictator who had he own gang of thugs that beat up and murdered those who disagreed with him, similar to the way Somoza in Nicaragua did. The New Jewel movement overthrew him and then started out just like the Sandinistas with education and the health reforms and doing more for the people than had been done in quite a while. But they, too, developed aggressive tactics toward their own people. A lot of people disappeared or were beaten up; some disappeared, some murdered. The New Jewel movement split into two elements. One group murdered thirteen of their former colleagues and triggered of chaos in Grenada. The U.S. intervened to protect the lives of 800 U.S. medical students that were attending an off-shore medical school in Grenada. After the intervention there was a six- or eight-month interim government followed by elections. Since 1984, there have been elections on a regular timetable and a turnover of power on a democratic model.

Q: Essentially you were going into, aside of the fact that you had to worry about disgruntled, corrupt people shooting political officers, this was a stable situation?

WRIGHT: Yes, Grenada was stable. You could see that there had been much political and economic progress. Economic progress was moving more slowly than political process as would happen in a small Caribbean country. Economic progress in a country of less than a hundred thousand people is difficult when the country must run all aspects of a nation, plus attracting a sufficient number of tourists to spend big bucks to generate the revenues that you need to run a country.

Q: In the first place, what do we have there? Do we have a regular embassy?

WRIGHT: Yes, we have an embassy, but no resident Ambassador. We have a Charge d'Affaires under the Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Q: But when you were there, who was the ambassador?

WRIGHT: When I was there, the embassy was not under our embassy in Barbados. We did not have an ambassador but a Chargé d'Affaires named Ford Cooper.

Q: So you must've got to know every voter on the island practically.

WRIGHT: I knew most everyone on the island from my military days there. My job in the military had been on an international law team that investigated claims against the U.S. forces for damages done to properties. So I met many Grenadians when they would come to us to tell us what damages their house had suffered or their banana trees had suffered from military operations. I became known as the person with the money so everybody in town knew me as Major Ann. Returning seven years later with the embassy certainly people remembered me well.

Q: From a practical point of view, outside of the fact that if you're a political officer you're reporting on the politics of the country, was there any particular issue or interest in what was happening there?

WRIGHT: One of the challenges left from 1983 was for the government of Grenada to determine

what should be done with the people who had murdered one half of the government seven years before. Those people were still in a little tiny prison in Grenada. The initial judicial process convicted most of them of murder and sentenced them to death by hanging. Seven years later the appellate process for the convicted was the focus of the Caribbean on whether or not the regional courts of appeal were going to uphold the decision of the lower court to keep these people in solitary confinement until a final ruling on whether they would be put to death. They were held in a typical Caribbean prison which isn't much to write home about. So one of my jobs as political officer was to go into the prison to make sure that we could report accurately on the conditions they were held under. There were groups in the region, particularly Jamaica and Cuba, who felt that they should not be in jail. They had supported that element of the New Jewel movement and were always expressing concern about the conditions in the prison. There was enough of a possibility of an attempt to break them out of the lightly-guarded prison that we were able to get Diplomatic Security's anti-terrorism program in the early '90s to do some training of prison guards to upgrade the security. That was the main focus on the political side.

Q: Cuba had been involved in building a landing strip. Was Cuba still messing around there or not much?

WRIGHT: No, the Cubans had been kicked out in 1983 and had not returned in 1989. But how times change. I was in Grenada in August, 2003 and the Cubans now have an embassy in Grenada and have a larger academic exchange program for Grenadians than does the United States. The Cuba government provides scholarships for Grenadians to study a variety of subjects in Cuba. The Cubans even provide medical scholarships for American citizens who can not afford U.S. medical schools to go to medical school in Cuba.

Q: Then you left there in 1990 to go to the Naval War College?

NADIA TONGOUR
Principal Officer/Chargé
St. George's (2001-2004)

Nadia Tongour was born in Turkey and raised in South Carolina. She was educated at William and Mary and Stanford 5Universities and taught at several colleges before joining the Foreign Service in 1980. Primarily a Political Officer, her Washington assignments were in the fields of Soviet and Soviet Bloc affairs as well as Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Her foreign assignments include Brazil, Barbados and St. George's Grenada, where she was Principal Officer. Ms. Tongour was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007

Q: Well then, what is it, about 2000 when you left this?

TONGOUR: I stayed until the summer of 2001. After that I had an assignment that I jokingly described as one that provided me with more titles than staff, which was to be the DCM/Principal Officer/ Chargé in Grenada, where I arrived in August of 2001, just three weeks

before 9/11. But to sum up the two Washington assignments we were discussing, they were both very interesting and informative, but I found that I really preferred working in what we term a regional bureau. These had been "functional" assignments in which I had many responsibilities, but no single country that you could call "yours" as was the case when I worked as a desk officer for Hungary or Georgia.

Q: Well, I think probably it would be a good idea to pick up the Grenada tour.

TONGOUR: Yes, which is a tiny country in the Eastern Caribbean.

Q: Oh yes, oh yes.

TONGOUR: Working in Grenada was a totally different situation, where we have had a mission ever since U.S. intervention there in 1983. Nineteen American soldiers died during our intervention there. As for Grenadians, even to this day, they refer to our military operation on the island as an invasion or a rescue mission, depending on their political persuasion. The term intervention is the most "neutral". In any case, in the immediate aftermath of the intervention -- this was the Reagan era after all -- there was a great deal of sentiment in favor of keeping an American presence in Grenada; in fact, initially, in the 1984-85 timeframe, we had quite a large Embassy there. Its worth pointing out that in recent years, throughout the Caribbean, we have cut back on the number of posts we have in the region. Right now most of the islands are covered out of Barbados, or with a few handled out of Trinidad to the south or Jamaica further north. In years gone by, we had posts in Martinique and Antigua as well as Grenada. Grenada is the only one of the smaller posts remaining. Yet, after the intervention, there was a large AID presence as well as military personnel on island. Over the years, the staff was steadily reduced. Today it is a miniscule post; nevertheless, it is called an embassy, which makes for an interesting situation. Technically, the post is an embassy because Grenada is an independent country; therefore, the mission can't be a consulate. However -- and this is why I had so many titles -- the Ambassador resided in Barbados, and served as Ambassador not only for Barbados and the countries directly covered by Embassy Bridgetown but also for Grenada. As long as she wasn't on island in Grenada, I served as Chargé, but when the Ambassador came to Grenada, I served as DCM. It tended to be confusing, especially since when I bid on the position, it was listed as a Principal Officer slot. In any case, I had a small staff and I had to deal with a number of "residuals" from the intervention period.

Q: We have got time; why do we not talk about it?

TONGOUR: We can certainly talk about the history, which was quite fascinating. Many countries in the Caribbean obtained their independence from Britain in the late 1960s or 1970s. Countries differed in terms of the specific year. Barbados was one of the early ones, becoming independent in 1966, I think; elsewhere, most of the smaller island nations gained their , independence a bit later, in the '70s. Unfortunately, most were totally ill prepared for independence at the outset. Very shortly afterward, in Grenada, as was the case in several other countries, a highly charismatic figure came to the fore and garnered a considerable amount of power. Initially, the first crop of independence leaders tended to come from the ranks of those who had either "fought" for independence early on or had been active in local labor movements.

They were genuinely quite popular and at first truly focused on local needs; however, over time, some wound up becoming despotic or corrupt. In the case of Grenada, this pattern was complicated by the prevalent or growing Cuban influence in the region. Plus, you have to recall that there was a whole generation of so-called "children of the 60s" who now in the 70s had gone on to study law or be in some ways influenced by leftist philosophers or leaders such as Castro and Che Guevara and wanted to change the power-mongering and corrupt systems they saw in their own country. As for Grenada, the early hero of the independence years, Sir Eric Gairy, over time increasingly began to fit this model. Then, too, he started acting a bit crazy and openly spoke of his belief in extraterrestrials.

Q: This was Bishop?

TONGOUR: No, not Bishop. This was Eric Gairy (who subsequently obtained the title "sir"), who preceded Maurice Bishop. He wound up becoming rather arbitrary and corrupt, as well as deemed crazy by some, which prompted a group of young, bright-eyed idealistic leftists to carry out a coup against him. The group that seized power consisted of a number of persons who became known as the "New Jewel Movement". The individual who was most widely regarded as the head of the movement was Maurice Bishop, himself a very colorful character, with substantial appeal to many Grenadians and a bit of a Che Guevara "look-alike". His main side kick was named Bernard Coard, who will play a key role in the events that triggered the U.S. intervention. Coard was not as charismatic as Bishop, and by all accounts a more traditional, hard-liner -- less flamboyant, less outwardly sympathetic, but possibly more intellectual, or at least more of an ideologue. Essentially from late 1978 or early 1979 until 1982-83, these two and their leftist/socialist cohorts were in charge. They did not call themselves communists at that point but they were definitely influenced by Cuba. It appears that many of them would have happily accepted assistance from the United States; some might even have welcomed being "adopted" by us -- or so they later said. But the USG implemented the same types of polices that have been, as we all know, ever so "successful" in Cuba, and completely turned its back on them, denounced the leaderships and made it clear we wanted nothing to do with this leftist regime. For its part, it was indeed moving further to the left and began to look more and more toward Cuba for assistance. The Cubans were more than willing to help out, especially with the building of a big, international airport, which was not something the USG viewed with equanimity. So to summarize, in the midst of increasingly economic problems and political isolation, the Grenada regime looked increasingly to Cuba for support and in the process grew increasingly radicalized. Over time internal conflicts arose, as well, between a faction led by Bernard Coard, and individuals still loyal to Maurice Bishop. Eventually, the situation basically came to a head or boiled over, with Bernard Coard and his confederates carrying out a second coup. Not only did they overthrow Maurice Bishop, but they killed him and a number of his supporters, resulting in fighting in the streets and considerable concern abroad, particularly in the U.S. regarding civil unrest and its potential impact on American citizens, particularly medical students at St. George's University. The conflict was not quite a civil war, but the threat of it -- coupled with the perceived danger to our citizens and the fear of Cuban/Soviet involvement -- triggered our intervention on October 19, 1983, which lasted roughly a week. Not this is just a summary version of events. There were many keystone cops aspects to the intervention, which occurred without a great deal of information regarding the actual lay of the land on the island, a shortage of useful maps and disastrous communications systems. Moreover, as I previously mentioned, 19

American troops died in the process. However, by October 25, Bernard Coard and his cohorts were rounded up, and calm was gradually restored. Thereafter, the United States was in charge for the next six months to a year, and tried to restore order to the country. AID came onto the scene with sizeable staffs from Barbados to provide assistance; plus we had a fairly large mission on the ground. Coard and company were tried and imprisoned -- many for life -- and most are still incarcerated. But there was a considerable division in Grenadian society between those who viewed the American involvement as a rescue mission and those who described it as an invasion. The more balanced or middle of the road types used the term that we ourselves use, namely intervention. As I previously mentioned, Maurice Bishop and his associates were initially quite popular and remained so for a number of years, but as they grew more radical in their positions, they themselves became increasingly arbitrary, even "despotic", imprisoning all sorts of enemies, real and perceived. I know a gentleman who has a successful tour business today who spent three years in jail for no particular reason apart from the fact that he was deemed a supporter of Sir Eric Gairy, whom the New Jewel Movement had overthrown. The problem for a small island like this one is that everyone not only knows everyone else but knows who did what to whom. People who pulled triggers and killed others, and many families were split. Much later, a truth and reconciliation commission was established, which we might talk about later, but the fact remains that in a small society with scarcely more than 100,000 people, everyone is either related or aware of one another, and a great deal of residual resentment from that period remains. Every year Grenadians celebrate October 25 as a national holiday of Thanksgiving, but it's a very specific sort of Thanksgiving, name for the American intervention. While I was there, we had a presidential delegation (not the President but his representatives, including a key military leader of the intervention) to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the event.

Q: Well, you were there from when to when?

TONGOUR: I arrived in August of 2001, three weeks before 9/11, and left in the summer of 2004.

Q: By this time had Grenada pretty well disappeared off our list of interests in the Caribbean?

TONGOUR: Well, it seemed that each year, at least while I was in Grenada, there was a serious discussion in Washington about whether or not to close the post. And every year those wishing to keep it open were able to beat back elements advocating closure. There were several valid arguments on both sides but the prevailing view centered on paying homage to President Reagan and the nineteen Americans who died during the intervention. A second factor was the large expat contingent on island, as well as the students and staff of St George's University, which certainly deserve to be mentioned.

Q: The medical school.

TONGOUR: It was an offshore American medical school, which at that time had no more than at most a couple hundred students. However, when the conflict among the various factions escalated and when it was clear that there were Cubans on the ground, there was great concern about the safety of the American students. Today St. George's is not simply a medical school, but an actual university with 5-6,000 students in a variety of disciplines, including a major veterinary

program and various other divisions in addition to the large medical school. Obviously, there is now a substantial community of American faculty and students who are voters -- or in the latter case, their parents are -- and they are very interested in what's happening on the island, as well as in retaining some official American presence there. There is also a large expat, mainly retirees who have been known to contact their congressmen to ensure that the island keeps its embassy. Given the fact that the post was technically an Embassy, I tried something innovative in terms of the resumption of visa services. Until then, and subsequently, residents of the Eastern Caribbean had to travel to Barbados or Trinidad to apply for a visa to the U.S., which could be quite costly for the locals. So we came up with a way to try to do visas in Grenada, using roving consular officers from Barbados, which was very popular while it lasted.

Another noteworthy factor in our dealings with Grenada was that the Grenadian government was comprised of many individuals who had spent a substantial portion of their lives in the United States. The Prime Minister himself had been an American citizen. According to Grenadian law, a government official cannot have dual citizenship. As a result, he (as well as several others) had to renounce his American citizenship. Similarly, the Foreign Minister had attended college and law school in New York; had married a South Carolinian who still works in their law practice in New York. Those are just two examples, but as I said, there were others. So, there were definitely many links. Also, and it's probably worth noting, that at the UN General Assembly, Grenada's one vote has the same weight as that of China, and every once in a while we do recall that our Embassy in Barbados covers seven island nations, which together with other states in the region can constitute a considerable voting bloc in international organizations.

Q: How did you find, did you have one or more than one ambassador?

TONGOUR: I had two ambassadors.

Q: How were they?

TONGOUR: Barbados always had political appointees.

Q: I would assume so.

TONGOUR: And some are better than others. The second ambassador , a woman from Iowa, who had been a key figure in that state's Republican Party, was actually quite good. I think she may have been the Party Chair for her state and had been an active supporter and fund raiser for George W. Bush, playing a significant role in winning Iowa for him in 2000. She was a no-nonsense person who really understood local politics. By her own admission, he originally knew next to nothing about international relations or the Caribbean region to which she was assigned. In fact, when she was informed that she would be ambassador to Barbados, she told me she bought a book to figure out exactly where she would be going. But, as I said, she did know how local politics worked; therefore, she was very good at grasping what politicians in various islands she covered were concerned about. In short, she was effect. She was honest and did not pretend to know more than she did; local leaders responded well to her.

The first one was a more complicated case. He was a successful businessman from North

Carolina. He also had had no international experience, but in his case he, outwardly at least, looked the part of an ambassador. However, he got into some trouble socially while in Barbados, and let us say seemed to have a penchant for seamier sides of life on the island. Apparently, he was discovered in some less than appropriate situations for an ambassador and was asked to return home. I don't really know the details, but I think I've said enough.

Q: You put it very diplomatically.

Q: Was Cuba at all an influence while you were there?

TONGOUR: Absolutely but not in the way we tend to think. The Cubans, like many others were very savvy about stretching limited resources so as to maximize their impact. And what is it that Cubans do well? As a generalization, they do medicine. They have ample doctors and education programs for doctors. Their programs may not be top of the line, not comparable to the Mayo Clinic, for example. Yet they do have medical schools which welcome Caribbean students, as well as a number of other academic programs for students who might not be able to afford studying in the U.S. or elsewhere. Apart from training, Cuba also provided medical "resources". When Grenada desperately needed a new hospital and we could provide next to nothing, they turned to the Cubans. And what did the Cubans do? The Cubans did not have money to offer but could provide labor. While I was there, large numbers of Cuban laborers came to the island to help construct a new hospital, and arguably winning a few "hearts and minds" in the process.

Q: How come we have got a big medical school there and no hospital?

TONGOUR: No connection. That's not completely accurate because there are connections between the medical school and the government, but the medical school itself is an interesting phenomenon -- in that it does not train students in a hospital setting on the island. The program at St. George's is technically a five-year medical program with the first two years spent on island and the remainder spent elsewhere generally back in the U.S. or England, or possibly some other country in a training hospital. They follow this up with their residencies wherever, just like any other medical school program. However, they pay St. George's for the full program even though in a sense they get farmed out to hospital schools in Boston or wherever. While in Grenada, the students take their basic anatomy, biology and other classroom courses. For whatever the reason, they never worked it out with the government to establish a separate hospital for the university -- perhaps cost was a factor but I'm not sure. Nevertheless, some of those who do the training, the professors, are themselves doctors, and they sometimes provide medical assistance to residents of the island. . The island itself has some decent doctors; it's just that the facilities were long lacking. When I first arrived, the general hospital was horrific. I remember thinking when I first saw it, please don't let anything happen to me or my son while I'm here. By the time I left, thanks largely to the Cuban contribution, Grenada had a brand new, quite beautiful hospital. It might not have had the latest, state-of-the-art equipment, but as a facility it was complete.

Today is the 24th of March, 2008. Nadia, alright, you are just back from a trip to Grenada so the island is fresh in your mind.

TONGOUR: …Looking back on my early days on island, many Grenadians seemed somewhat

wary of us or retained negative, albeit mutedly so, attitudes towards the U.S. even 20 years after the intervention. Those who had been very pro-U.S. tended to be rather less enthusiastic than before because they felt the U.S. had not done as much as it might have or what they hoped for. To put it differently, one could almost imagine them making a plaintive cry to the effect of "Daddy, why have you left us". After all, given the large contingent (by local standards) of U.S. troops, Embassy personnel and AID staff, there was clearly an expectation that the U.S. would provide substantial economic assistance -- a bit of manna from heaven. Unfortunately, as we all know, there were competing demands. It was the bad luck of the Grenadians that the fighting in Lebanon broke out at the same time, and the focus of attention quickly shifted. That has happened repeatedly over time and seemed normal from our perspective. However, from a more insular viewpoint -- and islanders could be considered somewhat parochial in their orientation -- the world stopped there, so why did the aid "dry up"? Not surprisingly, many felt let down by the dwindling support over time. In fact, while in the ensuing period, Washington grappled with whether even to keep this small post open, Grenadians were baffled by the continual drawdown in the size and functions of the embassy until what was left was a tiny post with very little by way of assistance. So, there was some disillusionment, a sense of somehow being let down.

In any event, when I arrived in Grenada in 2001, people were certainly polite enough, but there was not initially any particular warmth or even contact from government officials. In contrast, the expat community was very welcoming; yet weeks went by before anyone in the government deigned to meet me. In part, this was undoubtedly due to my August arrival, when many officials were on vacation. After 9/11, there seemed to be a complete reversal in attitudes. Obviously this occurred throughout the world, but in a small society such as Grenada the outpouring of sympathy was quite visible. People actually put flowers in the openings of the chain link fence that surrounded the Embassy building. There were spontaneous church services, including one in the local cathedral to honor the dead and show respect for the United States -- overall, an incredible show of support on the part of Grenadian and expat society. For a brief honeymoon period Grenadians seemed to forget whatever negative feelings they had had from the intervention era. Gradually, the overwhelmingly positive feelings subsided, but that, too, was common throughout the world; we seem to have squandered considerable goodwill in the years that followed. By the way, there were also two Grenadians who died in the World Trade Center bombing. They may have also been U.S. citizens, but Grenadians regarded them as their own.

Q: So, I mean, there was a personal sort of-

TONGOUR: They felt it. And I guess another factor worth emphasizing is that while arguably on a small island such as this an embassy makes little sense, there is another side to this story, namely the existence of so many islanders -- often newly minted American citizens -- residing in our own country. It so happens that there are more Grenadian expats living in Brooklyn or London or Toronto than there are in Grenada itself. Everyone has a cousin, brother, parents, whatever living in New York, and most are dual nationals. Others are constantly in and out of the country, and it is sometimes a tricky issue if you think of it in terms of immigration or visas. Many people reside in the States as part-time residents, much as many Americans spend their winters in Florida and return to New York or wherever for the remainder of the year. On the islands, there are the "now birds", who generally build themselves a home on the islands for the winter or retirement and spend the warmer months "back home". In the West Indies, there is a

broader phenomenon -- not limited to Grenada -- wherein earlier immigrants to England often return to their island of origin as they reach retirement age and build themselves grand houses, much larger than anything they could have afforded had they stayed home in the first place. They often return with "foreign" accents, sounding more British than West Indian. And the locals have a term for them: JCBs, which means "just come back". Unfortunately, some of these JCBs also return with a certain "attitude" about the proper way things should be done and tend to offer all sorts of helpful advice to those who stayed behind. This does not always go down well with the locals. This pattern is less true for those who went to the U.S. Although some do return, or at least buy property with that intention, a larger proportion simply come back to visit. Where this all leads in that out of any government cabinet of say 12 to 15 people, more than half at some point have had dual nationality. However, according to Grenadian law, Grenadian officials could not retain their "other" nationality and serve as a high level elected offical. By law, they were expected to renounce their former citizenship but sometimes they neglected to do so.

Q: You know, when I came into the Foreign Service in 1955 my first post was Frankfurt, Germany, and I had a _____ of vice consulates and doing American services of German Americans who had left Germany not so much when Hitler came in but before when the inflation started and all, went back to the States in 1948 and there was a currency reform in Germany where it started to perk up again and they came back and then they were saying, you know, I went to my village and they did not listen to my advice, you know.

TONGOUR: Exactly that, yes.

Q: I mean, really, you cannot go home again; America does things to people anyway, they make them feel- and Britain too, I am sure, make them feel quite confident that they can tell the people who are probably leading a different lifestyle at a different pace how to go.

TONGOUR: Early in my tenure there, the "scandal" broke out that the Prime Minister still retained his American citizenship. The issue had, in fact, been festering for some time and he had actually submitted his paperwork for renunciation some time earlier but it fell to me to accept formally this renunciation. Interestingly, inasmuch as he was the PM, he wanted me to call on his office to take care of the paperwork. I explained that while I would always be happy to call on him, and, I implied, be appropriately deferential, when it came to submitting a renunciation, it would be more appropriately handled at the Embassy. He agreed.

Q: So you could not do it anyway.

TONGOUR: Could not do what?

Q: Take his thing. You were not a consular officer.

TONGOUR: I was indeed. I had a consular commission.

Q: Did you?

TONGOUR: Oh yes, but this had all been previously worked out in Washington. In this instance,

I was basically the "transfer person" -- transmitting already agreed upon documents. .

Q: Well, you were there as chief of mission, were you not?

TONGOUR: Yes, and I actually had three titles. Technically I was Chargé, DCM, and Principal Officer. In addition, I signed all the adoption forms, Consular Reports of Birth, etc. So yes, I legitimately functioned as a consular officer.

Q: Because you know, there is this divide, somebody who is an ambassador cannot sign a visa or do consular work or any kind.

TONGOUR: True, but I was not technically an ambassador. However, the logic of that rule escapes me. You can be a DCM in a proper Embassy as well as a Chargé, but how can one be a Principal Officer in a separate country at a post designated an Embassy. Usually Principal Officers are at Consulates. And again, why is that an Ambassador cannot do consular work. I'm sure there are specific rules but it remains a bit esoteric to me. On a practical level, what made the situation a bit complicated for all involved was the fact that Grenadians most of the time were either oblivious to the fact -- or didn't really care -- that an ambassador residing in Barbados was really "their" ambassador. They basically regarded the person in charge of the post in Grenada as the ambassador;, and even though I never pretended to have that position, many people insisted on calling me "Madam Ambassador" or referring to me as "our ambassador". Clearly, our Embassy in Bridgetown was well aware of this attitude and did not care for it. In fact, Embassy Bridgetown advocated closing the post in Grenada. So this was a point of friction between the two posts.

Q: Well, I cannot remember exactly what we have talked about so correct me if we get off on a track that has already been covered; did we talk about- I assume our military presence, there was no need for any military presence.

TONGOUR: No, not during my time there. However, military attachés or staff assigned to Bridgetown or even Caracas would occasionally come through. But we did have a wonderful, temporary military presence in the form of so-called New Horizons projects, which were very popular on the island. Have you heard about New Horizons? or perhaps Trade Winds, another military exercise in the region?

Q: No.

TONGOUR: The Southern Military Command (SOUTHCOM) based in Miami would periodically stage training exercises throughout the region. I imagine other regional commands likewise had such programs, but I can only speak for the exercises carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean. In any given year, SOUTHCOM would schedule a certain number of such projects in the region, and these projects or training exercises would include an engineering and medical training component. So, after considerable planning and preparation in conjunction with the host government, our troops would come to a particular country and build a school or an old age home or whatever structure might be needed. Essentially, a government could request a specific construction project but it had to meet certain criteria, notably that the structure could be

completed within a fixed and relatively short period of time. The construction project would last for approximately five or six weeks. In addition to the engineers, medical teams would go out into the countryside to work in rural clinics, examining patients or providing services that were often not available or scarce locally. You could not win more hearts and minds -- these exercises were truly popular. While I was in Grenada, a New Horizons team built two schools and an old age home. One of these schools they built from scratch; the second involved adding to an existing structure. Plus they built a 20-person facility for the elderly. And, of course, they had teams of doctors going out to rural parishes to treat residents who did not see doctors on a regular basis. So it was wonderful.

Q: You were there from when to when now?

TONGOUR: August of 2001 to August of 2004. And Hurricane Ivan hit a month later.

Q: What did the hurricane do and what was the response?

TONGOUR: It came after I had left but I went back to visit a year later.

Q: Oh yes.

TONGOUR: The timing of my departure may have been fortunate for me but difficult for my successor. By the time I left, I had been there three years and basically knew a lot of people on the island, whereas my successor had only been at post for a few weeks went Ivan struck. It was undoubtedly a nightmare for her, both personally and professionally inasmuch as she had an elderly mother living with her, whom she did not want to leave in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane. Apparently, she stayed cooped up in the residence for a few days rather than venturing out, which resulted in some negative reactions regarding her handling of the situation. As it was, she had a number of distraught American citizens and countless Embassy issues to deal with, and it was all too much. She did not stay more than a few months.

In the aftermath of Ivan, USAID provided substantial assistance, I think, on the order of $30 million. How much of that translated into visible results was unclear, which is often the case with AID projects because much of the funds go to contractors or to programs that are not readily visible to the public. By contrast, the Venezuelans or the Cubans or even the Chinese come in and engage in highly concrete and visible projects. The PRC, for example, ascertained that the most important project from the standpoint of the Grenadian Prime Minister was to rebuild the sports stadium, so that Grenada could take part in the international cricket competition. To clarify this point, the cricket work cup was scheduled for 2006 and was to be held in various venues throughout the Caribbean. Grenada had been expected to host a few of the matches; however, hurricane Ivan had completely demolished the stadium. In fact, the original stadium would have had to be upgraded in any case even without the onslaught of Ivan. Just prior to Ivan, the Prime Minister had been weighing his options regarding continued recognition of Taiwan or the possibility of switching Grenada's allegiance tot eh PRC. Heretofore, Grenada had been one of the 16 or so countries that still recognized Taiwan, and the government of Taiwan had always been quite generous in its support. However, the "other" China eventually made some very appealing overtures to the Grenada government. I don't wish to sound cynical but dollar

diplomacy was very much at work here, and the PRC's terms were more lucrative. Indeed, shortly after Ivan, the Chinese sent scores of workers and materiel to Grenada and in short order built a brand new stadium. Moreover, a sizeable labor force was left behind which now does contracts for all sorts of labor intensive projects, and to some extent competes with other local construction firms.
Likewise, several other countries also provided tangible assistance. The Venezuelans, in particular, built a large number of low-cost housing units. That was one of their contributions. But we did considerable good as well. .

Q: I am not sure of my timing but was any sort of Venezuelan Chavez phenomenon going on when you were there?

TONGOUR: Absolutely.

Q; How did this translate to where you were?

TONGOUR: The Venezuelan presence took two main forms. First of all, and this is a regional phenomenon, the Venezuelans have traditionally operated very successful cultural and language institutes that offer free classes in Spanish to local participants. I have seen such Venezuelan Cultural Institutes on a number of different islands in the Caribbean, and they are all very popular. I myself brushed up on my Spanish there, as did many people I knew. This was not officially part of the Venezuelan Embassy and functioned largely as an independent entity. What was fascinating to me about both the Institute and the Embassy was the anti-Chavez attitudes several individuals more or less openly displayed. Their Embassy was quite small, consisting of only a handful of people, two of whom were openly disdainful of Chavez and one never lost an opportunity to criticize him as a leader. How she managed to do her job for as long as she did was rather remarkable. Still, she did come from an upper class family and was quite well connected. Nevertheless, it was unusual to hear a diplomat describe the head of her government as a monster or a nincompoop. Another officer, albeit more discreet, was also quite negative. Likewise, the Ambassador, another woman, was careful in terms of what she said, but did not seem to be a big fan of Mr. Chavez. However, what you are really asking concerns the economic or political impact of Venezuela on the region. And this manifested itself in cheap oil. Chavez instituted a program called PetroCaribe, which aimed at creating an oil monopoly in the region. He did not succeed as evidenced by the continuing existence of Texaco and other oil companies still active in the area. Still, the idea was to provide relatively inexpensive gas to the island nations -- obviously in return for their support and allegiance. To a certain extent, the approach worked. Compared to other countries, gas prices in this region were not astronomical; while gas was not cheap, it was manageable, which was definitely a Venezuelan "contribution".

Other forms of Venezuelan support were mainly symbolic. For example, Grenada's National Day is February 7, and every year the Venezuelans would send in a big a ship loaded with marching bands and acrobats, including people who jumped out of helicopters, which created quite an impression. We, on the other hand, did very little to commemorate their holiday. Frankly, it would have been much appreciated had we routed some vessel sailing around in the Caribbean to Grenada basically to "show the flag". It had been known to happen in years past, but while I was there the most we did was to have our Ambassador or Defense Attaché come over from

Barbados to attend the National Day parade. I say this only to make the point that on a small island with only half a dozen embassies, whatever one does in such instances is always noted and known to all.

Q: How stood Grenada and the UN voting context?

TONGOUR: Better than some, but in most cases Caribbean states would vote as a block. In many instances, particularly on matters that were of importance to us, they would insist on CARICOM (Caribbean Community) unity and vote more or less as one; thus, we would not be in a position to divide them. Periodically, there would be some major event or crucial issue that would prompt lead to the representatives of the various island nations getting together in Bridgetown to meet with some visiting Washington dignitary or other. Overall these states tended to be fairly pro-American in terms of the way they voted. In other words, for the most part, they voted in ways that were favorable to our views or positions, but when they did not, they would oppose us as part of the CARICOM block.

Q: How did the Iraq war play there?

TONGOUR: Badly. But they were very shrewd in that regard. Deafening silence is one way to put it. They were studiously polite in many instances; when they did not want to deal with an issue and simply chose not to discuss it. And Iraq was a case in point. However, I'm not exactly sure where things stand now in the islands on the question of the Iraq war. While I was there both the government and the opposition in a somewhat odd way "used" the Iraq war to score political points at home. As it turns out, there were a few Iraqi families that had somehow managed to come to Grenada. As was the case in many countries of the region, Grenada had an economic citizenship program. Are you familiar with that term?

Q: No.

TONGOUR: Essentially you buy your citizenship. But the term is a bit more gentile. One makes a commitment to invest a certain amount in the country and acquires status as an investor. By providing a substantial contribution, one in turn receives a passport.

Q: Even if you were not really a resident?

TONGOUR: For the most part these economic citizens were rich enough to have various residences, and some of them were not very savory characters. A few also bought diplomatic titles as well. At that time, there were a number of offshore banks, and again, not all were of the highest caliber. The situation improved -- cleaned up -- considerably while I was in Grenada. Meanwhile, the Iraqis I referred to had managed to get economic citizenship in Grenada sometime before, which provided the opposition politicians with a useful weapon to use against the government. Specifically, the opposition publicized the fact that these Iraqis had traveled to Barbados in hopes of obtaining U.S. visas and apparently had not succeeded in their quest. The opposition in turn blasted the government for having allowed "terrorists" into the country and providing them with refuge. The problem with this scenarios was that this particular group of Iraqis happened to be Christians and extremely pro-American, at least initially. We discovered

this because shortly after the onset of our engagement in Iraq, an Embassy guard informed me that there were some Iraqis outside who wished to see the American Chargé. While I was not really thinking about terrorism, I did wonder if they were asylum seekers. I recall thinking that if I let them into the building I might be faced with a problem if they did not want to leave. After all the embassy was technically American territory. To play it safe, I went outside to talk with them. On meeting, they simply said they wanted to thank us, specifically mentioning President Bush, and were effusive in their praise --- certainly more so than anything I had heard in a long time vis-a-vis our actions. They also asked me for an American flag. I replied that I would try to obtain one for them. I checked with Bridgetown, and everyone was so excited that these Iraqis had asked for an American flag that I was authorized to give them one.

Q: Well, I was wondering, did the issue of Puerto Rican independence; was that something that came up at all?

TONGOUR: No. As far as the Eastern Caribbean islanders were concerned, Puerto Rico was basically a transit point, an airport, which they wished they could avoid transiting. There really was an extremely limited interest in issues affecting more distant areas -- not counting the U.S. or the United Kingdom.

If you look at a map, Puerto Rico is a very long way away and the biggest concern was how many hours one would have to spend in the San Juan airport in order to get to the U.S. However, your mentioning independence reminds me that this very concept which we value so highly was not initially something many islanders were terribly keen on. Of course, the sentiments varied from place to place, but for many, it seemed as though the Brits just kicked them out of the nest, and it came as quite a shock. Many West Indians were well aware that they were really not prepared for independence when they obtained it. Even later, many would joke that it would be nice if we or some other nation could adopt them -- make Grenada or some other island a 51st state. That was a not uncommon theme.

Q: Well, this is, of course, true of some of the Stans, you know, part of the Soviet Union. I know Kyrgyzstan really had profited by being in the Soviet Empire.

TONGOUR: That is right. One of the more interesting or complicating aspects of my assignment had to do with the Cuban mission on the island. As I mentioned, we had a very small diplomatic community, and the Cuban Ambassador and I were always invited to the same events. Moreover, the Cuban residence was just down the street from my own residence -- less than a quarter of a mile. So it was difficult to avoid him and his wife. Moreover, they had spent a number of years in New York at the UN and enjoyed talking to anyone about his experiences there. Had he not been the Cuban Ambassador, I'm sure I would have enjoyed getting to know him and his wife. But that was not to be the case, although it's virtually impossible to sit in stony silence at a dinner table when you are all thrown together. In any event, he enjoyed talking about going to the New York Yankees baseball games and things of that sort -- a genial type, much liked by the Grenadian authorities. Once again, those Grenadians that had been pro-Cuban earlier continued to remain sympathetic and the government as a whole managed to essentially, I would not use the word milk, that is too strong, but derived whatever benefit they could from whatever source they could. So, as I told you last time, the hospital, building construction project and so on.

Q: Did Jamaica, it is sort of the big boy on the block and did it have a certain amount of resentment or did it have any influence there?

TONGOUR: Yes and no. To understand the region, one needs to think of a triangle in which Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica make up the points -- albeit an oddly shaped triangle -- with a number of other island nations wedged in between. Jamaica was just far enough away as to have a positive influence, and many Grenadians did go to the university there, if they didn't wind up studying in England or the U.S. Since it was fairly distant, Jamaica did not have the negative connotations that were associated with Barbados or to a lesser degree Trinidad. In truth, it is hard to dislike the "Trinis", as they are generally perceived as pleasant and fun loving. Barbados is somewhat of a different story. People here always assume that other countries in the region would like to emulate or draw closer to Barbados, but for many Barbados represented the big kid on the block for whom they had a certain distaste or resentment, which might have benefited Jamaica and Trinidad in terms of regional ties. Some believed the "Bajans" (local term for Barbadians) were convinced of their own superiority or had their noses in the air. I remember hearing them described as the Swiss of the Caribbean, not a concept exactly synonymous with fun.

Q: How did the ex pat community, did it have much, was there much work for you or not?

TONGOUR: It is a large community for the size of the island largely because of the medical school and university, which has now grown to several thousand students -- from the roughly 100 or less at the time of the intervention. It's a beautiful campus, absolutely gorgeous -- in fact one of the loveliest I've seen. How many college campuses are perched over the Caribbean, and filled with pastel colored stucco buildings. As I already mentioned, the university had virtually exploded in size, with programs in many fields, including the liberal arts. As a result, there was a doubling or even tripling in the size of the expat population. In addition to the students, there were administrators and faculty who receive substantial salaries, who like to purchase imported items. Food-wise, you can buy practically anything in Grenada, including items not to be found in Barbados or other larger islands. If you wanted smoked salmon or exotic cheese or interesting wines, they were all there, giving the island a certain touch of sophistication not found among some of its neighbors. Then too, the largely American student body wanted pizza and other goodies, which were available as well. On top of the university crowd, there was yet another expat contingent comprised overwhelmingly of retirees. They had certain needs, such as social security checks which were sent to the Post. There were also deaths, births and other welfare and whereabouts issues, usually involving tourists who would occasionally get robbed or have some other problem, and all of these cases took a fair amount of time. That said, the expat community was a congenial group that contributed substantially to my pleasant life in Grenada. .

Q: Did you find you were in a position or it was necessary to form sort of associations or something, American associations, you know, something both that you could reach out to them and to make them feel happy there and that you were a presence and all that sort of thing.

TONGOUR: Absolutely. First of all, the Embassy itself had what was known as a "warden system'", whereby we could communicate information to the broader American community, and

the wardens would meet with me periodically. In previous years, when the embassy had been larger, there had actually been an American school -- technically an international school -- which eventually folded. This was unfortunate for me since my son attended school in Grenada.

