

LATIN AMERICA HUMAN RIGHTS

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BRAZIL

John Hugh Crimmins	1956-1960	Transportation/Communications Attaché, Rio de Janeiro
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Hewson Ryan	1956-1961	Information Officer, Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Santiago
	1961-1962	Assistant Director, Latin American Operations, USIS, Washington, DC
	1974-1976	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Latin America Bureau
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COLOMBIA

Samuel D. Eaton	1959-1965	Economic Officer, Bogota
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John J. (Jay) Taylor	1987-1990	Chief - US Interests Section, Havana
Dennis Hays	1990-1993	Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, Washington, DC

Sarah Horsey-Barr	1992-1995	Deputy Chief of Mission, Organization of American States, Washington, DC
Joseph G. Sullivan	1993-1996	Principal Officer, U.S. Interests Section, Havana

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Joseph S. Farland	1957-1960	Ambassador, Dominican Republic
Henry Dearborn	1959-1961	Deputy Chief of Mission, Ciudad Trujillo
Gerald J. Monroe	1961-1962	Visa Officer, Santo Domingo

ECUADOR

Richard Bloomfield	1976-1978	Ambassador, Ecuador
Michael W. Cotter	1976-1979	Political Officer, Quito
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Robert E. White	1980-1981	Ambassador, El Salvador
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Thomas F. Stroock	1989-1992	Ambassador, Guatemala
John Allen Cushing	1994-1997	Economic/Labor Officer, Guatemala
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Theresa A. Tull	1987-1990	Ambassador, Guyana
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HAITI

Jack Mendelsohn	1964-1966	Consular/Political Officer, Port- au-Prince
William B. Jones	1977-1980	Ambassador, Haiti
Anne O. Cary	1978-1980	Economic/Commercial Officer, Port-au-Prince
Ints M. Silins	1978-1980	Political Officer, Port-au-Prince
Clayton E. McManaway, Jr.	1983-1986	Ambassador, Haiti
James Dobbins	1994-1996	Deputy Special Advisor for Haiti, Department of State, Washington, DC
Leslie M. Alexander	1999-2000	Ambassador, Haiti

HONDURAS

Mari-Luci Jaramillo	1977-1980	Ambassador, Honduras
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Sarah Horsey-Barr	1981-1984	Consul General, Tegucigalpa

MEXICO

Joseph J. Jova	1973-1977	Ambassador, Mexico
Leonard F. Walentynowicz	1975-1977	Administrator for Security and Consular Affairs, Washington, DC
Herbert Thompson	1975-1978	Deputy Chief of Mission, Mexico City
John A. Bushnell	1977-1982	Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, ARA, Washington, DC
William T. Pryce	1978-1981	Political Counselor, Mexico City
Theodore Wilkinson	1981-1984	Deputy Political Counselor, Mexico City
	1991-1994	Chief Political Officer, Mexico City

NICARAGUA

Charles Anthony Gillespie, Jr.	1976-1978	USAID, Managua, Nicaragua Task Force, Managua
David Jickling	1977-1978	USAID, Nicaragua
Lawrence A. Pezzullo	1979-1981	Ambassador
John A. Bushnell	1977-1982	Deputy Assistant Secretary, ARA, Washington, DC
Richard Melton	1985-1988	Office of Central American Affairs, Director, Washington, D.C.
Richard T. McCormack	1985-1989	US Ambassador to Organization of American States, Washington, DC

PANAMA

Clyde Donald Taylor	1964-1966	Consular Officer, Panama City
Brandon Grove	1969-1971	Director of Panamanian Affairs, Washington, DC
Lawrence I. Plotkin	1977-1980	USIA Program Officer, Panama City

Frederick A. Becker	1985-1987	Regional Labor Officer, Panama City
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PARAGUAY

Thomas F. Johnson	1968-1971	Rotation Officer/ Student Affairs Officer, Asuncion
George W. Landau	1972-1977	Ambassador, Paraguay
Robert E. White	1975-1980	Ambassador, Paraguay
James J. Gormley	1978-1981	Chief, Economic Section, Asuncion
Arthur H. Davis, Jr.	1982-1985	Ambassador, Paraguay
Clyde Donald Taylor	1985-1988	Ambassador, Paraguay
James F. Mack	1986-1989	Deputy Chief of Mission, Asuncion
David N. Greenlee	1999-2003	Ambassador, Paraguay

PERU

William Lenderking	1980-1983	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Lima
Richard Ogden	1983-1985	Deputy Chief of Mission, Lima
George A. McFarland	1985-1997	Retired Annuitant, Lima
Anthony Quainton	1989-1992	Ambassador, Peru
J. Phillip McLean	1990-1993	Deputy Assistant Secretary to South America
James F. Mack	1994-1997	Deputy Chief of Mission, Lima

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John J. Crowely Jr.	1980-1981	Ambassador, Suriname
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Barbara H. Nielsen	1977-1978	Rotation Officer, Montevideo
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Dale V. Slaght	1977-1980	Commercial Attaché, Montevideo
Richard H. Melton	1982-1985	Deputy Chief of Mission, Montevideo

VENEZUELA

Robert S. Pastorino	1967-1970	Junior Officer, Caracas
Otto J. Reich	1986-1989	Ambassador, Venezuela

Compiled by: Sarah Castellanos

ARGENTINA OVERVIEW

Juan Domingo Peron became president in 1946 after the military abolished Argentina's constitutional government in 1943. Peron, aided by his wife, Eva Duarte de Peron, known as Evita, aggressively pursued policies aimed at giving an economic and political voice to the working class and greatly expanded the number of unionized workers. After a lengthy exile in Spain (1955-1973), he again became president; however, he died in 1974. Peron's wife succeeded him as president but a coup removed her from office in 1976. During 1976-1983, the armed forces formally exercised power through a junta composed of the three service commanders and carried out the so-called Dirty War, when some estimated 10,000 persons were disappeared. In 1983, Argentina returned to constitutional rule. In July 1998, the United States recognized Argentina as a major non-NATO ally.

ROBERT S. STEVEN

Political Officer

Buenos Aires (1976-1977)

Mr. Steven was born in Massachusetts and raised there and in Rhode Island. He graduated from Brown University and served in the US Army before entering the Foreign Service in 1957. Mr. Steven became a specialist Latin America, where he served in Mexico, Chile and Argentina. He also served in Burma, Vietnam and Japan and had several senior assignments at the State Department in Washington. Mr. Steven was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: You left there in March of '76, I think, and then you were off to Buenos Aires.

STEVEN: A direct transfer.

Q: A direct transfer. Did you go right to Buenos Aires?

STEVEN: Yes, they had a vacancy there and things were hot in Buenos Aires. They needed somebody and I said, "Fine, I'll go," and arrived in Buenos Aires after their coup to find a rather similar situation, a military government being quite repressive, but still a very different circumstance: less efficiency, more corruption, more brutality. The total numbers of cases, the total volume of human rights abuse in Chile never approached that in Argentina. I think over time it would become clear that the Argentine military were more motivated by the pure idea of power than they were by saving their country. The Chilean military, for whatever one thinks of them, I believe, genuinely were reluctant to move as they did. They were provoked for a long period of time. They were urged by many people in their society to move. They were very

reluctant to do it. They didn't take power because they wanted power. They were not particularly corrupt. Of course, there were instances, yes, but as a whole it was not a corrupted class of people. I remember talking once to an officer, a *Carabiniro* officer I got to know very well, who told me that they were becoming increasingly concerned because the chaplains, the *Carabiniro* chaplains, were reporting to the senior leadership that the officers and men coming to confession were very troubled. Many of them were talking to the priests and saying, "I have difficulty reconciling what I'm being required to do, because I know that this is not God's will, killing people and so on." And many of them were genuinely and seriously disturbed. I think that *Carabineros* particularly, being police rather than soldiers, were very concerned about how their troops were reacting to it. I rather doubt that became as much of an issue with the Argentine military. Corruption over there was a far more prevalent thing.

Q: Could you explain the origins and what the coup was about? You arrived after it happened, but could you explain...?

STEVEN: It was basically, again, a breakdown in the political situation. Argentina had had the same sort of turnovers of government and economic disasters that were typical for so long of places like Italy. The very well known comment is such a cliché but it's true, that Argentina has resources. It's one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and up until about the 1920s Argentina was thought of as one of the richest and most promising countries in the world. And because it's inhabited by Argentines, it's been a disaster. Again, even today they are having problems with the IMF.

Q: Today we're talking about sort of a financial breakdown.

STEVEN: Yes. Nothing ever changes in Argentina, and the Peron experience, of course, had exposed them to dictatorial government there. I think at the time the Argentine military decided to move, they felt that the country was again in this disastrous situation and something had to be done. I have a private view, which I've never seen expressed by any scholar or anybody better qualified, that perhaps the Argentine military were inspired by what they'd seen happen in Chile, that they saw their colleagues across the hills take over and were making a success of the economy, at least in classic terms of product and foreign exchange reserves, and that perhaps they could do the same for Argentina. Well, they weren't the same people and it didn't work in Argentina. To me, the culture is a large part of it. You're talking about Mediterranean culture, which has a different outlook on life and efficiency in government than, say, the Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon culture, just a very different thing. Whereas Chile today is stable and economically in pretty good shape, Argentina is not. I think the Argentina military may have deluded themselves into the idea that they could do the same thing the Chilean military had done. Of course, there was also the terrorist factor, the fact that people were being assassinated in Argentina. We had an American USIA officer, one of the branch public affairs officers killed at the time. And there was much more danger for the rest of us. We had considerable security precautions as Americans moving around in Argentina than we had ever had in Chile.

The Argentine military were much more brutal, openly so. One of the worst examples we saw of that was - I forget the exact circumstances - they found a number of bodies of people who had been apparently killed by the Argentina military police piled in a field with a large charge under them and literally blown up. There were body parts all over the field. And everyone said, "What on earth! What are they trying to signal to their people and to the world?" and the basic signal, we all agreed, was very clear "We're in charge. We can do any damn thing we want, and if you don't behave yourself, this is what's going to happen to you." The business of tossing people out of aircraft: we all like to think at least that they were heavily drugged or dead before they were thrown out, but who knows. But bodies started washing up in the River Plate estuary in Uruguay, and the Uruguayans complained, "What in the hell is going on here? We don't want these bodies washing up on our shores." This was a government that didn't even care enough to fly coroners out to the bodies to bring them back in. That resulted, of course, later - a different subject entirely - in the Falklands War when the Argentine military, losing popularity, seeing that the opposition was increasingly gathered its strength, desperately reached for the old classic idea: find an external enemy, and thought if we invade the Falklands, we will get our people united behind us. It was the disaster that brought them down and ended them all in jail with trials and so on.

Q: You were there from 1976 to 1977, approximately a year, a little over a year. Talk about the embassy. Who was the ambassador, DCM, and your impression of the embassy, coming from one to another?

STEVEN: The ambassador was the political appointee...

Q: His name was Robert C. Hill.

STEVEN: Ambassador Hill. He was a political appointee who had been ambassador, I think, in Mexico at least before that and perhaps some other country. It was an interesting situation for me that Ambassador Hill did not speak Spanish. He had had at least two assignments, perhaps three, as ambassador to Latin American countries, and he didn't speak Spanish. So everywhere he went, he took one of the officers with him to act as an interpreter. I went with him on visits to fairly high-ranking people where I acted as the interpreter, untrained as I was, and also took the notes to write up the conversations. And then for his next interview in the afternoon, he'd take another officer, so we sort of rotated the duty. I think, at least in his own mind, he may have also thought that he was doing us a favor by exposing us more to what was going on in the embassy, which was perfectly true. It was interesting to have that access, but also trying to learn to act as an interpreter, which was very difficult. Fortunately, the majority of people that we talked to spoke English. But Ambassador Hill was there.

Q: Was this a different type of embassy from the one you'd come from? How did you find it?

STEVEN: It was a bigger embassy and, therefore, I knew less what was going and didn't know the people as well. I think my own impression of it was that we were less involved. We had been deeply involved in what was happening in Chile because of the Allende government and so on. In Argentina it was more sort of a normal distance. We were interested, but I don't think we were as much involved. My impression has always been, both from what I've read since and what I knew then, that we were not really involved in the coup. I have no idea whether we even knew it was coming. But it was just sort of a little bit more laid back, watching what they were doing and scratching our heads trying to figure it out at times. Yes, protesting the human rights abuses when we could. Americans were not as directly affected. I don't think that any Americans were killed over there. Very few Americans gave a damn what went on in Argentina. The government didn't focus on it, the press didn't focus much on it.

Q: Well, there had been so many coups, and you hadn't had this sort of PR delight of Allende.

STEVEN: Chile was ideological, like Spain, but Argentina was just another banana republic. Who's in, who's out, so what? They'd had the military in before. The governments changed. It just didn't excite people as much as what happened over in Chile. Chile in a sense to me - I probably would get thrown out if I talked about this among certain circles - Chile was a serious country, and what happened in Chile made a difference to people. It was important, I think, that Chile be restored to democracy. In Argentina, what happened, so what? In a year or two it would change anyway, and they never had been able to govern themselves very well, so what did we really expect? In Chile we had seen the loss of a long democratic tradition of good self government. In Argentina we didn't see that at all; we just saw another example of a takeover or misuse of power and the country stumbling from crisis to crisis. It was a different atmosphere.

Q: So what were you doing? How did you operate?

STEVEN: Quite openly. We had no problems. We went out as standard political practice and tried to interview and meet and get to know and cultivate politicians. I had much less contact with the military. In Chile I had a great deal of contact with the military, particularly in the police, the *Carabineros*. I'm still in touch with a *Carabinero* officer; we exchange letters and so on regularly. But in Argentina our military pretty much conducted those relationships. Again, I did narcotics work, which brought me into some contact with the Argentine police, but again not as much. Human rights questions were a problem - and do make a note to press Tex Harris on this.

Q: I've had a long interview with him.