Q: How old was your child?

TONGOUR: He was in the fourth to the sixth grades while we lived in Grenada, and that made for an interesting situation. Although he went to a private school where children of foreigners living on the island mostly attended, it was technically a West Indian or Caribbean school, named Westmorland My son was actually one of the few foreigners in his class and he wound up taking, among other things, courses in West Indian agriculture, cricket (for p.e.) and so on. Moreover, inasmuch as he was there in the sixth grade, he also wound up taking something known as the "eleven plus" exam -- otherwise known as the common entrance ex. It was an interesting process, in that while literacy rates were quite high throughout the English-speaking Caribbean, the number of high school slots were somewhat limited and at a premium. For example, the island might have 4,000 students in the sixth grade taking an exam for admission to approximately 1,000 high school spots in the country. What that meant, of course, was that the remaining 3,000 or so would not be going on to secondary school, at least not at that time. There were, in fact, provisions to re-take the text and some other options, but in general the system was rather restrictive.

Q: Were these British run exams?

TONGOUR: They were similar to the British system of exams but were more Caribbean in content and approach.

Q: This is not a Grenadian?

TONGOUR: No, these are regional exams, offered throughout the Caribbean "Commonwealth" at the same time each year. The reason I stress this distinction is that the exam included questions that probably would not be on the British version, questions having to do with agriculture or West Indian cricket stars, etc. I should mention that it was considered prestigious to place within the top 100 candidates; as it turns out my son placed 64th in the island. To elaborate, making it into the top 100 wins you considerable praise, making it into the top 1,000 earns you a mention in the local newspapers where the top 1,000 individuals are listed in rank order, with the name of the high school they plan to attend. There was a lot of hoopla associated with the publication of the list. Much to my surprise, my son was ranked "the top boy" in his school based on his exam score. I mention my surprise because his grades were normally not that high and there were a number of girls ahead of him in the pack. One of his girl classmates was 8th in the island and , of course, "top girl" in his school. It so happens that her parents were friends of mine, and the father called to congratulate me on my son's performance. I remember saying I should have been the one calling them, to which he replied "Oh, but you are not West Indian". In other words, the locals were surprised that a foreigner had done as well as he had. I, in turn, commented that I was unaware mathematics was geographically linked. "Yes," he said, "but not every American knows the local cricket players". In sum, the vast majority of students did not go on to secondary school but attended what was called a school-leaving program up to the age of 14. And of course, they

could take the common entrance exam a second time, and many did.

Q: Well, was there any push to get more into the upper ranks or was this-

TONGOUR: To create a larger more American style school system? Certainly but money was a major problem. And one other sad aspect of schooling throughout these islands was the fact that while the public schools, especially on the lower levels were for the most part adequate, the students or their families had to pay for their uniforms and books, which often were quite expensive. Invariably, you would run across situations where a woman would work as a domestic for the express purpose of earning money to pay the school fees and books for nieces, nephews or cousins. Families would pull together to obtain the wherewithal for their kids to go to school.

Q: Did you notice, was there a color system?

TONGOUR: Certainly there was an informal one. In one of the neighboring countries, there was a joke to the effect that there were at least 20 different names for color shades among the populace of the islands. By comparison, Grenada was a fairly "dark" island, with an old whitish upper crust. I visited the home of a couple who were descended from the local aristocracy, if you will, who were basically a shade of tan year round. They lived in a mansion that resembled a 19th century castle . According to local lore, at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century a West Indian ha gone to England and brought home a bride. He had considerable money and built her what he thought she was used to, namely a type of gothic castle. Well, whether it was the man or the castle, we don't know, but what was certain was that she ran off after only a year. The castle remained but changed hands a number of times over the years. The current occupants have a whole wall of photos of various ancestors. It resembles a model UN, with every imaginable shade. Interestingly enough, , while the owner did not mind the fact that he had all sorts of black ancestors, he did not want to be mistaken for an East Indian (from India). Yet, clearly some of his ancestors also came from that part of the world, based on facial characteristics. Yet, he somehow saw that as a stigma.

Q: One always thinks of, often or not-

TONGOUR: Of race? It's in the background.

Q: But the whole Indian community, was there much of an Indian community on Grenada?

TONGOUR: Some but not especially and for the most part its members had become quite successful. Many of the East Indians in Grenada had more recently migrated from Trinidad, where their ancestors had come as poor indentured servants. Over time, they or at least their children prospered, notwithstanding their humble roots.

Q: Okay, you were talking about- well, before we get to other aspects, I was wondering, we were talking about sort of social life. In some islands, I think maybe Jamaica, members of the ruling classes would actually bring their second or third wife to social functions. Did you find this to be true in Grenada?

TONGOUR: Not really. This type of behavior may have been more prevalent in larger islands. Even in Barbados, there was a culture of the so-called "outside woman" in contrast to the "inside woman" (the legal wife) and the Bajans were more daring in bringing outside women to certain events. But in a small society like Grenada people would always know who the "other woman" might be. The good or the bad aspect of being in so small an island was definitely the gold fish bowl quality, or the lack of a real private life. One more or less had to behave or else not care what others thought because most dalliances were quickly discovered. Arguably, this may have served as an enforcer of good behavior. Still, like everywhere, there were "few saints" and a share of "sinners", and it was well known which government official or local leader was having an affair and with whom. And so it goes.

Q: Well, let us talk about some of the aspects of the political life up there.

TONGOUR: When I arrived the word on the street was election would occur shortly, and they did occur about a year or so later; more recently, another round of elections were held this year (2008), and the opposition party took over the government. In terms of which parties were in existence then, it's probably worth mentioning that the "oldest" party, or the one that had been ousted by the New Jewel Movement and its more radical followers -- whose activities eventually triggered our intervention -- was the party headed by the late Sir Eric Gairy. As I mentioned earlier, he had initially been perceived as an early national leader and a key figure in events leading to Grenadian independence. However, over the years, he came to be regarded as somewhat eccentric, if not crazy, due to his claims of seeing flying saucers and so on. He had formed a political party called the Grenada United Labor Party , the GULP, which for many years had been the leading vote-getter in the country. More recently, it had fallen on hard times, and Prime Minister Keith Mitchell (in office until 2008) was one of the early leaders of a breakaway group called the New National Party (NNP). He was in power for three five-year terms, but the NNP lost out to a rival party in the 2008 election. Mitchell spent many of his earlier years in the United States, attending Howard University and obtaining a PhD there. He owned property in Maryland and prospered in the U.S. On his return to Grenada -- after the intervention -- he was regarded as a national figure, not actively linked to the preceding revolutionary movement. But after a number of years in power, certain less savory aspects of his administration came to the fore, including his support for offshore banking enterprises, some of whom were deemed less than clean. Then, too, there was the economic citizenship program which our Treasury Department officials deemed, if not corrupt, somewhat inappropriate. Plus sums of money seemed to disappear or alternately "appear", as in a much heralded case wherein the Prime Minister was videotaped accepting a suitcase filled with cash in a hotel room -- an incident which has resulted in legal action. The case was rather bizarre, though I'm not sure exactly how or whether it has as yet been resolved. This type of incident over time leaves a bad taste in peoples' mouths even though many businessmen and community leaders traditionally supported Mitchell and his NNP in part because he was smart and capable and secondly was not perceived to be a leftist.

Now, you might wonder, why is this significant today? Because over the years, a number of the more intellectual types, you might say the island's intelligentsia (some of whom had earlier been associated with the New Jewel Movement) gravitated to the opposition National Democratic

Congress (NDC). The names of these two main parties , and to some extent their policies, might be seen as interchangeable. However, during my tenure, Prime Minister Keith Mitchell and his NNP was the government and the NDC represented the principal opposition party. By 2003, there was a widespread sentiment that the government might conceivably lose the upcoming election; if not, it might still lose the overwhelming majority of seats it had held for many years. The main issue of the day was corruption and the need for change. Whatever else the opposition was, it was for the most part not judged to be corrupt. The key problem for the NDC was the fact that some of its members were former "revolutionaries" who were still regarded as leftists. So elections were held and the outcome resulted in an eight-seven split, and frankly there was considerable controversy surrounding one NNP seat. While the NNP retained the seat and won the election, the results could easily have gone the other way. An Organization of American States (OAS) mission monitored the elections which came down to the wire on the sister island of Carriacou, where the recount went on for several days, but in the end Foreign Minister Elvin Nimrod held on to his seat. And Mr. Nimrod himself is an interesting man. Married to a South Carolinian who lives in New York, he went to college and law school in New York and owns a law firm in Brooklyn that continues to function and is now operated by his wife as a family business. When he returned to Grenada and joined the government, he had to give up his American citizenship.

Now (2008), Grenada is facing another round of elections, and the opposition is expected to win. Today, when you drive around the island, you can see a veritable building boom, with gigantic houses popping up which neither you nor I could ever afford. The roads have been repaired since hurricane Ivan and there are directional road signs all over the island -- something I promoted during my tour. I remember pushing the idea that road signs would be very helpful if the government wanted tourists to visit. In any case, most of the buildings in the downtown area have been repaired or rebuilt, except, interestingly enough, for the churches and the Parliament building. Were you to visit Grenada today, you might well wonder why Parliament and two or three major churches don't have roofs yet; otherwise, you would not know that there had been a devastating hurricane a few years before. So, with a lot of help from their friends, the Grenadians have done a good job.

However, the government apparently has been selling off national assets such as prime lands and national parks without exactly informing the public -- basically the national patrimony. The corruption level is high, and there are many who claim the place is totally bankrupt. Individuals are certainly buying and building homes, but the government is reputedly broke. Elections are due any time now, and as I mentioned the opposition has a good shot at winning. What makes the upcoming race especially interesting is the fact that the leader of the opposition is considered by be a very decent, honorable man, who is not only widely respected but is also known for having spent three years in jail during the revolutionary period thanks to the very New Jewel Movement, many of whose members are now in his party. In fact, his leading deputies, the so-called second and third in command were both active members of the revolutionary regime who are now both lawyers. They have modified their views of the world somewhat since then. (Note: Since the aforementioned was recorded, the opposition NDC won the 2008 election, with Tillman Thomas named the new Prime Minister; Keith Mitchell, however, retained his parliamentary seat and is the new leader of the opposition.).

Q: I would think it would have been a prime place for drug money to go to.

TONGOUR: Some, because there are many inlets and harbors. This is not necessarily a place to stash money anymore since most of the offshore banks have closed in recent years, but it certainly serves as a transit point. If you consider drug routes, you'll see that Grenada is not that far from the northern part of South America, and with its extensive shore line, there are many places for drug runners in so-called cigarette boats to pull in. .

Q: Well, while you were there did you sort of have a permanent investigating FBI, Treasury, whatever you are thinking about-

TONGOUR: Yes.

Q –about who is doing what to whom because of our concern about both, well, narcotics and also I suppose terrorism and illegal money?

TONGOUR: Terrorism, no. We were still too far down the food chain for that. By the time the terrorism issue reared its head in the region, I was practically out the door. We did do some interesting contingency exercises for a hurricane disaster, which included some training on how to handle a terrorist threat, but it was not a major focal point. In order of priority while I was on island, the biggest concern dealt with money matters. It seemed for a while that there was a near permanent presence of bank investigators thanks to the agreement of the Prime Minister to clean up the offshore banking sector, which had been hurting his relations with the U.S. Treasury as well as the country's standing with various financial institutions such as Standard and Poor's. So Price Waterhouse teams were frequently on the island as was the Legal Attaché from Barbados.

Q: Legal attaché.

TONGOUR: Yes, legal attaché. Basically they were checking on the whole offshore banking system in conjunction with an ongoing legal case in the U.S. which involved a horrific pyramid scheme wherein lots of little old ladies had invested their life savings into a bank, whose name now escapes, set up by a guy from Oregon, who, in fact, possessed next to nothing aside from one large jewel that he had somehow obtain in Uganda. It was to Uganda that he subsequently fled with all these people's money, but his so-called bank had been a fixture on the offshore banking circuit in Grenada for some time. The actual investigation of this case had been going on for several years before I arrived, but I recall receiving all sorts of letters sent to the Embassy from citizens in small towns in eastern Oregon and Idaho bemoaning the fact that the senders had invested their life savings in the bank, with nothing to show for it. The bank had gone under and the banker had absconded with their money -- so our officials were investigating the case.

To a certain degree there was close collaboration between the local government and our Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Narcotic Assistance Unit (NAS) based in Bridgetown. Our agents would come over and be very discreet in their dealings with the local coast guard units, providing them with various forms of assistance. This was one area where our assistance was very effectively deployed, namely our aid to the local coast guard in upgrading their boats and repairing them as well as training their officers in how to interdict the cigarette

boats and other vessels entering the harbors. And there were some successes that came out of this.

One of our priorities at that time were cases of American citizens who had been defrauded by various scam artists operating in the region as well as money laundering and the prevalence of offs-shore banking, which I had previously mentioned. Drugs, of course, were always a concern. Terrorism, less so, except in Trinidad where a few years earlier there had been a small radical movement that had an Islamic orientation, and included among its membership Indians and Pakistanis then living in Trinidad. Since they seemed to advocate violence and other somewhat threatening objects, they had been a source of considerable concern and obviously a focus of attention. But this was not really an issue in Grenada.

Q: Well, what were you, sort of back to the relations business, was there concern that Chavez was trying to do anything there outside of sort of good works?

TONGOUR: I think it's important not to underestimate the significance of good works, especially given the limited amount we were doing in this region. One point I should stress is that when I arrived there was no real assistance budget for Grenada. AID had already cut back its operations in the entire region. Officially, the Caribbean regional operation was by then based in Jamaica, although a few AID officers remained in Bridgetown. To be sure, they would occasionally visit or sponsor a project but usually this was a low-profile endeavor. When I arrived I quickly discovered that everyone had their hand out for assistance, and I had no funds to give them. The trouble wa that what locals wanted or needed most did not fit into any of our aid categories. In other words, USAID does not provide funds to host a dance aimed at raising money for a new floor in a school. Or there was no money to buy a school on computer or a community center one sewing machine. I used to think the Brits had a brilliant system. They never had much money either but they did have a little "slush fund" or $25,000 or $30,000 which could be used for such small scale projects. .

Q: Well, I thought ambassadors and- have this but-

TONGOUR: But the chargé did not. The ambassador could allocate small amounts of money but usually these were spent on emergencies. In essence, I was constantly being asked to donate for this, that or the other; since there were no funds designated for such activities, more often than not I simply paid for the tickets for the dance or whatever as a personal contribution. What I did manage to accomplish in this area was a form of creative financing, which meant tagging on to events that Bridgetown was having. For example, if a little theater group was coming to Barbados to present an HIV/AIDS awareness program, we persuaded the powers that be to allow them to come to Grenada as well. While we could not technically charge money for the performance, we would suggest donations, and any donations provided would then be donated to the local HIV AIDS program. Similarly, if there was a speaker coming somewhere in the region, we would try to get them to come to Grenada as well, to give a talk or put on a workshop -- and we received positive publicity for our efforts.

But back to the subject of the ambassador's fund, because the ambassador did indeed have a fund for small projects, including a program for heritage/tourism development. Grenada happened to

have some ancient petroglyphs from the time of the original Arawak and Carib inhabitants, which were quite interesting stone carvings. Moreover, the northwestern part of Grenada where the petroglyphs were located had very little tourism even though it was very pretty. Yet there was a beach and these stones that could be developed. Since I knew some people who were involved in environmental cleanup and tourism projects, I spoke with them about possible proposals they could submit. Specifically, we spoke of a plan to clean up the local beach and the rocks so that the petroglyphs could more readily be seen and also to set up a cafe and other amenities to make this location more appealing and desirable as a tourism destination. Anyway, they did submit a proposal, which I helped edit and amazingly enough the proposal was selected. In other words, the Grenadian group won the prize. It was only $10,000, but still $10,000.....,

Q: Can go a long way in that part of the world.

TONGOUR: It did indeed. The local group cleaned up the beach and the rocks; gradually people started selling artwork and souvenirs in the area. Whether they are still doing do, I don't know. For a while, at least, there was visible progress in the area. So, what does all this have to do with Chavez? Well, at that point, Chavez had not yet come across quite as crazy as he later seemed, even though he already had plenty of foes. Still, he was engaged in what you called "good works projects", as were others. And since we did not appear to be doing very much, one really had to jump through hoops to be visible in the same way.

Q: How were your relations with the ambassador? Who was the ambassador?

TONGOUR: I think I mentioned that I served under two during my tenure. The first one only came over to Grenada a couple of times, which may have been one reason why the locals did not focus too much on Embassy Bridgetown. The first ambassador was an old friend of the Bush family and had been a major fundraiser as well as a successful businessman in North Carolina. I may have mentioned that he did not last very long and was recalled for various reason. Leaving aside his personal behavior, one difficulty his staff faced during his tenure was his attitude towards Foreign Service officers. He made it clear that he did not have a lot of use for us as a group, which created some difficulties for us, especially when he openly questioned why we were not more motivated by profit or when he pointedly asked why there were so many single mothers in the Foreign Service. It so happened there were a number of women at post raising children on their own, and such comments weren't appreciated. In terms of Embassy Grenada, he seemed a bit perturbed by the fact that the house rented for the Chargé was quite lovely, a new home that in some respects was nicer than the Ambassador's residence in Barbados. I'm not imagining this because he mentioned it to me on several occasions. He also made no secret of the fact that he wanted the place closed. He also made it clear that it wasn't personal -- he seemed to like me well enough -- but that he simply did not approve of the idea of having a mission in Grenada. My saying that I did not set the rules regarding the existence of the post and that it predated my tenure made no difference. In any event the second ambassador was far more successful in her work in the region and in her relations with the staff.

Q: Who was that?

TONGOUR: Ambassador Mary Kramer, from Iowa. She had been a prominent figure in her state

Republican Party hierarchy, playing a key role in securing a victory for George Bush in Iowa in 2000. She had also been elected to the Iowa state legislature, if I recall correctly. Initially, as I may have mentioned, she had no idea where she was going when first offered the position of ambassador to Barbados. She may not have know her geography, but she certainly understood local politics, and Caribbean politics was very similar to electoral politics in a small state. She was quite adept at dealing with all the various types of people she met in the region, from the Prime Ministers to the local staff at the Embassy. In short, she was very effective.

Q: Well, this is one of the things that I have picked up in these interviews I have done, that often politicians who get jobs can sit down and talk to the politicians in the country to which they are assigned on a much more practical and understanding position than a Foreign Service officer who never had to meet a ballot.

TONGOUR: That is right. She was excellent, but in all fairness it's hard to say whether her predecessor would have been good or not since he did not have too much time to demonstrate his skills. .

Q: How about the British, I guess it would be high commissioner, the one during the Grenada invasion or intrusion or whatever you want to call it, did not get on too well, was not too happy. The British government, the country's unhappiness, was not pleased with the fact that we went in there although we had more at stake than they did. By the time you were there what was the British-American relationship on the island?

TONGOUR: Absolutely wonderful. We were the best of buddies, if I can put it that way. Let me rephrase that. The first British Resident Representative (ResRep) and I overlapped only briefly; while we were very cordial, we were not close. The second ResRep, however, was someone who had spent considerable time serving in various capacities at British Consulates in the U.S., knew the states well and enjoyed his time there. We were very good friends. In fact, when I returned to visit a year or so later, I stayed with him and his wife. Not only was the relationship close, but there was a strong sense of our being in this together, the big kids in the neighborhood who had to cooperate. We actually got together quite often with the representative from the OAS for lunch and discussion of local issues. Basically, we tried to foster an esprit de corps among the local diplomats, especially since we were all thrown together quite often. For the most part, it was a compatible group. And we definitely cooperated with the Brits on security and drug enforcement programs.

Q: How were your relations when you were there with the government? Was this one where you could sit down and have a meaningful talk with the prime minister and others or not?

TONGOUR: Yes. I understand, having just visited Grenada, that the current Chargé calls on the Prime Minister quite often. I did not --- didn't want to overdo my welcome. It made sense to me to call on him when I had something relevant to report, but people differ and there's no right answer. The problem was that it was easier to approach to government when you also had something to offer that was of interest to them. Unfortunately, all too often, we made demarches, calling on them to take specific actions but there was not necessarily something for them in return. I did not have wiggle room to be able to provide meaningful aid. Later on, after hurricane

Ivan, there was more substantive assistance, which I assume made things easier. And as I said before, both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister had spent years in the U.S. and felt quite at home there and with us. In, on occasion the Prime Minister seemed to forget himself and speak as though he were an American, musing about "what we should be doing" about one thing or another. I tried to keep from smiling because I don't think he really meant to say it quite that way. In any case, relations were generally fine.

As for Foreign Minister Nimrod, he was very Americanized and seemed to know more about U.S. history than his own. When the first ambassador of my tenure came to present his credentials, the Foreign Minister hosted a very amiable lunch. Mr. Nimrod clearly enjoyed talking about North Carolina and other parts of the U.S. where he had spent considerable time. At one point our ambassador, demonstrating that he had done his homework, asked about the current state of play regarding the Windward Island Federation (a long standing project to unite the four Windward Island states). Specifically, he asked whether there would, in fact, be a unified Windward Island government. The Foreign Minister had a slightly blank look on his face. He really was not up on the Windward Islands Federation, a plan much discussed during the years he had been studying and working in the U.S. Since I had focused a great deal on this project during my earlier tour in the Caribbean, I teased him a bit, saying we ought to switch roles, since he knew so much more about the U.S. than the West Indies. I said it jokingly but he allowed that this was probably correct. So yes, we were friendly enough.

But they did not agree with us on any number of issues, and they had their own objectives. Scholarships were a case in point, and a topic they constantly raised. Apparently, President Reagan had promised hundreds of scholarships for Grenadian students. What happened to these scholarships, the Grenadians wanted to know. There were, in fact, various scholarship programs used by Grenadian students to attend American university, but we don not have a specific USG-sponsored undergraduate scholarship program for students coming from the Caribbean. The Cubans, on the other hand, were very generous with scholarships for anyone wishing to study medicine or other subjects in Cuba --- hundreds of scholarships of this type were readily available. The PM would often throw it up to me that we could win on much goodwill through scholarships and subsequently good jobs for Grenadians in the U.S. He would in turn stress the absence of jobs for Grenadians in Grenada. Unfortunately, we're not in a position to encourage greater migration to the U.S. for ill-defined jobs. That is not our primary objective as diplomats.

Q: Did you get many calls from members of Congress about visas?

TONGOUR: Some. We also had a few CODELs as well as a very interesting Presidential delegation to commemorate the 20th anniversary of our intervention. As for congressmen and staffers, they frequently called on behalf of some constituent or a rich, politically plugged in friend, who might be West Indian or American, who invariably had a made from their residence in the West Indies that they wanted to take to their other home in the U.S. They, the prominent individuals, always insisted they could vouch for the person in their employ. I would try my best to explain our regulations in a nutshell to them as well as the fact that no one could truly vouch for another adult human being, who could readily walk out their door and remain in Kansas or wherever. But, yes, we did have many such calls.

Q: I have that role to play and we have our role to play.

TONGOUR: That is right. And the stories are never ending. Just recently when I was visiting in Grenada, I attended a dinner party and an American guest told me about someone there who was returning to the States and wanted her employee to come visit, but she did not want to spend the time or money required to go to Bridgetown to apply for a visa. This led to a discussion of how good it was when Grenadians were able to obtain visas in country. That, by the way, was something that won us enormous goodwill for a period, but it didn't last. For a time, I was able to get a consular officer from Bridgetown to come over once a month or so to do visa interview in Grenada, thereby saving locals the cost of a roundtrip and pricey ticket to Bridgetown for an interview. This was discontinued, but it was truly popular.

Q: Well, you left there when, in 2004?

TONGOUR: Yes, a month or so before hurricane Ivan, yes.

***

JAMAICA

PERRY W. LINDER
Consular Officer
Kingston (1961-1964)

Perry W. Linder was born in California in 1931. After receiving his bachelor's degree from San Jose State College in 1952, he served in the United States Army from 1952-1955. His career has included positions in Hamburg, Kingston, Tegucigalpa, Paris, Contonou/Dahomey, Brussels, Amman, Athens, and Madrid. Mr. Linder was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in December 1996.

LINDER: The next post was Kingston, Jamaica. When I learned of the assignment I phoned a colleague who had served there and told him, "I'm going to Kingston, what can you tell me about it?" And he said, "Hey, get out of it if you can. It's a terrible post." And he said, "If you have to go, when you get there the first thing you should do is buy a dog and a gun. And every night before the sun sets, you go out and fire off that gun a few times so everybody knows you've got a gun." And he said, "Train your dog not to take anything from anybody, because they'll poison the dog, they'll feed him some ganja and he won't do you any good." He told me it was a terrible place fraught with crime and not a pleasant place to be.

Q: After that advice, did you try to get out of the assignment?

LINDER: No, I didn't.

Q: Did you find that both the dog and a gun were essential?

LINDER: No, not at all. I thought it a great country and great people, and I never felt uncomfortable there at all. I met my wife there, my present wife. I spent three years there; I was, again, Consular Officer, I did some visa work, but mainly citizen services. I also did some economic reporting. I was there when they set up Air Jamaica. While I was there Jamaica became independent; it became independent in 1962. When I arrived I served in a consulate general, and when I left it was an embassy.

Q: And the first United States ambassador arrived while you were there?

LINDER: I think his name was Bill Doherty; he had been the head of the Postal Workers Union.

Q: And that would have been an appointment by the Kennedy administration, I guess.

LINDER: That's correct. Because I was there when Kennedy was assassinated. And also, when I was there, the first group of Peace Corps volunteers arrived, mostly teachers.

Q: Yes, I think some of the English speaking countries were the first to actually receive the Peace Corps because they didn't have to have language training, Jamaica, and I know Ghana was actually the very first, I think, where they actually arrived, but there were others that were close.

LINDER: Yes in 1961, the first group. I must say they had a very nice experience. I mean, I knew the kids that were in the Peace Corps. They were a young group, mostly just out of college, and they were very well set up there. It was a very receptive place for them, and you know, they got a little bit of money, and having just come out of college, they had a good time out there, and I think they provided a good service.

Q: Was the training done in country in Jamaica, or....

LINDER: No, they had some training before they came. I think they set up a training school in Saint Lucia, one of the other Caribbean islands.

Q: Were you Consular Officer throughout your time there, or did you switch to another job?

LINDER: No, I was Consular Officer, I was there for three years, and that was my job throughout. It was then that I decided that I would really specialize in administration.

Q: Even though you really hadn't done that yet, other than the graduate training in business administration.

LINDER: Right.

Q: This was before we had cones, so you were forced to decide.

LINDER: That's right, there were no cones at that time, but they did have the four divisions, political, economic, consular and administrative.

Q*: Did you decide at that time that you would pursue a career in administration because you had seen some good role models, good administrative officers, or maybe some bad ones and thought you could do as well or better?*

LINDER: Well, there was Marme a part-time administrative officer in Hamburg and I never really thought much about that at the time. In 1962, Vice President Johnson was the US representative to the Jamaican independence celebration. In any visit of that magnitude there's a big administrative to-do and that peaked my interest. When I saw what the administrative office had to do and to take care of, it interested me, and, my own background. Academically I was better prepared for administration than I was for other functions in the Foreign Service.

Q: Was there quite an expansion of the post when it moved from being a consulate general to an embassy at the time of independence, or was it pretty much the same structure, same staff?

LINDER: No, it expanded. We got Marines, we got a station, I don't even know that we had a communicator before becoming an embassy. I know we used to get all our communications from Cable and Wireless. We'd go down to there at night, they'd give us a call and we'd pick traffic. If we had something to transmit we'd take it down there.

Q: Did Kingston have regional responsibilities at that time, or was it only...

LINDER: Not regional responsibilities. However, the Cayman Islands were included in its consular district. But you know, it was at that period when the hope of the US, and perhaps the British, was that all of the Caribbean islands would combine into a federation.

Q: Confederation?

LINDER: Into a confederation, right. And you know, they made a stab at that. The capitol was to go in Trinidad. However, there was a referendum, and Jamaica decided they didn't want to be part of that. So when Jamaica became independent and the embassy was established, they actually moved some of our people, who were in Trinidad in anticipation of the confederation, to Jamaica.

Q: When you actually arrived there, I guess in 1960, was it known that independence was coming, say, in 1962, or did that happen fairly abruptly? Were they ready or independence?

LINDER: Yes, it was known. I think Jamaica was ready for it. The British did a good job of leading them into it. They had well established political parties, both political parties in Jamaica had a labor union base. They had some senior statesmen who were recognized and well trained and educated.

Q: With your wife from Jamaica, you've been able to go back, I assume, a number of times over the years, and you've probably seen a lot of change.

LINDER: Yes, I go back fairly regularly. Well, there's been change. Of course, the biggest change was when Michael Manley was elected in the '70s. He was the son of Norman Manley, Jamaica's first Prime Minister.

Q: Was he first?

LINDER: Maybe he wasn't; I don't recall...the two prominent leaders were Bustamante and Normal Manley. I know Bustamante was elected and headed the government. I believe Norman Manley was Prime Minister at the moment of independence. Anyway, his son, Michael Manley, was a socialist, certainly liberal, and he had definite ideas of how things should be. When he was elected, he brought about dramatic economic and social change, many of the middle class, established Jamaicans left, and he gave opportunity to those who hadn't had an opportunity before. That was the biggest change. At that point the establishment began to be replaced by new people, and the class structure--I don't know if it was broken, because it still exists, but at least you had an influx of new people who had never had an opportunity before in Jamaica. There was a breakdown of established structure and responsibility. The country never really recovered from Michael Manley's experiment with change. It is a bit frightening in Jamaica these days. But, when I say it hasn't changed much, it looks much the same, people still have to hustle for a living, and nothing works quite properly.

Q: When you were there, though, on assignment in the consulate and in the embassy, the British were still very important, in terms of civil service and administration.

LINDER: Yes, permanent secretaries in most ministries were senior British civil servants.

Q: When you were doing consular work, was there a lot of pressure for visas to come to the United States to immigrate, or...

LINDER: Yes. There was a lot of fraud on the visitor's visas side, and I think the immigration quotas, or whatever they were, were also fully subscribed. At that time, Jamaicans still had access into Great Britain, a lot of them were going there. One interesting thing while I was there, what the British call "hire purchase". You could buy a car and pay for it on the installment plan. Well, that came to Jamaica, and the Jamaicans are real hustlers, they made the most of that. They'd buy a car and then sell it and use the money to go to Canada or to go to Great Britain or the US, and the whole hire purchase thing sort of ground to a halt after about two or three years.

Q: They were taking advantage of that.

LINDER: That's right.

Q: Probably at that time, though, it was easier for Jamaicans to go to Britain, I mean to Canada, and it was later as there were restrictions, that more and more pressure came to go to the United States, is that right?

LINDER: That could be, I don't know. But, there was always pressure for visas; there was a big Jamaican population in the United States, in New York particularly; that creates its own demand.

Q: For families to come together and so on.

LINDER: Right. And you know, there was a long history of movement of Jamaicans to the US. At that time they still had the agricultural program where they would take agricultural workers to the US to work in the fields of Florida and Louisiana.

Q: The economy of Jamaica itself was still largely based on sugar?

LINDER: They had three bauxite companies in there; they were doing well at that time. The price of bauxite was good, and they were still expanding. That may well have been the biggest single source of revenue. Of course, tourism has always been a source of revenue; sugar and bananas, were in decline.

Q: Montego Bay was up and running?

LINDER: Yes, Montego Bay was up and running, it was a popular tourist resort. When I was in Jamaica I had to go to Round Hill; Senator Javits was a frequent visitor there. It was interesting, a lot of prominent American figures would visit this north coast, both political and from the entertainment world. They would fly into Jamaica and spend their vacations there, but you'd never see them or hear of them at the embassy. It was rare that we ever got involved with these visitors.

Q: But they would go there essentially on a private basis....

LINDER: Yes, they would just fly into Montego Bay, they would never come to Kingston or inform the embassy of there presence unless there was some particular service that had to be performed for them.

Q: Was there quite a bit of American investment in bauxite and otherwise in Jamaica at that time?

LINDER: Reynolds Aluminum was there.

Q: Kaiser?

LINDER: Kaiser as well. Reynolds, Kaiser, and ALCAN were the three.

Q: Let's talk about, finally, one of Jamaica's other neighbors, Cuba. You were there during the Cuban missile crisis, I believe.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: How was that?

LINDER: Well, it was certainly exciting. We had this fleet in the Caribbean with the Marines. It was decided that they would use Kingston harbor as a base for recreation and resupply. Tenders were anchored there, and there was constant movement of naval vessels in and out. At the time, I was responsible for shipping, and became the post's liaison with the Navy.

Q: There was no naval attaché or...

LINDER: No, we didn't have anything like that. I made the initial arrangements for docking, water, supplies, lighters, garbage. I remember I went around with the Shore Patrol; they did a survey before the ships got there. We visited all the whorehouses in town. They each showed us all around their place. It was just an interesting experience. From a political standpoint, I don't recall that it affected Jamaica much. Of course, one development was that Guantanamo Bay was blocked off from Cuba. The Navy then recruited workers in Jamaica, and would take them to Guantanamo. They would do their work and then they'd get home leave. In other words, Jamaicans replaced the Cubans in Guantanamo.

Q: And that happened as a direct result of the missile crisis in 1962?

LINDER: As I recall.

Q: Did you get involved in that recruitment effort, or did the Navy send people in to do it?

LINDER: The Navy sent people in to do it. I did go out to Guantanamo Bay at least once, to do some kind of consular work, I don't recall what it was now.

Q: That must have been a good source of foreign exchange for the Jamaicans, in addition to tourism and bauxite, and...

LINDER: I think, you know, remittances from abroad were always one of their top sources of foreign exchange.

Q: From Jamaicans in the United States, and Britain...

LINDER: ...The United States and Canada and Britain, yes.

Q: Okay, anything else about Kingston we should talk about, Perry?

LINDER: No, I think that'll be all.

Q: Okay, what was your next Foreign Service assignment?

LINDER: I went to Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

NANCY OSTRANDER
Chief Consular Officer
Kingston (1967-1970)

Born in Indiana in 1925, Ambassador Nancy Ostrander received her BA from Butler University. She was posted in Santiago de Cuba, Havana, The Hague, Antwerp, Mexico City and Kingston and was the Ambassador to Suriname. On May 14, 1986 she was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin.

OSTRANDER: At that time, Washington was unable to fill the chief consular job in Kingston. They had sent one person who had had a nervous breakdown shortly after he arrived. This was 1967. Jamaica had become independent in 1965, something like that. There was a new immigration law which took effect in about 1967, which moved the immigration quota for Jamaica from 200 a year, which it was as a British dependency, to 20,000 a year. That became effective in '67, and the day it became effective, I would suggest that a majority of Jamaicans walked in and registered for immigration at the American Embassy.

So the consul general they had sent had gone around the bend in a very short time, and they had sent a new one, Vern McAninch. Vern wanted to try his hand at administration, so although he was running the consular section, he moved upstairs. They had to find somebody for the consular work and they couldn't. Nobody in his right mind would go into that mess, and I mean *mess*. So they found me, and I said I'd be happy to go.

Well, I took one look at that section. The section had been two rooms, small rooms, when there were only 200 a year, and the bank next door had moved out, so Vern had arranged to get part of their ground space. They had torn up the floors and it was a dirt floor, and raining a lot. They were trying to put tile down, but the tile layers had gone on strike. We had planks over the mud. I have never seen anything quite like that.

Q: A physical mess.

OSTRANDER: It was a physical mess. Again, if you opened drawers of desks, you would find applications for visas that nobody had ever even acknowledged, let alone tell people what the next step was. It was so far behind, it was incredible.

Q: Vern was too busy building his empire, was he?

OSTRANDER: With all due respect, it had just been sort of make-do. I don't know what was going on. It was not Vern's bag, that's for sure. Just sitting down and working on things one page at a time is not for Vern McAninch. I'm not bad at that. As a matter of fact, if the day is over and I see that there's a pile like this that's taken care of, I feel pretty good. Besides, women, I think, have more patience for that sort of thing than men do, anyway. Still, I used to think, "If somebody showed me a warehouse full of dirty dishes and told me that they had to be washed, I would do it, but I would be mighty unhappy doing it, and I would hate every bit of it." It's not a job that couldn't be done; it's "who wants to?" I think I went home and cried every night for the

first six months I was there. But I did bring order out of that chaos and found that there were an awful lot of really good clerks, local clerks, and brand-new, "retread" officers, who were willing to sit down and do the job if somebody would just tell them where to tackle it. What they needed was somebody to run it. I had something like ten officers. They were ambassadors' secretaries, who wanted what they would call an "excursion tour" now, but who really wanted to be commissioned, wanted to be integrated, and others were pouch clerks, as we were getting away from that. There were former Marine guards who had joined the Foreign Service. There were political officers who were about to get selected out, but were given one more chance. I have never seen anything quite like it. Those folks were given a half-day's training and sent to me, into this mess. Well, you can imagine what their morale was. There were also two or three brand-new FSO-8s, I think they were, at the time. I can assure you that this wasn't their idea of what should be the lot of somebody who wanted to be a political or economic officer. But they were good, you know. It also brought to mind that a good FSO does whatever he's given to do and does it well. None of this, "I'm not going to stamp these." They did it, and they did it well.

I tried everything I could think of to give them other things that they could do. I can remember one of them became involved in getting to know youth groups at universities and did reporting on the side, on the youth of Jamaica and what they were thinking. Another one I got a rotation job so she could go into the USIA. But anyway, I did everything I could, and I got a superior honor award for the management of that. It did get untangled. We broke all the records for immigrant visa issuance at that place.

But mainly what we did was answer the mail and get a routine going on immigration so that they didn't feel that they had to come down to the embassy every day because nobody ever answered the mail. I can remember I found one officer who, when there was too much mail to answer, decided not to answer any of the mail from American citizens. You can imagine what that caused. This means phone calls from the States, and not only from the States, but from every congressman and senator that you could think of. It just was creating work. So anyway, a little instruction on management went a long, long way.