STEVEN: Oh, you've already had him here, but I would make a point then. Among the jobs I did was to receive people who wanted to come in to tell us about human rights abuses and to listen, and I found was becoming sort of a routine stop for people. When you had human rights complaints, you went to the Red Cross or to the human rights organizations or to the Catholic

Church, of course, but then you also went to the US embassy and told them your story. The stories were depressingly similar, and we made notes and so on. But then what? What were we to do with this? When they weren't American citizens, we weren't going to go to the local government and complain, except in the most general terms, you know: "We've been hearing all these complaints. You really shouldn't be doing this." But you can't take up individual cases with them. You can write the thing up, but you can't publish it, you don't send it to the newspapers. So I began to think to myself what really are we doing this for, and I became convinced that we were doing it more as a sop to our consciences and to let these people feel better. They felt that they could come and talk to us and get it out of their systems and record what was being done and that the US government was hearing them, and so on. This all had a certain validity. Yes, it's admirable, but it was not, I thought, a good idea for us to develop a reputation and a practice of routinely interviewing everybody who was abused. Some of them were genuine horror stories, torture and so on, or mothers coming in about their sons and so on. Others were people who clearly just had political axes to grind and wanted to talk to us. So when I was packing up to leave the place, I recommended, I think even in writing, that we try to discourage the practice of our becoming a stop on the parade of people who had complaints, and I heard later that Tex, picking up after me, had taken quite a different approach and was widely available and known in the human rights community as a person you went and talked to. In fact, I think he even got some sort of an award for doing that. And I'm not sure that it was the appropriate thing.

Q: You've got to remember you have to look at the political change in the United States. We had gone from the Ford/Kissinger, particularly with Kissinger, to the Jimmy Carter Administration with human rights on the thing in Argentina. So Tex Harris was...

STEVEN: Tex was doing what he was told to do.

Q: I'm sure it's his proclivity too, but the point was that the time, at least politically in the United States, was ripe for this.

STEVEN: Whether it was the best use of our time and whether in the end it was a good idea. Among other things it may have raised expectations among the human rights people that we seemed to be so interested in collecting this information and listening to these people, and then look at what we did about it. There was a disconnect there. It was nice to have the archives, but unless we were out there really working hard to change things... And, of course, we did change after the Carter Administration came in, but I will show you how that worked. The two best examples I can recall were Father Drinan. Do you remember the Catholic priest who was a Congressman?

Q: Yes.

STEVEN: He was very interested in human rights matters, and he came to Argentina. Well, when a Congressman comes to your embassy, what do you normally do? The ambassador would

normally have a reception for him, right, or at least include him in some big reception, or you would have the DCM or the political counselor at least pay a lot of attention. But instead of that, I was assigned as his control. You know, I'm a careerist but I'm second down in the political section. I sat down to plan out his schedule and waited expectantly to be told when he would go to the ambassador's or when something else would be done, which didn't happen. There was a silence there, and so I finally asked, "Look, is somebody going to have a reception for him or something?" "Well, that would probably be a good idea, Bob. Could you handle that?" So I gave a reception for a visiting Congressman, not any of the three senior levels above me but I did it. And I invited primarily people from other embassies who were interested in these matters too and reporting on them, the Brits and the Australians and the French, who were important in that area, and a few contacts from the Argentine government.

I knew a couple of Foreign Office people, Ministry of Foreign Relations people and so on. And we had a cookout in my backyard, which was a nice arrangement. In any event, there I am with an interesting man. My mother-in-law was living with us then, and he charmed her. She said she hadn't met such a fascinating gentleman for a long time, he was interesting. We had a good talk with him, but I was just very concerned and embarrassed that the senior people in the embassy in effect were keeping their distance. This was reaffirmed in another instance - I can never remember which was first, but another instance - where Patt Darien, who was then the Assistant Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, HA, came down. She was an Assistant Secretary, and the same thing happened. I was assigned to be her escort, and the schedule was simply left for me to work up. She was not invited to the ambassador's or the DCM's or the political counselor's, and it was suggested that perhaps I could arrange something for her. They made sure I had some representation money for it. So, again, I ran a party at my house for Patt Darien and her escorts. To me it was fairly clear. They didn't want to be associated with that element, with Drinan and Darien, who were human rights advocates. They wanted to keep their distance, even although the President's policy was fairly clear. It should have been done. But these were people who were unhappy with that policy and were distancing themselves from it as much as they possibly could. I was fortunate in not having to try to explain in detail to either Drinan or Darien why they weren't being treated in a somewhat more elegant fashion. I suspect in retrospect they were wise enough to realize themselves and didn't embarrass me. They were very delighted that I was honoring them with a reception. So the policy of the President and the Administration at the time was exactly not disobeyed or foiled by the people running the embassy, but they certainly didn't encourage it or do anything that they could to advance it. It was, again, left to the lower levels to handle.

ANTHONY G. FREEMAN

Labor Attaché, Acting Political Counselor

Buenos Aires (1976-1980)

Mr. Freeman was born and raised in New Jersey and educated at Rutgers and Princeton Universities and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He served in the US Army, later joining the State Department in 1961. After Labor Training at American University, he was assigned to Buenos Aires as Assistant Labor Attaché. His subsequent assignments to Rome, La Paz and Buenos Aires were also in the field of Labor Affairs. He also served in Valencia, and Sao Paulo. In Washington Mr. Freeman was Special Assistant to several Secretaries of State on Labor issues. Mr. Freeman was interviewed by Don R. Kienzle in 1995.

FREEMAN: I went back to Buenos Aires in August 1976 and stayed there until mid-1980. I went there as a labor attaché but became acting political counselor for a while when the political counselor was sent on detail back to Washington. I think I was acting political counselor for the good part of a year. That was a very interesting assignment, because, as I told you earlier, I had been in on the ground floor in developing contacts with the Peronist labor leaders, and many of the guys I had met then were still around. It was like old home week. I gained easy access to lots of people on the trade union side. It was known among the politicians that the U.S. Embassy had an active Labor Attaché, who knew Argentina better than most Americans. People often called me out of the blue asking for an appointment. I had some fascinating experiences there, including some risky ones.

The situation in Argentina in 1976 was that the military had overthrown the government of Isabel Peron by coup in March. Juan Peron himself had died the previous year. It is hard for me to reconstruct this all now from memory, but there were two armed leftist insurgencies against Mrs. Peron's government. There was a Trotskyite, leftist-guerrilla, pro-Castro kind of movement, known as the ERP, and there was a more nationalist band of leftist urban guerrillas of Peronist origin known as the Montoneros, who had turned against Mrs. Peron's government. Mrs. Peron's government had dealt with this challenge in a shadowy, Machiavellian way. A close aide of hers named Jorge Lopez Rega, from his post in the government, created a clandestine right-wing group of off-duty policemen known as the "Triple A" to assassinate the leaders of the leftist insurgency. In effect, there was a civil war going on between left-wing and right-wing Peronists. The government was inept and corrupt and became successively weakened. In March 1976 the Armed Forces overthrew the government of Mrs. Peron and created a military junta in order to fully take charge of the war against the leftist insurgency and also to restore the economy which had been undermined by Peronist economic policies.

There was a proliferation of Argentine military intelligence services and they all practiced deception. I don't know how many different intelligence services they had. Maybe thirteen or something like that. Every armed force had its own intelligence service: The Navy, the Army, the

Air Force, the Federal Police, the Gendarmeria. Even the Coast Guard. They were all operating there.

The right-wing of the Peronist trade union movement included the guys that I knew best and had cultivated early on. On my first tour we had worked with a different element, the Frondizi-coopted types. But over time we also came in contact with the right-wingers, too. By this time, many of the right-wing labor leaders had been co-opted by, or eagerly joined, the intelligence services to fight the left-wing Peronists.

So there was a kind of Peronist civil war going on. And some of these Peronists were actually government agents, who were contract thugs for the government sub-rosa. Many of the killings were between Peronists of the left and Peronists of the right. Of the latter, some were on the payroll of one or another intelligence service. Quite a few top leaders of the Argentine trade union movement were killed this way during this civil war. And some of these killings were contract killings ordered or approved by the government intelligence services. It was not just a civil war. The military government helped to stimulate and paid for this, and many of the bodyguards of the government leaders were from the Peronist right-wing.

Peronists of both the left and right were anxious to maintain contact with the American Embassy and tended to gravitate towards me, because I was the labor attache and easily accessible. At the same time, we had officers in the Political Section assigned to human rights; and the more middle class left-of-center victims of the repression tended to gravitate towards them. By now, the human rights policy of the Carter Administration was in full swing and there were strong denunciations out of Washington concerning the violations of human rights in Argentina. The first signs of a human rights policy actually had surfaced a bit earlier in the Nixon Administration when I was in Sao Paulo, and I had gained some experience as political officer cultivating middle class liberal opponents of the military regime in Brazil, expressing U.S. concern about the heavy-handed military repression there.

But the Carter Administration's strong emphasis on human rights policy was not the only U.S. interest in Argentina. We didn't want to see the leftist guerrillas tortured to death and then "disappeared" in secret operations, let alone innocent civilians labeled as terrorists, arbitrarily detained and then disposed of in the same way, but I believe we recognized it was in the U.S. interest to see the guerrilla threat eliminated. We wanted the guerrillas dealt with by rule of law and some semblance of due process. When I say "we" I mean the U.S. government. It's conceivable there may have been some people in the Administration in Washington who harbored a more benign view of Argentina's rebellious youth, but professionals in the State Department (and certainly the Pentagon) saw the guerrillas as a threat to U.S. interests in Latin America.

The political model they appeared to vaguely espouse was some kind of collectivist or totalitarian society, whether of the radical left or right or some hybrid thereof, and they used

terrorist methods. They were the enemies not only of the current military dictators of Argentina, but also of the liberal democratic tradition in Argentine political history, represented by the civilian governments Argentina had known in the past. They were clearly anti-American. If they ever succeeded in attaining power, there was no doubt they would take Argentina on an anti-American, "anti-imperialist" path, whether directly into the Cuban-Soviet orbit outright or into the "non-aligned" camp. And so it was in our interest to see them defeated, but we preferred this done by civilized rules and not the way the Argentine military and police were doing it. As far as I can remember, however, U.S. concern over the latent threat represented by the insurgency was not articulated publicly. This may have been "signaled" or intimated in informal (and possibly even unauthorized) conversations between Embassy staff and Argentine government and military officials, but I don't think publicly. I would need to research this to be sure my reflections on this point are accurate but, officially, I think, the U.S. took a hands-off posture as to this internal rebellion in Argentina and the government's decision to defeat it militarily, except to express concern over the human rights aspects.

The Argentine counterinsurgency was carried out in good Machiavellian fashion. I had the notion of a great deal of deception going on and imagined there were operations where Army units pretended to be from the Navy, or vice versa, just to hide their unit's identity and defend themselves from any future acts of retribution (or justice). The intelligence services would hire thugs, who did a lot of the underground killing that went on. "The Dirty War" as they called it. The French had started this kind of thing in Algeria, I think, and I suspect the Argentines had learned from the French how to do it. This was their operating style, and there were trade union elements right in the middle, either on one side or the other. Some of the labor leaders were suspected of harboring sympathy toward the guerrillas and some were with the government, or at least they were against the guerrillas. And I had opportunity to meet some of the thug types.

As head of the Political Section, I oversaw the human rights work for a time and had some personal experiences trying to protect people's lives. On one occasion during a Congressional visit, Congressman Ben Gilman (R.-NY) asked to see newspaperman Jacobo Timerman, who had been seized at his home a few months back by police and was under detention. The Embassy arranged this and I accompanied Gilman to this meeting. We met with the Minister of Interior, General Harguindeguy, and then he had Timerman brought into the room. When I asked Timerman in the Minister's presence how he was, he answered he was all right "now". Timerman's meaning was clear. He had not been tortured recently. I have recently seen a copy of the cable I did reporting this meeting, which has since been released under FOIA. Frankly, I had forgotten some of the details including the fact that it was Gilman who had generated this meeting. My recollection was that the meeting was connected with a visit that Assistant Secretary Derian was planning to make to Argentina. She too wanted to interview Timerman and hoped to affect his release. Harguindeguy was concerned that Timerman's detention could lead to sanctions by the U.S. against Argentina and he apparently agreed to produce Timerman for Gilman, to demonstrate that Timerman was an officially registered prisoner, in good health

(more or less), and he would be dealt with in an accountable way. Harguindeguy's concerns were heightened by a rumor that Timerman and Patt Derian were actually family-related. For me, that was just a base, anti-Semitic, barracks-type joke, but my recollection is that Harguindeguy wanted to appear to be forthcoming to the Americans on the eve of Derian's visit.

Q: He was this newspaper man?

FREEMAN: Yes, he was a newspaper man. Jacobo Timerman, a well-known journalist and editor of Jewish origin whose disappearance became a cause celebre in human rights circles in the U.S. and in the American Jewish community. On instruction from the Ambassador, I also accompanied a local Argentine representative of the American Jewish Committee named Jacob Kovadloff to the airport one evening to make sure he got out of the country without incident. He had been receiving threats. The papers and manuscripts he had with him were inspected by the police before he boarded the plane, but they let him go. So human rights was very much a concern of the United States as reflected in our official pronouncements and demarches to the Argentine Government. However, behind the scenes there was a problem festering between Jimmy Carter's Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, Patt Derian, and Ambassador Castro. She felt he wasn't pressing the Argentines hard enough.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

FREEMAN: Raul Castro, who was a very interesting character. He was first appointed ambassador during Lyndon Johnson's administration, as I recall, but his ambassadorial appointments spanned several administrations. Buenos Aires was his third post. He had been my ambassador in Bolivia after Henderson, and when he arrived in Buenos Aires he was happy to have on board a familiar face who had served him in a previous post. I had a good relationship with him. He was a man's man, a guy with a tough *hombre* exterior, and I much liked the guy even though I didn't always agree with his (conservative) politics. Born in Mexico, he had been a boxer at one time, had worked his way up the hard scrabble way, emigrated to the U.S. and had become a citizen. He became a lawyer and a judge and was active in Democratic party politics in Arizona, eventually serving as Governor of the state before his first ambassadorial appointment. On one occasion in Bolivia he had been asked eagerly by a group of Bolivians whether he too was a "mestizo". "Hell, no", he said, he was "pure indio". (This went down very well in Bolivia, but later not so well with the "aristocratic" Argentines). On another occasion after the Gulf Oil Co.'s concessions were dramatically nationalized by the Bolivian military, he was on the phone in my presence answering somebody's questions and he said, "and we've just landed the Marines in Valparaiso and they'll be up here by tomorrow." It wasn't true, of course. Perhaps it was for the benefit and consternation of any Bolivian wiretappers listening in, or maybe he was just venting his macho side. You can't but like a guy like this. After the Foreign Service he returned to Arizona and was elected Governor again, but was implicated in some kind of political coverup of a criminal investigation while in office and I think he went to jail after that for a time. Anyway, he was a very picturesque and likeable character with lots of moxie. He liked me and we got

along great, but he wasn't terribly sympathetic to traditional worker concerns. I had some arguments with him over labor issues, but he certainly supported my efforts to cultivate and report on the Bolivian and Argentine trade union movements.

And, as I said, I also oversaw the human rights reporting for a while and there were some differences which emerged between him and Patt Derian, because she didn't think he was doing enough in Argentina to rein in the military government's excesses. The Embassy's reporting and some State Department statements dealing with the human rights problems in Argentina during this period have recently been made public as a result of a FOIA action. It reveals that the volume of Embassy reporting on the detentions and other human rights violations was quite staggering and that all the key elements of the Embassy were engaged in this effort, including the Ambassador who, as per instructions from Washington, intervened personally on several occasions to make demarches to Argentine military authorities on behalf of individuals who had been arrested or "disappeared". But Patricia felt the Ambassador wasn't doing enough. I think there was a question as to whether there was a pro forma or routine quality to the Embassy's demarches. The regime responded now and then by "throwing us a bone", that is, producing (and saving) this or that prisoner when it recognized the pressure from the US was particularly intense.

Also, there is some evidence in the record that the regime began reducing the number of "disappearances" after a certain point and ballyhooed this to the Embassy as an "improvement" in response to US wishes. But I'm not sure this wasn't just a reflection of the fact that the regime had largely achieved its objective and the "dirty war" was winding down anyway. If the US didn't do more, I'm not sure the blame should be put on the Embassy. If the US really wanted to put the screws to Argentina, I think it could have done much more in the way of economic sanctions, but that would have been Washington's call, not the Embassy's. Nevertheless, I think there was a certain degree of rankling on the part of the Ambassador as a result of the pressure he was under from Washington and this showed in his body language. There were also internal tensions within the Embassy on these issues. One officer in particular who was assigned the human rights portfolio came under fire in the Embassy because he appeared to be following instructions from the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs more than those of his own Ambassador. This officer was fearless in terms of going out, at some personal risk, and bringing back information on human rights abuses, but I think he probably also made some mistakes along the way. He was regarded as "grandstanding" and not being a "team player".

The extreme reaction within the Embassy bordered on the ridiculous and he was virtually treated as a subversive. This led to nasty charges and countercharges, and his career suffered for a while after that. This later became a noteworthy subject of controversy within the Foreign Service grievance or other administrative channels, following which the officer eventually was fully "rehabilitated" and even honored for following his conscience. He has since even been elected President of AFSA. At the time this issue was being played out at post, I had mixed feelings about all this. I was no longer acting head of the political section by this time and wasn't privy to all the details (and he did not share them with me), but this officer was a colleague and friend

and I empathized with his unhappiness that the Embassy's efforts weren't turning the Argentines around on their heels. If I had to think of one phrase to sum up the Argentine military's behavior in this period it would be "the banality of evil." They acted in an absolutely bestial manner. It would not have been in the U.S. interest if the leftist insurgents had succeeded, but once the military decided to intervene decisively, the insurgents were no match for the state. Of course, I have the benefit of hindsight in saying this now, but I think the military could have easily beat "the terrorists" without having had to adopt methods of state terrorism themselves. And I wonder whether the U.S. exercised enough pressure on them. That we didn't, I think the responsibility lies as much with Washington as with the Embassy. But whether the Ambassador could have done more or not, I still have warm regards for him personally.

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In telling you this, some further flashbacks have come to mind about other experiences at previous posts which may be worth retelling also. Sao Paulo was my first experience in which I got involved in human rights and democracy promotion. This was a principal preoccupation of the Consulate General. A gigantic metropolis, Sao Paulo was a major center of resistance to military rule in Brazil. We found broad sympathy in the urban middle class and among the commercial interests for reining in the military's excesses and restoring democracy. This was during the Nixon and Ford Administrations and my recollection is that we had ample support from Washington to encourage respect for human rights and the restoration of democracy. This was before the advent of Jimmy Carter and his human rights policy. I looked up and cultivated a number of lawyers who defended the political opponents of the military regime in the courts. These lawyers were obviously political themselves - broadly supportive of the middle-class, mildly left of center MDB movement. At first, the lawyers were cool to these approaches, suspicious of some kind of entrapment, but they eventually warmed up. Brazil was facing an armed leftist insurgency of its own at this time and in defending itself against the insurgency a substantial number of human rights violations were committed. Perhaps not on the same scale or ferocity as Argentina a little later, but nevertheless quite problematic for the U.S. There was also censorship of the press, which was a bit humorous because the major liberal daily newspaper, *O Estado do Sao Paulo*, had the defiant practice of leaving blank the entire spaces where articles had been censored by the authorities. This produced quite a large amount of cut-out white spaces, which made for an odd-looking newspaper, but judging from the particular page of the censored articles and the nearby articles which had not been censored it was usually easy to figure out which stories had been censored. That was the editors' intention. Part of my job in the Consulate was to report on the abuses, the torture, and the killing that was going on there by the military. Also, the Consul General, Fred Chapin, who was a great boss and mentor and personal friend, made it a point of visiting periodically with Paulo Arns, the Cardinal for Sao Paulo, the largest Catholic diocese in the world. I would accompany Fred on these visits. The Cardinal was very strongly opposed to this torture policy and really to the military regime itself. He was very much representative of the Vatican II Council Catholic Church. He did much to support the poor and

underdogs of the Sao Paulo slums and I think he also supported the striking auto workers under “Lula” in the “ABC” industrial suburbs of Sao Paulo, which later evolved into a social movement, and after that into a Brazilian Labor Party, known as the Workers’ Party (PT). Fred, through his visits, wanted to show symbolic U.S. support for what the Cardinal stood for. As the political officer in the Consulate, I cultivated the local politicians, particularly the members of the national Chamber of Deputies from Sao Paulo and of course the local state authorities. Also a former President of Brazil named Janio Quadros, who lived in the area. I was especially active in cultivating - and thereby providing the symbolic moral support of the U.S. - to the members of the middle-class MDB party, a sort of social democratic party, which was then on the rise in Brazil. This was our small contribution to the eventual restoration of political democracy in Brazil.

There’s also an incident which took place while I was Labor Attaché in La Paz, which I basically kept to myself when I was there, but which gives me some personal satisfaction in recalling now. At some point, Governor Nelson Rockefeller made a whirlwind hemispheric tour of the major Latin American capitals with USG logistical support. Rockefeller had developed a thesis that we had to work with the military governments in Latin America. According to him, it was the best way to defeat the Communists and build the way towards restoration of middle-class democracy in Latin America. The first step was for the USG to develop relations with the military regimes and then work with them to promote middle class democracy in the Hemisphere. He was accompanied on his trip by none other than Andy McClellan, the Inter-American Representative of the AFL-CIO.

JOHN A. BUSHNELL

Deputy Assistant Secretary, ARA

Washington, DC (1977-1982)

Mr. Bushnell was born in New York State and educated at Yale University and McMurray College. An Economic Specialist, he served primarily in senior level positions at Latin American posts, including Bogota, Santo Domingo, San Jose and Buenos Aires, dealing primarily with Economic and International Trade issues. An assignment to the Staff of the National Security Council was followed by tours as Deputy Chief of Mission at Buenos Aires, Chargé d’Affaires at Panama City, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Mr. Bushnell was the recipient of several awards for outstanding service. Mr. Bushnell was interviewed by John Harter in 1997

BUSHNELL: In most countries we did have other objectives in addition to human rights improvement. In Argentina we were very concerned with nuclear nonproliferation because

Argentina's nuclear program was by far the most advanced in the southern hemisphere and it had not accepted international inspections and safeguards. Its nuclear program caused Brazil to invest heavily in nuclear science, and both countries had the potential to develop atomic bombs in the 1980's. The more we made Argentina feel like an outcast, the more likely it would feel it needed nuclear weapons. We were also concerned with maintaining the peace. In 1978 Argentina was close to war with Chile over their boundary dispute in the South. During my time in ARA the Argentine economy was booming and our exports to Argentina were growing fast. We also wanted cooperation from Argentina on opening European agricultural markets because Argentina exports the same grains and soybeans we do. There was growing US private investment in Argentina, and the government made steady progress in resolving the inherited expropriation disputes. In short there were a lot of issues in addition to human rights on the US agenda with Argentina. Moreover, by 1978 the Argentine human rights situation was greatly improved. The military had won the war with the urban guerrillas, and the guerrilla leaders who had not been killed had fled to Cuba. People no longer disappeared; the number of political prisoners was falling fast. Press freedom was restored. However, the military was still in charge, and there was no sign of early elections and a return to democracy. Argentina did want loans from the IBRD, IDB, and Ex-Im even though it did not really need the money. It was hard to argue that most projects were for basic human needs in a country as rich as Argentina at the time.

Because the human rights situation was improved and continued improving, ARA argued that tightening our sanctions by voting against economic assistance would send the wrong signal on human rights and make it much harder for us to make progress on both our other interests and on continuing human rights improvement and a return to democracy. In the Christopher Committee I was supported by Treasury, Commerce, Ex-Im, and other economic agencies. HA wanted to vote no. Patt would explain what terrible killers the military leaders were. I would point out the guerrillas had been killing people on the streets of Buenos Aires every night and blowing up generals in their beds. I tried to make the case that killing in what really was a war was different from killing the opposition for political or economic gain. Patt would always have some cases where people who at least appeared to be innocent were picked up by the military and disappeared. As I recall, the debate was inconclusive. Once or twice I proposed delaying a loan to see if we could get some specific movement forward, such as the release of some political prisoners. Such proposals were unusual in the Christopher Committee, but this worked at least once. The prisoners were released, and we voted for the loan. We may have opposed some loans in 1978, but Christopher generally found for ARA and the economic agencies. After the Argentines cooperated on the Russian grain embargo following the invasion of Afghanistan, we regularly approved loans although we made little progress on the nuclear issue – also a major concern of Christopher.

BUSHNELL: It didn't happen on my watch. Perhaps it happened in 1975 or 1976. Raul Castro was Carter's ambassador. In the early and mid 1970s the Argentine situation deteriorated in

almost every way. In 1973 General Juan Peron, who had ruled Argentina from 1943 to 1955, returned from a long exile in Spain and was elected president. His third wife, who had been a bar dancer in Panama, ran as his vice president. Peron died in July 1974, and his wife became president although she had no political or leadership experience. The economy continued to deteriorate, and the political and economic problems opened the door to the Montonero guerrillas led by Mario Firmenich. The motives and objectives of the Montoneros were complex; they professed to be Trotskyists or guerrillas of the people. But many of their supporters were from the Moscow-leaning communist party, and some of their members seemed mainly interested in the money. They sent much of their money to Havana for safekeeping - although Havana of course was not known as a banking center. Eventually most of the surviving leadership fled to Cuba and from there eventually went to Nicaragua to help the Sandinistas. The Montoneros were allied with a more rural and even more radical, but smaller, group called the ERP, Revolutionary People's Army.

The Montoneros had led violent demonstrations in favor of Peron's return. But, when he came back, there was no pause in their violence and kidnapping. They raised many millions by kidnapping business executives - Argentine and foreign. Several American executives were kidnapped for ransom. They kidnapped the head of the giant Argentine grain and food products company, Bunge & Born, and collected some \$10 or \$12 million dollars. Executives had body guards; in shoot-outs executives, guards, Montoneros, and bystanders were killed. Although they organized some rural guerrilla activities and training camps, the Montoneros acted primarily in the cities. By 1975 they were engaged in gun battles with the police most nights in Buenos Aires with many innocent bystanders killed as well as many military/police and Montoneros. Buenos Aires became the wild west at its worst. They shot a rocket into the dining room of the American Ambassador's residence on a night he was giving a dinner for some 70 or 80 people. Fortunately, some of the guests were late and the party had not yet gone into the dining room when the rocket hit; no one was killed, but apparently the intent was to kill many.

The 1976 military coup was supported by 95 percent of the people. The military then intensified the dirty war with primary focus on the Montonero infrastructure. HA would always quote the figures for disappeared and tortured supposedly by the military. However, certainly the Montoneros fought at least as dirty and with less regard for bystanders. Let me illustrate with a couple of incidents I know from personal connections.. One Army general living in a Buenos Aires apartment had a daughter, maybe 14, who invited a school friend of the same age for a sleep-over, since people couldn't go out at night because of the violence. This girl came over, put her suitcase under the bed, and in the middle of the night the suitcase blew up and killed both girls, the general, his wife, and the rest of his family -- a guerrilla success. This sort of thing got the attention of the military. And this wasn't an isolated instance. While I was in ARA in 1978, the Montoneros attacked Walter Kline, who was the Secretary of Finance who had worked with me in Treasury launching our economic relationship with Argentina after the coup. The military took over the country, but they put in a civilian team to run the economy. Walter Kline's house

was bombed with him and his family in it; the walls, roof and everything came down. Martinez De Hoz, who was the economy minister, heard about this attack almost immediately and went to the area. He saw the damage and confiscated cranes from nearby construction sites to pull the big cement pieces off to rescue the family. Walter was not seriously hurt. One child was quite severely hurt and is still suffering from that attack. And the Klein family was lucky!

The economic team did a sensational job. In 1978 or 1979 I happened to pick up an Argentine newspaper, and I saw advertisements for imported apartments. Imported apartments didn't make sense to me. I asked the Argentine country director, "What the hell is an imported apartment? You can't import an apartment." I couldn't get an answer. When I saw an Argentine friend from the World Bank at some social function, I asked him about imported apartments. He said, "Oh, that's what we call an apartment where everything's imported, all the light fixtures, the plumbing fixtures, and all the furniture is imported." I thought this country's doing pretty well, and it was doing very well. One of the things I had to do every year was defend the budget for ARA in the Congress, and one of the questions that some Congressperson was likely to ask was, "How many local employees do you have in Latin America who are at the US salary cap, i.e. making the maximum amount the U.S. could pay any civil servant?" In most Latin countries the highest paid local employee in an embassy made about as much as the most junior American officer, but we had several, I think seven or eight, Argentines in the Buenos Aires embassy who were at the US salary cap making nearly the same salary as the ambassador, and we were still losing people because they were being offered substantially higher salaries in the private sector. This was an amazingly successful turn-around of the economy that came with Martinez De Hoz beginning in 1976. Within the first 12 months Argentine exchange reserves increased by more than 10 billion dollars. Reserves stopped going up once they started importing apartments.

The military during 1976 was fully engaged in the Dirty War. The military operatives would pick up people they thought were in the guerrilla infrastructure, most of whom were in the infrastructure but some of whom weren't, and these people would never be seen again. They would be tortured to find what other people were in the infrastructure. Some were dropped out of planes into the ocean; most were killed and buried. Arrested pregnant women would be held in prison until the baby was born. Then they might disappear, and the baby would be taken by a military family or someone associated with the intelligence service who wished to adopt a baby. It was a truly horrendous situation. Most of the disappearances were from families with communist or far left political associations and beliefs; thus only a fairly small part of the population was directly impacted by the military's actions, a far smaller part than was directly impacted by the guerrilla attacks and kidnappings. But by 1978 the war was largely over. The attack on Walter Kline was one of the last terrorist acts. Disappearances stopped. Many political prisoners were released.