I also had a DCM who said, "Tell us what you want and we'll get it." Vern backed me up on stuff out of administration that I had to have. So anyway, it got done, but it was physically exhausting, absolutely physically exhausting.

We had a team there and we were all so loyal to each other.

Q: How many people did you have under you at any given time?

OSTRANDER: There were well over twenty there, maybe twenty-five, I'm not sure. I'm talking mainly here about visas, but it was all consular work, and I had a superb passport and citizenship officer. I didn't often have to get into that work, thank God. I should have, but she was very good. I just had to tell her, "I've got to untangle this visa mess before I can even think." We had well over a million tourists a year in Jamaica, well over a million. Some of them needed help. They died, too, up at Montego Bay, and got into trouble and got into jail. When I look back on it, I think the first thing I did was call in all the local employees and say, "I'm sure that each and every one of you has good ways that we can streamline this." Then I got big charts on the wall to

show where the bulk of it was going. Once they could see progress and once they realized a pattern, they were ready to just knock themselves out for it, and did so.

I think I learned from that that if you can begin to see that it's getting better and that there's life after that mess, why, you get a lot of loyalty and a lot of hard work out of people. I got a lot of promotions for a lot of people out of that, too. I really sat down and redid all the position descriptions for that entire section, and the local help was so underpaid compared to what was going on in the embassy side of it. I can understand why nobody had had time to do this.

Q: That's a big job, though, that job description business.

OSTRANDER: Come to think of it, I did that in Mexico, too.

Q: That was for the locals, as well as the rest?

OSTRANDER: Yes. Actually, in Mexico it was only for the locals, because they were the ones. I'm always the one that gets that stuff dumped on her.

Q: That's because you'll do it. You didn't have a nervous breakdown there, though.

OSTRANDER: No, I did not. I thrived on it, as a matter of fact. As a matter of fact, I think I thrived on it because you could see the progress, and I was getting credit for it and I had an ambassador and a DCM and an administrative officer, even those that came after, who were--I can hear the DCM right now, David Wilkins, say, "Nancy, tell us what you want and we'll see that you get it." And this just makes all the difference. I learned to love Jamaica. Not too many people liked Jamaica, and still don't.

Q: Was it dangerous when you were there?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Quite.

Q: Did you have to carry a weapon?

OSTRANDER: No, no. And I wouldn't have if I'd had to.

Q: But they were having trouble when you were there?

OSTRANDER: Yes, they were having all kinds of race riots, burning buses, hitting people on the head, this sort of thing.

Q: Did you have a rape gate in your house?

OSTRANDER: No, we had guards. They gave us guards. I don't know, I'm just not a frightened person. I just can't live that way. I soon got rid of the guard, because he wanted me to provide him with food all night long and beer all night long, and there were all these beer bottles all over everything. I just got myself a dog. [Laughter]

Q: Do you have any anecdotes that you remember about this time when there were all these riots? Were you ever in physical danger?

OSTRANDER: Most of the wives sat around and talked, and people would find white chickens, with the necks wrung, floating in their swimming pools and this sort of thing. That was *obeah*, and it was a threat. People would talk about it a lot and they would sort of fan the flames of each other's panic. I just can't listen to this sort of thing. I'm firmly convinced that bad things can happen, but you can also ruin your life sitting around and waiting for them to happen, and you can become housebound. I think what you've got to do is learn where it is that you can go that's safe. I don't want to downplay a lot of the danger that people ultimately got into, but I wouldn't go into West Kingston for anything on earth then or now or any other time. There are just places that you don't want to flaunt it, and you don't want to be out all hours of the night when there are problems.

Q: Did you have to work late? If you did, how did you get home?

OSTRANDER: I didn't work late, that I recall, although there were times when I had to go down, when I was on duty. We were in the middle of town at that time, too. The embassy now is up and sort of out of the danger zone. It was down by the waterfront, on Duke Street. That was a dangerous area. We had some things befall us in the embassy family, and maybe it did get worse later, but I got sick to death about hearing how dangerous it was in Jamaica, because I had lived through it, and I just feel that you can ruin your life by living behind a locked door.

I think you can invite problems, yet I also realize that things are going to happen to people even if they're not invited. One of the girls was raped while I was there, one of the gals in the embassy. They got her out of there fast. I think she left the patio doors unlocked. I don't know what the answer is, but I know that the only two times in my life I've ever been robbed were in Arlington, Virginia, in forty years in the Foreign Service. I don't want to tempt the fates.

Q: But you took good care.

OSTRANDER: I think I did, and I think I lived in an area and had a dog and all these sorts of things, but I just simply can't be worried about it.

Q: It was perhaps worse among the wives, wasn't it?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes, who didn't have anything to do, of course, or not enough to do. They did nothing but feed on these problems. I know one of the junior officers' wives was threatened while she was at home one day. Somebody walked in and threatened her. Of course, he just wanted to be transferred immediately.

Q: But nobody was actually beaten up, were they?

OSTRANDER: The gal was raped. We had one officer who went out to cover a political riot and was beaten over the head, his head split open, and his car smashed up. But that was in the line of

duty, you know. If you go to a political rally that is apt to get out of hand, and does, why, it's too bad that this has happened, but he knew it when he went out to cover it. He wasn't complaining.

Q: That might be a case where you wouldn't want to send a woman political officer.

OSTRANDER: I suppose that's correct, if there's danger of riot. Yet, again, she might not have had her head split open.

Q: Who can say?

OSTRANDER: Who can say? You're quite right. Anyway, I left Jamaica and I haven't been back since, in spite of all of this, but I will go back some day.

Q: Did you travel a lot while you were there?

OSTRANDER: Oh, you couldn't get away too much, but I did get up to Montego Bay for a couple of long weekends. I can remember one lovely time that a bunch of us, about twenty of us, of the embassy gals, went to Frenchmen's Cove, which was the most--I think it cost $1,500 a week at that time, which was the most expensive place. But in the month of October, they closed to the public to redo everything, and you could go there for ten dollars a day. So we went up and took one of the beautiful beach houses and just had a wonderful time. That's a place where each person has an individual golf cart to whip around in. We had a marvelous time, at only ten bucks a night. Of course, we didn't have anybody waiting on us. It was fun, and I loved the place. I really did. But then, I'm a Caribbean whatever.

Q: You seem to love every post you've been, except Mexico City. But even then, you loved Mexico City.

OSTRANDER: I loved the city, but I certainly didn't like that work, and I didn't like working in The Hague. I liked that city. I think what I've tried to do is learn to split--I really didn't like The Hague. It's the most beautiful city I've ever been in, but the people were very cold.

Q: You mean in the embassy?

OSTRANDER: No, the embassy was fine.

Q: So you sort of split your work and your social life?

OSTRANDER: There are things that detract from every post you're ever in. What you like at one post is not there at the next.

Q: But you do like warm weather, don't you?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes. I used to say I'm like a tropical blossom. I really flourish in the warmth.

Q: All those years in northern Europe, than which there is nothing more dour.

OSTRANDER: Just really awful. But you have things to make up for it, that's for sure.

Q: Did you used to travel to Paris and other European capitals?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes. Whenever I could get away, I did. I had that feeling when I went to The Hague. It was only to be for a year, to fill in. It was a direct transfer, and I was going to fill in for a year. Then they left me two years and brought me back and said, "You'll be given a direct transfer in another year." Okay. After a year, I was transferred down to Belgium, where it was only going to be for another year, because then I would have home leave. So for seven years, I was going to be leaving in only one more year. I felt like, "You'll never be back this way again, so you can't afford to miss this, you can't afford to miss that." I almost went broke with all the things I couldn't afford to miss, and if I'd known it was going to be seven years, I could have taken it a little easier. But it was hard to get away from the work, but certainly every chance I could, I did. I saw pretty much of it, at least northern Europe.

Q: To wrap up for today, do you want to tell me anything else about Jamaica? You have already said what you learned about running a place, that if you can make people see that progress is being made, you can get their loyalty. Any other bits of wisdom that you can pass on?

OSTRANDER: That I learned out of Jamaica? I suppose the importance of teamwork.

Q: And praise, too?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes! I got full credit for what happened there.

Q: And you did it by praising your own people, didn't you?

OSTRANDER: I certainly praised them. There wasn't a year that went by that we didn't have a meritorious award, for the section, anyway. That helps. As far as management goes, with that many Foreign Service nationals, you must have a promotion chain. If you're going into that big a section, you want something that can give somebody a thirty- or thirty-five year career straight up the ladder, and they must be able to see that, starting at the bottom, that there are promotion opportunities and that there's going to be a turnover, and that they're going to progress up the ladder. Otherwise, you're going to be losing them to AID, you're going to be losing them to the administrative section, they're going to go to work for the bank down the street. You're just going to lose them like crazy. But once you can show them that, then they can see it happening, it just makes a lot of difference.

Q: How many local employees did you have there?

OSTRANDER: The immigrant section was big. I think it was about twenty locals and about ten Americans, give or take three or four on either side.

Q: Did you find three years was about all you wanted of that?

OSTRANDER: I wasn't ready to leave. I was just beginning to enjoy it, because it was just untangled, except that it was time to leave. My experience in Foreign Service tells me that my third year I'm really doing a superb job. The fourth year, it's old and you're beginning to wish, "Oh, dear, is that report due again?" This sort of thing. But that third year, at least that's been my experience, in the third year, the government is really getting double its investment out of me. The fourth year, it's past the point of diminishing returns, although I'm still giving more than enough, but the challenge has gone and it's time to be thinking of what's coming next. I also felt that it was time to come to work in Washington in consular work, if that's what was going to be my lot. That job in Kingston, which at that time was an FSO-3, which is now the FSO-1 job, is now an MC [Minister Counselor] job.

Q: I wouldn't doubt it.

OSTRANDER: Frankly, I think it's because they couldn't get anybody to fill it, so they just kept hiking it up higher and higher. But I would say that in my estimation, there were only two things happening in Jamaica at that time that were of concern to the U.S., two major issues: One was bauxite, the other, immigration.

KENNETH N. ROGERS
Political Officer
Kingston (1968-1972)

Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio State University in 1953, and his UJD from George Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You left there in 1968. Whither?

ROGERS: Jamaica.

Q: You were in Jamaica from 1968 to when?

ROGERS: July 1972.

Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there?

ROGERS: The first was Walter Tobriner, who was one of the three District of Columbia commissioners when there was no mayor in the District. At that time, there were two civilian appointees plus a U.S. Army engineer. Walter Tobriner was a Democrat and was appointed by Lyndon Johnson to be the ambassador. He was there when I arrived.

He was replaced by a Republican, Vincent De Roulet, whose mother in law was a contributor to

Richard Nixon. When the parties changed, he got that assignment. She was the owner of the New York Mets baseball team at the time.

Q: He was a controversial figure.

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

Q: Could you tell me about him?

ROGERS: He died at 48. He was tall, a little bit frail. I think his father owned Foremost Dairies in California. He married Lorinda Dayson of the Witney family. He was eccentric and fancied himself a certain stature in U.S. society which, if it exists, I've never seen it. When I was first assigned there, he asked me to come and meet him on his estate on Long Island. We got to the house and the front gate was enormous. It was really his wife's estate. He had a 90 foot yacht, "Patrina," and looked upon the Jamaicans perhaps as the Portuguese looked upon those from Angola that they considered must be looked after, so that they could eventually develop. Civilizing nonsense. When my tour was up after two years, he kept getting extensions of six months for me because I had become a very dear friend of the person whom I had claimed would become the prime minister of Jamaica. De Roulet said, "Oh, that's impossible. He couldn't possibly win the election." So, I said, "Okay, there are 52 parliamentary seats. Whoever takes half plus one, the leader of that party will be the prime minister." I gave him a list of 52 and I said, "These are the seats that will be won by the People's National Party (Michael Manley's)." I'll never forget, the night of that election (That was in 1972.), Vincent De Roulet had a party of the country team and friends. The symbol of the Jamaica Labor Party was a bell. He had on every table a bell that was to be rung when Hugh Shearer would have been reelected. Shearer was a lovely person, a very nice guy. I saw him not too long ago. The news came through that the People's National Party had won. The phone rang and whoever took the call said to the ambassador, "Well, it's Michael Manley." He said, "Oh, Ill take the call right away." He said, "No, Mr. Manley wants to speak to Mr. Rogers, not you." This was the end of my career in Jamaica.

Q: Oh, God. So Manley knew what he was doing.

ROGERS: Oh, yes. Worse, Manley said that he wanted me to come right over to his home. I asked permission. He said, "Yes, go ahead." When I got there, the chief of the Jamaican army arrived in his uniform at Manley's house drunk. Manley kicked him out and fired him from the army the next day. All these people are dead now, sadly. But that was a fascinating time. I was still there for several weeks. Michael used to call me and De Roulet would say, "You can't go to his house anymore." So, Michael Manley would come over to my house and sit on the front porch at six or seven o'clock in the morning. He said, "What is this? What are these things?" I said, "Well, they're all things about voting at the United Nations, oceans, and so forth." He said, "We're going to decide in the cabinet what to do about a vote." So, I would brief him on all these things. He had no background in it. He had no idea what it was all about. So, it was great fun for a few weeks. I had been there double the length of time I was supposed to have been. But it was very exciting.

Q: Didn't De Roulet do things like forbid visa applicants from using the toilets and things of that nature - or was that someone else?

ROGERS: There are a lot of stories about Vincent De Roulet, some of which have been embellished and unfairly so, but by and large, 2/3 of them are true. They are mostly rather petty, silly things that are hardly worth mentioning. He made a mistake when he, after that election, went back to the U.S. and said in a an open session of Congress that Michael Manley had promised him that he would not nationalize the bauxite industry. That was of great interest to us because four out of the five bauxite aluminum companies in Jamaica were American (one is Canadian). I had only left a few weeks before. The government in Jamaica informed the Department of State that Vincent De Roulet was "no longer persona grata." He was not permitted to return. They always make that distinction. He wasn't PNGed; he was "no longer persona grata." What they did was very polite. They said, "However, later, if he would like to come down on a holiday, he is always welcome." It seemed to me that he listened to the station chief, who was certainly a conservative Republican as well, and he read things as he wanted them to be, rather than the reality that they were. Incidentally, of the 52 seats that I predicted in advance and reported to the Department of State, 51 were correct. The 52nd on a recount was also correct two weeks later. That was the brother of Michael Manley, Douglas Manley.

Q: What were you there?

ROGERS: Chief of the Political Section.

Q: Before Manley came in, what was the political situation in Jamaica?

ROGERS: Since independence, it's always been parliamentary democracy, the Westminister system. When I arrived, the Jamaica Labor Party was in power. Hugh Shearer was the Prime Minister. Earlier, Michael Manley's father, Norman, had been the premier once of what was to have been a West Indies Federation of Trinidad, Tobago, all of the British Antilles, Windward Islands, Jamaica, etc. But it was so scattered and diverse that it just couldn't hold together. It didn't sustain itself and didn't work. So, the parts broke up into separate units of the Commonwealth. I remember when Michael Manley made his first speech in Parliament, when he was first elected to a seat, the Jamaica Labor Party still being in government, his father saw me and he said, "How did Michael do?" I said, "He did fine, but why didn't you go?" He said, "I didn't want to make him nervous." Norman Manley died in 1970. Michael Manley died early in 1997.

Q: What was your impression of Manley at that time? He was rather controversial.

ROGERS: Oh, yes. I liked him very much. He was then a labor leader, the National Worker's Union. He was called "the island supervisor" of the union. That union was mostly in sugar, but later in the bauxite alumina industry. Both political parties, the PNP and the JLP, had as their power base labor unions. One, the ILB, developed out of a labor union, BITU, and the other party, PNP, formed a labor union from itself. So, they were very work-oriented. I saw Michael many times after I left. He used to come and visit. He kept writing to me. He kept worrying about what he called his "Third World credentials." I used to argue with him that the Third

World is a myth. It isn't there. It's all self-interest and puffery. But he said, "That's not true. I've been to Algeria and Cuba and these people understand that." I said, "They're taking advantage of you."

Q: You had this time with him, but did you find that basically most of the rest of the embassy considered him beyond the pale? Was there a problem?

ROGERS: The assumption was that he would never amount to anything. They couldn't believe it when he got elected the first time to a parliamentary seat. They couldn't believe it when his party won the general elections. "Why, this can't happen. This is a conservative government." Otherwise, the theory was that because Manley was a "socialist," our mining interests would be nationalized. They were. To put it in the terms of the time, they were "Jamaicanized." Curiously, when I returned from Jamaica, I was first assigned to be the desk officer for Uruguay and Paraguay and then Argentina. After some months, I was loaned back to be the Jamaica desk officer during the negotiation on the Jamaicanization of the bauxite aluminum industry. I made a number of trips back and forth to Jamaica in that regard and to the corporate headquarters of the various companies such as ALCOA. That thread of contact carried on even after I left.

Q: Were we saying that if he were to win the minds of the nationals...

ROGERS: That was the concern, yes. That is because bauxite in its first stage of refined powder, alumina, has no value at all until it is extruded into alumina, then to aluminum, which is done in Canada and the U.S. Bauxite has no real value in its form in Jamaica. Manley and his economic aides wanted to assign to it a "national" value. That is, to find out what the market price of tubing and sheeting would be in Toronto and Pittsburgh and then back down from that and say a certain percent of that value was what we should have. That was how they tried to change the value. Of course, the Jamaicanization and the nationalization after that meant that almost every major aspect of the economy was nationalized: tourism, hotels... The government of Jamaica did not have the manpower, the skill, and the talent to operate any of this stuff. Eventually, it was permitted to revert to the private economy.

Q: How about tourism while you were there? Was this working well or not?

ROGERS: It was. Just as in some parts of Washington, DC, I wouldn't want to walk at night, or even in the day, now, certainly in the tough areas of Kingston, it was not wise for anyone to be there unless they lived there. People were desperately poor. Even though I was well-known in the ghetto, it still was terribly unsafe, even for me.

The Rastafarian cult was very interesting. The followers felt that Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who was then still living, was in fact the personification of God on Earth. They literally worshiped him. Some people who really didn't have that "calling" adopted that lifestyle, which was associated with some musicians. To understand the true nature of Haile Selassie, you had to take the "herb." The herb is ganja, or marijuana. I think so many of them who had adopted that faith system were not particularly sincere in their ecclesiastical orientation, but wanted a little pot.

Q: Was drug smuggling or marijuana smuggling a problem when you were there?

ROGERS: Yes, but much less so than now. Jamaicans had been using marijuana for countless years as a medicinal supplement called “bush tea.” It was said to be good for a toothache. The toothache didn’t go away, but you didn’t feel it anymore. It was an old traditional herbal medicine.

Q: What were you getting from the desk? Was Jamaica at all in the Cold War calculation with Cuba nearby?

ROGERS: No, not then, but Russian ships used to visit after they visited Cuba. I actually used to go down and go on the Russian ships and visit. They were all electronic surveillance ships, no warships. They had giant masts and huge globes on the top with listening equipment on board. The personnel were very pleasant. I would come abroad, call on the captain, and give him a bottle of Jamaican rum. He would give me some phonograph records. There was no problem at all. It was after I left that the identity with Castro became so close. In fact, Castro went to Michael Manley's funeral last spring.

Q: Back to Ambassador De Roulet, how did he get along with his staff? Did it work?

ROGERS: By and large, they felt that he was artificially presumptuous, as if he were from a royal class that didn't exist in our country. In many respects, I really liked him in spite of himself. But he was terribly insecure, didn't know what he was doing. But he had been a spoiled, privileged person all his life. He would make fun of it, too. He would say, "I'll never forget when I first went into the Air Force and my chauffeur drove me up to the camp. The boys thought this was great. But strangely, the drill sergeant didn’t think that was appropriate." He made fun of himself in those regards. I liked him. His wife was very nice. But he didn’t understand that setting.

At that time, I'll never forget, Herbert Kalmbach came through. I didn’t know how things worked in this way. Well, that was for De Roulet to make a contribution and then make a “wish list.” How they did that was so funny. Kalmbach would say, "Write a letter to your mother or your mother in law and tell her what you would like to do next." He would take that. This was the wish list of the contributors. But you don't write to the President. You write it to your mother and he took it away. I thought it was very cute. De Roulet asked for either Paris or Madrid. It turned out that coterie went down the tubes. I remember now, he took me to see Maurice Stans, the Secretary of Commerce, in Washington. He knew those people very well, the Republican inner circle.

Q: Until Michael Manley didn’t call him.

ROGERS: He deliberately called where he knew he was and said that he wanted to speak to me.

Initially, I didn't really like Jamaica, but it grew on me - the music, the food, the personalities of the people were just delightful. I still count them some of my very close friends and see them often. It probably is, mile for mile, the prettiest country in the world that I've ever seen.

Q: In 1972, whither?

BRUCE MALKIN
Rotation Officer
Kingston (1969-1972)

Bruce Malkin was born in Philadelphia in February 1946. He received his bachelor's degree from University of Pennsylvania University. His career includes positions in Jamaica, Mexico, Singapore, and Washington D.C. Mr. Maklin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 2005.

MALKIN: I was first told that I was assigned to our consulate in Khorramshahr, Iran, but was subsequently changed to our embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, where I duly arrived in November of '69 aboard a U.S. cruise ship.

Q: Then you came in '69. Your first post was what?

MALKIN: I was very excited. First of all, all the single men were being assigned to the Cords Program in Vietnam. They were going as Village Pacification Liaison Officers or, if they were lucky, assigned to our embassy in Saigon. However, I was the only bachelor who had taken the economics test option and done very well, and I was told that is why I was given the option to go as an Economic/Commercial Officer somewhere other than Vietnam. I was offered a position that had been vacated by a medical evacuation in Khorramshahr, the port city in southern Iran, which I think is mostly an administrative post for bringing in household and other shipments for the embassy. Still, I thought this was fabulous. I was going to Persia. I didn't care what the work was - it just seemed to be the whole beauty of the Foreign Service. I'd be going to a famous country. I bought my Farsi language book and I was anxious to get started with the language, I was doing area studies. And then I'm told that State received word from the Ambassador in Tehran that there had been an internal juggling of positions. Someone from the Embassy went to Khorramshahr to fill the job, and the embassy did not require anyone going to the position in Tehran to fill it when that transfer was made. Basically there were no more openings in Iran.

So, after a little bit of internal discussions, I was told by FSI that the only other available post at this time, because everything other than Cords in Vietnam had been assigned, was an opening for an economic/commercial officer in Kingston, Jamaica. Actually, it was a junior officer rotational position, eventually rotating into economic and commercial work. This was very disappointing as it was so close to the U.S., and I was really down for a while because it didn't seem to be in the mainstream of foreign policy. But I came around to thinking of it as a good assignment when I considered the alternatives.

At that time you were allowed to take U.S. ship lines, so I went on the U.S.S. Roosevelt, which stopped at Aruba, Curacao, and Caracas before reaching Kingston. It took ten days to get there, and I enjoyed every minute of it. Then I got to Kingston, and it turned out to be a wonderful place.

Q: You were in Kingston from when to when?

MALKIN: November ’69 to February ’72.

Q: What was so wonderful about Kingston?

MALKIN: The people were great, the climate was beautiful, the beaches white sand, and the water blue. Being brand new, I liked everything I was doing. Even the visa work was different. I made good friends there. I was married there.

Q: You know, I’ve heard about Kingston – a real problem of lawlessness and all that. Had that developed at all while you were there?

MALKIN: I think that was very minor when I was there. It was when Michael Manley became prime minister, just after I left in ’72, that Kingston and all of Jamaica took a political and economic nose-dive. Manley decided to get close to Castro, and his politics went way left and anti-American and anti-white. But when I was there it was under PM Shearer and his finance minister, Seaga. I tried to write a doctoral thesis there for Geneva on how Jamaica could be the Switzerland of the Caribbean. The Institute wanted me to come there for further work on my first draft, which I could not do at this point in time, so it was never approved.

Q: This was when Manley came in?

MALKIN: Yes, he was a disaster. Although he was the son of the George Washington of Jamaica, his politics were really left wing.

Q: What type of work did you do?

MALKIN: The first six months I was in the admin section working with the GSO and Admin Officer in a wide variety of tasks designed to keep the embassy functioning smoothly. Then it was the visa section, immigrant and non-immigrant, which was also active because there was such a demand for visas. Occasionally I see my old supervisor, Bill Moody, who is retired and now lives in Reston.

Finally, for the second year I was rotated into the Economic/Commercial Section, where there was a junior officer position. There were only an Economic Counselor and a Political Counselor, but there was no political support job. So I got the available commercial job and started meeting the business community.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

MALKIN: When I went down it was a political appointee named Vincent De Roulet.

Q: He was a problem, wasn’t he, as I recall –

MALKIN: He was there the whole two years that I was. He created problems until he was PNG'd (made persona non grata) by PM Michael Manley. During his 1972 open congressional testimony in Washington, De Roulet said that he had met with Manley privately and told him, "The U.S. doesn't want you as Prime Minister. I'm going to work against you." Manley took that personally, and told De Roulet when he was in Washington to not come back.

The ambassador was very wealthy. He had a yacht with a five-person full time crew. He had race horses which he boarded at a stable in Jamaica and the Admin Officer was basically in charge of the race horses and the GSO (General Services Officer) was taking care of the yacht. Any time left over would go to the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission).

So there was a lot of pressure on Admin from the top. And De Roulet was very quixotic and erratic. He once came to my office when I was interviewing immigrant visa applicants, and told me not to give anybody a visa. He stayed there for a half-hour or so, and I had to turn down everybody before me. If I thought they were good applicants, I told them to come back with some more documentation in a day or two and I'd look at it. But I believe that if I had actually granted a visa to anybody in front of him after he had told me not to do it, he would have had me sent away to someplace else on my first tour.

Q: What about Jamaican society, was it pretty open, did you meet many Jamaicans?

MALKIN: Yes, I did. The Political Officer, Kenneth Rogers, was very nice and he invited me to his receptions. He was very well connected, so I met a number of Jamaica's business and political leaders. At the end of '70, at the Political Counselor's Christmas reception, I met a woman whose parents had a record distribution and music studio company in Kingston and were doing very well as the sole licensee for many Motown labels. They distributed throughout the Caribbean Islands. I met her on her holiday vacation. She was back from Canada where she'd just graduated from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. She was planning to work for her parents until it got warmer and then go back to Canada to live again. The short story is that we got married in September of '71. So I left Jamaica in February '72 with a new bride.

Q: How did you find the economic-commercial situation while you were there?

MALKIN: It was doing very well. The isle was definitely prospering. The business community was mostly Lebanese- and Chinese- and Jewish Jamaican. They owned the bigger businesses, such as the brewery and the dairy, and were the biggest employers. The dairy owner was my next-door-neighbor where I was living. It seemed the economy was doing pretty well. It was not a rich country, but it has good climate and the food was cheap, unless you bought imported food.

Q: Did you feel any of the tensions of the more black Jamaicans, the underclass? Did they live in areas where it wasn't a good idea to go?

MALKIN: Well, there were areas in west Kingston, or Spanish Town, which was a small city not too far from Kingston that were considered dangerous by other Jamaicans, especially before elections. I remember driving into a poor black neighborhood because I wanted a piece of this famous Jamaican carver's work. I drove to his place several times and nobody ever bothered me.

There was still a certain respect for foreigners and white or light-skinned people. If you met somebody who was high on ganja, then he might give you a hard time. The one time I remember meeting a Rastafarian smoking ganja, he offered me some. When I told him I don't smoke, he said, "That's baad mon, that's baad."

Q: What about the white ex-colonial class? I sort of have the feeling that they were somewhat replicating the Kenyan upper class or white settlers there, or dissolute, remittance-type people and all that. Was that around?

MALKIN: I don't recall a big British overseas resident community in Jamaica.

Q: Maybe what I'm thinking of was more in Bermuda and Bahamas.

MALKIN: Sugar plantations and rum mills were big in Jamaica, but except for the banks, I don't remember a large British business community,

Q: When you left there in '72, where did you go?

MALKIN: I had to come back to Washington, of course. I'd married a foreigner.

Q: She was Canadian?

MALKIN: She was born in British Guyana, and she had Jamaican citizenship as well as Guyanese.

WILIAM T. BREER
Political Officer
Kingston (1972-1974)

William T. Breer was born in California in 1936. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth University in 1957 he served in the United States army from 1957-1958. His career has included positions in Tokyo, Sapporo, Kingston, and Yokohama. Mr. Breer was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 1999.

Q: Well then, in 1972 whither?

BREER: To Jamaica as political officer.

Q: This was quite a change.

BREER: I think there was a GLOP [Global Outlook Planning] program.

Q: Yes, this would have been the time. Kissinger was very unhappy when he went to a Latin

American conference and discovered everybody had been there forever and ever and really knew very little about NATO or anything else.

BREER: Well, I never served in a NATO country except here. Jamaica counted not only as a GLOP assignment but also a developing country assignment, even though the north coast of Jamaica is kind of elegant in places. We settled down in Kingston for two years, 1972-74.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

BREER: A fellow named Vincent de Roulet.

Q: He had quite a reputation. Could you give your impression of how he operated and the effect on the embassy?

BREER: He was totally conspiratorial, figuring everyone was [suspect] except a chosen few. He treated everybody like his personal lackey. Before I got there he had animal names for everybody on the staff. There was a very good article in Harper's Magazine in 1974 about him. He didn't like Blacks. He had a lot of disdain for humanity in general. He was horribly vulgar. Generally a kind of despicable person.

Q: Where did he come from?

BREER: From Los Angeles originally. An old Lost Angeles family, I think. My mother was in high school with one of his aunt's. He was married to the daughter, Joan Pacson, who was Jock Whitney's sister. He had a private plane and flew back and forth to the United States and kept a large yacht in Kingston harbor. He ran horses at the local track, hobnobbed with the north shore investors from Texas and other places and really thought he was the smartest man in the world. He got PNGed (persona non gratis) in 1973 after accusing me... I can't remember the exact details now, but someone in the Jamaican government had spread the word that de Roulet wanted me to report to Washington that Manley was a communist or friendly with the communists. I don't recall having done that but he wrote a seriously derogatory telegram about me to the State Department. Then, he flew to Washington to testify in congress and testified something to the effect in both closed and opened sessions, that he made a deal with Manley in the 1972 election that if Manley would lay off the bauxite, he would keep the CIA out of the election. Anyway he was PNGed when that became public and never came back to Jamaica again.

Q: This was a peculiar assignment for you.

BREER: It was for everybody in the embassy. There was nobody with any Jamaica experience in the embassy.

My foreign service experience is that I have never had any particular set of instructions, but I was expected to get to know the political system and political leaders and analyze the political situation for Washington. This was at a time when there was a less then friendly prime minister, Michael Manley.

Q: One of his mainstays was a certain amount of confrontation with the United States.

BREER: Well, he was a third world leader, a friend of Qadhafi's and he cozied up to Castro who are against American policy. He was pretty basically socialist at heart and scared away a lot of investors from Jamaica, I think. He didn't encourage, but I think under his regime there was more violence in Jamaica and more attacks. He scared a lot of white and brown Jamaicans out of town, while he took their capital and make trips to Miami and Canada. And, these were some people who supported him. He was supported by part of the business community.

Q: How about reporting in a place like this? Who was your DCM?

BREER: George Roberts.

Q: He was a Foreign Service officer?

BREER: Yes.

Q: How did he get along with the ambassador?

BREER: All right. He made it his business to get along with him. George is a terrific guy and we got along very well.

Q: Did you find that the government, other than Manley, was fairly open and you were able to go talk to people?

BREER: Yes. And, I ran around and lunched with or called upon politicians. I used to go to observe debates in parliament and traveled around the country and talked to local leaders. I went down to Spanish town to PNP (People's National Party) political rallies at night by myself and was carefully watched by the police.

Q: You had a prime minister who was a black who had evidence of racism towards whites, did his party reflect that?

BREER: I shouldn't say towards whites so much as I should say North Americans. He had white people supporting him for a while.

Q: *Did you find any crimp on your reporting coming from the ambassador?*

BREER: No.

Q: So there really wasn't an issue about what you should report with him?

BREER: No, I don't think so.

Q: Was the ambassador an issue in Jamaica?

BREER: Oh, yes, very much so. If I remember correctly, de Roulet refused to shake Manley's hand before he was prime minister.

Q: I recall at some point there was an issue of not allowing visa applicants to use the embassy bathrooms.

BREER: Yes, that was part of it. I think the Jamaican visa line set the example for the rest of the world of how badly we treat visa applicants. The treatment of visa applicants in a whole host of countries is really pretty horrible, both for the applicant and the visa officer.

Q: I would think in your job that you would find that every contact you would make would have a list of people who wanted visas. How did you handle this?

BREER: Some I rejected and some I sent to the consul general for his judgment.

Q: Did you see Manley as a threat to democracy in the place or was he sticking pretty much to a rule by getting popular support?

BREER: I don't think he was a threat to democracy. Manley was a great sort of English tradition LSE, London School of Economics, liberal who had been a RAF pilot. He was a tremendously charismatic leader and a wonderful speaker. He had a booming voice and spoke very elegantly about rights, poverty, education, and all these horrible issues facing Jamaica. But, I think he managed in the process to scare a lot of capital away. Up until the time he was elected, there was a great deal of inflow of capital due to the rapidly expanding bauxite industry and that spilled over into many other industries. There was a great deal of prosperity but when I got there, there was a strike. I was stunned in Jamaica. We took a trip to Guatemala, a long weekend, and walked through the market there and the prices were [higher] than they were in Jamaica and [there was] not nearly as much abundance of produce. Of course, Guatemala is a bigger country but Jamaica grows lots of fruits and vegetables.

Q: Was there concern at the embassy for personal safety because of the growing violence?

BREER: We didn't let our children walk on the streets by themselves. They were small but we wouldn't let them even go next door by themselves. In retrospect we may have been reacting too much to our Jamaican neighbors' caution. Actually, we took some precautions but I never felt particularly frightened. We drove all over the island. We drove at night through villages that had no electricity up in the hills. We drove over the mountains and back roads. I never felt threatened. Now, downtown Kingston is a little different. It is teeming and seedy and rundown.

Q: What about the opposition? Did they sort of represent wealth?

BREER: Yes, but not entirely. There was one tremendously wealthy, prosperous family that were Manley backers. One of them was the lord mayor of Kingston while I was there and another, one of his brothers, was head of the bauxite board. There was another family that was all the other party. The banks were basically foreign with Canada having the biggest bank there. But the old money, I think, supported the JLP, Jamaica Labor Party, the other party.

Q: When the ambassador was PNGed was there a period of time where you were working under a chargé?

BREER: Yes.

Q: Did a new ambassador come out while you were there?

BREER: Yes.

Q: Who was that?

BREER: Ashley Hewitt was the new incoming DCM and served as chargé until the new ambassador arrived. The new ambassador was Sumner Gerard from Philadelphia and a banker or something. A very nice man. He arrived in the summer of 1974 and things settled down quite a bit.

Q: There was quite a change?

BREER: Oh, yes.

Q: Did he understand that there was need to repair the damage?

BREER: Yes, very much.

Q: What about relations with Cuba? I imagine we were reporting on this or was it left in the hands of the CIA?

BREER: More in the hands of the CIA, which, by the way predicted that Hugh Shearer would win the 1972 election and my predecessor predicted that Michael Manley would.

Q: A classic case of the foreign service versus the CIA.

BREER: I think we have been more generally right. Nobody handles Cuba more than I reported on exchanges back and forth. There was one time when I was down there when Jamaica's biggest agricultural foreign exchange export was sugar and they were importing sugar from Cuba. They had a quota to fill with the UK and they ran out of sugar for local use and had to buy it from Cuba at one point.

Q: *Had the Jamaican community in the United States established enough roots to become a political power the way other groups had?*

BREER: In local politics probably. There was and is such a huge concentration in Queens in New York City. Most of the Jamaican migrants to New York were pretty well educated people.

Q: One always notices in our politics that often the African American leaders who really move to

the fore often have a Jamaican or Caribbean background. Barbara Watson, Stokley Carmichael, etc. They don't seem to have suffered from whatever the problems are within the United States proper. They come with a certain amount of both education and drive.

BREER: Yes, a middle class self-consciousness. A lot of them come from middle class or professional families.

Q: They seem to get ahead. It reminds one of Asians who come to the United States. They are not wasting their energy in feeling put upon. When you left Jamaica in 1974 in what direction did you feel Jamaica was headed?

BREER: I also kept in touch with the leader of the opposition too, Edward Seaga, who was a Harvard graduate and eventually became prime minister. He didn't do a very good job either. It is a tough proposition. There isn't much to work with. I felt Jamaica was in for a hard economic time and therefore social tensions would persist with huge unemployment. Kingston had some elegant suburbs up toward the hills but otherwise was dreadful. The government tried redevelopment projects. I don't know what it is like now.

Q: Did you see that bauxite was becoming less important?

BREER: During my time there it was still very important and was the major export. I think it was still expanding but bauxite is not a rare commodity and there was growing competition from Surinam, Ghana, etc. The Jamaicans were trying to squeeze everything they could get out of it. They were squeezing the companies more, and probably rightly so. The original deals were probably one-sided with the middle man making out well. I think they are still exporting bauxite but... The emphasis went on tourism but a lot of tourism is backed by foreign investment and profits often go back outside the country. There was a huge influx in the '60s of second home buyers and developers all up and down the north coast. These projects employ a lot of local people but a lot of the stuff is owned by outsiders.

Q: Were there an increase in community guards?

BREER: Yes, guarded communities existed all over the north coast. All the hotels and resorts have their own security forces.

Q: In 1974 where did you go?

BREER: To Japan.

KENNETH N. ROGERS
Jamaica, Guyana Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1973-1974)

Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio

State University in 1953, and his UJD from George Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

ROGERS: I was assigned to be the Jamaica and Guyana desk officer. I worked those talks. I made trips to Jamaica to review all aspects of U.S. investments there.

Q: You were there on the Jamaica and Guyana desk from 1973 to when?

ROGERS: 1973 to 1974. Then, I was assigned to the only bad assignment I ever had at the request of a friend from Vietnam who had become a very senior officer in ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency). He had me assigned to ACDA. It was interesting. I learned a lot about nuclear weapons proliferation, and chemical and biological warfare. But, suddenly, this mentor, who shall remain nameless, was transferred elsewhere. I was isolated high and dry. The Arms Control people who worked there had no interest in arms control at all, but quite the reverse. I was sent on a trip around parts of South America having to do with nuclear weapons proliferation. We were concerned that Brazil and Argentina were making nuclear weapons.

Q: I've had many other people discuss this issue, so I'd like to get your view.

ROGERS: We were really worried about that. Because I had had Latin American experience, I was assigned by ACDA to go with a physicist and another person to try to ferret this out. The trip also took us to Chile, Peru, and Mexico. Argentina and Brazil were the main targets of the trip. The concern was that they were going to buy a reactor called the Becker Nozzle System. This would permit weapons grade untraceable byproduct to come out of the reactor so that they could, without IAEA monitoring, make nuclear bombs. There is a Westinghouse similar product of similar price. We were trying to encourage them to buy not the German Becker, but the Westinghouse model which we could monitor well for a lot of reasons, partly because our engineers were supervising it. That was the main project. I was assigned to write the report on this trip and I did so. As an experienced FSO, I cleared each part of the report with the desk officer of each of the countries we visited. The then director of ACDA, Fred Iklé, sent word down that I had shown my trip report to the State Department and this was a terrible thing to do. I said, "What are you talking about? It's the same government. They have to do the work after we leave." They were furious. I was so shocked at attitude. I was in shaky condition, then. Suddenly, a call came that “We need somebody in Angola right away, because there has been a coup in Portugal. They're going to have independence in about three months. Could you go? We have all kinds of terrible problems on reporting, refugees, American citizen protection, that sort of thing." I said, "Sure, whatever is needed." I was delighted to escape ACDA. It still was an exciting and dramatic challenge. Within 36 hours, I was on my way to Angola.

HERMAN REBHAN
General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation
Washington, DC (1974-1989)

Herman Rebham was born in Poland and raised in Germany. He came with his family to the United States in 1938 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. After working in auto manufacturing plants in the Midwest, he became Administrative Assistant to United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, and dealth with domestic and international labor matters throughout his career. In 1972 he became the United Auto Workers Director of International Affairs in Washington, D.C. Mr. Rebham died in 2006. Mr. Rebham was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle in 1995.

REBHAN: I had a similar thing [happen] in Jamaica. Who was Prime Minister of Jamaica?

Shea: Edward Seaga.

REBHAN: Not Seaga. Before Seaga. He [Michael Manley] went through training in the Steelworkers Union. He was from the Bauxite Workers Union. He recently [declined to run for Prime Minister] because he has cancer. Anyway, he was the Prime Minister. We had a Latin American conference and the Prime Minister was going to come and the ambassadors were at the meeting, and in my speech. . . -- They were horsing around with Castro at the time. The Cubans sent a lot of teachers and health officers to Jamaica at that period. -- I criticized Jamaican policy and I said, "If Pinochet sent troops to South Africa to defend South Africa like Castro sends, what would you say?" The Prime Minister got furious at that. He had to answer me in his speech, and the next day the opposition paper published my whole speech.

DONOR M. LION
USAID Director and Economic Counselor
Kingston (1977-1979)

Donor M. Lion was born in Manhattan and raised in Brooklyn. He attended Erasmus Hall for secondary school. He received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University. He then earned a master's degree in Buffalo before returning to Harvard to obtain his Ph.D. All of his degrees were in the field of economics. His first overseas assignment was working with the Marshall Plan in Norway. He has also served abroad in Brazil, Jamaica, Guyana, Peru, and Thailand. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on June 25, 1997.

Q: After a year there, then you went where?

LION: The US ambassador to Jamaica, designate, came to the bureau and I was asked to brief him on Jamaica. That selection was made because we had decided to help Jamaica some months before that, resume a bilateral program or something. I was made chief of a group that went down there: a fellow from Treasury, a fellow from AID, a fellow from State and I were asked to draw up a program of assistance to Jamaica, a multi-year program. So I learned a lot about

Jamaica and what its needs were during that time. I don't know how many weeks we were down there. I was considered the expert on Jamaica in the bureau, which meant that nobody else knew about Jamaica and I knew a little bit.

Fred Irving, who was ambassador to Jamaica, newly selected or designated at that point, I don't remember, came to the bureau and I was asked to brief him. We sat down, chatted for a while then we had lunch in the executive dining room. He said to Lalo, "I want this guy in Jamaica." Lalo said to me, "Donor, you can go anywhere in the bureau that you want to." I said, "I'll go to one of two places, please, I'll go to Jamaica or Haiti." I was a glutton for punishment.

Q: That's right.

LION: So it was kind of a coincidence. Our ambassador to Jamaica wanted me. Jamaica was one of the two countries that I would like to go to. So, I ended up in Jamaica as the Economic Counselor and the AID director.

That was an interesting experience because I had to supervise the commercial attaché, or whatever they called him then, since I was also the Economic Counselor. But that didn't work too well because State Department people never paid any attention to a personnel evaluation written by an AID person. Not in those days, they may have improved since but they didn't then. So in a way, John, who was a wonderful, nice guy, was penalized by the fact that I was made the Economic Counselor. But I tried very hard to give him as much responsibility as I could because being the AID person was a full-time job. I couldn't spend a lot of time on the stuff that Economic Counselors usually do. But it was interesting trying to do that kind of combined work. I didn't enjoy that nearly as much as the combined job in Recife.

Q: What was the situation in Jamaica that you were working with?

LION: In Jamaica, the big challenge was whether we could push the Jamaican government into sensible economic policy: macro, micro, budget, fiscal, whatever. The head of Jamaica was Michael Manley, who always had been a socialist. He was educated, along with a lot of other people many years before that, at the London School of Economics, which produced several terrible policy people. Manley seemed to be receptive and was willing to explore with the IMF, a stabilization program. So that took a lot of my time, at that point.

Another thing we worked very hard on was primary health care in Jamaica. There was a major effort. Another thing in Jamaica that we worked on was trying to convert hillsides into agricultural productive locations by terracing, bulldozing and making them flat. Not successful, that did not work. The health program was useful.

Q: That started with the stabilization program where we did major balance-of-payments assistance.

LION: No. We came up with the program that we developed when I went down there, in the neighborhood of 60 million dollars. That doesn't sound like a lot but you're talking about two million people. You're talking about a country that's the size of the state of Connecticut. I think

ten million of that was for balance-of-payments assistance, the rest was for agriculture and health and PL 480 and training programs and stuff like that.

Michael Manley tried, I think sincerely, to work out an agreement with the IMF. He went on national television. A magnificent speaker he was, articulate, beautiful, persuasive, trying to sell the IMF program to the people of Jamaica. And he did but his party screwed it, undermined it. Part of the agreement involved the development, what might be called a social compact, with the private sector, with the cooperation of the opposition political party. That just never came off and the agreement collapsed. But part of our work, as the AID fellow more than the Economic Counselor, was working with the IMF people who were down there. Briefing them about Jamaica and then thinking with them behind the scenes. We were not involved with the negotiations with the government, on the structure of the program. I found that very exciting. I had already been involved with multilateral coordination and regional development so it was something I was comfortable with in supporting.

Q: How did you find the IMF at that time?

LION: It depends so much on the individual they send down. The guy they sent down was very understanding, very thoughtful, reasonable. He was not, what I think IMF had been and was even after that for some years, rather formulaic about their approach to macro problems: you've got to cut expenditures, you've got to cut the public payroll, you've got to cut tariffs. Automatic, that's what you always had to do. In the end, they did not take sufficient account, in my opinion, of the social impact. But he was not that way, so we sort of saw eye-to-eye. It just didn't work out.

Q: Basically it was because of the party?

LION: Because Manley was subverted by the extremists, the leftist extremists in his party.

Q: Which were what, protesting?

LION: He had to have their support and their cooperation. After all, they were in key positions in the government, they were the managers of the bureaucracy, they ran whatever it was, agriculture, finance, planning. There was one guy in planning who was very good and who would have supported, did support what Manley was trying to do, what the IMF was trying to do, what AID, in the background, was supporting but he was not politically potent, he was a technical person, he was an economist, Richard Fletcher, his name was, a wonderful guy. The head of the central bank for a time, was also a good guy, but he got clobbered politically.

Q: In retrospect, could there be anything that one might have been done differently that you learned from that experience?

LION: I learned that we're less powerful, less influential than we'd like to be and hope to be and sometimes think we are. It's the domestic scene that really calls the shots. I don't know whether we could have in some way persuaded the other people in the party.

Q: Engage them more in the process?

LION: I don't think that would have helped, Haven. Here is the head of the party, presumably, who was trying to do the right thing. A very powerful man, one of the most popular men in Jamaican history, Michael Manley. He was the son of Norman Manley, who was kind of like the founder of an independent Jamaica. Who wasn't able to do it.

We've always had these people in the world: fanatics, ideologues. The enemy of progress.

Q: But weren't these people, let's say, threatened in terms of their jobs, in their economic situation and so on?

LION: No. It was just an ideologue kind of thing. It was too bad.

Q: You spoke about having a health program. Did that work pretty well?

LION: There was a woman in the ministry of health, she was on contract. I believe she was English. A wonderful lady. Linda, my wife, was head of the health/population office in Jamaica. Thereby hangs a tale too. How do you work that out as mission director and office director. She and this lady got along very well.

The Jamaican health care system was in terrible shape. Few resources, not enough trained people, badly managed, inefficient, all that. That's what they were working on. I think they made some progress but we weren't there long enough.

The Jamaican program was up and down, up and down, depending on the political situation. After Manley there was a fellow named Seaga who was a moderate and whose party was more willing to undertake reforms of various kinds. But then they ran into trouble. Up and down.

Q: You said that the agricultural program of terracing didn't work. Why didn't it work?

LION: I think that the whole approach was cost ineffective. To bring in heavy equipment, how many thousands and thousands of dollars you'd spend on heavy equipment. It was more of a photo op that it ended up being. The ambassador and I, or some other people from the mission, would go out there and cut the yellow plastic rope at the front of one of these flattened terraces. The evaluations that have been done within AID around the world have indicated that that is not the way to go in most places. What works in one country, like putting rocks up to shore up some dirt and making a bed that way, worked a lot better than terracing--in some of the countries in Africa.

I wasn't there very long, '77 to '79. We were having some problems with the DCM when I was there. The DCM liked to go home on a Friday and come back on a Monday with a 15-page economics cable. He was not all that, well, these cables were not good. I think you know that I always said what I thought when I was with the agency, I always said what I thought and I didn't change when I was in Jamaica. So I used to tell this fellow, I used to suggest changes and tried to be as delicate and diplomatic as possible but by the time I got through with my corrections, suggestions, and all the rest of it, it was a different cable. This irritated the hell out of him so we

didn't get along very well. The ambassador had to make a choice at the end of my two-year tour. He chose the DCM.

So I left and came back to the states and bought a house and was looking around for what I might do. When all of a sudden, Edna, who was the director in Guyana, was called back to Washington to be head of personnel.

Q: Edna Boorady.

LION: First woman personnel director. I think Linda is the second. So, they had a vacancy in Guyana and that's where I ended up, in Guyana. The house that I bought turned out to be a great investment so something good happened.

By the way, the ambassador met me at the State Department dining room a few years later and he said, "I shouldn't have done it. You should have stayed."

Q: In Jamaica

LION: Yes, Ambassador Lawrence, Larry Lawrence.

Q: You were going to Guyana, right? At this point?

LION: After Jamaica, yes. Edna was called out to be head of personnel in Washington so Guyana opened up. Alex Shakow was the PPC guy at the time. At my swearing-in, you know sometimes the PPC chief or whoever is the host makes a few comments. He said, "Couldn't think of a better person to send to Guyana." The place just roared. Sort of like Siberia or something.

DENNIS HAYS
Consular/Administrative Officer
Kingston (1977-1979)

Ambassador Dennis Hays was born into a US Navy family and was raised in the United States and abroad. He was educated at the University of Florida and Harvard University. Entering the Foreign Service in1975, he spent the major portion of his career dealing with Latin American, particularly Mexican and Cuban, Affairs. He also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Burundi, and from 1997 to 2000 as U.S. Ambassador to Surinam. Ambassador Hays was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.

HAYS: There were at this point only two jobs left; B&F (Budget and Financial) officer in Lagos and vice consul in Kingston, Jamaica. There was one other guy, Brent Miller. I remember talking to the personnel person saying, "You know, Brent really has an accounting background and I think he'd do well in that job. I think that would work out well for Brent." So I took the Kingston

job, and as it turns out there were three of us from my A-100 class who went there because in the previous two classes no one had been prepared to go. It had been left at the bottom of the list and no one had bid. So when our class came around, they said were going to take three from it and two out of the next class. So we became the Kingston trio. We had the consular course and were due to be shipped out. The first guy, Harold Bond, left in December. This was at the time of the second Michael Manley election in early December. So Harold is scooted out immediately, and he was there by the time of the election. He wasn't happy about it, as I remember, but it worked out. Then I went. I was supposed to go at the end of January, and I actually checked out, said goodbye, loaded the car, and was going to drive to Miami. I woke up with 104° fever, went to the doctor thinking I would get a late start, and he said I had mononucleosis. So I had to postpone my departure which made the post very unhappy because they wanted me there, of course, two months before. So that added a week and another tearful farewell to my then girlfriend who had given me the mononucleosis, and so I finally got to post on February 6, 1977.

Q: And you went as vice consul in the consular section, doing visas primarily?

HAYS: Yes, doing nonimmigrant visas. There was Harold, my classmate, and we had a supervisor. We also had what seemed at the time like thousands – but was actually hundreds – of applicants every day. My on-the-job training consisted of the supervisor – who was in his seventh year as an untenured officer at that point – coming up and doing the first two interviews. He then patted me on the back and said, "Good luck." I had had the consular training. This was when the security consciousness was only weighing in, and we weren't quite as sophisticated as we are these days. So shortly before I arrived, they put in those flexguard windows and fortified the wall between the applicants and the people. Of course, we walked out to hand out the passports to people, and we had to go through the waiting room to get in and out and other such things, but nevertheless, we had this wall and this flexguard window that they had drilled some holes in. The problem was that sound did not go through these windows very well, and so you ended up having to lean forward on your tippy toes and scream into the windows and the person on the other side would scream back.

At that time Jamaica was having a lot of problems, a lot of violence. There was the beginning of the flight of the business class, and everybody else for that matter, and so there was very heavy demand both on the IV (immigrant visa) side and the NIV(non-immigrant visa) side. Probably 75 to 80% of first-time applicants were being denied. Like most people I had never said no to anybody in my life really about anything, sort of here take my last dollar sort of stuff, and now you're in a situation where all day unrelieved, you're telling people, "No, your hopes and your dreams are crushed by me." There is an adjustment, and you obviously get calloused or hardened or toughened or whatever you like to call it as time goes on, but nevertheless it was interesting to watch the other people who came behind me over the course of the next two years to see how people respond to that kind of pressure. Some keep their objectivity, some are hardened and find that it's easier to say yes or they find it's easier to say no and then that becomes the answer.

I knew from Jamaican friends of mine that one of their challenges was to wait and see and position yourself for the right vice consul for the match. That would increase your odds of getting approval. One of the things I went through early on was to put yourself in their shoes, and I said, "Well, I were on the other side would I be a bona fide applicant or would I be an intending

immigrant or something?" So that seemed to work for a while until I got a guy who came up who was born one day before me, i.e. he was one day older than I was. He was sort of my height and my build and he was a Jamaican guy, and he didn't qualify under any circumstances. He was a young male, and he had a job where he worked for his brother at a garage. He wanted to go buy auto parts, like everybody does. He was a bright guy and I enjoyed talking to him. I normally tried never to tell people to come back; that was a problem.

In this case I said, "Look, bring me some stuff about your brother's business and let me take a look at it." So he did that, and we talked some more. There was a restaurant across the street from the consulate. It was the only place that you could eat, and so we would always go over there. We would be eating on the patio, and of course, the visa line would be watching us eat. Of course, sometimes the applicants would go there; it was the only place for them to eat too so it happened that this guy was there. He was clever and maybe he planned it, and we started talking again. He wasn't pushy or anything. I said if I were born in Jamaica, you know I could easily be this guy, and I'd want somebody to have some faith and trust in me, so what the heck, I'm going to go issue the visa. What the heck?

I did that, and I was feeling quite happy and quite proud of myself for helping humanity. Three or four weeks went by and the blue sheets came back, the turn-arounds that the INS (Immigration and Naturalization) does at the port of entry. There's his name. Of course, when they saw this guy they wondered how he got a visa, and so they took him to secondary. When they opened up his luggage, they found letters and other things. It turns out that he was basically a pimp. He had some girl friends who worked for him that he had smuggled through Canada, and he was going up to join them to set up business in New York City. So that was the last time I put myself in their shoes and tried to anticipate other people's reactions to these things. I went back to a more standard gut reaction based on salaries and earnings and family ties and these kinds of things. I never found anything that I had that much confidence in that ensured I was making the right decision at the right time.

Q: Did you basically do this work for the whole two years you were there or did you switch to another?

HAYS: No, I switched. We had a visit. I think the first one was Rosalynn Carter when she was First Lady. She came down, and I was taken over to help out with the visit. I liked that, and I was pretty good at it at organizing and scheduling and doing those sorts of things. The then admin officer, Gene Scassa, who I also hit it off, invited me to come over, and it worked out for me to do a detail in the admin section because there was no GSO (General Services Officer). I think the last one had been shipped off to detoxification or something so there was a vacancy there. Anyway, I came in and worked for what was supposed to be a six weeks' rotation. It worked out pretty well so then he got me reassigned at post. Meantime, I had worked on IVs for a few months and also non-immigrant visas. Then this happened, and I moved over into the admin section. So I spent two and a half years in Jamaica which is a little long for the first tour, but I was reassigned at post with the last year was in the admin section.

Q: When you were doing visas, either nonimmigrant or IVs, were you doing some third country nationals or pretty much Jamaicans?

HAYS: It was mostly Jamaicans. Occasionally, we'd get some third country nationals. Here's my first sort of brush with the wider diplomatic world; I play tennis and there's a club there called the Rickety Club and one of the few places to play. A guy comes up, and I didn't have a partner, and so we played tennis. We had a drink afterwards and agreed to meet two days later and play some more tennis. It turned out it was the new Russian ambassador. So I thought this was kind of neat, the Russian ambassador and we were diplomats and here we are. So I mentioned that to somebody and, of course, twenty minutes later the phone is ringing. I go upstairs, and the RSO (Regional Security Officer) and the Agency guy were there and say, "What is this? Where did this come from? What the hell are you doing?" It wasn't that big a deal, but they were excited because this was still 1977. They arranged for me to introduce one of the other guys who was actually a better tennis player than I was and more at the ambassador's level. I brought him along the next time and introduced him there, and they did whatever they do from that point.

Mostly it was working with Jamaicans. We spent a lot of time together, because in many ways at that point – I don't know if it was a conscious decision but it sort of worked out at that time – we were getting single males assigned to the embassy because of the security situation and so it turned out it was sort of like a fraternity which I was used to. We had all these guys, we'd go out and party and make friends and go to the beach and do these kinds of things. Actually, even though it had the reputation of being one of the worst assignments in the Service, as I suspect is not uncommon, once you get there you find out that it's not so bad. There're lots of things to recommend it and it's a fun place and there you go.

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

HAYS: The ambassador was Sumner Gerard when I arrived. He was a very patrician political appointee from, I think, upstate New York, married to a Polish countess who had a yacht as I understand it. I thought he was a very charming, very elegant man, but I'm told that once he got on the yacht he turned into Captain Bligh. On Friday afternoons as one of the treats for the young officers, he would invite them to crew on his boat over the weekend. I think, quite sincerely, he thought this was a nice gesture to help the staff out. Of course, from the staff side, people would hide under desks or jumping into closets to avoid being given the honor of getting to crew on the ship. Anyway, he was there for only the first three or four months that I was there.

Then Frederick Irving came in as ambassador. He was very helpful to me. It's sort of the next chapter of the transition, and I'll explain one of the ways he was very helpful. I hit it off really well with him. I think it was the twelve hours I spent over one weekend fixing his electrical system that cemented that relationship. And also with the visits, as I said, I think I have a knack for organizing official business and things and so that was helpful and he liked those sorts of things too. And finally Roy Lawrence came in just at the very end, the last two or three months I was there.

Q: You mentioned other visits besides the first lady Rosalyn Carter. Were there others?

HAYS: Yes, we had Andrew Young come and Peter Bourne if you remember him? Actually, he

was Carter's drug czar or drug adviser, and it turned out that he had firsthand knowledge of the subject and so he left. Interestingly, I ran into him about two weeks ago in the audience at CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) where I was giving a speech on Cuba and there he was. My crystal memory of him was at three o'clock in the morning at the Kingston Airport looking for his lost luggage. We had a number of these trips that came along and so they were fun.

Q: Anything else about your admin experience that we should mention?

HAYS: It was good. I got to be the GSO for a long time, and then they brought in a supervisory GSO who was an AID (Agency of International Development) guy who was a good guy and I learned some things from him. This care and feeding of an embassy certainly was more complicated than I had anticipated, and of course, demands were placed on us by the embassy staff. Throughout the rest of my career, I had a very soft spot for GSOs (General Services Officer) because of those calls at two in the morning about a plumbing leak. Here in the States, you know, no one would think of calling someone at two in the morning to come fix a blocked toilet, but overseas that seems to happen.

Also, I got in trouble a couple of times for excessive use of discretionary authority. Perhaps, I'll tell you one quick one. I like it, no one else does. I had a running feud with an AID guy for some reason I can't remember now. We had a visceral dislike one for the other. A number of incidents occurred, but the one I'll relate here was when we were remodeling the embassy. As usual it was disruptive, it was messy, and we had to demolish the section that this guy happened to be in and stuff them, doubled up, in another area for about two or three weeks so that we could do the building. It wasn't anything that was planned; it was just the way it was. Anyway, he refused to move. He said, absolutely not until my new office is ready, I'm not moving. The weekend that this was supposed to take place he locked the door of his office with great ceremony and stomped off. So the next morning, there I am with the crew and we're moving furniture and all, and we can't get into his area. So I took the walls down on the side and pulled out all his furniture and his safe, and then put the wall back up. So the room that was his little office space was the only thing on Monday morning that was there. The door was locked, of course, and when he opened it all his furniture and everything was long gone. I got into some trouble for that, but it was worth it.

Q: Was this a joint administrative section?

HAYS: It was one of the first, as I remember – I forget the acronym now, JCAS or something like that – for joint administrative support. It covered the AID mission as well as all the other agencies.

Q: In view of your subsequent involvement with Cuba, I was wondering if you had any particular involvement with Guantanamo or Cuba?

HAYS: Guantanamo was at our supply base, and at this point, in Jamaica there were almost no foodstuffs you could buy. Other than some mangoes and pineapple juice, literally, supermarkets were empty. There was a once a month support flight where people would fly to Guantanamo and load up. But the Cuba question really didn't come up while I was there. There was a Cuban

Embassy that opened up during the time I was there with great fanfare, and Castro came for a visit during this time. There was a lot of concern over his activities which proved out later to be with good reason. Castro was prepared to encourage Manley to do a lot more. There was a program to train Jamaicans in sort of CBR-type environment that included defensive maneuvers. I think fortunately for Jamaica, and for Manley, in 1980 he chose not to go that route and went to an election and lost and gave up power and came back some years later. But my involvement with Cubans was at that point very much at a distance.

Q: And you weren't involved in political matters in Jamaica?

HAYS: Some. There was a political officer, Cochran (was it Rob?), who was quite good, and we worked with the junior officers. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) Roy Haverkamp also encouraged the junior officers to get involved, and one or the other would take us to a lunch when we had a contact, again to just sift through my contacts. My future wife at that point, was Jamaican. We were dating, and so through the university I made contacts with various people. One of the opposition leaders who was sort of on that line between statesmen and thug was someone whom the Political Section was very interested in. So I was helpful in setting up meetings with them.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say about your first post in Kingston?

HAYS: Everyone has a special place in their heart for their first post, and it was a good post. I think I would have preferred to been in a language post, it would have helped me, but I had been sent to Kingston and it was all right. It was the sort of place where there were things happening; it was interesting politically, it was interesting economically and socially there was music. Bob Marley was down the street from me. It was a great assignment.

Q: Certainly, that's one of the aspects of doing first tour visa work, in many places it is an opportunity to use a foreign language.

HAYS: I didn't have that at all.

ROY T. HAVERKAMP
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1978-1981)

Roy T. Haverkamp was born in 1924 in Missouri. He served in the U.S. Air Force in World War II and later earned degrees from Yale University and Cambridge University. Mr. Haverkamp joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Korea, Sweden, Japan, Cambodia, Congo, Benin, Vietnam, Guinea, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Grenada. He was interviewed on April 11, 1994 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You went to Jamaica from 1978-81. What were you doing there?

HAVERKAMP: I was the DCM.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HAVERKAMP: The first one was Fred Irving and later it was Loren Lawrence, both career officers.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived in 1978?

HAVERKAMP: In 1978 the government of Jamaica had been run by Michael Manley and his party since 1970. It was a nationalistic government, a government with socialist ideas of the general welfare. While it had friends and supporters among the rich and famous, it was also a very class conscious government. It reveled in excess going so far that it not only drove out speculators and the idle rich and many of the working rich but also people like carpenters, plumbers and skilled and trained people in a wide variety of occupations. The economy was in a mess. There was a serious shortage of foreign exchange. They had tremendous problems of over population, poverty and economic slump. There was much talk by the government to solve all these problems, but little was done. You had education for everybody, but when children went to school there were not always enough teachers. There was medical care for everybody but a large number of physicians and medical professionals had left the country and there was no money to buy all the medicine and things needed.

We had an AID program there at the time which increased to the "enormous" sum of $6 million a year. Carter and the Democrats were very friendly to Michael Manley and he certainly did not return their friendship. He was going all over denouncing the United States, blaming us for everything that was wrong with the world. But Carter continued to believe that this was one of our friends who was telling it to us straight. Manley preferred the Cubans.

Q: Where was this coming from? Was this Carter himself or somebody around him?

HAVERKAMP: I don't know who it was directly influencing him on this, but the whole administration I believe were strong supporters of Michael Manley. Manley was very cozy with Castro and the Cubans and said "I will go to the mountain top with Castro". He did things like taking a couple of thousand of his young teenagers and sent them to Cuba to learn socialism. He had Cuban advisors in each of his ministries and his security services. Well, if you favor a socialism that includes the essentials of a democratic society like Manley inherited, there are many socialist countries to which you could send them and you would not send them to Cuba where it was tied in with an authoritarian government. But Cuba was Caribbean and all Jamaican leaders look at Jamaica first of all in relation to their neighbors in the Caribbean. But Michael Manley was using us as the bogeyman to avoid blame for the disastrous economy. He was, I believe, genuinely concerned to improve the lot of the poor who were mostly Black, through education, jobs, and social services. His heart was generous, but he did not know how to manipulate the economy and the society to bring about the changes he wanted. He also did not know how to get what he needed from those outside who could help.

Q: At the embassy how did we view Michael Manley? You had an administration which had a rosy eyed view of things.

HAVERKAMP: When I went there I think they went too far. Our interest in Jamaica is in supporting their democratic system of free elections, an independent judiciary and all the other trappings of democracy. There are legitimate things that you could do that would not interfere in any overwhelming way in their society that you should do. But some in the embassy had gone too far, I think, in supporting Michael Manley because I think they felt that was what the President wanted. Criticism of him was anathema.

The leader of the opposition, a man named Edward Seaga...the opposition party was the conservative party although it was called the Labour Party... In the Westminster system, the leader of the opposition is usually the number three ranking person in the country and has a place in the hierarchy and protocol. Mrs. Carter came down and they did not schedule any appointment with Seaga. I can't remember the Ambassador ever seeing Seaga. After the first Ambassador left I tried to establish relations with Seaga and it took me months because he didn't want to see anybody from the embassy. Like elsewhere in the third world, politics was a winner take all competition. Add to that, die-hards in both parties had armed supporters willing to fire.

We also had another unfortunate thing. Also before I arrived, an Embassy officer, a cynic, left a description of Seaga which was highly detrimental, where it was found by a Seaga henchman. Naturally, this did not help.

We had access to Manley. He would see the Ambassador and listen, but he did not change. When he first ran as head of his party in the 1960s, he had a Foreign Service officer who wrote speeches for him and traveled around with him. That was early Manley.

Q: You mean one of our Foreign Service officers?

HAVERKAMP: Yes.

Q: Good God!

HAVERKAMP: This was in the time that he sang a different song.

Q: This lack of dealing with the opposition, was this coming from the ambassador, from Washington?

HAVERKAMP: Oh, I think this was coming from the Ambassador. It wasn't the whole opposition, it was just that the Ambassador avoided Seaga.

Q: How did you see Fred Irving?

HAVERKAMP: A very bright guy, a very able guy. I respect and like both him and his wife. But I think he felt that he had been sent there and had been told that there is a close relationship between Carter and the Democrats and Manley and his People's National Party and to do

everything we can to help them. Since there was so much antipathy between the party members and the leaders, balance was hard to achieve, nevertheless, it is done all the time in Embassies around the world.

I can remember one White House official telling me at a meeting later on when they were having elections in 1980 that I should go to see Seaga and tell him not to do anything that would politically hurt Manley. That was absolutely insane. If you went into any country in the world and told them not to criticize the opposition, they would say, "Don't come back and see me, see your doctor." So we were all mixed up in those things.

It was important to help preserve the democratic structures of Jamaica, to know and encourage our friends. In the 1980 election I did everything possible to stay neutral. This was not courageous on my part as it was evident people wanted a change. Seaga was certainly better able to do something about the economy and was friendly toward us, although we learned he was no pushover on any issue. In the end his record on the economy was mixed. It was exciting to be their during the elections in 1980. It was a dramatic demonstration of democracy working in a poor country. The Jamaican Defense Force played a critical role by remaining neutral.

Q: When did this happen?

HAVERKAMP: This was 1980.

Q: Who was ambassador then?

HAVERKAMP: It was Lorrie Lawrence.

Q: Well, when he came could you describe how he operated?

HAVERKAMP: Well, he prepared himself very well for it. He was somebody who had great interpersonal skills. He was very intelligent. He brought in the balance that we needed. To see a balance in that type of democratic society does not mean that you ignore things that either side is doing that you think are detrimental to us.

Q: Was the CIA playing any role that you were aware of?

HAVERKAMP: Any dirty tricks role?

Q: Yes.

HAVERKAMP: None that I was aware of. Guns were one of the problems. Both Manley and Seaga had their armed youths in ghetto areas of town. There were certain areas of Kingston where you could not go unless you were accompanied by, introduced by and supported by a Seagalite or in the other case a Manleyite. If you did, you were liable to be shot. And there was one very bizarre case where the military carried out an operation which they botched up. They got a bunch of youths in one of the ghettos which supported Seaga and killed five of them and

some escaped. There was a big to-do, but nothing ever happened. The killers and the victims were the poor, never the big shots in either party. It was a real tragedy.

Q: Were we seeing that things were going to be changing as we looked at this 1980 election?

HAVERKAMP: Yes, I think the general expectation was that in a free election Manley would be voted out and that there would be a change of government. But, I don't think anybody expected a great improvement. People felt Seaga better understood what you had to do to revive the economy than Manley did. Some people felt he was a fascist. He, like Manley, left quietly when he was voted out of office. He was a tyrant within his own party and ruthless. But towards the end the Manley government was very touch and go. People were very concerned that there would be a big shootout. The defense forces once they got rid of a corrupt commander were under a new commander and were pretty gung ho types, committed to supporting the government and its democratic structure. The police were less reliable. You needed an organization that was going to maintain order or deter extreme violence and that was going to be the JDF and they played that role very well and constitutionally. Manley, to his credit went out of office without causing any disturbance or behaving in a disruptive way.

Q: Was the Carter Administration, at least from the White House and what you were getting, still sort of Manley supporters or were they beginning to change?

HAVERKAMP: I think in the end they saw two things. Number one, Manley went to a meeting in Cuba where he really castigated us, including Carter. Then they began to see that this was a bit much. It was one thing to have your friends tell you about your faults, but to tell the whole world and lay the whole world's faults at your doorstep is going a bit too far. Particularly since we felt ourselves to be their supporters. And to their credit, when Seaga came in the Carter administration did raise the AID program a bit.

During the election campaign the Republican National Committee sent down a guy who made contact with the Seaga people. I don't remember the Democrats sending anybody down. If they did, they did it sub rosa. Manley really needed the AID money and he wasn't getting it on terms that he felt he had to have it from the Carter Administration. I made it very clear to everybody in the embassy that our job was to stay out of the way. To know what was going on, but to stay out of the way. I think that if we had evidence that the Cubans or the Soviets were giving any kind of covert support to the Manley people, depending on the circumstances, we should have exposed them. It was clear that people wanted a change and they turned out and lined up to vote.

Q: Was there a Jamaica lobby in the United States or in Congress? A lot of Jamaicans had immigrated to New York.

HAVERKAMP: The Black Caucus was very interested and were strong backers of Manley. Seaga wanted to send somebody to meet with them, but they wouldn't meet with Seaga's people. They were out and out Manleyites.

Q: Was Seaga Black too?

HAVERKAMP: No, Seaga was of Syrian-Lebanese decent.

Q: So that played a certain element there.

HAVERKAMP: Yes, but probably more back here than there. While race and class are problems here and there, racism is much less a problem in Jamaica.

Q: It is funny because I had the impression that Manley had gone far too far and it was a relief to get him out of there.

HAVERKAMP: Oh, he had very definitely, but Manley had White supporters and some rich White supporters and Seaga had poor and middle class Black support.

Q: But within the Democratic Party up until close to the end they got involved with his cause.

HAVERKAMP: Oh, I think they stuck with him all the way through, the Black Caucus and his other supporters back here. He had convinced them of all of these horrors of the opposition. Seaga was a man without much warmth or personality, but he had a lovely wife, a former Miss Jamaica, who was party Black and partly European. She was a beautiful person who greatly improved Seaga's image and acceptability. But he never used that or bragged about it. Their eldest child was a Black child that he had adopted after a fire in the area that he controlled in the ghetto. Race was never an overt question, although I am sure that there were some Black Jamaicans who would not have voted for Seaga and some White Jamaicans who wouldn't have voted for Manley. But early on the Manleys had all of the upper classes as supporters. Manley's father was a very famous lawyer and a man of great character who lost his position as Prime Minister because he insisted on having a referendum which he did not have to have on a West Indies Confederation. Michael Manley was always compared with him and found lacking. His mother was a very famous sculptor.

Q: You were there when Seaga took over?

HAVERKAMP: Yes.

Q: For about the first year?

HAVERKAMP: I was there for about a year and a half, I guess.

Q: How did that go?

HAVERKAMP: The transition was very smooth. I used to meet with Seaga once a week, having breakfast with him well before the elections. One of the things that the government needed was some up front money to bring in consumer goods...not the way he did it in the end, but that is beside the point...to bring in medicines, spare parts, and things that would help the economy to get going. One way to do it was for us to buy bauxite for the stockpile. We needed bauxite in the bauxite stockpile like I need a hole in the head. We didn't need it, but for political reasons it was a good thing to do. Well, we did it. It took almost two years to get it because it had to go through

committees of Congress, the General Services Administration, and a whole host of interests. This was started under Carter. Then when Seaga came up and met with President Reagan, he was assured we would do it, but it still didn't happen right away, it took time. Anyhow by the time he got the money the bottom had dropped out of the bauxite price and it really didn't help him to do what he wanted to do at all, which was unfortunate. Our purchases made up the loss in foreign exchange income, but did not give them the extra addition of cash they needed.

But I think the Seaga people had the impression that he was elected because he wasn't Manley and understood how to manage the economy in a way that would restore economic activity and bring jobs to people.

Q: Well, you left there in 1981 and went where?

HAVERKAMP: I went to Dillard University in New Orleans as a diplomat in residence.

HERMAN REBHAN
General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation
Washington, DC (1980)

Herman Rebham was born in Poland and raised in Germany. He came with his family to the United States in 1938 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. After working in auto manufacturing plants in the Midwest, he became Administrative Assistant to United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, and dealt with domestic and international labor matters throughout his career. In 1972 he became the United Auto Workers Director of International Affairs in Washington, D.C. Mr. Rebham died in 2006. Mr. Rebham was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle in 1995.

REBHAN: I had a similar thing [happen] in Jamaica. Who was Prime Minister of Jamaica?

Shea: Edward Seaga.

REBHAN: Not Seaga. Before Seaga. He [Michael Manley] went through training in the Steelworkers Union. He was from the Bauxite Workers Union. He recently [declined to run for Prime Minister] because he has cancer. Anyway, he was the Prime Minister. We had a Latin American conference and the Prime Minister was going to come and the ambassadors were at the meeting, and in my speech. . . -- They were horsing around with Castro at the time. The Cubans sent a lot of teachers and health officers to Jamaica at that period. -- I criticized Jamaican policy and I said, "If Pinochet sent troops to South Africa to defend South Africa like Castro sends, what would you say?" The Prime Minister got furious at that. He had to answer me in his speech, and the next day the opposition paper published my whole speech.

W. ROBERT WARNE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1981-1984)

W. Robert Warne was born in Washington, DC on November 30, 1937. He attended high school in Iran, Hawaii, and Brazil. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1962. Upon graduation, he joined the U.S. Army. Mr. Warne joined USAID in 1962. His career included positions in Buenos Aires, Brussels, Kingston, and Paris. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy April 1, 1995.