Then the question was what should our response to the improving human rights situation be. Yes, the military had done horrible things, and the guerrillas had done horrible things in 1974, 1975, and 1976. But nobody disappeared in 1978 and 1979; the number of political prisoners was down

to a handful; progress had been made, but they hadn't had an election yet and no one in the military had been punished. How should we moderate our policy to reflect progress and at least verbal intentions of making more progress? In 1977, before I came into the ARA Bureau, Patt Derian made a trip to Argentina and told, according to when I was briefed later, President Videla, who was the general in charge, that he had not only to give up the presidency but he had to go to jail. He told me years later that he'd never been spoken to by anybody, let alone a woman, like she spoke to him. Had it been a man, he would have challenged him to a duel on the spot. I don't think such confrontations helped human rights or our policy.

There were numerous economic sanction issues on Argentina; some were discussed in the Christopher Committee, but others were presented to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary in the form of decision memos. One was Export Import Bank financing for a major dam project on the border of Paraguay and Argentina, a multi-year project. Allis Chalmers, which was then still a US company, had a good chance of winning the bid for the turbines. The company was in trouble, and without this big contract it might well be out of business. The question was should we block Export Import Bank financing to show our disapproval of Argentine human rights, or should we signal our approval of recent human rights improvements by approving the loan and at the same time save several hundred US jobs and the export earnings. All economic agencies favored approval. Probably this was the meeting when Commerce even brought the Labor Department to a Christopher Committee meeting. I remember arguing that it would be one thing if our sanction carried a significant price for Argentina, but the other bidders on this project, Japan and Italy as I recall, were quite prepared to finance their turbines on the same terms. Thus Argentina would be virtually unaffected if we turned down this Ex-Im financing. Only the company and its workers in the United States would be penalized. HA and SP argued strongly that there were still serious human rights problems and we needed to stand by our principals and not get our hands bloody helping this terrible regime. Christopher decided to approve the Ex-Im financing. I noted that he was more flexible on Ex-Im financing where he had a clear veto than on votes in the IFIs where many loans would go ahead even with a negative US vote. It was also the case that there seemed to be fewer leaks on Ex-Im financing; perhaps the human rights community thought the public would be less receptive to human rights actions if US jobs and exports were being lost.

One leak, which eventually turned out to help me, concerned a World Bank loan for railroad improvements. We had prepared a memo on this issue with HA including its exaggerated picture of human rights. "The Argentine government continues to kill, torture and imprison innocent people. The basic institutions of repression, including secret prisons and an impotent judiciary, remain unaffected." After much back and forth with HA the wording was technically nearly correct even though the impression it gives does not reflect the situation. Someone was killed months before – one case. There were a couple of reports of torture, more in the area of police abuse of common criminals; there were still some political prisoners although many had been released. The secret prisons were still there, although empty. ARA of course described the improvements in human rights and recommended we vote for the loan or abstain to encourage

more progress. Christopher decided to abstain, and I did not think anything more about it. A few weeks later in September 1979, a Jack Anderson column appeared. He included the above quotes which he said came from a secret State Department report [actually a decision memo]. Anderson compared Argentina with Uganda under Idi Amin. He said State Department defenders of the Videla regime favored voting for or abstaining in the World Bank. He named Pat Derian who opposed the loan based on Argentina's disgraceful record of repression under Videla. He said John Bushnell argued for the loan. He wrote, "State's Latin American bureau is notorious for its support of right-wing dictators south of the border, no matter how blatant their violations of human rights may be." Anderson wrote that his people had seen the State report which was secret. Given the HA slant, I had a good guess who had leaked it. This was not the first or last such leak in the activists' guerrilla war. Three years later when I was assigned to Buenos Aires, I found the Anderson article had circulated widely among the Argentine military who then to some extent saw me as a friend in court even though overall relations with the U.S. were rock bottom following the Falklands war.

There was agreement, except for HA, that human rights were not at the heart of our relations with Brazil where individual rights abuses were pretty few although there was still a military government. Even SP agreed. But there were fascinating arguments on Brazil in the Christopher Committee.

ROBERT B. MORLEY
ARA Policy Planning Coordinator
Washington, DC (1979-1982)

Robert B. Morley was born in Massachusetts on March 7, 1935. He completed his bachelor's at Central College in Iowa and did further studies at the University of Oslo and Georgetown University. He joined the State Department in 1962 after teaching for several years and served in Norway, Barbados, Poland, Venezuela, Washington D.C., and with the National Security Council. Mr. Morley was interviewed by Mr. Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 1, 1997.

Q: As this crisis developed, if for no other reason than when it was a choice between the British and the Argentine government, particularly the type of Argentine government, within the American public I don't think there was any real conflict as it went forward and as it was presented. Here was the British doing a rather amazing job at tremendous distance of taking back their islands. This was American public opinion, I would say. What was the feeling that you got from your vantage point about a) what was this whole thing doing to posture in Latin America and b) there was certainly more than tacit cooperation between our military and the British military as things developed.

MORLEY: As things developed, yes. We felt about the Argentine decision, especially when it became obvious, that world opinion was gradually swinging against Argentina both because of the reputation of its government and because it was confirmed as the aggressor. It probably strengthened our hand in terms of trying to influence the Argentine government to create a transition. Certainly as the Argentines suffered defeat after defeat in the Islands, the government of Argentina became weaker internally. It became evident to the Argentine public that the military not only couldn't handle economics and politics and didn't have a decent human rights record, it couldn't even do what they were supposed to be experts at - that is, conduct an effective military campaign. So, they lost all credibility as a result of their adventurism. As the outcome of the conflict became clearer, our assumption was that it would strengthen our hand in terms of restoring democracy to Argentina. This is what we were saying to the seventh floor and to the White House in position papers, that there was some good coming out of this. It probably hastened the demise of the Argentine government and a return to democracy. That's what happened. For the reasons that I stated earlier, we hoped a successful transition in Argentina would probably influence developments in Uruguay and, to a lesser degree, Chile and perhaps elsewhere in South America.

Q: During the height of this crisis, did proponents of one side or another in Congress come at you?

MORLEY: Not that I recall. I don't recall any serious congressional intervention in the issue. They wanted statements. They wanted testimony. They wanted to know what was going on. Congressmen asked searching questions about the impact of this development on the British credibility, Argentine credibility, Britain's diversion of important military resources away from NATO and toward what amounted to national interests and that kind of thing. But I don't recall that there was strong congressional criticism of the Department's policy with respect to the Islands and the Argentine decision to go in there.

Q: Moving back to the center of our concern, you were there during sort of the buildup of major concern over Central America.

MORLEY: I don't think it was so much a buildup. We had been very concerned about Central America for several years before Reagan came to be President.

BELIZE

After being a British Colony since 1786, Belize (formerly known as British Honduras) gained self-government in 1964. The problem was that Guatemala's hampered their attempts at independence by claiming the Belize territory as theirs. And after they finally obtained full independence in 1981, Guatemala refused to recognize them as a country.

JAMES F. MACK

Belize Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1979-1981)

Mr. Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin American where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy March 20th, 2004.

Q: Today is the 12th of September 2005. Jim you are the Guatemala Desk Officer?

MACK: Yes, I was the Guatemalan /Belize Desk Officer so I covered both countries. The reason for this was that at the time there was, and I believe still is, is a serious border dispute between the two countries. In fact, at one time Guatemala claimed all of Belize, which in 1979 was still a British colony. I think the Guatemalans have since reduced their claim but it is still rather substantial. Anyway that was the big issue at the time I was on the desk. The British were anxious to unburden themselves of Belize, which was one of the few remaining British colonies in the Caribbean at that point. Also, important in their thinking was the cost of maintaining defense of the colony. Because of the ever present threat of a Guatemalan incursion they had to keep a couple of thousand troops in Belize, including a unit of Harrier jump jets, which was an expensive proposition to them. At the same time, they worried, as did the elected internally self-governing Belizean government of George Price, that a grant of independence without a border settlement could provoke a Guatemalan invasion. So they were stuck.

In any event the border issue consumed a significant amount of my time as a desk officer. During this period, I worked very closely with guy named Millard Burr from the State Department Office of The Geographer. Burr came up with the proposal to guarantee Guatemala *sovereign* access to the Caribbean sea from their main port of Puerto Barrios. The problem was that without

an agreement, while ships did enjoy physical access to Puerto Barrios in accordance with the international law of the sea, it was not the *sovereign* access that Guatemala felt it had to have for political reasons. So when we received word that the Guatemalan dictator might be willing to cut a deal, Burr came up with the idea of granting the Guatemalans a mile wide sovereign channel through Belizean waters to Puerto Barrios. The problem we had to solve was that smack in the middle of the proposed sovereign channel were several very small islets called the Sapodilla keys, which belonged to Belize. We knew that George Price was adamant against giving up an inch of territory, so Burr came up with the idea of granting Guatemala *usufruct* of the islands in perpetuity which would allow Guatemalan to claim it had won sovereign access to the sea.

Now *usufruct* is a word I had never heard before, but exists in international law, it means *use as if it were sovereign*. For Belize that meant they would retain theoretical sovereignty, but Guatemala would get to use them as if it were the sovereign owner. We thought this was a brilliant solution that would be acceptable to everybody, end the dispute, allow Belize to peacefully achieve independence and win us the Nobel Peace Prize. Just kidding but we were very excited.

Unfortunately, the problem ended up not being the Guatemalan dictator president and notorious human right abuser Gen Lucas Garcia , but the democratically elected Belizean Prime Minister George Price. Price was adamant that he wasn't going to agree to any deal that as much as *implied* loss of any sovereign territory even some water and a few islets. And so, Price lost the opportunity to settle the deal then and there. The British were pushing Price very hard to accept.

Q: I was wondering why we were making a deal or acting as though we were outside authority. Why weren't the British doing this?

MACK: Oh the British were very actively involved. Lord Carrington was very, very involved in this.

Q: He was a Foreign Minister?

MACK: He was the head of the FCO, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the time. He was very, very active in the process and the British dearly wanted to get out. I am sure I am missing some details twenty-six years later. But that occupied a lot of time. My other important issue as desk officer was Guatemala's horrendous human rights record under the military dictatorship, which was waging a war without quarter with Marxist guerrilla group.

Thousands of people were killed in the rural areas where the insurgency raged. In the urban areas, hundreds were gunned down by Lucas Garcia's people working from death lists which it was my understanding he personally approved, kind of like the evil Ming the Merciless in the Buck Rogers movies. It was pretty awful. Not that we could do too much about it since the US already had cut Guatemala off from military assistance a long time before. Remember this was under the Carter Administration. But what this also meant was with no US assistance, we could not use the threat to cut it off as a lever to force greater respect for human rights, although I'm not sure that

Guatemalan government would have been susceptible to pressure in any event. They had decided to fight the insurgency, and any suspected of supporting it, their way, which was brutally. In some ways they were successful. Not that they are better off today because for it. In fact a lot of the lawlessness, high level corruption and impunity in Guatemala today can be traced to that period.

In any event, all this was happening in the context of Central America going down the tubes. Remember, the Sandinistas come into power in '79 or '80 in Nicaragua. The insurgents were rapidly gaining strength in El Salvador. The Chichoneros were growing in Honduras. These were not the most happy times to work in the Office of Central American Affairs. And the nights were very long. We were seriously understaffed.

Q: Well now who were the Guatemalans dictator and his crew killing. Were they basically Indians or were they people who had gotten in his way, or were they unidentifiable group that was fighting him?

MACK: In the rural areas anybody who was perceived to give aid and comfort to the guerrilla was a target. I didn't have much access to what was going on. The Embassy could not travel to the worst areas because of security reasons. I really didn't know much unless an American or a missionary living there got caught up in it. In urban areas however they were going after anyone perceived to oppose his regime. Those killed were not necessarily communists at all. They may have been labor union leaders or democrats. I am sure there were some communists among them. I had some contact with the people that the dictator was going after when they would come to Washington. This included a Vinicio Cerezo who later became President. But he was certainly no communist at all. He survived a number of assassination attempts and so anybody who was opposed to the dictator seemed to be fair game for Lucas Garcia.

Q: Well now, this during the Carter Administration?

MACK: Yes, and Carter was going full bore on the whole issue of Human Rights. So here we are in 1979 in a situation in which on the one hand the leftist insurgencies in Central America were rapidly gaining ground, and on the other President Carter's Human Rights policies were coming on strong. The State Department was kind of caught in a bind. On one hand, obviously we didn't want to see all those governments in Central America be taken over by leftist guerrillas. On the other hand, we wanted to carry out the Human Rights policy. In the case of Guatemala, we did not have a friendly government to support. In fact, they did not want anything to do with us. They were not receiving any military assistance from us.

Q: Were they picking up any support from the Right – the Jesse Helms types and all that?

MACK: I don't recall that in case of Guatemala. I just don't recall. I can recall very vividly El Salvador but I cannot recall the case of Guatemala.

Q: But, did you get caught up in the rest of that. The El Salvador and Nicaragua business.

MACK: Well we all worked in the same office. And we were all overworked in the same office. Central America was staffed at a level for the sleepy old Central America days. A total of seven officers covered Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Belize. To give you an idea of the work load, after I left, that office grew to nineteen. Our Deputy was Rich Brown, who passed away a couple of years ago. To say Rich was a very hard working guy was an understatement, and he expected the rest of us to emulate him. Just to give you an idea, when someone left before seven p.m., Rich would comment wryly that that person was “taking the afternoon off”. The fact is that most of us habitually left work a lot later than that which put a lot of strain on those of us who were married with kids, which was practically all of us. We really began to worry about people there. They were wearing. A few years later, the deputy office of Central America Affairs died of a heart attack.

BOLIVIA OVERVIEW

Elections in 1979 and 1981 were fraudulent and in 1980, General Luis Garcia Meza Tejada carries out a coup d'etat and promises to stay only for a year. When he didn't leave, and after months of human rights-abuses, drug-trafficking, and bad economic management, he was extradited from Brazil and began serving a sentence, 30 years long. After another year of turmoil and military governments, Congress convened in 1982, and Hernan Siles Zuazo became president again after 22 years.