Q: Well, then let's talk about Jamaica. You were in Jamaica from when to when?

WARNE: I was in Jamaica from '81 to '84.

Q: What was the situation?

WARNE: I came in just after Seaga was elected, and stayed during the first part of his administration.

Q: How were our relations then?

WARNE: Our relations were very good. The first year was a very good year, because I had an old, seasoned, career ambassador to work with.

Q: Who was that?

WARNE: Loren Lawrence, a very affable and friendly guy, whose main mission in life was to get along with Seaga. And he did that very well. Seaga used him very well.

I'm not sure that all was in our interest, to be honest. I think there were sides of Seaga that became more apparent as we went along. He was not a good manager. I think probably there were some aspects of him that we didn't fully appreciate, on the corruption and ruthless side. But certainly we were committed to him.

Despite all of our aid, the country didn't turn around. If anything, it was depressed. He had some bad shots. He had the depressed bauxite. The difficulties of criminality and theft against tourists hurt him. But he didn't manage the situation nearly as well as he thought.

He was a very arrogant and difficult person to work with, in some ways. But Lorie got along with him superbly. And, as chargé, I got along with him well. I had a stint of more than six months. But it was during a terrible time of a drought, and they really didn't have any water for parts of the city. Seaga asked me to do an emergency program to bring water in.

We had a large AID program. We built up our AID mission very, very rapidly there. Probably we were not well oriented in our AID program, and I don't think it was a great success, to be honest.

And then we brought in Bill Hewitt, who was the former CEO of Deere and Company, who had never had any governmental experience.

Q: Agricultural and farm...

WARNE: Equipment. Bill was a very fine guy, but was just not the right person to be an ambassador. He just didn't have, I didn't think, much in the way of political intake. It was an unfortunate match, I thought. But he did his best to get along with Seaga. He was very committed.

But he resented me very much in my relationships that I had developed with the opposition, which subsequently came into power. In fact, once, he told me he was going to get me for meeting with the opposition.

Q: This sometimes happens, particularly with political appointees, who don't really understand the long run.

WARNE: Not only that, but feel that you're not being correct in your handling of diplomacy, to meet with the opposition. But Seaga understood. He never called me down for it. In fact, I was quite open with him. And Seaga shared a lot of confidences with me.

In fact, one time, I was really chagrined. Hewitt had to go to Japan just at the time when Seaga decided to hold his snap election. He ordered me, before he left, not to tell the Department about all these plans and everything.

Q: That he was going?

WARNE: No, no, that Seaga was going to have his snap election, and he was going to redo the government, and how he was going to deal with the opposition and so forth. It was almost anti-democratic, what happened. I said, "Well, Bill, what can I do?"

And he said, "Well, if you really feel you have to send a message, here are my numbers in Tokyo. Call me and I will assess it."

So I called him in Tokyo, and I said, "I really feel the situation has gotten to the point where I have to tell the Department."

He wouldn't let me do it.

He had worked out an arrangement with the station chief, and the station chief was doing the reporting. So I essentially got cut out of it.

Q: That's very serious, of course.

WARNE: When I got back to Washington, I told the Department that I really was upset with the way that was handled. And they said, "Well, we knew what was going on. It didn't make that much difference." My political section, obviously, was really distraught, but what could I do?

So I think Bill didn't really have confidence in the State Department; not only me, but the whole political section, and maybe some of the economic section. He just felt that maybe we were too open or we didn't know how to protect secrets or whatever.

Q: Also, there can be this fascination with the CIA station chief. It's enticing to feel that you really are...

WARNE: In the know?

Q: In the know. And, of course, it was an era of William Casey being the head, and the Republican administration was...

WARNE: They cooked up one idea that I really strongly opposed, and that was, Casey was going to come down and visit Seaga. And I said, "There's no way you can do that. This would be a serious mistake. There's no way you could cover it up. If it ever got out that he'd been down here, and he'd been that close to the CIA, it would damage everybody."

No, I had a very difficult time. Bill asked me to stay on for another year, but I just found it an unworkable situation. He let me run the embassy. I did all the work during that Seaga era. He was home during the time when we did the Grenada thing.

I had one political officer, who was not a leftist, but was sort of open minded, who was sleeping, maybe, with the editor of the newspaper or something. And the Agency got on her back a little bit. But I never felt that she was confiding secrets to anybody or anything.

Q: Oh, boy.

WARNE: Boy, I had some tough ones. But Seaga and I got along well. I mean, he's still a good friend of mine. We trade letters and cards. But I didn't trust him.

Q: Well, you came back and did what?

WARNE: I was the director of the Economic Bureau, the Economic Office in Latin America, for two- plus years. And I ran the CBI program for State, and also did a lot of economic work.

Q: This was from when to when?

WARNE: That was from '84 to '86. My main effort was on Central America. That was under Elliott Abrams. I did a lot of work in putting together what was then called the Kissinger Plan for economic development.

Q: Was the Kissinger Plan a real plan, or was he dragged in as a sort of sideshow for pursuing the Contra business and all that?

WARNE: A little bit of both. It was a real plan, and we had a lot of aid effort. But I never felt that we had the discipline in the use of that money to make a difference. I was convinced that, if we were going to do a program, it would be much like the one that we tried in the Caribbean, where we'd get the IMF and the Bank involved, and we would do a thorough analysis and come up with a solid action plan, where the governments had to make commitments to stabilize and to open and to really rejuvenate their economies. That's what I argued about, and, frankly, it just rolled right over the top of them. So I thought a lot of the aid was misused. It was just a short-term payoff. But it was a very substantial program.

Q: For the record, this is about the conflict with Nicaragua, essentially.

WARNE: Well, Salvador, too.

Q: But it was the left versus the right.

WARNE: And it was trying to contain the Contras and also to prevent the insurrection in Salvador from getting out of hand. I was handling sort of the economic side of it with AID.

Also, the Caribbean Basin Initiative was a big effort at that time, and we did quite a bit. I went around and negotiated and settled agreements with all those countries on CBI.

Q: Was this Caribbean Initiative a real program?

WARNE: It had a substantial program. The main thing was the preferential trade arrangement. And I think it made a big impact. But it was a long-term program, and it wasn't going to turn things around right away. It certainly helped solidify our effort in the region, and we had congressional support for it. It didn't make as big a difference as we hoped, because, frankly, it depended on those countries' ability to organize their trade to take advantage of it, and a lot of them were slow in responding, such as Jamaica.

And then, finally, my last tour, I went to Paris. Actually, I did it as a last choice. I wanted to leave the Bureau. I felt that I had had enough of working on economic affairs, and I wanted to go overseas as a DCM or ambassador. At that time, I was a minister-counselor, and had been a minister-counselor for three or four years. I ran in competition for about six or seven DCM jobs, and I didn't get one of them. And it finally came down to Caracas. They had a new ambassador, not a career guy, and he chose a different candidate. So I decided to throw the towel in.

JOHN TODD STEWART
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1984-1986)

Ambassador John Todd Stewart was born in New Jersey in 1940. He received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1961 and his master's degree from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1962. His career has included positions in Munich, Puerto La Cruz, Geneva, Kingston, San José, and an Ambassadorship to the Republic of Moldova. Ambassador Stewart was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in October 1999.

Q: Where did you go next?

STEWART: I went from Personnel to Kingston, Jamaica.

Q: What were you doing there?

STEWART: I was DCM.

Q: You were there from '84 to?

STEWART: '86.

Q: Who was the Ambassador there?

STEWART: There were two. The first one was Bill Hewitt, a political appointee who had been chairman of John Deere for a long period and retired from that job. He was appointed by President Reagan and started his tour before I got there. He was succeeded halfway into my two years by Mike Sotirhos, another political appointee who had run the ethnic campaigns for Reagan/Bush in both elections. He was a businessman from New York who had an interior design firm, not a chi-chi sort of thing, as his firm designed places like officers clubs and hotel lobbies. His hobby was politics, but he was also interested in foreign affairs. His great desire was to become Ambassador to Greece, given his Greek heritage, and he went there after Jamaica.

Q: How about Hewitt? Was Kingston an award for political support?

STEWART: Very much the case. He certainly supported Reagan in the 1980 election, probably with campaign contributions, although I don't know that for a fact. He was CEO at John Deere for 28 years. His wife, Tish, was John Deere's great-granddaughter, and he was the last member of the family to be CEO. He was very experienced in running an organization, and I found him to be a very instructive person to work for. He was not a hands-on manager. One of his aphorisms was that if he knew more about the functioning of a John Deere division than the person in charge, then something was seriously wrong. I also found him to be a very ethical operator. He would say in this respect, "If the deal is not good for both parties, it's not a good deal." The Hewitts took a great interest in art and had a fine personal collection. There's a lot of art in Jamaica, it's an enormously rich country in that respect. They did a tremendous amount for the artistic community, in no small measure by making substantial purchases.

Because of Ambassador Hewitt's operating style I became the hands-on guy. It was a great

experience in that respect. And Jamaica is a wonderful place to be a diplomat. You are taken into the society there more quickly and more completely than in any other place I've served. You are suddenly enveloped with all sorts of interesting contacts and interesting things to do.

Q: What was the political situation there like during '84-'86?

STEWART: Edward Seaga, the Prime Minister, had come to power as head of the Jamaica Labor Party in 1980, after a very hot election in which there was considerable violence.

Q: Manley was in it?

STEWART: Seaga's opponent was Michael Manley, the head of the rival party in Jamaica's two-party system. The invasion of Grenada had taken place the year before I got there, and that action very popular in Jamaica. The Jamaican Defense Force followed the Americans in and took over as the occupying force in Grenada, allowing us to pull our troops out quickly. The Reagan Administration did not, therefore, have to pay the domestic political cost of running a U.S. occupation while the country was being reorganized prior to elections. The popularity of the invasion led Seaga to call a snap election before my arrival, but the opposition People's National Party, Manley's party, charged with some justification that the election breached an understanding between the parties that no election would be called until a new voter registration had been completed. As the result the PNP boycotted the election, and Jamaica had on my arrival a one-party parliament with the opposition on the outside.

To put it mildly, Seaga was not the easiest person in the world to deal with, but Manley was still suffering from his reputation in the late '70s as being the next thing to a communist. While he was not a communist, a lot of his positions were very leftist. He rethought those positions after losing the l980 election, and my efforts, and I had support from both my ambassadors, were directed at rehabilitating him in Washington's eyes. This strategy culminated in a good meeting with Secretary Shultz in 1985. I maintained pretty close contact with him during the two years that I was there, and I was happy to see that U.S.-Jamaican relations improved when he won the next election.

Q: How was Seaga difficult from our perspective?

STEWART: He was referred to in the AID mission as the City Planner because he got into everything. He wanted to micromanage this, that and the other thing. But he really couldn't do it all. There were plenty of competent Jamaicans he could have worked with, but delegation was definitely not his thing. He had, I think, a profound distrust of market processes while our objective was to introduce market mechanisms and wean Jamaica away from the statist approach to development that the country had been following since independence. It was like pulling teeth to get him to agree to fundamental reform, and the privatization of state companies went very, very slowly. As a result of Grenada, we had a huge AID program, over $100 million per year, which was Washington's way of saying "thank you." It included a lot of ESF - Economic Support Fund - money, which was basically a dollar check written to the Jamaican treasury in exchange for the government's undertaking certain programs. Unfortunately, we were never able to make adequate use of this money as leverage for policy reforms because Seaga regarded it,

perhaps with some justification, as payment for services rendered in Grenada.

Q: What about Cuba at this time. Was Cuba playing any role in Jamaica or hovering over the horizon?

STEWART: No, but it's not very far away, of course. If you climb Blue Mountain Peak in Jamaica, you can see Cuba, and there were always some stories about Cuban-sponsored guerrilla bands in the hills and other such nonsense.

Q: What about crime? As DCM, you're responsible for the Embassy community there and also, through your consular section, for private Americans. And I've heard that crime is a major problem.

STEWART: It's certainly no joke. It is a major problem. We had several attacks on Embassy houses when I was there, including one rape. No deaths, thank God. We finally moved to a solution of establishing small compounds, groups of townhouses to which we'd assign a security service. The Ambassador's and DCM's houses had their own guards. And virtually every house in the Embassy housing pool had a so-called "rape gate" that allowed you to cordon off the bedroom area from the rest of the house when you went to bed at night. It was not a particularly pleasant situation in that regard, but it was not the kind of politically motivated violence that would target me because I was the American DCM. Despite the crime problem we didn't have any particular qualms about going up to the North Coast and renting a house for the weekend. But most of those places were located in compounds where there was some security.

Q: Was there almost a double life? I mean there was Kingston and then there was the North Coast, which has rather protected hotels, etc.?

STEWART: Certainly the hotel compounds were rather well guarded, there is no question about that. Once you got outside the hotel compound, you had to be concerned about street crime, and tourists were looked upon as easy marks. I was never really hassled, although we often drove around by ourselves. If you knew your way around, you were much less likely to be bothered.

Q: At one time bauxite was a very important thing. How was it during this '84 to '86 period?

STEWART: Still very important. One of the fiascos during Manley's first period in office was to try and set up an international bauxite cartel, which never really got off the ground. The price of bauxite had fallen, largely as a result of recycling aluminum cans and other end products in the United States and other developed countries.

Q: How about immigration, both legal and illegal? I've heard people who've served in the consular section there say they were getting telephone calls from yuppie couples, asking, "Where the hell is our maid?" They had to wash their own dishes.

STEWART: The visa problem there was dreadful, as it is in so many Caribbean countries. There was an enormous line leading into the consular section every day, people trying to get visitor visas. Sad to say, very few of them were eligible.

Q: Did you find that you were getting a lot of pressure from Congress or from Jamaican officials?

STEWART: I didn't get much pressure from the U.S. We referred Congressional letters to the Consul General and told him, "Good luck." We'd get calls from Jamaican political figures, and I avoided virtually all of them, unless Manley or Seaga called me personally to take a look at a visitor visa case. But by and large their referrals were pretty good cases as they didn't recommend anyone they thought was likely to skip. That was important. The other major activity there was drugs. Primarily marijuana.

Q: This is part of the Rastafarian thing?

STEWART: Well, that's a part of it. Marijuana is called ganja locally, which is an East Indian word. East Indian laborers brought it from the subcontinent at the turn of the 20th century. It grew wild in all parts of the island, and virtually every Jamaican has tried it at one time or another. But the real problem was, of course, cultivation for shipment to the U.S. We were pretty successful during the time I was there in helping the Jamaicans begin a serious eradication campaign. Seaga was opposed at the beginning but then gradually gave way because of serious U.S. pressure. Eradication was not an impossible task in Jamaica because the island is pretty small when you get right down to it. If you can get a plane to do some serious mapping, you can get enough helicopters to land eradication workers at the ganja fields, and you can conduct spot-checks on a periodic basis, then you can have a pretty good eradication campaign that really cuts the guts out of the industry. We had a program budgeted at $40,000 a year when I came and $2,000,000 a year when I left. Seaga was not enthusiastic about chemical spraying although he was starting to give way on that issue toward the end of my time, but spraying was really not necessary there. You could just cut the ganja down and burn it. The fields were not huge—just a hectare here, a couple of hectares there. It was just a matter of getting the chopper to the field with a crew who could cut it down, pile it up and burn it. There were few people who were dependent on ganja because they could easily switch to another crop.

Q: How about Sotirhos as Ambassador? How did he operate?

STEWART: I think it's fair to say that my relationship with Sotirhos wasn't a marriage made in heaven. This was largely due to the fact that I was brought in to do a certain kind of job for Bill Hewitt while Sotirhos was a very hands-on, my-way-or-the-highway sort of guy. We parted quite amicably, I think, at the end of one year, and then I went off to the Senior Seminar.

Q: Why don't we leave it at this point in 1986 when you are going to the Senior Seminar?

DAVID RYBAK
Private Sector Officer, USAID
Jamaica (1985)

Mr. Rybak was born and raised in New York and educated at LeMoyne College. He joined the Peace Corps in 1963 and was assigned to El Salvador. In 1966 he joined AID in Vietnam, serving first in Public Administration and subsequently in the Refugee Program. He returned to Washington in 1973 working in the Disaster Relief Office of AID, later being transferred to Jamaica. Mr. Rybak had a number of senior level assignments in AID headquarters in Washington, including assisting in the creation of the Center for Trade and Investment. Mr. Rybak was interviewed by Frank Pavich in 1998.

RYBAK: One day I was approached on the telephone by someone named Glenn Patterson. He introduced himself as the AID Mission Director to Jamaica and asked if I would be interested in talking to him about a position in Jamaica as a private sector officer. I have always known better than to spite myself even though I had ambitions of going to Asia on assignment. I told Mr. Patterson I would be happy to talk to him about an assignment to Jamaica. And we did. He explained the situation in Jamaica. With President Reagan committing the U.S. to the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and to Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica in particular, Mr. Patterson was developing a private sector initiative early in the game.

He told me he was proposing I come down to AID/Jamaica as his private sector officer. At that time, Patterson had the foresight to realize that AID's emphasis was going to be increasingly on the private sector. And the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which he knew was coming down the pike and Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica was to be instrumental in playing a major role. Seaga actually came to the U.S. and talked to Reagan about the regional private sector initiative about to occur in the Caribbean.

Patterson had the foresight to see what was happening and decided he would get the USAID/Jamaica Mission involved in the private sector. Therefore, he asked me to consider going to Jamaica as the private sector officer in the USAID mission. I agreed to go take this assignment with little or no training in private sector development. But I realized in AID as in so many things I had done in the past, where I didn't necessarily have the specific training, one can take the job and learn as much as possible about the job so you can function well in the job. I always took an assignment with AID with the objective I would become an expert and do the best job possible in each position held. That is one of the reasons I feel that I had such a wonderful, diverse career with AID.

Many people hesitate to take jobs because they don't have the background. They don't realize they have experiences which can qualify one for positions. Experiences can't take the place of a master's degree or a Ph.D. If one knows the ropes of how to operate within the parameters of the agency, then one should be more than willing to take on an assignment and accept it as a challenge. One can learn as much about that position as one can and function well.

In Jamaica, we were providing funding to more than one hundred private sector consultants (these were American and Jamaican consultants) to implement private sector activities in the country. For example, Jamaica was trying to market its products in the U.S. and elsewhere. Those products must literally jump off the shelf so the consumer will want to try it. However, the labeling on Jamaican products at that time was not very sophisticated and the outside packaging

was poorly done.

So I arranged to contract with a very sophisticated advertising firm in New York City; I brought an expert to work with the Jamaicans to improve their product labeling. This man was a labeling expert. Because Jamaica had some very decent products, the labeling expert felt with better labeling, the Jamaicans would be able to export those products to the United States and elsewhere. They also would have better opportunities to sell their products with better labeling. AID funding was also used to support the Kingston Export Free Zone, Small Business Association, Jamaican Investment Group, and a host of other individuals and groups working in the private sector.

I would recommend this project I was responsible for conducting in Jamaica be done in every AID country where we are trying to develop the private sector. It was called the Technical Consultations and Training Grant. In Washington, they termed the project a boondoggle. But without such a grant funding to, we would never have made the strides we were enabled to do with the private sector in Jamaica. This grant project was started with a few million dollars. It gave us immediate access to funding to contract for consultants and services directly from Jamaica without having to go through approval in Washington. It gave us a great deal of flexibility to accomplish activities and promote private sector projects without Washington putting in their two cents, which often was the reason for the demise of some very good overseas projects.

Q: Who were your customers?

RYBAK: Customers were basically Jamaicans. It was all part of the Caribbean Basin Initiative. It was where you saw a need the Jamaicans couldn't fulfill themselves that we would bring an expert in to their system - basically business people to assist the Jamaican private sector.

Q: Big ones, small ones?

RYBAK: Large and small. But the whole idea of the grant was to give us flexibility in approving these $20,000-$2 million projects immediately. We did not have to go through the Washington bureaucracy for approval on evaluation of the effectiveness of the projects. But as it became known that we had this special grant, Washington started calling it a boondoggle. And we had to prove to Washington it was being used for worthwhile activities within the mandates AID had set for us to develop a country's private sector.

Q: You are now in Jamaica?

RYBAK: This was in Jamaica, yes.

Q: You were physically located in Jamaica.

RYBAK: I was physically located in Jamaica with my family. When this project was initiated before I got there, not one single project had been implemented. The project was taken away from another officer and given to me by the Mission Director. Within one month, and this is not

to brag about my capabilities or anything, but within one month we had at least ten of the fifteen projects already underway.

Q: How did you do that?

RYBAK: By contacting the people who were to be involved in the projects. There was already a list of some projects Jamaicans wanted to do which had not been accomplished yet. It required a lot of initiative to get out to see these people, to talk with them and find out what they needed. Since I had direct access to the Mission Director, I would discuss the project with him, whether or not we could do them. They had been sort of pre-approved by AID prior to making the contact but needed an implementor. AID needed somebody to get the job done.

When the person from whom I took his job came back from a trip to London one month later, he was flabbergasted I was able to get as much started as we did. And I am talking about all sorts of initiatives with a small business association, business groups that we worked with and through to promote projects in the private sector. Some of them were almost "Mom and Pop" type projects. People who had projects in their backyards. Maybe they needed a little extra money to boost their production, to buy some resources, tools perhaps to make their project grow. They usually had five or six people working for them. These were fantastic opportunities for private entrepreneurs and it was great fun to have a job where I touched the lives of so many people to make their lives better.

We did some work with the Kingston Export Free zone. I would like to visit Jamaica to see if some of those businesses are still functioning. We also were trying to attract U.S. businesses to Jamaica. The Jamaica Exporters Association was another group that we worked with.

Q: Mr. Patterson was the director then?

RYBAK: Yes.

Q: And how did he feel about this approach?

RYBAK: It was due to the initiative of Mr. Patterson and the foresight to get this project initiated that made it easy for me to actually implement and build on it. By the time I left Jamaica four years later, the project had grown to a $20 million dollar program and was being replicated in other AID countries. I earned a promotion during the years I implemented this series of projects which brought me up to the FS-1 level.

The focus changed a little bit with the change of directors. After Patterson came Lou Reed. Reed came from the private sector and the independence I felt we had with Mr. Patterson was not there when Mr. Reed arrived. He took a much more direct role himself rather than let the officers, myself and others implement the projects.

Q: What would you say the major accomplishment of this activity was?

RYBAK: It was to put funding where our mouth was. It was basically to tell the Jamaicans we

would check to see if we could do something and we did. If we found we could do it we did. If we were unable to utilize the money because of stringencies in the AID regulations, we would tell them we could not do it. But we would try to find other ways of getting around it, particularly if the Jamaicans came up with good concepts for projects. My counterpart on the Jamaican Government side was a wonderful person by the name of Corinne McLarty, Prime Minister Seaga's choice to head up his private sector and investment initiation.

Q: At this point you are about 20 years into your development experience...

RYBAK: That's correct.

Q...if you go back with the Peace Corps as the beginning. What are some of the changes that have occurred to you and to development over this period? Anything that comes to you at this point?

RYBAK: We touched on it during our discussion. Development became more sophisticated as I went along in my career. Maybe too sophisticated. We were going over and beyond in not staying and building more at the grassroots level with the people who really needed the assistance - the urban and rural poor. We generalized and what was good for one country was good for any country. Each country is different. I think we tended to forget that very important concept as we proceeded down the development road. I believe we have to work with development uniquely in each country. We can use many of the ideas and concepts that succeeded in other countries and apply them to a country but not exactly in the same way. I am afraid that sometimes AID made the mistake of trying to apply a program in exactly the same way because it was successful in one country it would work exactly the same way in another country. Nothing works exactly the same in another country. Each country is different.

Q: Not to put words in your mouth but it sounds as though you are talking about a kind of "cookie cutter" approach.

RYBAK: Right.

Q: Was that reflected in the attitude of the director?

RYBAK: I think it was at that time, yes.

Q: You're saying that it was working or it wasn't working...?

RYBAK: I am ambivalent. I would say maybe some of it worked but certainly if it didn't we should have dumped it quickly...rather than let it linger on the way we did.

Q: There were some good ideas that may have applicability?

RYBAK: Absolutely. Even if there were some things that were bad there was still some good to come out of it. It may take a little longer with AID though. We can always profit from our mistakes. It just seemed to take longer for AID to understand that concept.

ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT
Consul General
Kingston (1986-1989)

Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in 1940 in Washington, DC. Her father worked for the International Red Cross, but died when she was very young. Her grandparents and uncle were all Navy world travelers. Her desire to enter foreign service was sparked by their tales of traveling abroad. She attended Stanford, but graduated from Radcliffe in 1962. She has served in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Jamaica, as well as several other positions within the State Department. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 1992.

SWIFT: So there was Dick Williams, who was a senior OC officer, there was me who was a new OC officer, and the two of us in jobs that were undergraded for what we were doing. When Personnel started looking around for somebody--first Haiti, and then for Jamaica--they knew that there were the two of us there. Dick and I had called back and said, "Look, this is really silly to have two officers at this level." We had said, "If you've got something that you want filled, just ask us about it. The two of us will sit here because we're not exactly unhappy, but if there's something good you might ask us."

So basically what happened was they started asking Dick first, would he like to go here, and would he like to go to there? And if Dick said no, then I got the next shot at it, which was how I got Jamaica. Basically, Jamaica is known as a very tough post. It's one of our major visa issuance posts. It's a country that has high fraud, high corruption, active narcotics trade, and high crime, and is just known as a very tough consular post.

Q: *I was a Personnel officer back in the '60s and I recall having to deal with a Consul General who had to leave there on a stretcher basically because of the violence, and putting somebody else in.*

SWIFT: It was a very tough post, and it's one that people tried to avoid. I think it was a terribly bad rap because I found it delightful, but never mind. At any rate, when they offered it to me, I sort of crossed my fingers because Dick was very, very tempted, but he had problems with his kids. He didn't want to move them, one was almost a senior in high school, had one more year to go. He didn't to wreck her schooling, so he decided to stay in Athens. So therefore it got offered to me, and I said, "I'll go." So off I went.

Q: *You served in Kingston as Consul General from '86 to '89. What was the situation, political and economic, in Jamaica during this period.*

SWIFT: The conservative government under Seaga had been in power since '82, I guess. It had come in as a reform government, and had done very well in calming things down a bit, but it had basically, as in any democratic country, it had been in too long. The left had by that time

reformed itself and gotten back a lot of respectability. Over the three years that I was there Michael Manley took his liberal party and put it back together, put it on its feet, and won the election. It was an interesting time to be there because our ambassador, who was a political ambassador, felt very, very strongly...it was very interesting, he felt very strongly that an ambassador had a duty to talk to all sides of the political spectrum. So over the period, even when it looked like Seaga was going to stay in power, he had made a real effort to talk to Michael Manley, and to...

Q: *Manley had not been persona grata with the United States.*

SWIFT: Absolutely not. He had been a real radical in his previous period in charge of the government, and I think that he had seen the light. He had seen that his policies had not helped Jamaica, and Jamaica's economy. And that Seaga's policies really had done a lot better, and Seaga had put the country back on an economic path forward. At the same time, in the way things go in that sort of thing, Seaga had not paid enough attention to things like health care, and to the problems of the lower classes. So when Manley came back in, he had a mandate to try and redress, but he moved a lot more toward the center. And in his conversations with our ambassador, I think that it became clear to our ambassador that Manley really had changed. There was a great deal of doubt as to whether he had really changed, but I think Sotirhos was convinced that he had changed, and he was right.

Q: *Sotirhos?*

SWIFT: Michael Sotirhos, and he was right. You actually wonder, as a matter of fact, how much Sotirhos's openness toward Manley helped Manley move back toward the center. It was a very interesting period. Sotirhos was/is a real character, very strong minded. This was his first ambassadorial position abroad and he made lots of mistakes in the beginning, and learned very quickly. His idea, and I always sympathized with it, a lot of people hated it, the ambassador to a country is the ambassador, and he is not to be outshadowed by anybody else in his embassy, that if anybody is going to get publicity, it is going to be the ambassador, and not the Consul General, and not the PAO or whoever it is. He told me flat out before I went down, that he did not want to see my picture on the front pages. I said that was fine with me, I didn't want to see my picture on the front page either, but it was a switch in the way the Consul General had acted down there. Because from the time of Mike Carpenter the Consul General had become really very much of an imperial Consul General. Mike had done some very good things in going out very publicly to explain what the U.S. embassy was doing in terms of visa issuance, or denial, and had, I think, done a very good job in getting it fixed in Jamaican's minds that they did not have a right to come work in the United States, that they had to qualify for visas to come to the United States. Basically speaking Jamaicans felt that our visa process was just a method of keeping them from their God-given right to work in the United States. But Mike had been a very, very strong Consul General, and a very public one. Arlene Render, who followed him, had also been a very public Consul General to the point that the Consul General was probably more popular, or at least more sought after in Jamaica, than the ambassador. Arlene left Jamaica early on her own volition. I think the handwriting was clear on the wall that she was not going to be able to work with Sotirhos. And Sotirhos was not going to be able to work with her.

Sotirhos didn't know me from Adam when I became his Consul General. I'll never forget a conversation we had up in Washington before I went down. I assumed that I had been assigned by the Foreign Service, and here I was in Washington, home leave, and on my way down to this posting, and I assumed that my job was all set. And it became quite clear to me in talking to Ambassador Sotirhos that had I said something wrong, or had I struck him as somebody he didn't want, that he was going to break that assignment right then and there. He was not going to have me be a very public consul general. And this was interesting, because basically the one thing that I had not liked about the job, was that I did not want to be galloping around the country making speeches. It was not something that I really thought would be fun. I was willing to do it, I wanted the job, and I went into it thinking I was going to have to. And when Sotirhos said, "I do not want you doing this, I'm going to make the speeches, you're not going to," I said, dandy, fine, wonderful. I thought that was superb, I was delighted to stay back and run the consular section, and do some Out Reach, but not in the very public way that the Consul General had done before. It took a lot of doing to follow these instructions when I got down to Jamaica.

When I first walked into the country I was being asked every time I turned around to go on talk shows, to speak to the Chamber of Commerce, to do this and do that. And I would take these invitations and send them up to the ambassador's office. And often I would find that they would say, "No, no, we don't want the ambassador. We want you." And I'd say, "but..." And after about six or eight months of this, what had previously come to the Consul General, started naturally going to the ambassador instead. I thought he was right.

Q: *It makes sense if an ambassador is willing to pick this up. Now to follow through on this, did the ambassador take on the very important issue of publicizing how we operated our immigration laws? Did he engage on it?*

SWIFT: Not really, but by the time he got there they pretty well understood it. And what he did, which I was ever thankful for, and I was so lucky--I didn't quite realize how lucky I was at the time--was that his attitude was that it was the Consul General's authority to issue or deny visas. And what he did, wherever he went because he got hit for visas all over the place, was he simply said, "Look, my Consul General is in charge of visas. She statutorily has the authority. I do not have the authority, and I will not become involved." And he did not become involved in any visa, he turned it right off. And he ordered all of his embassy officers to also stay away from visas stuff.

Q: *I can imagine this pervaded the entire operation.*

SWIFT: Oh, yes. It was funny. Sometimes he really almost went too far. I would hear him say to people, "I'm sorry. I sympathize with what you're telling me, but I do not have the authority to make such a decision. You will have to go to my Consul General because I have no authority to do that. The Consul General in this case has the authority, and I don't have it." It strengthened my hand in dealing with things. Now, if he felt that the consular section had made a mistake in the way they handled something, if we had been rude, if he couldn't figure out were we applying the law properly, or something like that, then he would call me and he would say, "Ann, I have had this complaint, or that complaint, could you look into it for me, and assure me that there's nothing in it." And usually the things that he came to me on, and they were few and far between,

we would have mishandled, or it would have been strange, or there was a perfectly straight forward explanation for it. But he would always give me the opportunity to look into it, straighten it out, and work it that way. He would never come and say, "You will issue a visa to somebody." He never ever did that to me. The DCM did, who was Foreign Service.

Q: What was his background?

SWIFT: His background was that he's a New York businessman, of Greek Orthodox in extraction. He was a commercial interior design person. In other words, he had done the interior designs of things like Marriott. A big businessman, and close to Bush. He'd run Bush's minority campaign, and had had a great influence with the Greek community, and with a lot of other minority communities.

Q: *When you went out to Kingston I assume you stopped by the visa office, what were you getting from that as far as their concerns and problems with the Kingston operation?*

SWIFT: It was just the high fraud, and they were just putting IVACS, the computerized immigration processing into place. I got there just after they had installed all the new computer equipment, and they had gone through a very, very rough installation period. They were then trying to convert the hand-written visa control cards onto the computerized system. They were about a third of the way through that. As usual, I do not think we had done it very well. I had installed IVACS in Athens, and I had had the luxury...I knew we were going to do it, and on the way out to Athens I had stopped by London. Everybody thought I was absolutely nuts, and had gotten this wonderful privilege to go by London, but I knew that London had a big IVACS system up and running, and running well. So I stopped by there, and talked to them about the mistakes that they had made when they installed it, and the sorts of decisions you had to make on screening out the material, what sort of material you put in, what sort of material you didn't, how you got prepared to convert to a computerized system. And then before we ever got the equipment...or just as we were getting the equipment in the training period, I managed to get enough money together actually out of Athens resources, to bring down the head of the IV section in London, and have her sit there with my FSNs, she was an FSN, and with my officers may I point out, and show us how to convert the material to go into the machines. It was a great help and made us go much more smoothly, and made our transition much better. We did a lot of file cleaning ahead of time so that we didn't put junk into the machine.

In Kingston, of course, they had a much greater data base, but they didn't do any cleaning at all. They didn't do any preparation work for the installation. So we spent the next year and a half, after we got the thing up and running, cleaning the data base. I thought that was the wrong way to do it, but there was no way I could tell them to stop in the middle of it, and reconvert.

Actually I think Arlene Render had done a very good job of organizing the section. She had also just gone through a big modernization...my only problem is that I hate pink, and Arlene liked pink, so the whole blasted place...my office was all pink and grays. I mean it was pretty, but I just don't like pink. It was very modern and very nice, but it was my most unfavorite color in the world which I then lived with for three years. At any rate, they'd done a major reconstruction of

the section, and done a very good job at it I think. I mean there are a few glitches, but basically speaking it was a very smoothly set up section. I came into basically a very good situation.

Q: *Could you describe the immigrant and non-immigrant situation there?*

SWIFT: I guess we were the fourth largest immigrant visa issuing office in the world. And we were like the tenth largest non-immigrant visa issuing post. During the period I was there we had just a major surge in non-immigrant visa issuance. I kept being worried about it, why is this happening to us? I calmed down a bit after I discovered it was happening throughout Latin America, throughout the Caribbean, and to a certain extent throughout the world. I think because of the shifting value of the dollar. It was easier for people to find the money to go up to the States. But the NIV section was under heavy, heavy pressure, and of course we had big lines around. The whole idea was to make sure you didn't have huge lines around the embassy--to process visas quickly, fast, and with the minimum of heartburn. And the same over on the IV side.

The IV unit basically was easier to run than the non-immigrant visa because it was easier to control the crowds. It was easier to control your flow-through because you had absolute control over the scheduling. Our problem in the IV section was getting the computer software working, and getting ourselves so that we could understand it, and then working on fraud which was endemic. But on the IV side it was a flow sort of thing. As we had a steadily increasing visa load, and no more officers, how did you smooth out your procedures and develop new ones so that you could cope with all of this.

Q: *What was the flow--the immigrant and non-immigrant flow. Where did you see it going to the United States? What were people after, and how did this work?*

SWIFT: The immigrant flow was, generally speaking, families going up to join their father or mother, whoever it was. And then a lot of fifth preference, brothers, relatives. Jamaicans generally speaking, live up and down the eastern seaboard, and to a less degree across into Texas, but basically Florida, the New York area, Washington, Boston, Chicago a bit. They came in, usually fairly simple people from the countryside, with low skills, reading ability. They come in with the advantage that they speak English, and they've all had a certain level of education, not terribly high at the lower economic scales, but they usually could read and write. And they went up to the States and basically, our feeling was, did not go on welfare at all. Hard working and willing to take...typical immigrants...willing to take the lower class jobs. Jamaicans make very, very good immigrants.

The only problem that we were having while I was there, was the whole drug business, which I get incensed about when I look at what we have done to the rest of the world. But at any rate, Jamaica was a high marijuana producing area, and we had a big drug program which was not completely ineffective, aimed at destruction of marijuana. The problem was that many high ranking Jamaicans were involved in the marijuana trade. It was one of the major sources of income for the Jamaican economy, and, of course, it was illegal. There was huge traffic back and forth between the States and Jamaica of marijuana. It was just starting to more over into cocaine. It's not a cocaine producing area, but it was starting to turn into a cocaine transit area, or an area

where the big drug dealers were using cocaine to purchase marijuana. In other words, they would come in and rather than paying for marijuana all in dollars, they would pay for a certain amount with cocaine, which was then starting to give Jamaica, at least in the higher levels of society, a cocaine problem. But at any rate this affected us in the visa section because we had to be very, very careful to make sure who we were allowing up, and we had a high percentage of people we would turn down because they were known to be, or suspected to be, involved in the drug trafficking.

And at the time I was down there, it was the time at which there was a big outroar up here in Washington because the crack cocaine distribution rings up and down the eastern seaboard, and across into Texas and Kansas City were run by Jamaicans.

Q: *I remember. The word was Jamaican gangs are very dangerous, they kill a lot of people.*

SWIFT: And indeed they do. The problem with that sort, and the reason you saw it all disappear off the front pages, was that it's very easy to speak of Jamaican gangs. The problem was that Jamaicans, like any other portion of our society, the Irish, etc., had been around a long time. So that a lot of these so-called Jamaican gangs were in reality Jamaican-American gangs. American citizens of Jamaican extraction. And there were a lot of immigrant Jamaicans, and a lot of illegal Jamaicans involved in this. But a high percentage of these people were Americans. So the black community in Washington got outraged by the way the press was treating this. It was like that...they turned off discussing the Jamaican drug running gangs still existing.