DAVID N. GREENLEE

Political Officer

La Paz (1977-1979)

Ambassador Greenlee was born and raised in New York and educated at Yale University. After service in the Peace Corps in Bolivia and the US Army in Vietnam, he joined the Foreign Service in 1974. In the course of his career the ambassador served in Peru, Bolivia (three tours), Israel, Spain and Chile, as well as in the Department of State, where he was involved in Haitian and Egyptian affairs, and at the Pentagon, where he was Political Advisor. Three of his foreign tours were as Deputy Chief of Mission. He served as United States Ambassador to Paraguay and Bolivia. Ambassador Greenlee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

GREENLEE: I was in Bolivia from November of 1977 until December of 1979. In those days it was 25% hardship assignment, that is, a 25% increase in pay. Some people, I think, were reluctant to go to Bolivia because it was turbulent. Also, La Paz is at a very high altitude, about 12,000 feet. For me it was serendipitous. I loved Bolivia and my wife, of course, was right at home. She had family there, not a large family, but cousins as well as her sister. Her sister has since died, but she was married to a guy who was active politically and part of a political party. I was very well connected going in, and, frankly, much better connected in many respects than others at the embassy.

The ambassador was Paul Boeker—he died a few years ago. He was a very young ambassador, a smart guy who had been part of Kissinger's inner circle. I found him to be a good man to work for, and I found the political section interesting. The political counselor was supportive, but I had to be a little careful of how I...

Q: It sounds like it must lead to trouble.

GREENLEE: It could have, but I tried not to grandstand. I went through the system. As I started to hit the nail on the head, I think my information was particularly appreciated. I would not put stuff in cables immediately. I would write memorandums for the files, and the memorandums would be distributed around. I would get notes back from the ambassador, so it was a heady thing for me. Some of the other section heads—not my boss—resented my access to the ambassador. I started to learn about careerism.

I had trouble at first writing the cables that I really wanted to write. Sometimes they were substantially rewritten, either watered down or elaborated on so much that the focus was lost. Another thing was that I was a slow writer. I mentioned this before. I always wanted to get things exactly right, and I wanted to write with verve, with a kind of snap. It took me a long while to write. I remember one time the political counselor came in and said, “You write good stuff, but sometimes you’re in there with your door closed, and you produce a mouse.” [laughter] One thing that I learned in La Paz was the importance of contact work. I wasn’t an eight to five or nine to five officer. I was working all the time and working lines that the embassy didn’t have easy access to.

Q: Let’s talk about the political situation and the lines that you were working.

GREENLEE: Political turbulence is the norm in Bolivia. It was still the Cold War, but Jimmy Carter as president wanted to promote human rights, which was a new concept for the region and especially novel after the Kissinger period. Bolivians, at least those in the established political class, were not too interested in our views on human rights. They thought it was interference in their affairs.

Q: During the two years that you were there, were there any crises or developments that stand out in your mind?

GREENLEE: There were the crises of the coups and the elections. There was plenty to try to understand and plenty to report on. It was an adrenalin trip, the whole of those two years there. There were a couple of things that stand out. One was the last coup, which was run by a colonel named Natush Busch, a coup that lasted only 16 days.

We knew that this coup was developing, and I had a lot of information about it. The coup actually happened on the last day of the 1979 OAS ministerial, which was held in La Paz. Just before it broke, the ambassador sent me over to talk to a prominent MNR politician named Guillermo Bedregal. He was a contact of mine. I told him that we had information about what might happen and asked him to help head it off. This was not out of line, because we knew he was involved. He acted like he didn’t know what I was talking about. When the coup happened, he became foreign minister. Later, after it collapsed, he denounced me, publicly, for interference in Bolivia’s affairs, and accused me of being the “station chief.” That charge became attached to

my reputation, and if you Google me you see it there. This was a coup from the right, but this guy's accusation against me was later exploited by the left, when I returned as ambassador.

Q: At that time, as a foreign service officer, you saw coups up close and reported on them. But did you find that back in Washington the attitude was, "So? What's new?"—an attitude like, "Who cares?"

GREENLEE: Washington certainly cared, at least briefly. They cared because the push to consolidate democracy was faltering. Remember, we started out with the *de facto* president declaring that there would be elections, and then we had all these problems. There was some explaining to do. "How is it you guys are promoting democracy and the people aren't ready for it?" Attention was paid at the State Department. But not much. It was really just a blip among other, larger concerns. The Natusch coup was a 16-day blip.

Q: What were you doing in those 16 days?

GREENLEE: Talking to the new opposition, the people who had been trying to form a government before. The ambassador was the one doing the heavy lifting and the DCM and political counselor were certainly active. There was a lot of pressure and the coup collapsed.

Q: What about the Bolivian military? What constituted it? What was its role?

GREENLEE: The military conducted coups. It was a factor of power and could not be ignored. When the military understood that it couldn't sustain itself in government, it stepped back. But it remained an important factor of power.

One of the things we had to contend with was a perception in Bolivia that although Jimmy Carter and the State Department wanted democracy to succeed, the Pentagon had a different view and was willing to tolerate a *de facto* government to keep the Soviets out. It was not a correct reading of the thinking of the day, but it was what I think most Bolivians believed. There were in fact some issues with people connected with the defense attaché office in Bolivia. There was at least one guy who never understood why it was important for us to promote human rights. He would always be saying, "It's their country, why can't they do it the way they want?" I think he probably said a bit of this to the Bolivians. We didn't have as coherent a policy line as we should have, but some of the Bolivians who wanted to see military intervention were eager to detect splits in our policy that didn't exist.

Q: Human rights. This was one of the main focal points of the Carter administration, and it was new on the horizon, more or less on a worldwide basis. How much of a problem were violations of human rights in Bolivia?

GREENLEE: Human rights were a concern not just in Bolivia but certainly in Chile and in Argentina. There were massive violations of human rights. When Carter insisted on human rights as an essential component of democracy, it seemed a novel position. I think Bolivians on the left

didn't quite know what to make of it. Maybe they thought we were being cynical. In fact, through our position, we carved out a base for the left to develop.

What really was eye opening for me was how powerful our human rights policy turned out to be. It was powerful because it made sense to us, it tripped easily off our tongue, and it was powerful because you have to have human rights if you're going to have respect for rule of law and for the institutions of democracy. It didn't surprise me when, after Carter lost the election to Reagan, the policy continued. Now nobody thinks about it. It is a component of what everybody understands to be necessary for democracy. But it wasn't always so.

Q: Was the military government beating up and imprisoning a lot of people? You mentioned Argentina and Chile, where there were "disappearances." How about Bolivia?

GREENLEE: The de facto military governments had no compunction about using lethal force. Bullets sometimes flew, and opponents were rounded up. People were killed. What happened in Bolivia didn't get as much publicity as what happened in Chile and Argentina, and happened on a much smaller scale. There were things I found out later, such as Banzer's participation in "Operation Condor," which was about hunting down and assassinating left-wing figures in those countries.

A former leftist president of Bolivia, an army general named Juan Jose Torres, was assassinated in Argentina as part of Operation Condor. Torres was president for a little while in 1970, and later sought asylum in Argentina. My brother-in-law was connected with a party of fairly young people. He was identified as a leftist and under Garcia Meza and was threatened with death. He was taken out, put against a wall, and I think bullets were shot over his head. He was told he would be killed if he didn't leave the country. And he left for about ten years. The military operated that way.

Q: What about the neighbors, the countries surrounding Bolivia? Did they interfere?

GREENLEE: Bolivia had lost territory to each of its five neighbors, but the most significant loss was its outlet to the sea during the 1879 war in the Pacific. Banzer, as a right-wing de facto president, had a kind of affinity for Pinochet and came close to making a deal that would have given Bolivia a sea outlet through former Peruvian territory. There were discussions with Chile and a real effort to resolve the dispute. Bolivia wanted a territorial concession, but the Chileans wanted Bolivia to give up an equal amount of territory in return. There were also problems in the arrangements with Peru. So a promising effort ended up being a setback in the Bolivia-Chile relationship, with repercussions that continue.

ALEXANDER F. WATSON

Deputy Chief of Mission

La Paz (1979-1981)

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: I went to Bolivia as Paul Boeker's deputy chief of mission in August of '79. About four or five or six months after that, Cy Vance, who was the Secretary, asked Paul to come back and run the Foreign Service Institute. I was chargé d'affaires briefly in Bolivia. We can get back to Bolivia at greater length. Then came Marvin Weissman, who was an AID officer who had been ambassador to Costa Rica. He came to Bolivia as ambassador in March of 1980. Then in June of 1980, we had a military coup and we withdrew our ambassador preemptively as a demonstration of our opposition to the coup. Also, we feared they would probably throw Marvin out anyway. The government would declare him persona non grata because there had been this huge campaign against him— about the ugliest thing I've seen in the Foreign Service. They had swastikas all over the wall pointing out that Marvin was Jewish. They were attacking his wife, who is the nicest person on earth, I assure you. She was a Chilean from Chile even though, in fact, her mother was Bolivian and her father, if I recall correctly, was a Chilean of Norwegian extraction. He came as an engineer to Bolivia to do mining work and that's where he met the mother. So she was born in Chile. She wasn't Chilean, but she was at least half, but that didn't matter. The whole point was to undermine the U.S. government in the eyes of the Bolivian people and thus undermine the president Lidia Gueiler, a woman who was president that we were trying to support, thus weakening her position and preparing the ground for the coup; and that's what was going on there at the time. So we pulled Marvin out on June 20, 1980 or 21, 1980 and I was chargé for the rest of the time. Of my 24 months in Bolivia, one way or another, I was chargé d'affaires for 18.

Q: That was from '79 to '81 then?

WATSON: Right.

Q: Today is the 7th of March, 2000. Alex, let's talk about Bolivia. We've picked up why you were chargé for so long, but we really haven't talked about anything else. What was the Bolivian

government like? I mean, when you talk about Bolivia you have to use a plural as far as governments at that time. And you arrived and, what developed?

WATSON: I think in retrospect it has turned out to be a really crucial period in Bolivian history. Once this period I was there ended, Bolivia entered into a period of great democratic stability and transition from one cleanly elected civilian government to another several times now. I think I was there perhaps in the new era of Bolivian political experience in some respects. When I arrived there, a fellow named Walter Guevara Arze had become president. He had become president of the senate. To understand one reason why the system was so fragile at that point, I think it's important to say a word about how the presidential electoral system worked in Bolivia—traditionally the most unstable of countries in South America, certainly. If I recall correctly, if a candidate for the presidency does not get 50% of the votes plus one, the election then went into the chamber of the congress, where the congress decided among the top three candidates; so enormous political jockeying took place. I was not there exactly... especially when Guevara came into office, I don't quite recall how this occurred, but in fact I don't think he was even one of the top three. But he was the president of the senate and the congressional coalition put together supported him. So, Guevara had a very tenuous hold on the presidency, but he was the legitimate president of the country when I arrived there.

Meanwhile there was a lot of activity on the left—sort of traditional Castro style or influence left that had emerged from sort of a guerrilla phase and moved into an incipient to politically active phase, or in a democratic mode, and then there was of course the military. The military was agitating all the time and threatening to overthrow the civilian government, and there was General named Alberto Natusch Busch, a German...

Q: B-U-S-C-H?

WATSON: Yes. He was one of the leading agitators, and there were many other players. I don't think it's all worth going into all of that right now, and there were severe divisions within the armed forces, but there were a couple of key units in this regard, including a motorized unit just outside of La Paz, on the surrounding plains, where the airport is at 13,400 feet. Whoever commanded that motorized unit had the tanks and armored personnel carriers that would come in and take over the city. Plus, there was a major military headquarters downtown which was full of troops and a couple of other units right around La Paz that were crucial to any kind of military effort to seize the city and overthrow the government. There were units in Santa Cruz and Trinidad and other cities, which were relevant in terms of expressing their support for military coups, but not vital to the success of an operation which would necessarily have to take place in and around La Paz itself. In any case, Natusch's government was fragile, based on a rather weak coalition within the congress, and he himself did not have any strong political following, although he was a respected member of the senate. He was from the party of the 1952 revolution, the MNR (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) if I recall correctly, whose leader was Victor Paz Estenssoro, who had led that revolution in '52.

Okay, so the leading political figures were Victor Paz, who was in his '70s at that time, but very agile and alert and an enormously clever politician and probably the most effective political figure in Bolivian history. He was sort of in the center, center right maybe at this point. _____ was a former colleague of Victor Paz who had been president himself once and been overthrown in the past, who represented the left—including this emerging bunch of formerly violent leftists who were now entering the democratic political stream. Then there was, on the right, Hugo Banzer, who was a military dictator in the '70s, but who was trying to lead a right conservative party based in Santa Cruz and was seeking the presidency through democratic means. Then there were lots and lots of other candidates ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right. It's important to recall that there was a very extreme right, even Nazi-loving element in Bolivian politics, because some Nazis actually came to Bolivia after World War II. There was a lot of confusion in all the political parties, too, as to which factions would prevail. In any case, _____ was the president, but I wanted to describe all these factions and give you an idea of them because they're all manipulating and maneuvering all the time, like molecules that are being heated up by a Bunsen burner; and the military, if they can try and take advantage of these things—everybody is trying to manipulate everybody else.

In the midst of this, sometime in late 1979, the Organization of American States had its meeting there in Bolivia, its annual meeting, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance came. Foreign ministers from many other countries came. Our ambassador to the OAS at the time was a former senator from Wyoming, Gale McGhee, and the secretary general of the Organization of American States was Alejandro Orfila, of Argentina. So this annual meeting took place in La Paz. There was, I remember, an incipient movement to overthrow the government, which happened just before this OAS meeting by the military, and it then did not. It started but then stopped and the military was told by the higher level military, "don't do anything bad to the OAS meetings," so they had the OAS meeting. Literally as soon as Secretary Vance and the other foreign ministers had left the city, and because the OAS meeting was set up for the ministers, for the first day or so and then the current representatives would come out for the other two days, had left and the meeting had just drawn to a close, but the delegations hadn't left yet. There was a military coup led by this fellow Colonel Natusch Busch. We used to call it the Natusch Busch Putsch, and it was a huge mess.

A colonel named _____, who commanded this motorized regiment up in El Alto, came into town where these people and students had come out of the military academy; they are always an easy spotter for their leaders to manipulate, and the other groups had a military coup. There was a lot of violence, shots fired all over the city, and it was really a mess. There were so many different coups, or attempted coups, when I was there, it's hard for me right now to tell you which one was which. One of them they took the tanks and just blasted the hell out of the labor union headquarters, the COB it was called: C-O-B. This was a major political force in Bolivia with highly unionized tin mines and other mines dealing at the center of political activity on the rather traditional left. This building was decimated by the tanks. In any case, it was a terrible scene.