The problem with the Jamaicans, and the problem with Jamaican society, is for some reason or other there is a very, very strong streak of violence in it. There were a lot of sociological studies of the areas that the Jamaican slaves were transported out of whatever their cultural background was. The Jamaicans are fiercely, fiercely independent. Certain groups of Jamaicans fought the British to a standstill, and never were conquered. The slaves revolted and went up into the hills, and actually in some cases made treaties with the British that gave them hunks of the country under their control. It's as though the American Indians fought us to a standstill. The Jamaican blacks, some of them managed to rule parts of Jamaica without much interference from the Brits. So they are a very, very proud people. Unfortunately when I was there, in the early '80s, the various political factions had armed themselves, and had sort of hired thugs to do their guarding work. And when Seaga came in, they dismantled a lot of these private armies. And what this meant was that a lot of people were left without employment, but with guns. And what ended up filling the breach was the drug trade, where the drug traffickers took these guys on as their runners, and their controllers. And they're very, very trigger happy. So a lot of the shooting, and a lot of the very quickness to go to guns, was in that culture, and was transported into the States.

Now the Jamaicans would say that it is your drug trafficking that is misleading our good Jamaicans who go up there, our poor kids go up there, and get corrupted by your American gangs. And to a certain extent that was true. So it was a very difficult problem to deal with.

Q: *From your point of view running the consular section as it impacted on the visa work, how did this drug thing translate?*

SWIFT: Well, what it meant was that we had a very close working relationship, both with the intelligence community, and with DEA.

Q: *Drug Enforcement Agency.*

SWIFT: ...to track, and try to give whatever help we could from the Visa Section to DEA to keep these people from getting into the States. Which meant that they would give us information, we'd enter it into our machines, and try and track some of this stuff.

The other side of this was, that the drug dealers were closely involved with the fake document industry in Jamaica. There were vibrant, charging, document production rings, which had their base in smuggling normal Jamaicans up to the States to be illegal aliens. But the narcotic rings got into that because they needed fake documentation, they needed fake passports, they needed all of this sort of stuff, and they were willing to pay huge prices for it. The Jamaican working class themselves would pay $3,000, $4,000, and $5,000 dollars to get documentation which they thought would get them through the embassy, and get them a visa. But the smuggling rings would pay much more than that. So there was a close interconnection between the narcotics people, and the document rings.

Q: *How did you deal with that?*

SWIFT: It's very, very difficult to deal with alien smuggling and with document rings. We're not policemen, we're not investigators, although in our consular section we had a fraud unit. It was very hard to keep my fraud unit people from becoming real live police investigators. We had a very close connection with the Jamaican police authorities, and, as I said, very close relations with our intelligence agencies, and with our embassy security people, and with DEA.

Ordinarily at an embassy, for instance like in Athens, your intelligence agencies, and your DEA, really doesn't care much about the consular section, because there's not this close connection between what they're doing, and the visa section. In Jamaica it was very, very close. It was obvious to them that if they could get at the counterfeit document producers, they could stop some of this trafficking. So by convincing the intelligence agencies that it was in their interest to target the counterfeit document producers, I got help from DEA and things that would not be available to me otherwise.

Q: *How effective did you think your section was in getting on top of the fraud problem?*

SWIFT: Oh, not very effective at all. It's a very, very hard thing to control. When the ability to reproduce documents with all your fancy new modern FAX machines is so high, and when it was so easy for a Jamaican to change his name, change his identity, and come in with a totally new set of documents with very good documents to back it up. What we tried to do was pick out patterns. This kind of documentation is suspect. Therefore, when it appears in front of you, you look at it six times harder. But it was very difficult to do. As fast as we'd crack down and break one ring or scam, another one would leap into its place because the commercial advantage to producing these documents was so high. And the government itself...the other thing was convincing the Jamaican government that fake document production was against their best

interest. There was a tendency by the Jamaican government, and should I say by the US government, to regard counterfeiting of documents as a civil offense, rather than a criminal offense. And your fines are low. Even in the United States, how many prosecutions do you see for issuance of fake passports and fake birth certificates? Very few, and the fines are low, and the jail sentences are minimal if you get caught at doing this stuff. It's no different in Jamaica as it was in the States.

One of the leaders of the document production rings was a very, very interesting lady who had a huge following because she was seen as sort of a Robin Hood. She helped all of these poor Jamaicans to get up and join their families. She was very popular, and she'd get put in jail. She was caught two or three different times, I mean by my predecessors. I caught her too but my predecessors had gotten her tossed into jail, and she'd get out, and she'd be treated as a hero while she was in jail because she was...part of their Jamaican ethic is to have the little guy taking on the big guy, and fooling him, and tricking him. And this lady was absolutely seen by the Jamaican people, and I think even by a lot of people in the Jamaican government, as somebody who was very bright, brazen, and fun, and wasn't doing anything harmful really. This wasn't seen as something that was bad...okay, so you fake a visa, or you fake papers. You're just helping some poor Jamaican get around these darn US immigration laws which are kind of foolish in the first place. We were up against that all the time.

Q: *There is nothing more frustrating for young officers coming to deal with a situation where they know they're dealing with something that's probably bigger than they are, they're supposed to enforce the law and people are getting by.*

SWIFT: Very, very, very tough. It's very tough to keep young officers from getting bitter, and aggressive, and difficult in that sort of situation. They know they're being lied to. They know everybody is running around. They know they can turn visas down, but they also know that they've got to have a decent ground to turn them down on. The Jamaicans will come right on in there, and lie to you to your face, and then they'll get very hostile when you turn them down for a visa. They're very strong minded sort of people. And it's a really tough visa line situation. It's very hard for the officers to keep their balance, and keep their senses of humor which is basically what you have to do. You have to regard it as you are doing your absolute best to administer US immigration law, and that your job is to let people into the States, not to block them from going to the States. But you have to keep the ones out that you think are illegitimate. And that's your job. And they're going to get mad at you, and it looks like they're mad at you personally. But they aren't really mad at you. They are mad at the law, and they're mad at the fact that you're applying the law to them.

Q: *Did you spend a lot of time as sort of the section physiologist?*

SWIFT: We tried hard. It was really tough, because groups of junior officers take on their own characteristics. And when I got there the characteristic of the consulate was basically us against them. And it was real tough.

Q: *Us against them was us against the visa applicants.*

SWIFT: It was very, very tough, and it was very tough to change. A lot of the change came not particularly because of anything that I did, but because of a new group of officers coming in who came in with a much more of an outreach attitude toward Jamaican society. And that helped. When they were willing to get out, and get involved in Jamaican society, then they regarded Jamaicans much less as the enemy, and much more as people who they could be friendly with. But it was a very tough thing to do, and even the most involved officers would still lose their tempers and get mad. I had officers who went and married Jamaicans, and still you would find them on the line losing their temper. There was nothing personal in it, it was just that they were losing their tempers. So it was tough. I mean the best you could hope in Jamaica was to have a reputation that you were fair. You couldn't be loved because you were carrying out laws that the Jamaicans just didn't like. If you were fair they would accept it.

Q: *What about Congressional pressure? Phone rates were low, and a lot of these Jamaicans would be brought up to be, as we're seeing as of today, the problem of domestic servants at least initially, and there's nothing that gets an American citizen more upset than knowing that they aren't going to have somebody to look after their children, or wash the dishes.*

SWIFT: Right. And a lot of Americans would come down on holiday, and would go to these big Jamaican resorts or some place, and they'd have lots of money, and they would meet wonderful Jamaicans who were just dying to come up to the States with them to help them out with their kids, or whatever it was. The Americans would just simply not understand that our laws would object to this. They had the money to pay these people, they were delighted to have them up and pay them a going rate in the States, and here was this wonderful person who was thoroughly qualified, and we were saying no. Then they'd call their Congressman and we'd get a Congressional...we spent hours answering Congressional mail and telephone calls and all that sort of stuff...hours and hours.

Q: *How were you supported by the visa office?*

SWIFT: At the time that I was down there the visa office was very weak, and I would say that our support from the visa office was minimal, thank you. Especially during the period that I was there, we had the problem of farm workers where the '86 bill permitted people who were up in the States as farm workers to convert to immigrant status under a very complicated set of laws. It ended up not applying, but it may yet apply, to Jamaican cane workers which was a major amount of people. But we thought that we were going to be flooded, just overrun, with applicants for this program. As it turned out it wasn't too bad, but we were really concerned at one point that we were going to just sink underneath this. And we got very little support from the visa office, and we were not happy about it. I spent a good deal of time screaming at the visa office, and finally gave up and just started talking to Mexico. It turned out to be much better because they were having the same sorts of problems.

Q: *That's our embassy in Mexico as far as technical advice.*

SWIFT: In order to find out what was going on. Basically we needed information. We needed to know where the bill was, where it was going, how it was going to be applied, what were the

various aspects of it. And we were not getting this out of the visa office, so as I say, I started calling Mexico, and they knew a lot more about it because they were dealing directly with it.

Q: *How about the protection problem? During this period, and I suppose even now, I would be very dubious about going to Jamaica for a vacation. I hear about violence, robberies. It must have had quite an impact on you.*

SWIFT: It was a problem. As long as you were up on the north coast, it was reasonably okay. The north coast being the tourist areas. And as long as you weren't out in the back woods. We had, just before I got there, a very nasty incident of some people who were robbed and raped. Some missionaries that were up there out in the back woods and they thought they were perfectly safe, and they were not. We had a lot of sort of minor incidents. We had not very many major ones. When I was there, there was very little direct robbery aimed at tourists. Now the problem that we had was that there was, and especially in the period just as I got there, there were armed gangs roaming around in the hills above Kingston who were coming down and robbing houses. When I say armed gangs, I mean these guys were armed with M-16s, and heavy weapons.

Q: *The M-16 is the standard infantry rifle of the United States.*

SWIFT: Yes, a fully automatic, nasty gun. So they were scary people. We had guards but there were some very, very nasty incidents that were going on just as I got down there. And just as I got down there the army went after these gangs that were up in the hills, and simply wiped them out. And that made the situation a little bit better. But just before I left, things started getting again nastier. It was never good. There was a lot of burglary, and that sort of stuff in Kingston. But just before I left, we had some serious murders of people in the American community because they ran afoul of somebody--either a house breaker, or something went wrong with their servants, and their servants came back and simply wiped them away. It was not nice. The head of the Jamaican Chamber of Commerce was murdered, a Jamaican friend of mine--or the father of a Jamaican friend of mine--was shot by robbers in his business. The violence hit the upper classes, rather than simply bubbling down in the ghettos. It came up and struck at the upper classes as well.

Q: *You mentioned that you had not received much support from the visa office at that time, but you came back to at least start off...when did you leave Jamaica?*

SWIFT: I left Jamaica in '89.

Q: *When in '89?*

SWIFT: Summer.

SALLY GROOMS COWAL
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America
Washington, DC (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.

COWAL: It was the age of great independence movements, all of the African countries and so on, and the Caribbean was picking up that wind and wanted to do that. The British tried, I think, very hard to make the whole enterprise more sustainable by making it more united, by having one West Indian Federation, which was to seek independence as a single country, with one prime minister and one cabinet, and elections in which anybody from any country could be the prime minister, but they wouldn't each have their own legislative assemblies and so on.

In fact, that fell apart at the beginning, I think largely because the Jamaicans decided if the capital wasn't going to be in Kingston, which it wasn't – I think the capital was going to in Port of Spain – and the prime minister was going to be a Barbadian, the initial prime minister, then they weren't going to play cricket on that team. So they took their balls and bats and went home, and the other 12 countries – well, it was at that time 10. A couple became independent subsequently in joining CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market), but the others decided, as the great calypso song has it, 10 minus one equals zero. So if they didn't have Jamaica, which was the largest-population country, and the most resources, then it was not going to make it as a West Indian Federation. I think that's been one of the tragedies of that region. So they all pursued their separate courses at great cost. There are great inefficiencies which would not be altogether overcome if you had them together, but it would certainly be ameliorated.

As it is, you have Jamaica with a couple of million people, Trinidad with just over a million, and it drops off radically after that to countries with 200,000, 100,000 citizens. You've got these, as I call them, sui generis little rocks, each with its own mechanisms of government, its own full three branches – an executive, a legislative and a judiciary. Tremendous waste and inefficiency.

Q: When you got there in '89, did we have a policy to try to do anything about this?

COWAL: Well, not really to rewrite history. I think we were encouraging and helpful. There had been some original Caribbean basin legislation passed, which was essentially giving them trade preferences, mainly for assembly industry, for the textile industry, which is important in the Caribbean. We sought to have all of them sort of hang together enough to do one trade agreement with the United States, and then to renew that trade agreement. That was somewhat helpful, then. As drugs became a bigger issue, we certainly tried to provide some of the fiber optic network that would allow the Jamaicans to talk to the Trinidadians or the Barbadians or the St. Kittians by radio and by fax and by phone.

All roads lead to Miami, but the roads aren't very good that lead between Jamaica and Barbados. To sort of foster and to provide the infrastructure for a better law enforcement network, in our own interest – I think it was in our own interest – but I think what we've discovered with the drug business all over the world is it can't be just coming through you. The beginning, I think, of the whole war on drugs, going back to Nixon, probably, and certainly through Reagan, there was a tremendous dialog of the deaf, where the United States of course – still does, to a certain extent – blames the producer countries. The producer countries say, "Hey, it's not our problem. If your young people didn't want to consume it, we wouldn't be growing it, would we? And besides, we don't have drug addicts. It doesn't affect us."

I think the shortsightedness of that point of view began to be addressed in the years that I was there. The Caribbean are not producers, but there are two ways for drugs to get to the United States. One is through Mexico and the other is through the Caribbean, so I was really handling both sides of that portfolio, therefore very drug related. I think that the transit countries, as well as the producer countries, began to understand the terrible effects, how distorting that amount of money to the Caribbean economies. Suddenly somebody is getting paid enormous amounts of money to close your eye when the boat goes through, or as paid mules and shippers.

They began to catch some of the really low-level folks, the poor Jamaican women who would take a few kilos in their suitcases and go to the United States. Of course, it's much harder to catch the real traffickers, because they're much more clever at what they do. At any rate, I think through our working with all of the countries of the Caribbean, both on trade issues and on law enforcement issues, we have done something to encourage a better dialog between us.

***

Q: Well, let's turn to the other sort of powerhouse of a place, Jamaica, while you were there.

COWAL: These are all very interesting countries. It's just that they're so in miniature, and despite the fact that they're so close to the United States, we tend not to think about them at all. Jamaica had, I would say, one of the good political appointees of my time, a fellow named Glen Holden, who was a polo player and a very big insurance man from California who made gazillions of dollars and gave significant parts of it to the Republican Party and got Jamaica. He took it very seriously and did a pretty good job. That was through the election of the sort of new Michael Manley. Michael Manley had been the prime minister of Jamaica, not a friend of the United States. He was not a Communist and never a Communist, but certainly firmly in the maybe Francois Mitterrand camp, I mean, a socialist, defined in many ways by his opposition to the United States.

Then we had gone through this period of Eddie Seaga, who was basically a thug, I think, but politics in Jamaica are a homegrown sport. It's such a vital democracy that it risks being a dangerous vital democracy, with two parties, the PNC (People's National Congress) and the JLP (Jamaica Labor Party), who go back to before independence. The JLP was always considered to be more pro-Republican, pro-United States, pro-business, but at the same time has a populist element to it in a quite interesting way. The PNC, which is Manley's party, was socialist but British socialist, run on the rules of we have to operate a government, we have to collect tax

revenues, and therefore we have to have private industries which function. And we want to have a tourist industry, and we want to have an export textile industry, and we need to provide some flexibility for business to operate.

What makes politics in Jamaica dangerous is that each of these quite respectable – I think Seaga ranged on being a Godfather type – nonetheless, all the people in his party did not. Quite respectable politicians are each identified with much less respectable elements who will seek in moments of local elections or national elections, to intimidate the followers of the other party by violence in the streets. So street gangs are associated with both of these parties. That all got worse with the drug trafficking also, because drug money inevitably tried to find its way into where it could have some influence. Convicted drug traffickers who spent some time in U.S. jails then got repatriated. When their jail terms are over, they get repatriated back to their country of origin. That's often Jamaica, and they come to little old Kingston, which may have been fighting it out on the streets with rocks and clubs, and introduce real weapons of mass destruction in the neighborhood way – heavy armaments. So the level of violence escalated dramatically.

Jamaica was a dicey situation, but we, I think, stayed out of the election properly. Manley was elected. Bush 41 had a certain knowledge of the Caribbean, and a certain affection for it. I don't know whether this was from his days in offshore oil or his UN days or whatever, but he had some kind of residual warm feelings for the Caribbean. So one of the things that he agreed to do was a state visit for Manley, and also because his friend Glen Holden was ambassador. That's one of the things a political appointee can do in a place that doesn't matter otherwise. He's got the ear of the president, at least for five minutes at the Christmas party, whatever it is, and he can sometimes get done. I'm sure the State Department could never have brought that off, because it wouldn't have even gotten through the State Department. He's only going to do five state visits this year, or 25 state visits this year, it doesn't matter, Jamaica's not going to be on the list. It's not going to be on the list of five, and it's not going to be on the list of 25, so they're not going to get any hearing.

Instead, and I think because of Holden, they got Manley on the list, so we had a state visit by Manley, and that was a rather positive affair, I thought. It was one of the highlights of my time as deputy assistant secretary. Because you get very involved with the White House and with the higher levels of government, which two or three ranks down, as you are in State, you don't get all that much opportunity to do. Suddenly your guy's coming to town, and so you get to go to Andrews Air Force Base and fly in with him on the helicopter and do all these things that are part of what makes getting to that level of government fun, I suppose. Manley, who's died now, recently, was I think one of these magnificent sort of larger-than-life Caribbean figures. There are a number of them in the Caribbean, who are really the products, largely, of British educations. The new generation is more American educated, but Manley's generation, they were pre-independence, and they went to – I don't remember whether he went to Oxford or Cambridge, but I'm quite sure it was one of the two. His father had been a Jamaican politician. He came to it almost from boyhood. Norman Manley had been a great leader and so on in Jamaica. So he was Caribbean aristocracy all the way through. It was just a pleasure to know somebody like that.

Q: From what you'd heard of Manley before, had he changed, or was he still sort of a Fabian

socialist ...

COWAL: No, he had changed quite a lot. He certainly at that point had seemed to make a complete transformation: to believing that, whether it was the Caribbean Basin Initiative or later, the Free Trade of the Americas, an attempt to put NAFTA and the Andean and the Caribbean and all of these various free trade agreements together in a hemisphere-wide agreement, minus Cuba, of course. But he spoke glowingly about those, and he got on quite well in his second term with the private sector.

I once had the opportunity, we were sitting together at a dinner or something, to ask him what had changed his mind on so many of these things, and he looked me square in the eye and said, "Defeat."

Q: What?

COWAL: Defeat. He had been prime minister. He had been defeated. He had analyzed for four years why he had been defeated, decided that he would rather be prime minister than be right, maybe, and that Fabian socialism was not the way of the latter half of the 20th century and wasn't sustainable. He changed. Whether he really changed or whether he changed the rhetoric I would never have the opportunity to know, but indeed he changed.

HERMAN J. ROSSI III
Economic Counselor
Kingston (1989-1992)

Mr. Rossi was born in Florida and raised in Idaho. He was educated at Gonzaga University and Washington State University. In 1965, he entered the Foreign Service, specializing primarily in economic and African affairs. During his career, Mr. Rossi served in Kinshasa, Blantyre, Rome, Pretoria, Monrovia, Kingston and Libreville, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He was Economic Counselor at several of his posts. In his Washington assignments, Mr. Rossi dealt with both African and Economic matters. Mr. Rossi was interviewed by Peter Eicher in 2007.

ROSSI: I got an assignment to Kingston, Jamaica as economic counselor. The reasons I went there were mainly personal. First of all, I still had four kids in college, so I needed a hardship differential post with government housing. Kingston, believe it or not, was a differential post due mainly to the crime in the city. It had a serious crime problem, and I think still does which I'll talk more on in a second.

My other reason was I wanted to be closer to my kids and see a bit more of them before they completely grew up. Most of them were in college at that stage. It's a long trip to Africa, so I wasn't getting to see all that much of them.

One footnote to my Africa career is that in my final weeks in Monrovia, well after I had been

assigned to Kingston, I was offered the job of DCM in Madagascar. I turned it down. First I wanted to see more of my kids and secondly I was rather burnt out on Africa. I knew something about the situation in Madagascar and another troubled African country run by another ruthless dictator did not seem very attractive at the time. In retrospect, it would have been far better for my career if I that taken that job but I had other considerations.

Q: On to Jamaica. What year was this?

ROSSI: This was 1989. Michael Manley had come back to power a year or so earlier. In the '70s when he had been in power, he was something of a socialist and did not get along well with the U.S., and the U.S. did not get along well with him. The Jamaican economy had suffered a major decline during this period. When he came back to power in the late 1980s, Manley had become something of a born-again capitalist. I guess he's had seen the light from his previous problems and mistakes with the economy. He and the U.S. got along well during most of my tour. Among other things, we were cooperating on drug enforcement.

Jamaica does not produce hard drugs. It does produce a lot of marijuana which is grown up in the mountains. Some of it was grown for the local use, but is some is for export. Marijuana is a bulk item, so it isn't a high value thing. One of the major problems was the island and its crime network was becoming a staging area for hard drugs coming in from Columbia and places like that. We had a large drug enforcement presence there working with the Jamaicans. DEA was there and other agencies.

Let me touch on my job there. I was economic counselor or head of the economic section. It was a period when Jamaica had gone through a long period of economic problems. It was very heavily indebted. Briefing papers would say it was the most heavily indebted country in the world per capita. It had borrowed a lot from various banks and international institutions.

The country chronically lived beyond its means. It wanted to live at a higher standard of living than it could afford to on its export income. The major exports were bauxite and coffee and a few things like that; tourism was probably the biggest single foreign exchange earner. None of that seemed to balance with the consumption on the island. You can see where it was frustrating for the Jamaicans. When I got there, satellite dishes had come into use, so the Jamaicans could get American television and see how the Americans live.

There was a long tradition of immigration from Jamaica to other countries in search of work and opportunity. Previously, much of this immigration had gone to Great Britain. During the period I was there, this had shifted more to the United States, and many of the educated Jamaicans and others wanted to immigrate to the United States. The consular section had its hands full trying to cope with all this. That was not my job. I mention it for general background.

It was an interesting tour. I was impressed with the educated Jamaicans. Having been in a lot of third-world countries, I found the educated Jamaicans—which is perhaps a quarter of the population—very impressive people. You can see where Colin Powell gets his roots in Jamaica because there's a good work ethic there and stress on education.

My job was the normal economic reporting functions. We had some negotiations going on while I was there. The IMF negotiations were a chronic, ongoing thing. We had our own AID program, a fairly substantial AID program which we linked to compliance with the IMF program.

Except for Rome, this was my second experience with a political ambassador. He was named Glenn Holden. In Rome, I had been way down in the trenches from the ambassador I had only rarely contact with him. In Jamaica, I had frequent contact with the ambassador as the economic counselor. The gentleman was very congenial. He had built up a large insurance company—actually several companies—in California and was a political appointee. He wanted to do a good job in the country and seemed to be willing to take advice.

It was interesting for me to work with somebody who did not have a background in foreign service work or the intricacies of overseas economies. He was a very bright gentleman, but he had no real experience in international affairs or international finance. I tried my best to educate him on some of these issues, and he was overall receptive.

Q: Did you meet Michael Manley?

ROSSI: Yes, I did meet him.

Q: What was your impression of him?

ROSSI: Very bright, charismatic guy. He probably had some resemblances to Bill Clinton. He was very much of a people-person. You could see why he got re-elected. Probably a better politician than he actually was prime minister. He did the job fairly well. I think he shrank a little bit from the hard decisions which is easy to do. In Jamaica, if you raise the price of gasoline, you get rioting in the streets. Thus it is easier to avoid the tough calls. Manley made some of them. He shrank from some of the others. I thought overall he was a decent prime minister, certainly a charismatic figure.

Q: Good relations with the United States when you were there?
ROSSI: We had had excellent relations with Jamaica. That side of it seemed to go well which is a complete turnaround from the '70s when Manley was in office before.

Q: How were American relations with the Caribbean in general? Wasn't that approximately the time of the Granada and Panama invasions?

ROSSI: In general, American relations were quite good. After the Grenada invasion, the U.S. made a fairly substantial investment in the Caribbean. A program called the Caribbean Basin Initiative poured in some money in support for investment and development in a whole number of areas.

That was the early '80s. By the time I got there in '89, this was still a republican administration. This was the Bush senior administration, and priorities had shifted elsewhere. All the resources and high level attention that had been focused on the Caribbean in the early '80s had diminished somewhat. The structure was still there, but it just didn't have the priority that it did previously.

Broadly, our relations with Jamaica and with the Caribbean were good with the exception of Cuba and Nicaragua. I'm trying to think of problem areas, but they really were fairly modest. We had a slew of ongoing problems at any given time, but they were problems that arise between two countries that have lots of trade and investment contacts, not countries that are at loggerheads. The level of U.S. assistance to Jamaica was of course a key ongoing issue.

Q: How were relations with Cuba?

ROSSI: Not greatly different than they are now. This was the period right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There was some expectation in Jamaican circles that without Soviet support, the Castro government would collapse. It had been heavily subsidized by the Soviets so they felt Castro could not last. Therefore there would be great opportunities for investment when U.S. sanctions were lifted. That was certainly the attitude among some of the Jamaican businessmen, particularly those in the tourism area.

I remember trying to tell some of them, "Let's wait a bit. He's got control of all the security forces and a very strong secret police. He might survive this." However a few businessmen wanted to leap ahead with their investments in Cuba to beat the competition and did so. Here we are 20 years later, and Castro is still alive, if not in power, and his authoritarian regime continues on.

I got to visit Guantanamo Bay during my tour there. The Cuban employees gradually phased out of Guantanamo Bay. The U.S. military replaced them with workers from other neighboring countries, and Jamaica was one of them. There were several thousand Jamaicans working in Guantanamo Bay. I went over for Jamaican Labor Day when they had a celebration for the Jamaican workers. In the process, I got a tour of the base. We spent about two days there, saw what life was like on Guantanamo Bay.

It seemed less attractive than I thought it might me. It's a bleak and rather arid area. It's in the rain shadow of some mountains and gets relatively little rainfall. Even the beaches are rocky there. It's not a sailor's paradise by any stretch of the imagination, but it was interesting to see.

Let me say one thing about the Jamaican economy that I should have talked about before. There is a very big divide in income levels in the Jamaican economy. There is a very large low income group which is a least two-thirds of the country. There is a fairly small high income group, maybe 10% or less at the top. There was also a rather small middle class which was shrinking during the period I was there. This situation is far from unique to Jamaica but it was and is a major problem in the country. Most of the economic reform programs that we and the IMF supported tended to hit on the low and middle income poor sections of the population more than the upper levels.

One of the results was there was a very high crime rate in the city of Kingston itself. It was a bad sort of crime in that it was violent. A lot of the criminals had guns. That was one of the reasons we had a hardship differential there. The typical mode was that armed robbers would attack a house and often not leave any witnesses. Many people were killed that way and houses in the

better areas of the city were particular targets.

During the period I was there, we actually had armed guards on the homes of the American officers or, if they were in a compound, there would be a guard on the gate. Because I had a separate house, I had an armed guard, a gate, and there were grills all over the house.

I had been in a lot of third world posts, some rather dangerous. Thus the crime problem in Kingston did not shock me too much. On the other hand, I did not have a family there either. My kids came down to visit occasionally but were not there regularly. The crime was less acute up on the north coast which is where the main hotels and tourism were. Tourists didn't experience it to the degree we did in Kingston although there were occasional problems even on the north coast.

Q: Was it a good sized embassy?

ROSSI: Yes, a large embassy for the size of the country. We had a large AID mission there and several other agencies were present.

Q: Today is August 3, 2007. This is Peter Eicher continuing the interview with Herman Rossi. This is tape number 4A. Herman, you were talking about the size of the embassy in Jamaica.

ROSSI: The embassy in Kingston was bigger than you might expect for the size of the country. I think it was a legacy of the Caribbean Basin Initiative plus the obvious fact it is so close to the U.S. and there was a broad spectrum of US interests there. There was also the feeling that the U.S. needed to support the Caribbean economies or they would be subverted by Cuba. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990, this threat seemed to have become less acute because Cuba was not getting the kind of the support it had before.

After I left in '92, the embassy was cut back somewhat because the rationale for this heavy effort in Jamaica was less. We had a good size AID mission. We had DEA office. We had a good sized USIA operation there and an agricultural attaché I believe. There was also a large consular section since many Jamaicans wanted to get to the U.S. and visa fraud was a significant problem Also the many American tourists were often getting sick, having traffic accidents, and even dying. All this required Embassy staff.

Q: *This is very interesting what you said suggests that as the Cold War ended, we were scaling back, and so perhaps the Caribbean nations suffered somewhat by the end of the Cold War?*

ROSSI: I think they probably did in terms of US assistance. I'm do not think that at any point the U.S. government stood up and said, "The Cold War is over, so we can do less in the Caribbean," but the area gradually assumed a lower priority for assistance and attention. Other areas came more to the fore than the Caribbean particularly after I left. I think in large measure this was due to a reduction of the perceived threat from Cuban influence in these countries; without Soviet support Cuba could not undertake nearly as much subversion as before.. Most of these countries had somewhat fragile democratic systems. Jamaica was and is a rough-and-ready democracy. The elections would get a little violent, but as far as anyone could tell, the man who won was

normally the guy that got the most votes which is not true of many other countries. [laughter]

Q: Did you get a lot of high level attention from Washington?

ROSSI: Not like we had had before. Dan Quayle visited while he was Vice President. I was rather impressed with him. He's gotten a lot of bad press, but in dealing with him during the visit, I found him to be a solid, sensible individual.

I think the Secretary of State came, his name is out of my head at this point.

Q: Jim Baker probably.

There had been a big hurricane, Gilbert, which had swept through the islands about nine months before I got there. They were still recovering from that storm, and the U.S. had come forward and greatly helped the island of Jamaica on recovery. In the period right after the storm, we had sent down repair crews to restring the power lines, telephone lines, and gave them continuing aid to help recover from it. It earned the U.S. a lot of goodwill.

My tour in Jamaica was mid '89 to mid '92, I left in mid '92 and went back to the department and took a job in the CIP (Communication Information Policy) bureau. It was a very small, specialized bureau in State that dealt with telecommunications issues all the way from frequency negotiations to broader issues of state control of telecommunications. There's a whole series of international organizations that have been set up to deal with various aspects of these issues all of which we were members of. Some people in the bureau had to attend at lot of international meetings.

It's a specialized field. The CIP bureau has since been merged back into the EB—Economic and Business—bureau, so it no longer exists. In years earlier a decision made that telecommunication was important enough that it needed an assistant secretary level head to deal with other countries when negotiations that were going on. Later on in the late '90s this was reversed.

There was a political appointee as head of the bureau and as far as I could tell all the assistant secretaries of CIP had been political appointees. These were rather technical fields so I spent much of my year there learning the turf. I'd dealt with broad policy and communications issues, but these were more specialized issues.

One of the things in the back of my mind when I went there was the possibility of a mandatory retirement looming on the horizon. Thus I thought it would be helpful to pick up some knowledge in the telecommunication field which would help me in a second career.

LACY A. WRIGHT
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1991-1995)

Mr. Wright joined the Foreign Service in 1968 after earning degrees at Mendelien College and Loyola University. His foreign service took him to Vietnam both during and after the War. Other assignments took him to Milan, London and Bangkok as well as to the State Department in Washington, where he worked with International Organizations in matters concerning refugees, and UNESCO affairs. Mr. Wright was born and raised in Springfield, Illinois. Mr. Wright was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: *Today is the 13th of August, 1998. You were in Jamaica from when to when?*

WRIGHT: '91 to '95, almost exactly four years.

Q: *Jamaica has often been a troubled place because some political ambassadors have gone there and were sort of not quite sure what an ambassador would do. I mean they were often more social than not, but they were real problems. Could you describe how you got the job as a DCM and who was your ambassador, and then the situation in Jamaica in 1991, and then we can move on?*

WRIGHT: I got the job primarily through the support of Sally Cowal, who was then the deputy assistant secretary in ARA who was responsible for the Caribbean. She recommended me to the then ambassador, whose name was Glen Holden. Holden was and is a very wealthy Californian, a friend of Ronald Reagan, a friend of George Bush, a man who made a fortune in insurance, and he had just lost his then DCM because of disagreements between them, and so he was looking for someone new. Sally recommended me. I don't know how many other applicants there were—I know there were some—and I went through a long series of correspondences with Holden, in which he asked me a number of questions to which I responded. The whole process took several months, but in the end he accepted me as his DCM, and I went there directly from Trinidad in April of 1991.

Q: *Obviously you were sounding the corridors to find out what the dispute had been between the other DCM and the Ambassador, just to get a feel for the situation. How would you describe that?*

WRIGHT: My gosh, it never occurred to me to wonder about that.

Q: *Ha, ha! A note to the transcriber to put down "Laughter and raised eyebrows" on both our parts.*

WRIGHT: Yes, of course I looked deeply into the matter. The then DCM, whom I did not know at that time but came to know later, was an economic officer, and this was his first DCM-ship. I believe that several things went wrong. I believe that there was not enough communication between the two. The economic officer went off and did things—this is what it appears to me, I must add—which he was familiar with, talking about economic policy and Jamaica's role in that and in our overall economic policy toward the Caribbean, not always, it seems, coordinating with the Ambassador. And I think that that was the general problem, that is, there was kind of a

growing rift between the two. One has to remember that when you have a political ambassador, that person usually doesn't know what his role is, and he doesn't know what his deputy's role is, therefore. So there's a period during which those things have to get sorted out. There's also, or can be, a certain amount of suspicion on the part of a political ambassador vis-à-vis his DCM, who may think that he is trying to encroach on the ambassador's territory. This happens all the time. And so there might have been some of that. Anyway, it's unfortunate that it didn't work out for the person involved, who stayed about a year and whom I have come to know later as quite a good guy and a serious person. But those are the kinds of things that happen in our service.

Q: *Can you talk about what was the situation vis-à-vis the United States but also the political situation on the ground in Jamaica in 1991, when you arrived there?*

WRIGHT: Well, you have in Jamaica a country with some serious issues with the United States. You have, first of all, a number of Jamaicans who live in this country, and some people are fond of saying that they are either very good or very bad. There are some marvelous Jamaicans here, some of whom have become famous, like Colin Powell—

Q: *Barbara Watson.*

WRIGHT: —Barbara Watson and others, many who don't become famous but who are marvelous citizens of our country. And then, at the other end of the spectrum, you have a whole group of very violent criminals, who do a great deal of damage in our country. So you have both. And the people at the bottom end of the spectrum also cause bilateral difficulties with our country. For example, we exercise our right every year to deport a number of Jamaicans back to Jamaica. These are often people who are released from prison, and we put them on the plane and send them back there. This, during my time there, reached a total of maybe close to a thousand people a year.

Q: *Oh, boy.*

WRIGHT: And Jamaica, under international law, has to take these people back. But first of all, they don't like it, naturally, because it's causing them and their society increased problems, and they sometimes accuse us of sending back people, number one, who sometimes they contend are not Jamaican citizens, or who may be technically Jamaican citizens but who arrived in the United States so young that they were really formed in the United States and so, it is said, their criminal behavior is really our fault, and not Jamaica's. That is a debate that went on during the time that I was there. We once did a statistical analysis of some groups of these people who were sent back, and I must say, we did not find very many who arrived in the United States at age two and then became violent criminals. Most of them arrived much later, although there were some who fit into the first category. At any rate, this is one of the issues.

Q: *I must say, during this period of time, I was here in Washington, and the papers would make reference again and again to Jamaican gangs who would come in and work from New York down to Norfolk and sort of up and down the Atlantic corridor. They would say "Jamaican Gangs" and then you would have, you know, "Ten People in an Apartment Slaughtered." I haven't heard that much any more, but that was very much in the newspapers during this*

particular time when you were there.

WRIGHT: Well, I remember maybe one or two instances of that. I don't know that that—the particular way you've described it—was a continuing feature of these gangs, but there's no doubt that they exist, and there's a tremendous symbiosis in travel between gangs in the US and the same gangs, with the same names, in Jamaica. There's another interesting feature here, and that is that the gangs in Jamaica are generally linked with one of the two political parties in Jamaica. This is a feature of Jamaican political life, which it's hard for us to comprehend. And I can't really think of any parallel anywhere else in the world, but these over the course of the past two or three decades, Jamaican criminal gangs became affiliated with one of the political parties. And one of the things that pops up from time to time is one of the two most renowned Jamaican leaders of the last several decades—and those are two, Edward Seaga and Michael Manley—being caught in a photo somewhere, at some fund-raising event or some other kind of public event, with a bunch of very dubious characters. Seaga, in particular, whose constituency was, and is today, one of the most abject and difficult and violence-ridden parts of Kingston, was often accused of having used these gangs literally to attack partisans of the other side. And the same kind of charges were made against the Manley people. So probably neither side has its hands clean in this matter, and both of them are guilty of having dealt with and used and accepted the violent services of these criminal gangs.

Q: *Well, did we try to tell the Immigration Service to cool it or not to send as many, or did we sort of accept the heat from the Jamaican Government?*

WRIGHT: The latter. We never tried to influence our own authorities in that way. We explained to the Jamaicans as best we could why this was within our rights and tried to clear up some of the misconceptions. Another problem between us, by the way, similar in nature, was that of extradition. Because of the frequent travel back and forth of people who committed crimes in the United States, they would often end up back in Jamaica. And there were some really clamorous cases of people who were extradited or whom we wanted extradited that occurred while I was there. One of them—I can't think of the man's name, although I will in the written record—was a man who was wanted, I believe, for murder in the United States, a Jamaican. He was extradited, and no sooner was he extradited than his lawyers and others popped up and said that this was done illegally, that the laws of Jamaica had not been followed, and I believe that our case turned on an appeal that they contended was still in progress with the Privy Council in London when the removal of the person to the United States occurred. And I don't remember whether this was totally clear. I remember, at the time, that we believed that we were right. Well, first of all, if any mistake had occurred, it would have been on the part of the Jamaican Government; it would not have been on our part. So there's no question of that. But the Jamaican Government was so concerned about this public accusation and about what they feared the reaction was starting to be. I was chargé at the time, and I was called in by the minister of national security and literally asked if we would sent him back to Jamaica, which I duly transmitted to Washington, and you can imagine the attitude of the Justice Department to such a request. Their response was "no way, José, are we sending this guy back to Jamaica." And so this was a request that was repeated to us several times over the coming weeks, that we never sent back, and it faded away.

Another time, or perhaps it was the same time—you know, in extradition, when a requesting

country asks for someone to be extradited, it must say exactly on what charge, where it will be—it has to be very specific. So you can't get the guy back to your country and then try him on something else, as you know. And in this case, the person was then tried in another jurisdiction and for a slightly different crime, and this brought protests from the Jamaicans. I believe we could show that there were actually two requests made, the Jamaicans acted on one, we acted on the other—again, I'm not sure if it was totally clear which side was in the right and which side was in the wrong. I think, from a moral point of view, there's no reason to feel sorry for the person in question. Whichever count he was tried on, he richly deserved what he got. And I think the Jamaicans privately were very happy to be rid of him. But again, it's one of those kinds of questions that come up, behind which there's often a lot of nationalistic sentiment.

Q: *How did Ambassador Glen Holden operate? How long was he there, and how did he operate, and how did you two work together?*

WRIGHT: He was there for, I guess, almost two years while I was there. Ambassador Holden first of all got off to bit of a rocky start—this was before I came on the scene—but even before he arrived in Jamaica he made some remarks in a speech, which I never read and really don't know the nature of, remarks that were taken badly by Jamaicans. I think that he may have not been as carefully talked to by the State Department during this period—that might have been part of it. But at any rate, he said things which irritated them. So this meant that when he arrived he had this to overcome. Another thing that he had to overcome was that he was a very wealthy man, so he was susceptible to those kinds of accusations, those kinds of resentments. For example, I'm told that he spent about $500,000 of his own money to refurbish the residence. And he brought down his own armored car, which he drove around in. So all those things were the kind of things that can, if someone wants to be critical, breed criticism and resentment. I would say, however, by the time that he left, he was well liked. I think by then, in a number of ways, he had shown that he really was very fond of Jamaica, that he was willing to put his money, both in a literal sense and in a figurative sense, where his mouth was. And he had become friendly with a number of important Jamaicans, including people like Michael Manley and others. And so I believe that by the time he left he was appreciated. He came back once during the time that I was chargé, after he had left. He was invited back by the Jamaican Government when the Queen and her husband visited Jamaica. He was invited back because he had made some significant donations to the restoration of the governor-general's residence.

Q: *I imagine that immigration, running the consular section and all, must have been a considerable burden. In fact, this has gotten some of our ambassadors into trouble, because they did not respond very well to the hordes of people that came in and all. How did the immigration thing work while you were there?*

WRIGHT: Well, the consular section was a very busy one, very difficult job. We had about a 50 per cent rejection rate, very high. We were constantly being hit with various kinds of difficulties in that area. It was a difficult job for the junior officers that had to do it, and there were always about 10 or so of them there. They felt under a tremendous amount of pressure, particularly because they sometimes had to take their work home with them, in the sense that in public they would be recognized as consular officers, so that you would call them up at their homes or badger them on the streets or things like this, making life more unpleasant than it would have

been otherwise. There were also, of course, hordes of people who called various of us in the embassy, probably me mostly, to get them visas, intervene on behalf of somebody.

Q: *These were Americans who wanted, usually, servants, wasn't it?*

WRIGHT: No, I wouldn't say so. I'm sure there were some of those. By the way, I don't mean to imply at all that people who called us were supporting something dubious. But the people who called us were often people we knew and who knew also how difficult it was to get an American visa or who had been importuned by somebody that wanted a visa, therefore had to be seen to be doing something for them, though often they were of this nature. The applicant himself or herself, his or her case might not look particularly convincing to a consular officer, but the person was calling, perhaps an employer, perhaps a friend, a politician, to say, "Look, I know so-and-so. I know their family. I know their situation. I know they're going to come back, and here's why." And I think when the situation fits that kind of description, you ought to take it seriously, because after all, what you're trying to do is not exclude everybody; what you're trying to do is make the right decision. And if somebody comes along whom you trust and purports to shed light on a situation that you, of course, know little about, and if you trust that person, that's something that ought to be considered. So it always seemed to me that these were, on the face of it, legitimate interventions on the part of people that ought to be used to help make a good decision.

Now it's interesting—you know about this better than anybody—that you have certain consular officers who are absolutely determined that nobody is going to influence them, and who regard anybody's call to them, including that of the Ambassador, as at least an implicit interference in their affairs. You also have, however, a legitimate area for participation by other people, first of all, of the kind that I've described, and secondly, I think, when a very important person in the country calls you up and says this is really important to me that this happen, that's something that any ambassador ought to take into account. If the foreign minister calls him up and says, "Look, I don't ask you for many favors, but I want one, and here's what it is," I think that our broader foreign policy interests dictate that that request be seriously considered. And sometimes you have a consular officer or consuls general who recognize that and sometimes they don't.

Q: *Well, on the consular side, was this sort of—I won't say a running battle, but was this a theme that kind of ran throughout the time that you were there, with these requests and the varying responses of consular officers and requests and that sort of thing?*

WRIGHT: The visa requests were certainly a constant theme. I would not say that we in the front office had a lot of problems of this kind with the consular people. I think that, by and large, the people who were there, both the junior officers and their supervisors, had good heads on their shoulders and could tell the difference between a shoddy case and one that required some extra thinking.

Q: *While we're on the consular side, what about crime and protection of Americans and also the staff? Was this a problem?*

WRIGHT: Yes, there was a problem. For example, while we were there the French military

attaché and a visitor from France were murdered in the man's living room, in his house. Terrible crime. We had, I think, three of our guards murdered while I was there, including two who were actually on duty. We had some very severe cases of American tourists, one in which a man alone traveling in Jamaica was brutally murdered and his body weighted down and thrown into the sea and very probably eaten by sharks, and having to deal with this poor man's family. So these were very difficult cases, and there were two incumbents of the American citizens' services job while I was there, and these poor guys had to deal with the families in these kinds of situations, and they were really gut-wrenching. So yes, there was a lot of crime, and it was a constant problem for us.

One way in which it became a problem, especially between our countries, was in the issuance of what was then the "Travel Advisory." As you know, it's since been changed. But the travel advisory was something which was put out at that time on an *ad hoc* basis and when there was reason, anywhere in the world, to warn American visitors against a particular situation. And we issued a travel advisory on Jamaica during that time. Again, I guess I was out of town, I think, and someone else had to deal with this for about a day until I got back, but I think I was nonetheless the chargé at the time. And we issued such a travel advisory, and the Jamaican Government really went bonkers because Jamaica, of course, depends heavily on its tourism industry for its national sustenance. Jamaica's two big foreign exchange earners are bauxite and tourism, and most of their foreign exchange comes from those two sources. So the government feared that this would have a severe impact on their tourism, and they were highly exercised about it. And they called us in and said, "How could you do this?" and "Aren't we friends?" and "What are you thinking about?" and "Why didn't you tell us you were going to do this?" and so on and so on. So this was a bit of a mini-crisis in our relations.

Q: *Well, how did it work out?*

WRIGHT: We, of course, defended our travel advisory. In those days you replaced one travel advisory with another, if you wanted to, and I'll have to do some more recollecting about this, but I think that after a certain period we were able to soften it; but more important, I would say, our travel advisory did not seem to have a big effect on the numbers of people who went to Jamaica, and I think that probably both they and we overestimated the influence that a travel advisory had. In fact, I would say that overall, I believe, that Jamaica, given sporadically the kinds of crimes that have occurred there, and I don't want to exaggerate them because they don't occur every day, but given the several high-profile crimes that occurred there, has, I believe, been very lucky that their tourism from the United States has not been more severely affected.

Q: *You were there during '92; Clinton was elected, and that I assume had brought another political ambassador.*

WRIGHT: That's correct. Ambassador Holden left shortly after the inauguration, having stayed on a bit longer than most other ambassadors did, but no too much longer, a couple of months, I think, but then, fortunately for me, it took a long time to appoint another ambassador. The first person appointed was a black woman politician, whose name I'll think of in a minute. It took them a while to appoint her, but they did. She eventually dropped out of her own accord because, she said, of her eyesight, which was not very good, and she feared that she would not be up to the demands of the job. This was Shirley Chisholm, from New York.

Q: *Oh, yes, a former Congressional representative.*

WRIGHT: Yes, and I guess the first woman and the only black woman to run for her party's nomination for the presidency. During this period I did come up and see her once, to get to meet her. I met her at the Hyatt Hotel near the Congress, where there was some kind of a black convention going on, and it was very instructive for me because this diminutive woman was obviously held in huge esteem by all the people there. My talk with her was interrupted constantly by people coming up to her and paying their obeisance.

Well, anyway, she did drop out, and then it took a very long time to appoint another person, and that really surprises me. I would have thought there would be no dearth of people wishing to go to Jamaica as ambassador.

Q: *Did someone arrive before you left?*

WRIGHT: Yes, and Gary Cooper, who was a black man who became the first black American ambassador to Jamaica, and he arrived about six months before I left.

Q: *What was his background?*

WRIGHT: It was varied. He was a Marine Corps Reserve general. He had founded and run a black-owned bank in Alabama. He had been an Alabama state legislator. He had been, I think, assistant secretary of the army, and I think he had another Pentagon job. So he had a number of arrows in his sling. His sister is or was married to Mr. Cafritz, here in Washington, a very influential and wealthy family, by marriage.

There were only about three or maybe four bauxite operations in Jamaica. They were all large. And there were, I think, three American companies there: Kaiser, Alcoa. I believe there was one Canadian company, and there was a national company. And there were, therefore, some American resident managers, and there were, of course, labor negotiations and labor disputes. The company's position always was, in the matter of wage negotiations, that they had to pay on the basis of productivity. The Jamaicans would argue that "You're paying so-and-so up in Canada X amount an hour. We're producing the same stuff. You should pay us the same." The company's position always was, "Yes, but their productivity is three times as great as yours." So this was a constant battle, and needless to say, these matters reached very high levels in the government because of the importance nationally of the bauxite revenue.

I'm trying to think of what happened in the one that I got slightly involved in. It was resolved. The company didn't leave, but there were veiled threats that if they couldn't reach an agreement they couldn't sustain their operation. An agreement was always reached.

Q: *Well, now, could you talk about our dealings with the government. Who was the prime minister at the time. As I recall, we had a very rocky relationship with Manley, when he was in power at various times, but during this time, where did we sort of stand with the various leaders?*

WRIGHT: Well, by this time, Manley was in his second prime-ministership, and he was a very much changed animal. Now how much of that was a change of conviction and how much of it was a tactical change, I think they were both. I think Manley did change his views about socialism. I think he did become convinced that a lot of aspects of socialism didn't work, that Jamaica did need foreign investment, and all that, companies did need to behave like businesses, and so on. So I think a lot of his thinking truly did change; on the other hand, on certain things he never changed. I'm thinking primarily of his stand on Cuba. He always believed that we were terribly wrong in the way that we dealt with Castro's Cuba, and that never changed, even though, again, tactically, he greatly played down, during his second term, Jamaica's relations with Cuba. For example, there was a Cuban ambassador to Jamaica, who had a very small mission, however. There was never, during Manley's time, a resident Jamaican ambassador in Cuba. They had relations. There was a Jamaican ambassador, but he rarely went to Cuba, and he had other duties in the foreign ministry in Kingston. There were no visits between the two. I think Manley must have listened very carefully to what we were saying during his campaign, and he must have taken the very calculated decision that the United States is a lot more important to me than Cuba is. But I can remember, I had, while I was chargé, probably two or three luncheons with Manley, in which I invited him to our residence, and we had various members of the country team there, five or six people, and Manley, just Manley. And I remember saying to him the first time, "Mr. Manley, we thought we would make the sides even here: we would have six of us and one of you." Manley was a fantastic character, though. He was, I believe, the most brilliant extemporaneous English speaker that I've ever heard. He was a man with a great sense of humor, a man of huge range of interests. He had written one or two books, for example, about cricket. He was into everything. He was also a tremendous—legendary, I should say—womanizer, who was at that time with his... In fact, he was married while I was there, again, to Glynn Manley, who is now his widow. But he was larger than life in many ways, and I will never forget that at one of these luncheons he really unloaded on us about Cuba and about what a horrible botched up job we had made of our relations with Castro.

Q: *What were American interests during this time? We had the end of the Bush Administration and the beginning of the Clinton Administration. Did we have any major issues? I guess the whole Communist thing, which was always something there earlier on, that had died. People could be right, left or indifferent, and it didn't make us that much of a problem at this time*.

WRIGHT: Yes, I think that's right, and rabid socialism was pretty much dead by then. There really were not very many ideological differences between the parties, and in fact, it's kind of interesting that Seaga, during our time there, was probably more in favor of government ownership of certain parts of the economy than Manley's government was. So that is true. These differences had largely disappeared. One interest—not an abiding interest, but something that came up all of a sudden—provided us a chance to get much closer to Jamaica, or Jamaica to get much closer to us, and that was the trouble in Haiti, when we forced out the leader there and reinstalled—I shouldn't use that horrible word—assisted in the return of President Aristide. During that time, as you remember, there was a huge outflow, out-migration, by sea of Haitians, and this caused us to have to really devise a policy for dealing with this, and as you may remember, we had our coast guard and navy intercept people at sea rather than allowing them to come into Florida. This was a controversial policy at the time, and one in which we needed both some political cover and some real help. And Jamaica kind of surprisingly stepped forward. So

this was by far the most significant thing professionally that happened while I was there. Jamaica stepped forward and agreed, first of all, to participate in the force that went into Haiti in order to bring about the removal of –I can't think of his name now—General whatever-his-name-was. First of all, they agreed to participate; they helped us a great deal in persuading other Caribbean countries to participate; and they allowed us to use Kingston harbor to emplace ships to interview Haitian migrants for acceptance as refugees into the United States. And all of those required some heavy decision making on the part of the Jamaican Governments, and so in that instance Jamaica really earned the gratitude of the United States, and that was a very hectic and active time for us. I was the chargé during all this period. It also meant that we had at least two visits by Strobe Talbott while I was there.

Q: *Who was Under Secretary of State.*

WRIGHT: Under Secretary of State. And the whole thing there really went very well, and we were, as I say, extremely grateful to the Jamaicans for their assistance during this period.

Q: *One last question that I have on this, and that is on, during this time, the role of the narcotics trade.*

WRIGHT: Jamaica, first of all, grows marijuana, and so our narcotics assistance unit was engaged in trying to encourage the Jamaicans to destroy marijuana and assist them to do so, and we had a DEA office there.

Q: *Drug Enforcement Agency.*

WRIGHT: A Drug Enforcement Agency office, which had about three people in it, which is a fairly decent-sized DEA office, and they worked with the Jamaican police and the Jamaican drug squad within the police to try to catch traffickers, and they did catch some. We were not very successful in seeing traffickers either prosecuted or convicted in Jamaica, and this was always a weak part of our efforts. We were engaged through AID in trying to assist Jamaica to upgrade its court system with the idea and the hope that—well, first of all it's a good thing to do in itself—but with the hope that it would assist in the prosecution of drug cases. One of the problems was not so much that drug cases were badly handled but that the entire system was extremely slow, was cumbersome, was one in which judges routinely did not behave very forcefully, so that defense lawyers had a relatively easy time of it in arguing for delays and that kind of thing, which disrupted cases, from our point of view. So on that score, we were not very successful. We were probably more successful in the case of marijuana eradication, although that gradually became, in our overall policy, less a matter of importance and urgency than stopping the cocaine trade.

Q: *Well, wasn't marijuana or this type of hemp called* ganja *or something like that that played quite a role in one aspect of Jamaican culture?*

WRIGHT: Oh, absolutely. Ganja is just marijuana. That's what it is. That's what Jamaicans call it. Yes, and of course, you have Bob Marley. Bob Marley, by the way, I think, is probably, posthumously, the best known popular musician in the world. Everywhere you go, all over the

world, people who've never heard of Elvis Presley or the Beatles all know Bob Marley, so Marley's influence is just tremendous, I think hard to exaggerate. And Marley and all of the people in that culture, of course, were highly identified with marijuana, and one of the results of this is that a lot of people, Americans, tourists, young people, go down to Jamaica to do drugs. And I think some of them probably think that it's okay to do drugs in Jamaica because of all they've heard about it, and one of the things that we constantly had to deal with were a high number of Americans arrested at the airport for drug possession. And the Jamaicans really went after this with a lot of enthusiasm. And so at given times we had maybe a couple hundred Americans, couriers, in jail in Jamaica for drug possession.

Q: *What were conditions like and how did you work it with the prisoners?*

WRIGHT: I never myself visited any of these prisoners in jail. I don't think it was awful. I think there were jails in Jamaica that were awful, but I don't believe that these people were in them. In fact, I have the recollection now that some of these people regarded being in jail for six months in Jamaica as part of the cost of doing business. On the other hand, you had other really sad cases of young people talked into or cajoled into being a courier, with the promise of some money and a vacation in Jamaica, who ended up in jail to the horrible consternation of their parents, and all kinds of efforts made to get them out. We had both kinds of people. But it was clear to us that the people who were running these couriers and, by the way, who were often willing to pay a fine to get them out, regarded the losing some of them from time to time as one of their costs of doing business.

Q: *Were there any other issues particularly during this time?*

WRIGHT: Oh, we signed a bilateral investment treaty while I was there, which helped out in the treatment given to American investors and companies there. Let me think.

Q: *Hurricanes? Natural disasters?*

WRIGHT: No, the great hurricane occurred about two years before I came there, and that really was a disaster, and it caused a huge amount of devastation—tore the roof off my house, by the way. It was all back in by the time I got there.

Well, the BCCI scandal occurred while I was there.

Q: *Could you explain what the BCCI was?*

WRIGHT: Well, let's see. The Bank of Commerce and something International, I guess. BCCI was an international bank which in about 1991 or so was discovered to be involved in all kinds of fraudulent activities and over most of the world was closed down, over all the world, I guess. And there was a branch in Jamaica. Actually the Jamaicans claimed at the time that their BCCI bank, because of the strength of their own banking system, no legitimate clients lost their money because of what happened. However, about five years later, right after I had left, the whole Jamaican banking system pretty much came unglued, and there was a general bank scandal in Jamaica, in which it was shown that several of the major banks in Jamaica had been involved in

very dubious, or lax, if not fraudulent, loan activities, and several banks were closed down and taken over by the government. And so Jamaica has had its share now of banking problems.

JAMES C. CASON
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1997-2000)

Ambassador Cason was born in New Jersey and was raised in US Naval bases in the United States and abroad. He was educated at Dartmouth College and the Johns Hopkins School of International Studies (SAIS). He was also the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship to Uruguay. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, Mr. Cason served primarily in Latin American countries. In his Washington assignments, he also dealt primarily with Latin American Affairs. His foreign posts include San Salvador, Lisbon, Maracaibo, Montevideo, Milan, Panama City, La Pas, Tegucigalpa, Kingston and Havana. He served as US Ambassador to Paraguay from 2005 to 2008. Ambassador Cason was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Well then in -- you left there in '97. Where did you go?

CASON: Then I went as Deputy Chief of Mission to Kingston, Jamaica.

Q: You were there from when to when in Jamaica?

CASON: '97 to 2000.

Q: What was the situation in Jamaica when you arrived?

CASON: Well, Jamaica is a very physically dangerous environment. It is a beautiful island. Kingston was very dangerous, with shootouts in the areas that we lived. The "posses" or drug gangs controlled the capital. We had a lot of problems with drugs there. Jamaican cocaine mules were bringing large quantities of coke into the US and the UK. Something like 70 or 80% of those arrested at US and UK airports for drug trafficking were Jamaican. The posses were well-established criminal organization. For the embassy, counter-narcotics work was very important. Jamaica is the largest and most important Caribbean country. As DCM I was back again doing the coordination of law enforcement efforts. We worked especially closely with the Coast Guard of Jamaica, helping them professionalize. We gave training and intelligence, and they allowed us to eradicate marijuana within the country. That was a lot of what we did.

Politically, relations were only lukewarm. Superficially they were friendly to us. But they did not vote with us in the UN. They had good relations with the Cubans--even sympathy, because they'd been trained by the Cubans. So we didn't get anywhere with them on countering Cuba. They were standoffish politically and in foreign affairs areas of interest to us, but nominally allied with us on a number of law enforcement matters. In one area, we never saw eye to eye.

That was criminal deportees. Many Jamaican criminals, when they got out of US prison, were deported back to Jamaica. The Jamaicans claimed these deportees were the cause of crime waves. They claimed they were not criminals when they immigrated to the US, but learned from US criminals and then we sent our problems back to them. That was not true. I researched all the deportee criminal records in Jamaica (with the help of the police) and found that most of them had criminal records before they left Jamaica. We were able to debunk the charge that they learned to be criminals in the States. They went to the States, lived in Jamaican communities, hobnobbed with Jamaican criminals there, were arrested and came back home they had been convicted and finished their sentences.

The Jamaican gangs were very smart. They penetrated our consular section over time, putting "sleepers" into key jobs over decades. Some of these people printed visas after officers had adjudicated them. Some got jobs as drivers then applied for a job in anti-fraud operations, or in running the section's computers. Deported posse members came back after serving time for cocaine trafficking. Their friends in the consular section would give them a new visa right away and they'd go back with a new identity and a fresh 10-year visa and get back into the drug trade in the US.

An informant told us we had a problem and gave us a Jamaican passport with a new US visa that had not been approved by an officer. How did this happen? I spent many months pouring over printouts of every keystroke made by anyone in the consular section to look for anomalies to determine who in the consular section was involved. I was successful. It was very sophisticated. I figured out how they did it. I took all the printouts for a year and a half period from each computer home. It was about a 20-foot high stack of print outs. I eventually realized that several locals had gotten access to officers' log-on passwords. When the officer stepped away from their computer or went on vacation, one member of the group would "adjudicate" the visa and a week later an accomplice would print the new visa. I discovered that the bogus visas were in passports that did not have any holes in them where we would staple the receipt for payment for the visa interview. They lacked the normal holes, since of course the "applicant" never appeared much less paid the fee. That was the give away. So we knew we had a problem and eventually figured it out. There were no Americans involved. They were sloppy with their passwords.

Q: Were there any arrests in your consular section?

CASON: Yes. Two members of the group were fired and arrested. I found out that this operation had gone on for years. After a number of successful years, the bad guys made a lot of money and moved to Fort Lauderdale. Their successors continued on.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

CASON: We had Gary Cooper and Stan McLelland. The first was a Two-Star General in the Alabama National Guard. He was also banker. The other was in oil, a lawyer for Valero Oil Cooperation. Both were political appointees who had given big bucks and were rewarded with a posting in the Caribbean. They were there for the prestige and fun, scuba diving or golf. I was very disappointed that neither was interested in working. I ended up having to be the defacto ambassador most of the time. They were in and about, running around spending the post's scarce

program money on their golf and scuba diving adventures. This was my first experience with a non-involved political appointee.

Q: Did you have to tread carefully to avoid sensitivities?

CASON: You bet. They had paid well for their positions. Program money was scarce in Jamaica. That pot of money was for consular officers, the Front Office and to fund political section activities. To the extent that an Ambassador used it for his hotel expenses, little was left for post activities. Jamaica was very expensive. The Ambassador could not travel without bodyguards because of the crime. Diplomatic Security paid the bodyguard expenses and the gas, but not per diem for the Ambassador. When an Ambassador went to the North Coast to Negril or to other places to golf or scuba dive local hotels were very expensive, geared to tourists, costing $500 a night. By definition, when an Ambassador traveled everything he did was "official." The trip would end up just costing thousands and thousands of dollars, which was a program expense, so it came out of whatever little we had for programs.

Q: Yes. It's always a shocker when you think about it--it happens in places like Jamaica I think more often than some other places, where --

CASON: Yes. We had a good Peace Corps presence in Jamaica. The Peace Corps volunteers were fun to work with. As in Honduras, our post tried to get Jamaica to pass stronger narcotics laws-- in large it was thugs and drugs and fugitives. We got the US Marshals to come in and search for US fugitives. They had good success and the Jamaicans cooperated. We worked with the GOJ on joint marijuana eradication efforts and maritime interdictions. That was our focus and those were the kind of things that political appointees were just not interested in. So that was the down side of serving there, but it was a fun post and I learned a lot from it.

Q: Was the drug traffic Ganja?

CASON: Yes.

Q: Marijuana being produced --

CASON: And increasingly cocaine. Marijuana was grown in Jamaica and then shipped by sea out from clandestine little harbors all around Jamaica, which had thousands of miles of coastline. Often go-fast boats would come into Jamaica to bring in fire arms in exchange for coke. A constant stream of vessels sailed to and from Jamaica, entering Cuban waters and running right on the edge of Cuban waters all the way around Cuba, so we couldn't do anything about it. And then they exited on the other side of Cuba, making a dash for either The US coast or to Puerto Rico. Small planes from Colombia hauled coke as well using isolated dirt airstrips in Jamaica. Jamaica needed to have drug agents monitor these air strips but the GOJ had no funds for housing agents. I went to FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and asked them to donate some of the mobile home trailers they used as post-hurricane shelters. INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) helped us with expenses of getting them shipped by sea to Jamaica. Drivers drove them down from Tennessee, put them on a ship, and then we had to drive these long trailers on little mountain roads in Jamaica to runways in Port

Antonio and places like that. Jamaica then stationed Jamaican anti-drug people there to keep the airfields --basically strips from World War II-- from being used by the bad guys.

We tried to get the GOJ to pass legislation trying to seize drug planes if tests showed the presence of cocaine on board. Modern forensic techniques could reveal that the plane, in fact, had been used to transport cocaine and therefore should be seized. We never got that law because there was so much corruption and so many high level people involved. They knew that law would kill their business. So like everywhere, trying to get the locals to do the right thing in terms of legislation and performance was hard. I constantly engaged with the equivalent of the Minister of Justice and Interior located just across the street from us on all of these matters.

Q: Could you use the visa weapon against the drug lords like in some of the Latin American countries where you've been involved, Mr. High and Mighty, you've been involved with drugs so we're not going to give you or your family visas to --

CASON: Right.

Q: -- the United States.

CASON: Well, remember in our last conversation, that's what we did in Honduras for the first time and --

Q: Yes.

CASON: -- the Helms-Burton people codified it. The problem there was we cancel or deny visas but unbeknownst to us they had been getting visas, fresh visas in different names, for bad guys because of the infiltration of the consular section. We figured out the got 500- 600 people multiple entry 10-year visas, fresh new identities. So the visa weapon wasn't particularly effective when they could just manufacture a new, seemingly legitimate one.

Q: You know at one time we'd had rather bad relations. I think it was under -- was it Manly?

CASON: Manly.

Q: He was anti-American, anti-white and all that. How stood things with the government when you were there?

CASON: As I say, relations were correct if stiff and formal. There was always a racial under current. Jamaicans were subject to slavery for a long time and they harbored tremendous resentment for the way they were treated under slavery--it was particularly harsh. So the white man was, you know, still the enemy. And you would see it in all of the Jamaican songs. You know, the underlying attitude was they were oppressed—you whites did us wrong. Jamaica is a black and mulatto society. It was not easy to socialize with Jamaicans. They thought they were the natural leaders of the Caribbean. They wanted special treatment from the United States, but were not willing to reciprocate. It was always give us, give us, give us. You owe it to us, that sort of thing. They wanted us to stop all guns leaving the United States. We replied that's kind of

difficult with 100 million containers leaving the US a year. We offered to help look at containers leaving Jamaica that might contain cocaine, which fed this whole business. They fought to stop us from deporting their criminals. But they had to take them back and we insisted they do so as was their legal obligation. It was not easy dealing with the Jamaicans.

Q: Was there a rather strong very wealthy American presence there that sort of lived on its own and wanted special treatment?

CASON: No. There were lots of tourists but no, there weren't that many resident Americans. The wealthy US tourists stayed on the North Coast which had some fancy hotels. There were a lot of rich Jamaican families whose fortunes stemmed from sugar, bananas, tourism and rum. We knew them and they were friendly. These families had been there for generations and were into exports, shipping, tourism and nickel and aluminum. Those were the major export products. The country's economic situation was bad due to tremendous corruption and vacillating commodity prices. They never could get their roads built. It was a very poor country, beset by the drug trade and the armed gangs that the two political parties had created to fight each other and get votes at election time. These gangs got out of hand. Eventually the army had to go in and take out the leaders at a high price in lives lost.

Q: Yes --

CASON: Jamaican drug leaders knew they were going to die young, so they lived it up, they'd get killed around 25 or 30. Their culture was gangs and ganja. Kingston was a very poor town. Tourists didn't want to go there and there was not much to do. All of the international activity was on the other coast, which was a different world. Cruise ships would come into Dunn's River Falls and Port Antonio. I used to go fishing over. I had a fishing boat. That was my hobby, to go out deep-sea fishing with some friends, and have some fun. But other than that it was work, work and --

Q: Well tell me, did you have a problem as DCM -- You were basically responsible for the personnel there -- was it difficult for Americans working for our embassy?

CASON: Was it difficult?

Q: Well I was wondering, you know, I mean given the --

CASON: It was hard to recruit people for the post because of the fact that Kingston was not a desirable city and due to the danger. We had good schools. But the embassy itself was terrible. It was in a rented office building-- the air conditioners didn't work sometimes and it'd get 100 degrees inside. It was just not a nice place to live-- everybody wanted to live on the other coast. So on the weekends everybody would take off for the other side of the island. It was not a particularly easy place. Nobody really wanted to go to Kingston.

Q: So you were there from what, '97 to when?

CASON: 2000.

***

MARTINIQUE

CLINTON L. OLSON
Consul
Martinique (1952-1955)

Ambassador Clinton L. Olson was born in South Dakota in 1916 and moved to California when he was 15 years old. He received a bachelor's from Stanford University. While pursuing an MBA in graduate school at Stanford, Ambassador Olson was called into active duty as a U.S. Army Reserve Officer in 1941. His Foreign Service career included positions in Austria, Iran, Russia, Martinique, England, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Ambassador Olson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 17, 1996.

Q: Where did you end up going?

OLSON: I was trying to get the hell out of Washington because the McCarthy Committee were still interested in me and one of my colleagues asked me if I would like to be Consul in Martinique. I said, "Great! Whose is it?" I became Consul to the French West Indies.

Q: When were you there?

OLSON: I was there for two and a half years, from 1952 to 1955.

Q: What was the situation in Martinique and the French West Indies at that period? It had been under Vichy during the war. What were American interests there?

OLSON: The principal interest was that Martinique had the highest free Communist vote in the world, 63% in Martinique and 43% in Guadeloupe. It was mainly studying the size of the Communist Party and who was involved. The Party turned out to be a personality cult. The leader of the Party in Martinique was a fellow named Aime Ceasar, who was a Deputy in Chamber of Deputies. He was a rabid Communist. I used to walk through the streets of Port au France with Aime and we'd discuss Communist dialectics. During this period, Stalin died and Ceasar was invited to his funeral in Moscow. I'd always told Aime, "You think you're a loyal Frenchman, but you really can't be while you're working for the Soviet Union.' He went to Stalin's funeral and, when he came back from that, - he was a blue black in color - he came back as a gray black. He was really shaken up. As a result, Ceasar slipped out of the Communist Party of France and established an independent party. The result was that they had about a 13% vote instead of a 63% Communist vote and the Communist problem in Martinique started to

evaporate. There were a hell of a lot of radical groups around. Then I was sent by Loy Henderson to the Office of Budget. That was the last job that I wanted, but you went where they sent you.

Q: We're still talking about the 1956 to 1959 period, when you were in ARA. Were there any posts that caused particular problems for you?

OLSON: There were no posts that caused any particular problems for me. I had some run-ins with some Ambassadors who wanted more money for the administrative side of things. But they were all solved in good humor and good form.

Q: Was this at the time when Argenz was overthrown in Guatemala and Peurifoy was Ambassador down there?

OLSON: I was in Martinique in those days. I got a telegram to check on all ships going into that area and to report on a daily basis. I had a regular program Vice Consul and a USIA Officer, so there were three of us and the only material we had to work with were code books. We had 50 ships coming in at any one time. We were going crazy at that time. The big problem that I had on that one was that there was a ship called the Wolf something and that was the one that they were looking or. It sailed into Guadeloupe waters and so I prevailed upon the French to hold the ship and to look it over. Well, Washington wanted more than that. They wanted to see the cargo. They wanted it at least partially loaded. With using up all of my good will, and with great difficulty, I got the French to go along with that, and they tore the ship apart, but there were no munitions on it. It was a decoy. The real ship from East Germany sailed into Guatemala with no problems whatsoever and it was unloaded there. I was in a very embarrassing position.

WILLIAM B. COBB JR.
Consul
Martinique (1955-1958)

William B. Cobb was born in North Carolina in 1923. He received a B.A. from the University of North Carolina and an M.S. from George Washington University. His postings abroad included Managua, Havana, Manila, La Paz, Martinique, Stockholm, and Mexico City. Mr. Cobb was interviewed by Horace G. Torbert in 1990.

Q: *I had not realized that Fritz had been there. It was an interesting assignment.*

COBB: It was. I got to know the Service, the people. At the time I felt I knew eighty percent of the officers in the Far East and twenty-five percent of the officers elsewhere. And I knew how the system worked. And knowing that I asked for an assignment to Martinique, and got it. This was my reward for my service in Personnel - as consul in Martinique.

Q: *I talked to you predecessor, Clint Olson. He seemed to think it was an idyllic post, so I guess you did too. I suppose most of it was citizenship and protection?*

COBB: Very little of that. It was mainly keeping the flag up - though we had an interesting political system there. Amie Cesare was the mayor of Ft. DeFrance. He was also a deputy in the French National Assembly, elected on the Communist party ticket. Olson used to say that Martinique had the largest number of people voting communist in the free world. He made quite a name for himself as a communist fighter on Martinique. [laughter] Those of us who took a longer view of it realized that these people did not know what the Communist party was but knew that Aime Cesare was a black and a friend of theirs - they would have been voting for him if he had been running on the conservative ticket just as well as on the communist ticket.

Q: *Was Martinique considered to be in the European bureau?*

COBB: Yes, although I did not report to Paris. All reporting was sent to Washington. Paris did not know I existed for all practical purposes, except when I would write Paris and say I have a clerk who wants to move to Paris, will you please find a job for him in the embassy? They always did. It was that kind of relationship.

Cesare defected from the Communist party in a speech in Martinique at the time of the Polish revolution just before the Hungarian revolution...

Q: *When we were interrupted by the end of the tape you were telling about the mayor of the city in Fort DeFrance.*

COBB: He was also one of the three deputies to the French Assembly from Martinique.

Q: *He renounced communism after the Hungarian revolution, saying that the communist system obviously did not solve the needs of the poor ...*

COBB: or the requirements of the needy and if they could throw it off in Hungary they certainly could throw it off in Martinique.

Q: *I hope you got full credit .*

COBB: I don't think anybody can.

Q: *I think it is about the same as when the consul in Florence and I converted the Republic of San Marino to crypto-democracy. [laughter]*

COBB: When I was in Martinique, General de Gaulle came through. He was the *ancien chef d'etat* on his way to Polynesia and he stopped off on his way at Martinique and Guadeloupe for a week of public accolades. It was the first time that any president or former president of France had ever come to Martinique. Arrangements were made by the French prefect to have the school children of the island to line the fourteen kilometer highway from the airport into town and wave little French flags and shout “Viva de Gaulle!". There were lots of attendant ceremonies during the four days and I was involved in them being the chief American representative. The American consul on Martinique and the British consul on Martinique as well as the Dominican Republic's

consul on Martinique were the only three full-time consular officers. All the others were consular agents. We were invited to all the public ceremonies for the general. I remember going down the receiving line for the first occasion at the prefect's and de Gaulle saying to me and to man next to me, "*Tiens, le consul American parle le français*." "*Oui mon General*" was my response.

Q: *Now he was out of power at the time?*

COBB: He was out of power, but recognized as a former chief of state. I wrote a despatch - in those days one wrote despatches - saying that of all the public acclaim he received, he would be deceived if he thought he would carry Martinique if he ran for the presidency of the Republic. DeGaullism was dead in Martinique, this was just an arranged turnout for the former chief of state. This dispatch goes down in history as one of the many mistakes that Foreign Service officers make in their zeal to predict things. Of course when he ran for the presidency he got something like seventy-two percent of the vote in Martinique.

Q: *I doubt, however, that anyone ever looked at the dispatch later. You were fairly safe.*

COBB: Like Bob Murphy's famous despatch from the embassy saying Hitler was a passing phenomenon.

Q: *Were there any other highlights of this period?*

COBB: Not particularly. The de Gaulle visit and things like U. S. Navy visits were major features. The Caribbean cruise business was just developing and I wrote the first brochure in English on Martinique to be distributed to the cruise ships that came into the harbor. This leads up to one other major incident. The *Ile de France* came into Martinique on one of its trips and it had come out of New York and was going back to New York at the end of the cruise. As it left the Martinique harbor it ran aground with four hundred Americans on it. It could not get off, the screws were damaged, the ship was helpless.

Q: *So all you had to do was get four hundred Americans...*

COBB: To keep four hundred Americans happy until something could be done. It was quite a task. We entertained them at the residence. We entertained them all over town. The entire American community, all five of them, turned out. I went on board the ship to calm them down and addressed all the passengers over the loudspeaker, told them that their needs would be taken care of and the French Line was arranging air transportation for those who wanted to fly back. They would bring in another ship for those who wanted to sail back.