Our delegation, including Senator McGhee, were up in a hotel room and they had to keep their heads down. People were filling the bathtubs with water because bullets were ricocheting all over the place and they were trying to have enough water on hand in case the power systems in the hotels failed. Mr. Orfila jumped into his own private plane and abandoned everybody flying back into Argentina, leaving everybody else there on his own. We had to make efforts to bring this under control. I think it was on this occasion when I had to summon in the C130s from Panama to evacuate a lot of people. That may have been another coup or something. In any case, it's hard to recall it all now, but finally this thing came to rest. We got Senator McGhee and all the delegations safely out of the country and the Natusch Busch government lasted about two weeks and then just collapsed of its own incompetence and they put another congressional figure, a woman named Lidia Gueiler Tejada who had been the leader of the lower house of the congress, as the president of the country. So Lidia was then president of Bolivia from whenever this time was in late '79 until about June of 1980. But she had a tenuous hold on the leadership. All of the manipulation and maneuvering among all the military factions and all the political factions continued.

Shortly after this, early in 1980, Ambassador Boeker left to become head of the Foreign Service Institute, something that Cyrus Vance had asked him to do when he was down there, or shortly thereafter. Paul cleaned up his affairs and moved out in February 1980 to go back and take over the Foreign Service Institute. Marvin Weissman, who was a career AID official who, at that time, was serving as ambassador to Costa Rica, was named the new ambassador. He was confirmed in March of 1980. Meanwhile, the political agitation continued, the economy was in serious straits, and the military particularly was trying to drive a wedge through the United States and Lidia Gueiler to undermine support for her because it was viewed correctly or incorrectly in Bolivia that the U.S. support was legitimate to the extent that she was legitimate. She certainly was more legitimate than anybody else. The president of the country was a key factor in her ability to retain her office despite this... all this agitation. There were coups being rumored all the time.

Q: While all this was going on, I mean, you know, in Bolivia we must have had a standard operating coup procedure.

WATSON: Of course we did. I was the deputy chief of mission. I managed that whole process and I had my various lists of people and who we would bring in as what I called the "skeleton staff." I didn't like to use the word essential or non-essential because everybody is essential, so I used the word skeleton. There were certain people I would move in at the right time to make sure we were in the embassy and therefore the access to our communications facility at the time that some things were happening. We increased our reserves of fuel, put our gasoline tanks underground. We had armored vehicles. We had all sorts of provisions taken for dealing with these phenomena.

Q: What was our interest?

WATSON: It was to support the democratic government of Bolivia and the higher administration and to collaborate with them in fighting narcotics, which was a major issue. The cocaine industry was just starting to boom at that point. One of the things I spent a great deal of time on was with the DEA with the State Department narcotics enforcement folks and the Central Intelligence Agency and others all engaged were trying to sort the Bolivian dimension of the international cocaine cartels. We can talk more about that later if you're interested, but affecting everything was the political unrest of the country. They had a very large AID mission there, Bolivia being the poorest country in South America. We had a very large AID mission there; we had a large military mission there. We were in touch with all the factions of the military, both to our attaches and to our military missions, trying to professionalize the military forces.

Q: The military either has when the Busch, came on, I mean, did we, we've got all this stuff, do we just stop everything or what... I mean, what were we doing?

WATSON: Well, I'll get to that when I tell you when the real coup took place which was in June of 1980, but I haven't gotten there yet.

Q: Okay.

WATSON: I don't want to take too much of your time on this, but it was really an enormously complicated tale. To get all of the threads right I'd have to go back into the records at this point, but what I wanted to get to was that they lit out at the military. The leader of the military forces was the commander of the military academy, a guy named Garcia Meza. Natusch Busch was still a factor, but he had faded somewhat and did not really have a major command. Garcia Meza was emerging as the most prominent leader of the ultra right wing faction in the military. There were lots of other military people including people with major commands who did not support Garcia Meza, but in the final analysis he was proved to be the central figure. Anyhow, they lit out after Marvin Weissman, that's the point I'm trying to get to here. And there were swastikas all over the walls because Marvin was Jewish. They also attacked his wife because she was a Chilean although in fact her mother was a Bolivian and her father was a Chilean of Norwegian extraction who came to Bolivia as a mining engineer and met her mother in Bolivia, but that didn't matter. For their purposes she was a Chilean and therefore the enemy and so there was a very, very hostile campaign against the Weissmans by the military that linked up with these ultra right wings phalanges party, that's what they were called, and others who were of course looking for any crumbs that you get from whatever the military might do. It was a terribly agitated situation. There were coup rumors all the time. There were also civilian politicians there maneuvering _____'s group in the congress was threatening to go on a hunger strike and they were threatening to paralyze the work of the congress because they opposed something that the Bolivian government was trying to do. We tried to dissuade _____'s people, but this was exactly playing into the hands of the military and _____ may not have liked Lydia Gueiler, although they were old comrades in arms from the 1950 revolution. It was certainly not going to be in the interest of that group that had the military takeover. If they paralyzed things even further, they could bring

about a situation that would be more conducive to that. They were successful, I think, in persuading them not to do that and because of a lot of other factors that worked there, too. There was just a situation of turmoil.

In the middle of this situation, I remember I became ill for a moment with what appeared to be some kind of a heart condition, and I had been working just about every night until 2:00 in the morning and up at 6:00 dealing with these various things and trying to manage the embassy in this kind of a situation in lieu of the political activities that were going on. I also had a case of the flu and was also over 12,000 feet in altitude. Just one morning I felt at my desk that something of a strap had been wrapped around my chest and I couldn't take deep breaths, that's how I felt; I felt really strange. Fortunately, the State Department doctor, who was at that point based in Lima, Peru, was there in country and so my secretary called down and asked if he could see me at some point. He said yes, he would see me around noon. Two or three hours later, I went down to see him. I still had this condition and he gave me an EKG and said, "Oh, my God I think there is something wrong with you." He shot me over to the intensive care unit of the clinic there and kept moving and evacuated me medically to Washington and the doctor went with me and they had me wired up to machines and all that sort of stuff.

I went to Georgetown and had to take several weeks completely off and then come back for some tests, which I did, in radioactive thallium; stress tests on me. The upshot of it was that by mid-June of 1980 they had said I could go back to work, but I had to sort of ease my way back in. What I had apparently was something called a t-wave inversion— not a serious problem, but something that should be watched. They had no idea where it came from and it had left no damage to my heart, so I was basically given a clean bill of health but told to be careful. What happened then, just when I got this word, is that Garcia Meza moved and they had the coup on June 20, I think it was of 1980. We quickly made the decision that I should get back there. They should remove Marvin Weissman before they declare him persona non grata. We should take the initiative and remove him to preempt. This would make it our political statement and not theirs. I had to get back down there immediately so, rather than easing back in, I had to go charging back in. I flew immediately down overnight. We could not land in La Paz because of the chaos there. I had to land in Santiago, Chile, slept on the bench in the Santiago airport, flew from Santiago into La Paz the next morning in time to go and see Marvin and his wife and bid them farewell as they left. From that point on, I was in charge of the embassy. We drew down the military mission completely and the airplane left and drew down our AID mission to remove the AID director and scaled down the mission bit by bit. We ended all of our programs there except those that went around the government and directly to the people or had dealt with kinds of housing or programs that would really totally collapse if we did not maintain them over some period of time. We pulled out all of our DEA people against my recommendation. I wanted to keep at least one or two there and ended up that I had to perform the functions of the DEA— that is to say paying informants myself, which I had never done before because, while I had no DEA people there, they still wanted these certain functions to be performed. It was really a wild time.

The military plotting did not stop, of course. The other military factions rallied against Garcia Meza and wanted to have the U.S. blessing for their efforts to overthrow him. I was meeting all the time semi-secretly with all sorts of political and military leaders. Garcia Meza's regime was absolutely brutal. He was a gross violator of human rights. The Argentine regime that was in power at that time was an accomplice up to its ears in the coup. They had people inside the interior ministry and Argentines were engaged in the torture of people at the military headquarters in downtown La Paz; I know for a fact. We had excellent information as to what was going on inside that place. The regime itself was engaged in drug trafficking. The former army intelligence chief Luis Arce Gomez became interior minister. He had his own fleet of 13 airplanes flying cocaine from a base up in Colombia, where it was refined. They were stealing everything in sight. It was absolute – almost, if it wasn't so tragic – a cartoon of what a corrupt incompetent Latin American military regime would be like. It was extremely difficult for us. We were viewed in the embassy as the enemy of this regime. We were under pressure at all times. I had to be very careful. They were trying to trick us into symbolic situations that would look like U.S. endorsement of them, photos and things like that. You had to be alert all the time. I have a thousand stories about these things that I could go into with much greater detail. We had a curfew, which was manned by illiterate 16, 17, 18 year old soldiers from the countryside who were scared to death and whose AK47s trembled in their hands as they put their guns up to our ears. We'd move around the town and got nervous when we had to reach into our pockets looking for our carnets, diplomatic IDs, and etc. It was extremely difficult on our kids, particularly on the teenage kids who were driving around town. They had to be home by 11:00 or midnight or 1:00 or whatever time the curfew was set. It was really an amazing time for me, but truly rewarding in many ways because I think we handled the situation extraordinarily well, but it was a difficult one.

When the military coup took place, among the other things that occurred was that the students in the military academy starting roaming around the town attacking certain spots, including the American commissary. The pilot for military aircraft, who we had there with _____ Air, came out to see what was going on and they shot him in the face. Fortunately, the bullet went right parallel to his teeth and into his cheek and the front of his mouth, out the back of his check and didn't even break any teeth or bone, but that was pretty serious. They also raided our commissary and stole most of the liquor that was in it. They destroyed the kindergarten— the embassy kindergarten, which was on the ground floor of the building. So anyhow, the U.S. government set some requirements for any incipient normalization of relations with the Garcia Meza regime. Those conditions involved ending the human rights violations that were taking place all over the country brutally, and beginning the process of returning the country to a democratic, civilian government; taking some steps against narcotics trafficking, which was kind of a joke because the regime was intimately involved in the trafficking itself. Then the State Department, against my advice, also said they should have some rational economic policies. I thought that was on the lower level of things that were much more difficult to attain in short order. I added my own. I'm

not even sure the Department ever knew about this. I said I wanted \$45,000 to repair the kindergarten and replace everything they stole out of our commissary.

Q: How did you deliver this message?

WATSON: We made it clear in a variety of ways. I also did meet secretly with the foreign minister of the new government at his house and my house with no one else there. In any case, he was actually not a bad fellow, but what happens in these situations... you end up in little factions. Then, all of a sudden, you find that your faction is in line with the group that takes power, and you can't resist it once you get that close. I could go for hours about the maneuvering that brought about the Garcia Meza coup, but a lot of people believe that Victor Paz took a fundamental role in stimulating the coup and then backing off at the last second, creating a military that is overthrowing Lidia Gueiler, creating a military regime sort of Leninist style and increasing the tensions and internal – what's the word I'm looking for – contradictions as much as possible. In any case, we conveyed this message to them clearly, both publicly from Washington as well as from the embassy. Then, of course, I had private meetings with _____, with whom I met two or three times during this period. The only one of these demands on which they made any progress whatsoever was the one that I unilaterally imposed. They gave me a check for \$45,000, which is kind of funny if you think about it in the historical context.

Every time I was approached by military officers opposed to Garcia Meza, asking for U.S. support for a counter coup, I turned them down and I said, "You're not going to take any action here that would interfere with Bolivian political process. We want to see you return to democracy. We're doing nothing to support this brutal and horrible regime, but we're not going to contribute directly to any kind of military option against them." It would be suicidal to be involved with one faction or another, even if as a matter of principle I thought it was.

Q: Any problem with the station there? I mean, in a situation like this, I would think they'd be salivating to get involved.

WATSON: No, we had good discipline on the team and we had no real pressure from Washington to do anything other than what we were doing. The military regime murdered a whole bunch of young people that belonged to a leftist group called the MIR, M-I-R, by raiding their headquarters. It was really an awful situation. One of the most difficult mentions of this, this was a presidential election year in the United States. The Garcia Meza people and allies, including, by the way, some prominent political and business leaders who had been so afraid of coming to power _____ on the left that they supported the coup. I guess I should have said earlier, on the reason the coup took place, was that it looked like Hernán Siles on the left was going to win the election that was taking place. To forestall Siles coming through power is why the military is their excuse for moving at that point. They were looking for an excuse. They wanted to take power one way or another. They did manage to have some support of people on the right and that's one reason why the argument is that the _____, who was the arch enemy of

_____ at this time, encouraged them to do so to keep his own former colleague in the '52 revolutionary movement from coming to power. But _____ was in hiding, people were coming to us asking to borrow the embassy boat - which we did not have one - to be able to escape across Lake Titicaca. I gave the keys to my house to several people who will go unnamed, political leaders that, if they ever needed to, they could come in the back way and hide in our basement even though they're not supposed to do that.

There were hundreds of people, political leaders in asylum in Venezuelan, Mexican and French and other embassies. It was a chaotic situation. The fact that the U.S. political scene would have to be, the Garcia Meza folks were banking on a victory by Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and anticipating that that would bring a change in the U.S. attitude toward them. President Reagan did win the election. He did take office in January of 1981 and Senator Jesse Helms had sent some of his henchmen down there and had been collaborating and was showing sympathy with people that became leaders of the Garcia Meza government, including Luis Arce Gomez, who on 60 Minutes subsequently was called the minister of cocaine, and it was an interesting piece back in those days. Helms sent his staffers, who had gone out to Lake Titicaca, to the Copacabana shrine with Arce Gomez. _____ thought that he was a wonderful guy and all that stuff. All this gave heart to the ultra conservative forces around and the Garcia Meza people— that when President Reagan came, things would change. Well, obviously the first thing on the new administration's mind is not Bolivia, so they did not get to it right away, although there were some interesting things that happened. The Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, apparently invited General Gordon Sumner to the so-called Santa Fe group of conservative intellectuals who had written a proposal for U.S. policy toward Latin America. They were presenting it to the Reagan administration and included Lewis Tambs who became ambassador to Colombia and Costa Rica afterwards and David Jordan became ambassador to Peru.

Anyhow, my understanding of what happened was: Secretary of State Alexander Haig asked General Gordon Sumner if he would become a member and if he would be willing to be ambassador to Bolivia. This was really a stupid thing to do, because there was no reason the Reagan administration should be getting itself tarred with the Garcia brush by normalizing relations without giving any thought to the process. This only came to the attention of the people on the Bolivia desk when General Sumner's letter sent back to Secretary Haig declining his kind offer was bumped down by the executive secretariat to the desk. It was the first time anyone had heard any of this. In any case, I had shifted during the Carter administration. I had been reporting rather fully from the embassy what was going on in the political front and the democracy right and the human rights violations, the narcotics front. When the Reagan administration came in, they really hit with a vengeance. They wanted to do everything opposite of what Carter was doing. It was almost a knee-jerk reaction, was my perception from my vantage point. So, I tried to shift. The Reagan administration had not become a very vociferous opponent of human rights. At that point, that was an idea that was sort of associated with Carter and therefore not something that they were paying much attention to even though later on, the Reagan people came to

understand what a powerful instrument it was for fostering democracy and U.S. interests around the world.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover, I mean obviously there is a lot in Bolivia, I was wondering about USIA efforts?

WATSON: USIA was very good, a USIA group there and they were good at getting our message out. No, I thought we had a good embassy.

Q: Could we be critical of the government?

WATSON: Of what government?

Q: Of the Garcia Meza.

WATSON: We were certainly critical of it all the time.

Q: Publicly, I mean could USIA or I mean how does one be in a country and be critical of the government?

WATSON: Well, they didn't like it, but sure you can always be critical. People asked us, the press would ask us, why aren't you normalizing relations, we'd say why all the time. I would always try to be dignified about it, not call them the scum bags that they were, just say that Bolivia is a country that is run by Bolivians, you have to decide what you want. There's no way the United States can normalize relations when the government is doing these kinds of things. I'd say it over and over again. There are so many chapters in this thing I could go into in great length, but probably I can't do it now, but there was strong support from the Mexican government, from the Venezuelan government, the European governments, the French and the Germans and the Brits. The Japanese were more tricky. There were a whole bunch of Japanese who live in Bolivia after a result of a treaty between the two countries after World War II. The Japanese first interest was to take care of its own citizens outside of Santa Cruz. I had tremendous relationships with the _____, the key figure in this. He took Lidia Gueiler the former president into his residence and she lived there for many months. I visited her. I'd go by once every week or so and talk to her and see her and the old dog. I tried to keep her spirits up. _____ was a very strong leader of the _____ and _____ had been smashed by these guys as well. There were people in churches and stealing stuff. It was a very unbelievable mess that was going on there and so this guy, _____, a fabulous man, I talked to him almost every day about what was going on. He once told me, I said, aren't you worried because they were tapping all our phone lines and he said, no, I say the things I want them to hear, I've got other lines they can't hear me on, he'd tell me over the phone. So, you had a whole lot of people pressing on you, nobody was _____.

There were some people in the business community who were absolutely furious, absolutely could not see straight because they thought that if this was the alternative to a leftist takeover and God dammit it may not be ideal, but it is a hell of a lot better than the left. They'd say who do you think you are in the middle of dinner parties, screaming at me and this kind of stuff. Everybody knew what was going on. Everybody knew that the whole world basically was against the Garcia Meza regime. We had all these people in the embassy. We had like 50 people in the Venezuelan residence and _____ was the ambassador and he and I were talking about this stuff all the time. We had many funny stories; I mean all of the so-called people you might say were slightly more culturally sophisticated at the time ended up at the French embassy. My friend the French ambassador and his wife used to tell me wonderful stories about how the people started complaining about the food. Even complaining that, "by the way Mr. Ambassador you should have your grass mowed." These are people inside the embassy. Venezuela and all these politicians that he was trying to control. It was like you were in an asylum. They're calling out to everybody. He's trying to control the phone calls. Total chaos in there.

The next ambassador a retired parachute general of the Mexican army was a _____. He got all the labor types in his embassy. So, he got his entire house prepared. He had a whole new roof put on and all that stuff for free; he had all the workers in there. I used to play racquetball with the Mexican and French ambassadors every morning. So, we had all these stories and the Germans had two or three. We couldn't take them, I told you I passed my key out and some famous people did pass through our house; we don't have to go into that at this point. It was a very exciting time and although depressing in many ways, very rewarding from the point of view of the Foreign Service career and we did make a difference.

Q: Well, you must have gone through a real period of...

WATSON: I had kids going to high school there, so.

Q: Yes, well, you must have gone through a very difficult period about when the Reagan administration came in about you know, not just professionally I mean yourself, is this new administration going to come in and somehow play nice to this regime?

WATSON: Yes, that was the concern that we had and we had reason to think that given what the Helms people had done and the importance of the Helms people and the very conservative group, this Santa Fe group we thought was going to have on the policy for Latin America in general. My job wasn't to take a partisan political side. My job was to point out to these guys in whatever way that I could that they'd listen to, that the last thing a brand new administration of the United States or whatever political persuasion, what you need to do is to get in bed with these drug trafficking, human rights violating, anti-democratic slime balls. That was my only message. For God's sake, don't; pay attention to this place; they'll pay attention to important places like Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. For heaven's sake, don't get sucked in because you'll damage everything you do in Latin America. That was finally the message.

Q: Were you there when the Malvinas/Falklands crisis came?

WATSON: No, I was already in Colombia. That was '82. That was another story.

CHARLOTTE ROE

Political/Labor Officer

La Paz (1983-1985)

Ms. Roe was born and raised in New York State and educated at the University of Colorado, the Sorbonne and Ohio State University. During and after her university training she was involved in political and labor activities. In 1983 she joined the Foreign Service. In the course of her career with the State Department, Ms. Roe served in La Paz, Santiago, Tel Aviv, Budapest and Bogotá, primarily in the political and labor fields. In Washington, she served on the US Mission to the OAS and in the International Organizations and Environmental and Scientific Affairs Bureaus. Ms. Roe was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: So you went to Bolivia from when to when?

ROE: I was there from August of 1983 to July of '85. I tried to extend, but this being my first assignment, it was out of the question.

Q: Just talk about Bolivia in '83. Maybe this was an earlier time, but I imagine a bunch of miners with sticks of dynamite in their belts, and you have to be careful.

ROE: You could find that if you went looking, but under normal conditions the miners are not threatening. They're just trying to survive a tough, unforgiving environment.

Q: What was Bolivia like in '83?

ROE: From 1964 to 1989 you had nineteen presidents; thirteen of them were generals. Bolivia was the one Latin American country where the United States had actually supported a social revolution. One of the guest lecturers in the area studies course was a Cuban-American, Professor Aguilar, who gave a tour d'horizonte of revolutionary movements in Latin America. He confessed that Bolivia impressed him as a country of "lunar sadness, a land of devil masks," mitigated only by the aloof mysteries of the Indians and the solidity of the Catholic Church. (I think this is because he yearned for a warm climate!) Another teacher was Ben Stephansky, who'd been Ambassador to Bolivia in the 1952-56 Paz Estenssoro government that carried out

the nationalization of the mines and land reform. He termed the Bolivian revolution a “noble experiment” that needs to be followed through. He also suggested throwing away all the books and cultivating an oriental sense of intrigue. After the classes ended and before my departure, I interviewed Stephansky in his home. He gave me some fine contacts, including the Controller General, Antonio “Tony” Sanchez de Lozada and his brother, Gonzalo “Goni” Sanchez de Lozada, who was soon to become Speaker of the Congress and later President. Goni was one of the owners of COMSUR, the largest privately-owned mining operation in the country, with holdings in Peru, Argentina and Brazil.

Bolivia was unique. President Eisenhower had sent his brother, Milton Eisenhower, to advise Bolivians on the land reforms. The U.S. mounted one of the biggest aid programs in the world after the 1956 revolution. During the administration of Hernán Siles Zuazo, around a quarter of its income came from U.S. assistance. Bolivia had just emerged from 18 years of military rule and a series of bloody coups. The previous President, General Luis García Meza, was connected to drug gangs and had ordered massacres in mining country. Siles Zuazo was President in the late 1950s, when he headed the conservative wing of the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario). His new governing coalition had a large web of parties including the split-off leftist group of young Turks called the MIR (Movimiento Izquierda Revolucionario). Siles Zuazo’s initial support base was strong but quickly evaporated as the country faced a staggering economic crisis. By 1984 inflation was running 14,000 percent.

Q: Good grief.

ROE: For payrolls, stacked bills were tied with string and bore paper seals from the bank attesting to their value. General strikes were catapulting.

Q: We’re continuing with La Paz.

ROE: Bolivia was facing a foreign exchange crisis. The country carried a three billion dollar debt, which they had just stopped servicing. How to democratize in the midst of extreme scarcity and an economy gone haywire was the dilemma. Hyperinflation caused a major hike in food prices, massive hoarding, and extreme shortages of basic foodstuffs and of gasoline. President Siles Zuazo worked out a series of austerity packages or “paquetes economicos” with the IMF (International Monetary Fund). Siles Zuazo’s November ’83 belt-tightening program included whopping currency devaluation and more increases in food costs. The discontent triggered was so tremendous that he soon undid the measures, promised more wages to government workers and printed more money. The crisis just kept getting worse while the government’s authority unraveled. I was monitoring developments in the trade union movement, the human rights community and several parties on the left including the MIR, trying to figure out how ordinary Bolivians managed to survive.

Q: Who was the political counselor in La Paz?

ROE: Dan Strasser in the first year and William Lofstrom beginning in 1984.

Q: Do you know where Lofstrom is now?

ROE: Bill retired and is now living in Sucre, Bolivia with his wife Ana Maria Zamora. He headed the Latin American area studies program at FSI and wrote a number of books on Bolivian and South American history. A brilliant officer and a real gentleman. The FSN (Foreign Service National) staff of the economic section was close collaborators. Fernando Urquidi, a geological engineer who knew the mining sector inside out, shared many insights in our efforts to interpret the socio-economic upheavals.

Earlier, you had asked me about corruption – it was endemic in Bolivia, but more on the order of officials who lined their pockets when they got in power. Bolivia is a traditional society. Your reputation is gold there. The good business people were well known and those who cut corners or were ruthless or corrupt were also known. The same is true of the political elite.

Q: You didn't find that you were having to pay the policeman a bribe not to get a ticket—

ROE: Actually I did once. I was driving my jeep and a policeman stopped me. I was worried, it was late at night. So I asked if he could pay my fine because I was going to have a hard time getting to the court. That was my one fall from grace.

Q: But it wasn't a corporate, I mean a large scale bribe as happens in so many places now.

ROE: Not in that league. During the previous century, one of Bolivia's presidents sold away large land tracts to make a fortune on guano production. There was huge demand for guano in Europe. Bolivia's colonial era rulers used the government as their private piggy bank.

Q: How did you find the church when you were there?

ROE: The Catholic Church was a mixed bag. In the provinces, the religious hierarchy was often tied to the same local establishment that had kept the campesinos in their place for centuries. In La Paz, the archbishop's social policy and human rights council leaders were highly committed Jesuits. The director, Father Jose Gramunt, a Spanish Catalan, wrote a newsletter on human rights and social developments in Bolivia. It was one of the most objective chronicles of the times you could find. Father Gramunt was also a regular contributor to the La Paz Catholic daily *Presencia*. Gramunt and his Jesuit colleagues were looking dispassionately at these catastrophic conditions. They weren't judgmental. They were advocating a more humane, pragmatic approach to problems. I remember the feeling of tranquility that came from talking with them, visiting their office. They were looking at the whole pattern.

BRAZIL

In 1956, Juscelino Kubitscheck became president, governed without any major crises, and in fact was able to construct the new capital city – Brasilia. Janio Quadros was his successor but he resigned in 1961 (he was there for less than a year). His vice-president, Joao Goulart, was not received with a lot of warmth and was deposed by 1964, giving way to a military regime.

JOHN HUGH CRIMMINS Transportation/Communications Attaché Rio de Janeiro (1956-1960)

Ambassador John Hugh Crimmings was born on November 26, 1919 in Massachusetts. He received his BA from Harvard University in 1941. He served in the U.S. Army as a 2nd lieutenant of artillery from 1941 to 1946. Upon joining the Foreign Service in 1955, he served in many countries throughout his career including Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil. Ambassador Crimmings was interviewed by Ashley Hewitt, Jr. on May 10, 1989.

Q: How old were you at this time?

CRIMMINS: I was born in 1919, so that would be 36. I went to the War College and then was sent from there to Rio as the transportation/communications attaché. I spent four years in Rio as the first secretary in the economic section in that capacity. Came back as Deputy Director of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs in ARA, when Ed Valen died very suddenly in September. I came back in late July of '61. When Ed died in September of '61, I became the acting director, and after I was promoted in the end of '61, I became the director. I couldn't get promoted because I wasn't senior enough. I couldn't get the full title because I wasn't senior enough. So that takes me to '62.

I was Director of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs until January 1963, when I was sent to Miami to set up the Miami Office of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, a position that had just been established. I was there until May of '63, when I came back and became the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, replacing Sterling Catrell, who had the job for the first two months or so.

I was Coordinator of Cuban Affairs until January of '66, when I was sent to Santa Domingo to take over from Tapley Bennett. This was eight months after the revolution. I went down first as DCM and then became chargé when Tap left in April, becoming ambassador in June of 1966.

Q: When did the intense involvement of yourself and the US really begin? With the assassination or before the assassination of Trujillo did it become tense?

CRIMMINS: As I said, I didn't come back from Brazil until July of '61, so that was two months after the assassination. I wasn't involved in the antecedents to the assassination, but I read the accounts. Henry Dearborn probably could tell you enough, more about the degree of involvement than I could.

I think the US involvement goes back to the 1959-60 period, when Trujillo was becoming more and more--what shall I say?--irrational, the attacks on Betancourt and the consequent sanctions that were levied by the OAS against him. We were very actively involved in that. In other words, there was a shift in the late '50s, so far as I could determine, from policy by passivity, to toleration of Trujillo. But the 1959-60 period marked a change.

Q: That says something about the mentality of the Brazilians.

CRIMMINS: This is true. He considered Ellsworth to be [Spanish phrase, phonetically *inesencial uchio*.] And Braga took his place. I want to say Olympio, but it wasn't Olympio. Anyway, he was the hard-liner, the simplistic type who looked upon all constitutionalists as reds. I mean, just by definition, communists. He was still there.

Of course, I made all my calls. I went down as DCM because the desire was that Tap would leave at a quiet moment, because there was concern that if he left in the middle of a crisis, this would reflect on him, but more importantly on the judgment of the White House, etc., etc., etc. It got a little sticky because I had my own DCM coming, Frank Divine, who arrived two weeks after I did. We made him a special assistant to the ambassador. He went to live with his wife and kids in the DCM house. I was staying in the guest wing of the residence, and there were all sorts of rumors about this. Given LBJ's temperament, it was impossible to acknowledge anything. (Laughter) So there were all sorts of white lies told about all of this arrangement.