Q: *Meanwhile there was plenty of champagne on board.*

COBB: There was champagne on board and plenty to see and do in town. It worked out all right, but it was a bad seventy-two hours.

Q: *It was one of those things that was not your responsibility, but you had better do something.*

Again you went back to the Department - was this something you arranged or was it arranged for you?

COBB: My wife came down with hepatitis on Martinique. She and the vice consul in charge of the USIA and one other American all got hepatitis at the same time, at the same cocktail party, the same bad clams. It was a bad time, it was severe hepatitis and lasted a long time. So in November we came back on home leave and I was transferred to the FSI [Foreign Service Institute] to work for Harold Hoskins and Seaborn Foster, as liaison officer between the FSI and Personnel.

FRANK SNOWDEN HOPKINS
Consul
Martinique (1957-1960)

HOPKINS: Because I had an able and appreciative superior, I worked hard in this position and was rewarded with a promotion to the rank of FSO-2 for which I had originally applied. But what I really wanted was another overseas assignment. The chief of personnel proposed first that I should go out as Consul General at Winnipeg, Canada. I expressed dismay and asked if I could not go somewhere more exotic where I could use my foreign languages. A few weeks later I returned from my San Francisco UNESCO conference to find that personnel officials had assigned me to Martinique as American consul for the French West Indies and French Guiana. This was certainly much more exotic than Winnipeg but an unimportant post, normally given to an officer of Class 4. After some soul-searching, I decided not to protest, even though I had just been promoted to Class 2. For after all, it did promise what I wanted -- a fascinating experience in a new area and a chance to improve my fluency in French. Had I not entered the Foreign Service, I asked myself, for international experience rather than career advantage?

The Martinique experience lasted two and a half years until June, 1960. My territory consisted of two small but populous islands, Guadeloupe and Martinique, then 1,000 miles to the south the large but thinly populated area of French Guiana. There were about 600,000 inhabitants in the islands, mostly of African origin, but in all of French Guiana only about 30,000 miserably poor people living in Cayenne and some scattered villages along the coast. The interior of Guiana, with an area the size of Indiana, was a barren jungle, inhabited by primitive Indians and some runaway black slaves who had brought their culture with them from West Africa.

The economic importance of the French Caribbean territories was quite modest. The islands produced cane sugar, rum, and bananas; Guiana virtually nothing, though the French tried to exploit the tropical timber, excavated a little gold and tantalite, and found some bauxite deposits which were too far from navigable water to be readily usable. The islands made a living from rum and bananas, but all three of my territories, juridically considered by the French not to be colonies but overseas départementés of France itself, operated at a deficit and were subsidized by the French Government. The reasons for this paternalistic attitude were complex and were the subjects of some of my analytical despatches. The French spent quite a lot of money providing their Caribbean territories with social services. The schools in Martinique, for example, were

excellent, and my younger son Richard benefited greatly from his courses at the local lycée. But having educated the local children there were relatively few jobs for them after school except to go back to the cane fields and rum factories. The combination of literacy and poverty produced a population which was frustrated and restless, open to the appeal of communism. Keeping an eye on communist activities in the area was a principal reason for maintaining the Martinique consulate.

The consular work with visas and passports was new to me, but not difficult, and my small staff was easy to manage. Political and economic reporting were no problem for a former journalist, and I wrote several hundred despatches to bring Washington files up to date on a long list of subjects which my less prolific predecessors had frequently neglected to cover. Although my French at the beginning was rusty, I worked on it religiously and soon brought it to a satisfactory proficiency. Maintaining cordial relationships with French officials and local white business leaders on the one hand, I worked through cultural contacts to establish sympathetic contacts with local black politicians and cultural leaders on the other. It was a tricky business to keep on good terms with all three groups simultaneously. But I was able to follow all developments in my territories closely, and by the time I left I was confident I had done about as much with my job as was possible.

The trouble with my area was that it was not of much intrinsic significance. Not very much happened there which was of interest to the embassy at Paris or the French desk in Washington. Once there were some riots which stirred up publicity, and the nervous French government sent a cruiser and some air-borne police reinforcements. But I watched closely and noted that the looting and burning were the work of unemployed teen-agers, not noticeably participated in by communist politicians. The only time my area was really in the center of attention was when President Charles de Gaulle visited us after an ego-pleasing official reception in the U.S. in 1960. He was for the moment quite euphoric about Americans and treated my wife and me with special courtesy.

When my Martinique assignment approached its end, I had trouble once more with personnel, which wanted again to send me to Canada, this time as the number two at the Montreal consulate general. I decided that the time had come to assert myself and insist on an assignment at my proper level. By a combination of personal letters to friends in high places and an official protest to the Director General of the Foreign Service I was able to get myself appointed instead as the American consul general at Melbourne, Australia. This was unorthodox procedure, but it worked in my case for my friends stood by me and justice prevailed. My experience illustrated a serious weakness in Foreign Service personnel practice; the most desirable assignments are made by the Office of Personnel largely on the basis of name requests from senior officials for FSOs whom they know personally, or who have well-established reputations. The way to get a good assignment, therefore, is to arrange for the employing office or post to put in a request for you. The efficiency reports written by superiors do not carry as much weight as they should. My own experience was instructive, for after I had raised a stir and arranged to have myself more properly reassigned to a more prestigious post, I found myself immediately treated with more deference and new respect.

ARVA C. FLOYD
Consul
Martinique (1962-1964)

Arva Floyd was born and raised in Georgia and educated at Emory University and the University of Edinburgh. After serving with the US Army in World War II and in the Occupying Forces in Austria after the war, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Djakarta, Indonesia in1952. His foreign postings include Indonesia, South Africa, Martinique and Brussels, where he dealt with matters concerning NATO, European Security and Disarmament. In his Washington assignments Mr. Floyd also dealt with these issues. From 1978 to 1980 Mr. Floyd was Foreign Policy Advisor to United States Coast Guard. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Today is the fifth of June 2000. In 1962, you were in Martinique, you were there from when to when, the years?

FLOYD: '62 to '64.

Q: What were you doing there?

FLOYD: I was the American consul for the French West Indies – Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guyana.

Q: What was our representation like there?

FLOYD: Well, we had a consulate located in Martinique for all three of the so-called Caribbean departments of France. We had a consul, a vice consul, plus a USIA (United States Information Agency) information service officer, a library and so forth.

Q: What were our interests in Martinique at that time?

FLOYD: Well, we didn't have any enormous direct interests. I think, strangely enough, it was a reflection of the Cold War. The islands, both Martinique and Guadeloupe, had fairly significant communist parties. It was a superior decolonization. I think the basic reason for having a post there was the notion that France might at some point tire of these places, and if so, they could become a bit of a nuisance in our backyard with their strong left orientation.

Q: What about Cuba? Castro was going strong in this period. Was Cuba playing a role as far as what you were doing?

FLOYD: Oh, indirectly. Cuba was the nearest incarnation of the communist menace. The people on the island were very conscious of Cuba, but not really fascinated by Cuba and not really much influenced by Cuba directly.

Q: Did Martinique, being a French enclave, have a different thought process or different outlook than most of the other islands in the area?

FLOYD: To some extent, yes. These islands weren't much concerned with, and had very little intercourse of any kind the neighboring islands. They were focused on France. But, that being said, the West Indies is the West Indies and all its component islands have enormous similarities: they were descendants of ex-slaves, they were poor and so forth. The French subsidized the two islands and French Guyana very heavily. The local people – the local left of the Martinique and Guadeloupian political spectrum were very much interested in having what they called autonomy; but, they never pronounced the word 'independence,' because they knew that if they tried to become independent or did become independent, they would lose these very, very substantial subsidies that were flowing in from France. So they made that compromise.

Q: This was a period, too, when many of the French possessions in Africa became independent, and depending on how they became independent, the French left and pulled everything out and said, "May you rot in hell," almost like they did with Guinea, when they chose total independence.

FLOYD: Sort of, yes.

Q: "If you didn't cooperate."

FLOYD: Guinea did not cooperate. Most of the other French African colonies left on good terms with France. The island, that is to say the educated, politically-conscious portion of the population, which was not very large, followed all this to some extent. The mayor of Fort-de-France was a disciple and close friend of Leopold Senghor, who was president of Senegal, and the originator or father of the school of thought that there is a strong cultural similarity among people of African descent wherever you find them.

Q: Negritude.

FLOYD: Negritude was the name he gave. The mayor of Fort-de-France was also a poet, I don't know how good, and a member of the National Assembly in France. He had a career much like Senghor's.

Q: De Gaulle was pursuing a pretty independent line at this time. Were we trying to do anything on the French national scale, such as having influence? Were there any concerns with instructions from Washington about how to deal with the Gaullist government in one of its outposts?

FLOYD: No; Washington was almost totally indifferent to what was going on in the French West Indies. They wanted reports to come in, but they didn't really much care. As I said, I think we were a kind of insurance policy there in the event that the French got tired of the islands and decided to abandon them. The British were in the process of doing that. This is not written down anywhere at that time, but I can't imagine any other reason for our being there.

Q: How were your relations with the French? Who did you deal with?

FLOYD: The prefect. Same organization as the metropolitan kind and they were good, generally speaking. The prefects are not political animals; they are basically there to run their prefecture. They have oversight over an awful lot of things that go on, but they take their instruction from the Ministry of the Interior in France. We had good relations with them. Socially, we saw them often. I should add that they, of course, had a certain residual suspicion as to what we were up to, and that there was a local French office of security which was similar to the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) in its function except that it had a good deal more autonomy than I think the FBI has. And then there was something corresponding to our CIA. And I think our telephones were probably being tapped and we were being followed by them. But at the same time, we met these people socially and otherwise, and sometimes I cooperated with them; it was a friendly relationship. I think everybody was simply doing their thing – going through the motions – but nobody was hostile.

Q: Was there any residue of the Vichy years? Martinique had been standing out there by itself during WWII, and I think they had an admiral during the war who was a strong Vichyite, and they had a cruiser and a couple of other vessels during the war that were sort of sitting there, and I was wondering if there was a residue of this.

FLOYD: No residue at all. The local politics were totally dominated by the Antilleans. There was a small population of people. There was a small group of native whites which was influential and important in the local economy. I suppose they might well have been Vichyites at one point, but that was gone.

DENIS LAMB
Consul
Martinique (1965-1966)

Ambassador Denis Lamb was born in Ohio 1937. He received his BS from Columbia University and MS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1964, he was posted in Fort de France, Paris and Brussels. He was interviewed by Ray Ewing on September 19, 2005.

Q: But you did your French language training and then you went to Martinique, which was a fairly small post.

LAMB: Martinique was a two-man post but the Department had established a training position there, to which I was assigned. The consulate general, which has since been closed, was rather a sleepy place. The consular district included Guadeloupe and French Guiana, but there wasn't enough essential work for two vice consuls. I learned a number of things about the Foreign Service at my first post. To begin with, the Service has a way of assigning people who are not

particularly effective to out of the way places where they can do little harm. The two consuls general I worked for fit that description nicely. One incident sticks in memory. The consul general arranged to sell the old consulate car to a local merchant when we received a new vehicle. But the merchant did not remove the consular seal from the car door, as had been agreed. The boss ordered his vice consuls to deal with the problem. We tracked the merchant's comings and goings and learned that he usually left the car parked near the central square on Saturday mornings. One Saturday, after acquiring a can of black spray paint, we located the car. While my colleague stood watch, I painted over the seal.

The second thing I learned was that much of what goes on at remote Foreign Service posts involves mastering the territory, so that in the event that something *does* happen, there are people in place poised to act and advise responsibly and effectively. I also learned that Foreign Service reporting can simply be a device for organizing one's thoughts, valuable even if the report goes unread. Speaking of reporting, the only commendation I received during my year and a half tour was for an analysis of the logging industry of French Guiana, for which the Commerce Department expressed its appreciation.

Q: You traveled quite a bit, to Guadeloupe and French Guiana then?

LAMB: We did, and we had a diplomatic pouch run to Bermuda as well. Martinique is roughly six times the size of Washington, D.C. You can get "rock happy" unless you leave the island from time to time. So the opportunity to travel was welcome.

Q: Were there many American residents, American citizens?

LAMB: Very few Americans and almost no tourists except those who came on cruise ships and spent part of a day in the capital, Fort de France. The island had very little tourist infrastructure in those days. One of the chief diversions of the vice consuls was to meet the launches coming in from the cruise ships and wangle an invitation for lunch, preferably with the captain. Many of the waiters importuned us for visas, but we fended them off. We also received visits from American naval vessels. When a ship was due, we arranged calls for the captain and set up visits to the ship by local officials. Also important from our perspective, the visits gave us an opportunity to purchase food, especially American steaks, from the ships' stores.

Q: What sort of work did you do in the consulate? Everything?

LAMB: I did everything, but primarily administrative and consular work. There were some interesting problems involving Haitians seeking visas. The resident head of the *Tonton Macoute*, the personal police force of dictator Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc), was a bandleader at one of Martinique's few hotels. A disreputable character, to he sure, but he could be relied upon to

vouch for Haitian residents of Martinique who applied for tourist visas. If he said they would come back to the island after visiting the U.S., they came back. There was one exception. I issued an "emergency" visa (without waiting for the response to our usual check with the embassy in Port au Prince) to a Haitian student whose documents said he was headed to France on a scholarship. He told me he wanted to visit an aunt in Detroit before taking up his studies. He was killed when his Pan Am flight crashed into a mountain on Montserrat. I subsequently learned that his documents were forgeries.

We also had some shipping issues; consulates in ports have particular responsibilities for U.S. vessels. I remember being called out one night to mediate after a fight broke out on an American ship. Dicey, but I worked through it. Another task was to organize modest disaster relief after hurricanes. Modest, because the French preferred that the Americans keep a low profile. We stocked tin roofing material in Puerto Rico and had our military fly it in after a storm passed through. As I recall, consulates had a $25,000 fund for disaster relief that could be expended without prior approval. Thus we could move fast and did so.

We also had to deal with the deaths of Americans: notifying relatives, inventorying effects, and tending to the shipment of remains. One such case stands out in my mind because the decedent had been writing to his wife in the States boasting of his success in business. In reality, he lived life on the margins. Confronted in my reports with the reality of her husband's financial situation, the wife accused us, me, of stealing her estate. Fortunately, in these cases, we worked closely with the Martinique authorities and documented everything. When the wife traveled to the island to investigate, I was able to convince her that her husband had been spare with the truth.

Reporting on an island was interesting since almost all influences can be measured in some way. I and the other vice consul -- his name was Glenn Cella, by the way -- thought we should meet everybody the consul general would let us meet and figure out how the island really ran. To a large extent, we succeeded.

Q: And you felt like you did a lot of it without a lot of direction or supervision from above. Certain work came to you and you used some initiative?

LAMB: Yes. For example, the two of us visited most of the mayors of the little towns on the island. It proved to be an excellent way to make contacts, get an intimate feel for the political scene, and put my French to work.

Another interesting experience I had concerned Vietnam. The consulate general received a packet of information from the Department describing the reasons for our presence there and what we were trying to accomplish. The French had a military detachment on the island, headed by a general officer, and I was dispatched to brief him on our Vietnam policy. As it turned out,

he had been at Dien Bien Phu. He said, "Young man, sit down. I have a few things I want to tell you about what the United States has gotten itself into." I had followed developments in Vietnam at Columbia and read the early books on the situation there by Ellen Hammer and Bernard Fall. As a result, I tended to share the general's pessimistic outlook. We had a good, long conversation. In my view, at the end of the day, "spin" cannot sell a flawed policy or resuscitate one that has gone awry. As Churchill said, "Propaganda is all very well, but it is events that move the world."

We had a Unites States Information Service (USIS) operation in Martinique and a small outpost on Guadeloupe. Despite Vietnam, our public affairs activities were successful. We had a library. We had opportunities to send people to visit the U.S. We sponsored English language courses, which were very popular. The State Department and USIS worked well together on the island, cooperatively identifying future leaders to cultivate, among other things. Some of my best contacts were former recipients of visitors' grants who maintained contact with the consulate.

Q: Was there an American officer as the head of the USIS operation?

LAMB: Yes. She was supported by several local employees.

Q: And no other U.S. government activity on the island besides that?

LAMB: None apart from the Shell Oil representative, whom we thought worked for the CIA, although he never admitted it. He was the only undeclared operative I ever ran into, if in fact he was one.

Q: At that time, this was the mid-1960s, was the French role very strong? It was, of course, a French colony. Were the native Martinique people pretty much running everything themselves?

LAMB: Well, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana are overseas departments of France, so they're administered the same way as the other 96 departments, with a *préfet* and a French administrative structure.

Q: And they vote in French elections.

LAMB: They are French citizens and vote in French elections. The *Martiniquais* comprise two groups. There are the *Békés,* the descendents of the original white settlers who slaughtered the Indians and began importing slaves from Africa to exploit sugarcane. The *Békés* preserve a privileged position in the local economy. The black *Martiniquais*, who constitute the vast majority of the population, control local politics. They are a conflicted lot. They chafe at being

governed from Paris but are addicted to the benefits they receive from the French system: social security, *allocations familial*, infrastructure investment, and other payments. So their political orientation runs towards autonomy, which means "give us the money but let us run our own show." The French government has not been willing to do that. I went back to Martinique in 1985 and found that the mood on the island was even more conflicted than it had been when I served there. The population had grown, the economy had not developed beyond what the French were willing to subsidize, and the local residents had not accepted the island's vocation as a tourist destination.

Q: Martinique has a volcano.

LAMB: It does indeed.

Q: *Which didn't erupt while you were there.*

LAMB: No, Mount Pelée last erupted in 1902. The eruption wiped out the then capital, St. Pierre. The American consul stationed there at the time had performed heroically for the population and there is a small monument to him. On one of the anniversaries of the eruption, I gave a little speech to an appreciative audience in the new St. Pierre, which is quite small and undistinguished.

Q: Laid a wreath?

LAMB: Exactly.

Q: All right and you were in Martinique about 18 months, leaving, what, late '66?

LAMB: Yes, late in 1966. Supernumerary posts like mine were suppressed for lack of funding. A cable was sent to those who held such posts at consulates instructing us to proceed to the capital of our host country, where we would be reassigned. I waited for clarification, which didn't come. Then I sent a cable saying, "My capital is Paris. Is that what you mean?" And the response was "Yes, that's what we mean, and we'll look around for a job for you and let you know." Eventually I was informed that I would be the administrative advisor at the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Vice Consul
Martinique (1968-1970)

Jon G. Edensword was born in the state of Washington, and graduated from school in Illinois in 1956. After a five year teaching career, he entered the foreign service in 1968. Edensword has had tours in Martinique, Liberia, Haiti, Jordan, France, and Mexico. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing on October 30. 1995.

Q: *So you went for your first assignment to Martinique, which is a French speaking post. Did you already have French?*

EDENSWORD: No, I did the old sixteen weeks of French and ended up with a 2+,2+ as I recall. I went off to Martinique and really started learning French. Martinique at that time, was a... four officers and an American secretary: there was a consul, whose name was Ernest Stanger - he had been DCM in Bujumbura. There were two vice-consuls and a branch PAO. At the time we had a USIS office in Fort-de-France and a reading room/library in Guadeloupe. There was a fair amount of travel to do in Guadeloupe and the Consul did not want to go to French Guinea. So I ended up going to French Guinea, which I thought was a lot of fun. In those days, our classified pouch was given to the Pan Am pilot. The secretary and I (shortly after I got there one vice-consular position was cut, so it ended up with only one vice-consul) would put together the pouch. I would take it out in the morning and give it to the PanAm pilot. I never did understand what he did with it or why we did it that way, but we had done it that way when I arrived...and were still doing it when I left. When I first got there (it took weeks for my car to arrive - I had bought a Vespa scooter) and the consul wouldn't let me drive the official car, so I would drive the pouch back to the airport on my scooter. Our only means of getting classified was by telex, and we would get these long telexes with rows of five letter groups. When you would come in on a Monday morning, there would be yards of this stuff all over the floor. Once a month, one of us would go to American Embassy Barbados where we would pick up a pouch of classified material that came down through their communications facilities.

Q: *That would be a one-hour flight or so?*

EDENSWORD: Yes, usually - sometimes you would have to stop in Saint Lucia, and sometimes it was direct. That was always a nice trip: you would go over for two or three days. You would have a day of per diem for your trip, and then you would stay another day. There were some places you could stay quite inexpensively.

Q: *And then you traveled to French Guinea how many times in the two years or so?*

EDENSWORD: I only made it down there once. I was to go again and then something happened and I wasn't able to. But the time that I went, I spent quite a bit of time down there. At the time there were two American shrimp freezing plants down there, and there were American shrimp boats operating out of French Guinea. We were constantly getting these letters (that were months old by the time we got them) about some American shrimper getting arrested: in a bar, in a brawl, in a fight. The consul decided that we really needed to see what was going on down there.

So I went down and made arrangements at both shrimp freezing plants to visit them and talk to the prison authorities and the police. I called on the prefet and the governor in Cayenne. I think it had been three or four years since an American official had been down there, so they were very pleased. Then I drove across the top of the country. There are no roads going inland, but you can go from east to west close to the coast. Stopped in Kourou, which is the French Space Center and did what I thought was a thorough report on the French space facility and later sent it to Washington. When I went on to my next assignment and stopped in Washington, I asked the French Desk officer if they read my magnum opus on the French Space Center. I was told that if they really wanted to know about the French Space Center, they'd contact the French science officer in Paris.

Q: *Discouraging, isn't it?*

EDENSWORD: And then I went on to St. Laurent de Maroni, where we had another American shrimp company and that was like an old west town. You drove in, and there was one bar with the hotel above it. Everybody was sitting out on the verandah when I drove up. I felt like the new man in town, but within twenty minutes I knew everybody and within one hour I was in a small plane flying into the interior to look at an American placer gold mining operation.

Q: *Did you call on the French colonial administrators/authorities there?*

EDENSWORD: I did. They're not colonial because French Guinea is like Hawaii or Alaska to the U.S. - a state. It's an overseas department. I called on the prefet in Cayenne, and I called on his deputy, the sur prefet in St. Laurent, and made a call on the mayor. I talked to the police and looked at the prisons.

Q: *Did they resent that an American government official was coming or did they appreciate the interest?*

EDENSWORD: No, they were very interested, very happy to see somebody and I told them, "By all means, call, you know, and if necessary we'll pay the expenses, but if you've got an American in jail, we'd like to know other than by a letter or postcard the guy eventually writes." I also talked to the directors of the American shrimp plants there and asked them to let us know immediately. I made enough contacts that I felt that I could call the police at least. I made it very clear that if we didn't necessarily want them released, but we'd just like to know what their status was. In most cases, the arrests resulted from bar brawls, and they just held them a day or two until they sobered up and let them go.

Q: *Did things improve somewhat after your visit?*

EDENSWORD: Well, it's hard to tell, but at least we got calls and I talked to people. I think two or three years later, the shrimp plants shut down and the problem disappeared.

Q: *Besides doing the pouch and traveling once a month or so to Barbados and this one trip to French Guinea, what other kind of work were you doing on a regular basis...primarily visas or?*

EDENSWORD: I did all the consular work. We did non-immigrant, immigrant, passport, and citizen stuff. I did all the administrative work, and we were like an independent post. We had to do our own budget: I remember the first time I got one of these (in those days) pink airgrams telling us to do our next years budget; I literally could not understand it. It used terms that I was unfamiliar with. So I took the occasion on one of the trips to Barbados to spend a couple of hours with the administrative officer over there, and he explained it to me. I did the first real budget that Martinique had had in years. Their general way of doing things was to keep spending until the B&F [budget and fiscal] Foreign Service national said, "We don't seen to have any more money." Then the vice-consul would call the Desk, and the Desk would get hold of the post management officer, and they would put another couple of thousand in our account. Anyway, I tried to put together some kind of budget. I remember going in on the weekends and trying to figure out what sub-object classes were and trying to divide up our expenses by subobject class. I think I probably learned more about budgets in that process, and it stood me in good stead later on in the Foreign Service.

Q: *Martinique, of course, is in the Western Hemisphere - in the Caribbean, but at that time, it came under the European Bureau or the Latin American Bureau?*

EDENSWORD: It came under the European Bureau when I went there, but I think a couple of years after I left it was transferred to the Latin American Bureau. But we did not report to Paris, we reported to Washington. We sent copies of our stuff to Paris, but we didn't have to get clearance from Paris or anything like that.

Q: *Is Fort-de-France still open as a post?*

EDENSWORD: No. It just closed as a post within the last couple of years.

Q: *You felt it was helpful to have an American consular post in Martinique; covering not only Martinique, but Guadeloupe and French Guinea?*

EDENSWORD: Well, you know, the people there thought it was a recognition of their importance. At the time, it was also fairly important (maybe "fairly important" is too strong a word) - it was considered something of a listening post for Cuba. One of the guys that I got to know there quite well was the French... (I'm trying to think of what - it wasn't the Secret Service) it was kind of like a combination of their FBI and CIA in that they did the counter-intelligence and whatever intelligence gathering they could do. He worked all the Caribbean. I started to learn to snorkel and scuba dive down there, and he was a scuba diver and we ran into each other somewhere, and we became pretty good friends. So he would tell me various things that were going on. One of the things that was happening down there: there were a lot of American college students who would fly in from Canada. About once a month, a small Cuban freighter would come in to Fort-de-France and it would unload cement and pick up pineapple plants (because in Cuba, apparently, they were expanding their pineapple plantations.) These were not the pineapples, but the small plants. They would export cement to Martinique. On almost every one of those trips, a dozen or so young Americans would be on that boat, either coming from or going to cut cane in Cuba. He was the first one who told me about this, so I went down and watched a couple of times. I never did collect any names, but clearly it was gringos of some sort

- probably Americans getting on and off that boat every time it came in. Their passports were not stamped apparently - the French connived at it as did the Cubans. He told me about that. I think they were coming into Cuba probably through Mexico and other ways. At the time - in the sixties - it was considered part of the... (I don't want to say) hippie revolution, but the same element I think that eventually led to the anti-Vietnam War and the 1968 confrontations in Chicago...those same kinds of feelings about US foreign policy.

Q: *Was Cuba active?*

EDENSWORD: They had a representative there. There were only two career consuls in Martinique at the time: the US and the Venezuelan, but there was a Cuban representative. He was not a consul - more like a commercial type, but we never had any official dealings with him that I knew. But he was there.

Q: *It sounds like it was a good first post. You did a variety of things and you learned a lot. You certainly had an opportunity to learn your particular field, consular work, and you did all those different things there.*

EDENSWORD: I also did all the labor reporting and commercial reporting because eventually there were only two officers. After I had been there about a year, they abolished the branch PAO position, so I picked up some of the USIA work also.

Q: *From Martinique you went to Liberia?*

EDENSWORD: I went to Liberia where I was a one officer consular section. I really liked that post: it was a one person section and I had a PIT (temporary) spouse who acted as secretary. It really was a lot of fun. I liked going into the interior and it was very difficult traveling in the interior, so the DCM was happy to let me go off every six months. I would disappear in the interior for three or four weeks. It was really fun going in there- -mostly Peace Corps volunteers and missionaries to stay with.

RICHARD M. GIBSON
Vice Consul
Martinique (1972-1973)

Richard M. Gibson was born in Florida in 1942. He received a bachelor's degree from San Jose State College in 1965 and his master's in 1966. He served in the US Navy from 1966-1971 as a lieutenant overseas and entered the Foreign Service in 1971. Mr. Gibson was assigned to Rangoon, Bangkok, Songhla, Yokohama, Okinawa, and Chiang Mai. In 1998, he was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: *While you were doing this, did you want to go somewhere?*

GIBSON: I wanted to go to Asia because that was were my interests were. I wanted to go to Japan or somewhere out in Asia but there weren't any good Asian assignments on the list so I got my second choice. My first choice was Casablanca because I'm a romantic at heart. I'd seen the movie. One of my good friends in the course who has remained a friend, I haven't seen him in a few years but we crossed paths again, he got that. I got my second choice which was Fort of France in Martinique which has since closed of course. My friend Mike Mahoney, went to Casablanca. Mike said to me later when we were in personnel together, "The reason you got Martinique", Mike wanted Martinique too, "is you got it because you were married." One of the class guys or personnel guys told Mike that the reason Mike didn't get it was that Martinique wasn't very good for a bachelor. It was better to have a married man, a family man, down there. So I was with family and I went, and Mike went to Casablanca. That was sort of temporary and from there I got assigned to Rangoon.

Q: *Let's talk about Martinique for a bit. You were in Martinique when?*

GIBSON: February of '72 after 19 weeks of French with a wonderful grade of 1/+2 or was it 2/1+, I've forgotten. It wasn't very good.

Q: *We're talking about a very low grade. You had to bring yourself up to a three I think in order to get off language probation.*

GIBSON: Yes, so I obviously was still on language probation. I went there in February of '72 and I replaced an officer who you may know, Marty Chesses, who was on his third or fourth tour. I don't know where he learned French but his French was beautiful. If not bilingual, damn close. The boss, I found out after I got down there, had sent a steady stream of messages back to Washington opposing my assignment because I wasn't good enough in French. He was overruled and so I go down and Marty goes on to somewhere else. Our paths have crossed once or twice since then. I was there from February of '72 until November, Thanksgiving Day or the day after, of 1973. That was my first assignment. Martinique at the time was a small post. There was the principal officer, there was me, an American secretary and I think something like six local employees. We covered Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana as well as the French part of St. Martin.

Q: *What were you doing there?*

GIBSON: With the esteemed position of vice consul, I did all the visa work naturally and I did the commercial work. I did all the WTDRs, World Trade Directory Reports. I handled things like working with police, when the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs came down I would liaise with them, and when the Coast Guard came down I'd have to work with the Coast Guard guys. The boss spent his time working the political side of the street and economic reporting, what little there was. At that time there was a fairly strong movement for either autonomy or independence, depending on where you stood on the spectrum, from France. The boss spent most of his time following that, the independence autonomous movement.

Q: *This was a time when the Caribbean nations were all becoming independent.*

GIBSON: Right. The Martiniqueans wanted to become independent as well. Some did, some didn't. The complicating factor was always that the French government was pumping tremendous amounts of money into the island. The French kept making it very clear that in your current status as an overseas department, we are going to keep pumping money in. If you want another kind of status, we're going to talk about how much money we're going to pump in. The economy simply would have collapsed without the French. I don't know if it is still that way today. I would not be surprised if that were the case.

Q: *The French had made the point very clear in Africa to those Francophone countries that did not want to have close relations to France. They took everything including the faucets off the fixtures. How did you find Foreign Service life?*

GIBSON: Loved it. Loved Martinique. My wife hated it. I had been trained in French for what it was worth and I studied real hard while I was there. I got a tutor and studied real hard. It was an R&R post and I came back about a year into the assignment, passed my test and went on back. My wife didn't come back. She did not speak any French. Those were the days when they would not pay for your spouse to study a foreign language. I had taken a pay cut from the Navy to come into the State Department in the first place. We had a little boy. Martinique was very expensive. Right before we had gone down there had been the Smithsonian Conference where right after that they devalued the dollar against the franc, let the dollar float I guess is what they did. It was just punishing down there financially so we did not have the money to have my wife study French. We weren't going to direct the money into that so she never learned French. Martinique had very few English speakers and so when we came up after home leave, she stayed in the States for several months. I went back down alone. She eventually came back down not long before I left. She and our son stayed with her parents in California.

Q: *Were there any consular issues there?*

GIBSON: No. There were a lot of the visa things. There were a lot of American death cases. On cruise ships an elderly portion of the population would come down and they would overdo on a hike or something or they would be sick before they got on the boat. That was also a period in the early '70s in the United States when we started the process of if people who had mental problems and they weren't a danger to themselves or society, we were sort of letting them out. Many of those guys ended up on Martinique. I had cases with mentally ill people about every couple of months. Every couple of three months, I had one. These were guys who were really wacko and we had to get them out of Martinique, back up to the States and arrange with the right kind of social agency either Social Security or Health, I don't know if it was HEW at the time. We would arrange so they would be sort of met at the plane and be taken care of and this sort of thing. It's not funny and these are people with real problems but some of the circumstances that got created were just hilarious. To this day my wife and I trade these stories. Some of the best sea stories I've ever gotten out of the Foreign Service were dealing with these people.

Q: *Can you tell me one?*

GIBSON: There were some great ones. I'll tell you the one that was the scariest. There was an American down there who was observed one night walking around buck naked with a 22 rifle

over his shoulder. How he ever got it into Martinique I have not the foggiest notion. He was walking around until about midnight or one o'clock in the morning. He then went back to his hotel and he was sort of followed. He had been with a prostitute and she rolled him I guess or something like that.

Q: *Would you explain what rolling means?*

GIBSON: At some point during their business transaction she lifted his wallet and clothes and apparently disappeared. That was it. He was out looking for her with a 22 rifle. It had been in his room so he could have put new clothes on but he didn't bother. I got a call the very next morning from the police. The hotel people had called the police and the police had called me. I can remember they wanted me to go talk to this guy at the door. I can remember like in the movie where you stand to the side and you knock on the door because you are afraid that bullets are going to come through the door. I talked him into opening the door and going away with the nice policemen. They carried his 22 rifle for him so he didn't have to carry it. That was sort of scary.

There was a Club Med down there. There was a long, curving banister that went up to the second floor at the Club Med. This guy appeared at the head of the banister dressed in women's underwear and slid down the banister into the mob down below. They carted him off. We had people who would just go berserk and tear their hotel room all apart. I had another guy who was pursued either by the crime syndicate or the CIA or both and he wasn't sure which. He was going to leave the islands and go the Virgin Islands or Venezuela, of course, the opposite direction. We had guys like that coming through. A woman in retrospect must have had Alzheimers, had gotten off a cruise ship and gotten lost. One woman I'm speaking to her with the ships agent trying to get her repatriated back up the States. The ships agent was being very cooperative. She was just as sweet and nice to me: "Oh, you're such a nice young man." Within five minutes she had turned on me, venomous swearing at me and telling me what a dirt ball I was and that sort of thing. There were just a whole series of cases like that.

I'll tell you another interesting case that we had, back to the Vietnam War. The regional FBI office down in Caracas I think it was, told us that there was a guy on Martinique from Montana. In Montana he had planted a bomb to destroy several National Guard trucks and vehicles at a National Guard armory to protest the Vietnam War. He had then fled the country with a warrant out for his arrest. We sort of knew that this guy was around. One day he walked into my office and tells me that he is going to renounce his citizenship and he wants to know how to do that. He was really kind of a nice guy and a young guy. I said "You don't want renounce your citizenship. They won't drop charges against you." It came out, and he was quite open, that he was the fugitive. I said "By renouncing your citizenship it's not a get out of jail free card, you still have to pay the price if you come back to the States whether you're French or anything else." He said, "Oh yeah, I know that. I've been just so turned off by the war and the whole nature of the U.S. government" and so on and so on that he wanted to renounce his citizenship. I said "Go back and think about it." He said "No, I don't want to think about it." I said "I don't know, I've never done this before. I've got to do some paperwork." I was stalling hoping I could talk him out of it.

Meanwhile I told the FBI guy that he was there and they contacted the French police to get him arrested. He came back again I guess before the French police arrested him. Finally he just kept

insisting and he said he was going to write his congressman if I didn't let him renounce his citizenship. There was a wife or a girlfriend, I don't know if she was French. I said I don't need a congressional, I get enough of those on visa cases. I said "here's how you do it", and he did it. Then the FBI got him arrested and tried to extradite him. I remember taking him books in his jail cell and that sort of thing. He was a real nice guy. The French would not extradite him because his crimes had been political and he didn't hurt anybody or anything. The French let him out of jail and gave him a laissez passé and I'm told by the FBI that he went to Algeria first and then to France. The debris of the war was still going around. He was a fascinating guy. I can't remember his name. A real nice fellow. In fact in better times, we probably would have been friends.

Q: *You left in '73. What were you asking for and what did you get?*

GIBSON: This was before the days of open assignments. In those days we didn't have the open assignment list where you asked for anything. Maybe if you had been around for a while, like Steve Kenny had been around a while and knew the ropes. I didn't have a clue. I got a message one day from a guy on the French desk, why he was on the French desk and doing this I just can't figure out. He said "How would you like to go to Rangoon?" What he had to do with Rangoon is still to this day totally unclear to me. I said wow, great, I get to go to Asia. So I said "Yeah, I'll go to Rangoon." Nothing is special about Rangoon, I just wanted to get to Asia. The next thing I knew I was processed and I got a set of orders for Rangoon. I had no idea what else was open or what other possibilities were before me but I heard Rangoon. I had come of age in the Navy and if the Navy said go here, okay. So the State Department said go here, okay. Out of A-100 we did get to list three or four choices and they showed us what was open, that was fine. To me I thought that was kind of strange. Coming out of Martinique they just phoned me and said "do you want to go?" And I said "yeah" so that's where we went.

MICHAEL NORTON
English Teacher
Martinique (1980-1986)

Born and raised in Minnesota, Mr. Norton was educated at Hamline University and the Universities of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Chicago. After several years in Europe and Martinique, he moved to Haiti, where he spent a large portion of his career as a radio news reporter for the Associated Press and the BBC. Mr. Norton was a keen observer and reporter of Haiti's political, social and economic difficulties over the years and of the personalities involved. Mr. Norton was interviewed by Daniel Whitman in 2007.

Q: Okay, '79 now?

NORTON: '79 and we left for…I continued teaching English as a foreign language and getting to know Martinique. I worked on the plantations. I worked across the different class lines and color lines. I was one of the very few who knew the black population as well as the béké, descendants of the French colonists. I was sharpening my skills analyzing the society, a society

rather different from the one that…

Q: The béké is what we would call Creoles?

NORTON: Creoles, yah. And five years. And then we had friends in the Dominican Republic and that's right next to Haiti, isn't it? And then we went to the Dominican Republic to wait.

End of reader