I took over in April. From a substantive point of view, at that time [Hector] Garcia-Godoy was the provisional president, the head of the provisional government, and I had enormous respect for Hector Garcia-Godoy.

Q: Sort of a transcendental track two.

CRIMMINS: That's right. In my experience, I have never run into a situation in the field, even the Dominican Republic or Brazil, as chief of mission, ambassador that I did not feel that I was capable of ascertaining the answer to any question that I put, and, moreover, was the beneficiary of candor on the part of potentially maverick elements of the embassy. There was one attaché in Brazil that went off the deep end, but that was a special case.

To go back to the Dominican Republic, the relations with the US military and the agency, I told

you about. With respect to the Dominican Republic, I touched on our relationship with the Dominican military, a relationship that was greatly assisted by the very fine work of Van Joslyn, the Marine colonel who was the head of the MAAG, who had a particularly effective relationship with the Secretary of Defense, Peres C. Peres, and who was an absolutely faithful executor of tasks that were put to him by me and by Frank Divine as the DCM and the chargé when I was in So you had the elections. The development effort was central during the rest of the period. I had very good people, had a huge staff. We started to cut it down right away after the elections. By the time I left in '69, it was probably half of the size that it started. Just to illustrate the problem, when I took over, there were 26 legal attachés in the embassy, FBI types. (Laughter) They were very happy. They were down to two in a couple of months, and down to one very shortly thereafter. They were happy. They were sent when LBJ was desperate for information about what was going on in the Dominican Republic.

To continue with the development thing, not only were we providing funds into the AID program, but we were giving the Dominican Republic special treatment on the sugar quotas. This was a hard fight with Washington on the sugar quotas, particularly. It was easy to get AID money, which was slow disbursing, but the sugar money was right there. We had a tremendous fight in Washington--Linc Gordon, particularly--on devaluation of the Dominican peso.

Q: No, let's change countries. This is a time when two other issues, which occupied the attention of a lot of commentators and writers since, were sort of getting under way, and that's the dirty wars in Argentina and in Brazil. Do you have any thoughts on that subject that you would like to share?

CRIMMINS: Of course, in Argentina, the dirty war in earnest didn't start until 1973-74 with Perón. In Brazil, however, we had the severe repression that was going on.

Q: 1970.

CRIMMINS: That's right. Was that before or after Chile? Well, anyway, with respect to Brazil--let's start with Brazil. The Institutional Act of December '69--wasn't that right? Was it December '69 or December '68?

Q: I think it was December '68.

CRIMMINS: Yes, '68. When I arrived in ARA, it was an issue. I, for one, was very concerned about the repression and particularly our heavy involvement in our AID program. You will recall that we were providing, in effect, a balance-of-payments assistance to Brazil at the clip of about \$100 million-plus a year, which in those days was an awful lot of money. I was uncomfortable with this in light of the effects of Institutional Act number five and the full-fledged dictatorship

that it represented and the increasing reports of torture and other abuses of human rights that were occurring.

We were getting all sorts of intelligence reports of torture being used against prisoners. It was interesting that the military was very reluctant to accept this.

Q: Our military.

CRIMMINS: Our military. Because they did not believe that the Brazilian Army was capable of doing this. It took quite a bit of convincing for them to accept the validity of the reports. The agency was very forthright about this. They were reporting straight all the time, and it was in almost all the reports establishing the widespread use of severe torture. This wasn't just electrical shocks; this was the real medieval stuff. It was the agency that established this. As I said, the military were sort of reluctant to do this.

Bill Rountree was the ambassador. He came up, I guess, in 1970 at some point, to testify on Brazil. There was a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearing or set of hearings on Brazil, and Rountree came up. We had some discussion with him about not gilding the lily with respect to Brazil. But I think, in effect, he did. For some reason, I was not asked to testify. Charlie didn't testify that I know of. Bob Dean, who was a country director at the time, did testify briefly, I think, and had, of course, a lot to do with the preparation of the briefing papers for Rountree's appearance. But there was a reluctance, certainly on the part of Rountree, to make much of an issue of the increasing repression in Brazil.

We in ARA--I, with Charlie's approval--were moving toward stopping our AID program in Brazil. Eventually, in early 1973, we did stop it. We had another justification. It was at this time that Delfim Neto, the finance minister of Brazil, was boasting all over the world about how well the Brazilian economy was doing, and it certainly was, and how strong Brazilian reserves were. Well, it was, on its face, pretty absurd to be continuing balance-of-payments assistance to a country whose finance minister was boasting about the amount of foreign exchange reserves they had. So these two things coincided nicely, and we made a decision through the IG in early 1973 to make no further loans to Brazil. The pipeline at that time was almost a quarter of a billion dollars, as I recall--\$200 million, it was. So there was a lot to draw down and there were lots of problems -- loans that were problems -- that were not being disbursed. So I, in effect, arrived in Brazil having participated importantly in the decision to stop the program.

Q: This was when you became ambassador.

CRIMMINS: Yes. This was about six months before I became ambassador when the decision was taken. But that decision was powerfully influenced by the repression in Brazil.

Now, one thing that has to be borne in mind with respect to the whole human rights situation in this period, and also in the period when I was in Brazil, is that the Congress was well in the lead of the executive branch on human rights matters. With AID, who, of course, wanted to continue the AID program--certainly the AID mission in Brazil did--one could point to the great difficulty of getting congressional approval for any continuation of AID programs as a reason for not going ahead. So this is the old business of using the Congress as the lever to get things done. Of course, with foreign countries, this was a common technique to say, "Unless you shape up, the Congress simply is not going to permit us to do such and such." In other words, the executive branch's hands were being kept clean and the Congress was taking the blame, but the result was a useful one.

Now, on Uruguay. I'm very vague about this. I remember the overthrow of Bordaberry and the Mitrione business, which I was very heavily involved in. I recall very few details of it.

Q: Let's leave it aside and move on to some other things. I do want to ask you a question which may be unfair, because it's really philosophical speculation. Something that has puzzled me and has puzzled a lot of people who are observers of Latin America is that the kind of human rights problems, torture and violence and repression that sometimes happens, somehow doesn't come as a surprise in some countries in Central America or Paraguay or Bolivia, or maybe even Argentina. But a lot of people were kind of deeply surprised and shocked that this should occur in Brazil. Is this surprise due to, in fact, a misunderstanding of Brazilian character? Or was it, indeed, a surprise to the Brazilians themselves? Was it an aberration of some sort?

CRIMMINS: This is still hotly debated in Brazil. For my four years that I spent in Brazil before, I was surprised, but I think the military in Latin America, given their power, have to be looked upon as something different from the society as a whole. So there was a loophole, let's say, in that sense. But the security forces under [Getúlio] Vargas, for example, in the Vargas dictatorship, particularly in the "30s and "40s, were very rough and people were tortured and died under torture in that period. So Brazil is not without a tradition, let's say, a bloody tradition of this kind. There are a lot of people who say that there are dark recesses in the Brazilian psyche that produce this kind of thing. Certainly they are more recessed, they are far deeper down and not mobilize-able, let's say, anywhere nearly so easily as they are in Central America and other parts of the continent. But they are there.

I think that one of the reasons why our military were reluctant to accept the evidence of Army involvement in this was in part influenced by this. There was, of course, the institutional interest in not having the relationship disturbed by people who would not approve of close ties with a repressive institution, but in addition to that, I think just said, "They're not constituted that way. Their approaches are different."

Q: "They're honorable soldiers and they fought with us in World War II."

CRIMMINS: That's right. Of course, one has to bear in mind that among, let's say, the big four of torturism and repressors--that is, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile--Brazil by far had fewer instances of torturees per thousand or disappeared. I remember very well a conversation with President Geisel, with _____ present, in which Geisel volunteered the comment that the Argentines were just crazy. Bodies were washing up in the Plata estuary, all over, and it was just incredible to him that this was happening. This doesn't excuse the widespread repression that occurred particularly in the '68 to '73 period, but it was on a considerably smaller scale, both absolutely and relatively, in terms of population, to go back to your torturees per thousand, than it was in Uruguay, Argentina, or Chile.

On Chile, of course – and I believe this to be true – received sort of technical assistance from Brazilian security forces right after the coup of 1973. So the Chileans may have learned some lessons, even though they went much farther than the Brazilians did. The Brazilians certainly were content to provide assistance to them.

Q: Let's move on to your ambassadorship in Brazil, which was your final assignment.

CRIMMINS: That's right.

Q: What were the main issues that you struggled with during your period in Brazil? What were the main challenges?

CRIMMINS: To be somewhat oversimplified, there were three big issues during the nearly five years that I was in Brazil. The first one, the first and continuous one, was economic differences between us and Brazil. The second was the nuclear proliferation question. The third was the human rights question. All of these were highly controversial, some more emotional than others.

To begin with the economic ones, given the intricacy of the economic web that joins us in Brazil, disputes between the two countries are inevitable. I was never really terribly depressed about the continuing and constant economic conflicts between us and Brazil, because they all revolved around trade questions. To me, such questions, by their very nature, are resolvable through compromise of one kind or another, and they lend themselves to, let's say, classical treatment.

We had some severe economic issues revolving around dumping and duties of shoes, but these were, to me, manageable. They were difficult, but they were manageable through the exercise of the classic instruments involved in relationships--negotiation, diplomacy, mutual understanding, give and take. Those persisted. They persisted in various forms throughout the four and three-

quarters years.

The nuclear proliferation question was of a different sort and much more intense and, in effect, irresolvable. As I used to say, there were high interests involved, high interest of ours and high interests of the Brazilians involved, and these were not susceptible to compromise. One side or the other had to give, or time had to change the terms of the problem.

The nuclear question arose in dramatic form, of course, when the Brazilians and the West Germans signed the nuclear treaty of 1975, June of 1975. The negotiations between Brazil and the Germans go back, to my knowledge, to 1969, when scientific and technological exchange agreements were initiated. There is evidence in the intelligence record that nuclear questions were advanced at that time. Some of the Brazilian personalities who later were very important in the nuclear question were stationed in Germany.

One of the critical events occurred in June of '74, when the US Government, in effect, said it could not guarantee the supply of enriched uranium to many of the purchases lined up for this. This was used by, let's say, the pro-German group as a justification for turning to the Germans for enriched uranium for the power reactors that Brazil wanted.

We had some insights into the negotiations that were going on. I think a fundamental mistake was made when in the early part of 1975 a decision was made in Washington not to invoke political arguments with the Germans against the relationship with Brazil, but, instead, to handle this at a technical level. My own understanding always was that Henry Kissinger was simply not concerned about nuclear proliferation. On the Indian explosion, no action was taken, I think, as I always understood, because Kissinger did not think it was that significant. I think his position changed, especially when the Pakistanis got involved with this sort of thing. But I think this carried over into the Brazilian thing, that he was not prepared to spend political capital with the West Germans on this issue.

This is the kind of question that an ambassador in Brazil is in no position to dispute. I mean, but in hindsight, I think we might have been able to prevent some of the worst proliferatory aspects of the treaty if political investment had been made. As it was, at the technical level, the agreement was tightened up. The Germans did agree to tighten it up. But in any case, we made known our concerns about this to the Germans. We did not take it up with the Brazilians. All of our efforts were directed at the Germans to try to get them to lay off. As I say, no political inputs were made in that effort. An agreement was signed in June of '75 and was hailed as a triumph for Brazil, a historic triumph. *Monchechi* had a headline up, "[Portuguese phrase]." There was a whole lot of expectation that this was going to lead to a nuclear explosive capability on the part of Brazil. There were safeguards in the treaty.

MARSHALL D. BROWN

Assistant Program Officer, USAID

Rio de Janeiro (1965-1970)

Marshall D. Brown was born and raised in California. He received his undergraduate and master's degrees in political science from Stanford University. Mr. Brown's service with USAID took him to Peru, Brazil, and Honduras. He was interviewed December 4, 1996 by W. Haven North.

Q: Were there any major issues or events during your time there?

BROWN: There was one. It was the enactment of "Institutional Act Number Five". I have forgotten the year; it was probably 1967. That's where the government cracked down on their dissidents and scheming politicians and "cancelled" (there really is no good English translation of Portuguese word) the political rights of a lot of the politicians and were left leaning and corrupt. The Act in effect said, "You can never run for office again; you are a non-entity politically." They barred the "cassados" from any future political activity.

The U.S. reacted and suspended our assistance program. They put it "under review." I remember it was ironic because the day of the suspension I was supposed to deliver the draft health sector loan agreement to my counterpart in the ministry of finance. By chance, I ran into him that morning coming out of my apartment building. He is driving by, he stops and waves, and I tell him "I'll have the draft agreement to you today." "Good," he replies. Then I arrive at the office and discover we have suspended the program, and I can't deliver it to him as I promised. But more than that, State has decided that we can't tell the government we have suspended the program.

That was one of those clever strategies where we send a political signal by not telling them we're sending a political signal! At least initially. And so, in my situation I couldn't explain to my counterpart why I wasn't delivering the draft agreement. He kept calling, "Where's the agreement? You said you were going to send it." And I said, "Well, you know, it got hung up with the typist, then, it is in the mail, then something else." For about two weeks I had to make up stories why I couldn't deliver the agreement. Finally we came out and told them, "Our AID program is under review because of the adoption of Institutional Act Number Five", restricting political freedom.

There was a big meeting in the Embassy, chaired by the DCM, to discuss our policy because there were some dissenting views within the country team about our strategy. And most of the

AID Mission was there arguing against holding up the program. They said that it didn't make any sense, that we were doing things that help the Brazilian people and holding up our aid and assistance is not going to change Institutional Act Number Five. I remember the DCM saying, "I don't understand you AID people; how you can think like that?" He was lecturing us that we were all off base. Eventually State decided we could resume our program. The government may have softened Institutional Act Number Five; I'm not sure, but we went back to business-after a several week hiatus in our program.

What eventually led to the phase out of the AID program in Brazil was the human rights issue, as dramatized by the sanctimonious Senator Church. He visited Brazil several times in the 1968-70 period, and he didn't like what he saw. He launched a campaign on the Hill to close down or sharply phase down the AID program. That was the beginning of the end for the AID program. By 1971, I think the decision was made to phase out.

Q: Were there severe human rights issues?

BROWN: No there weren't; but Senator Church, who was the political precursor of the later Carter Administration's preoccupation with human rights, didn't like military government, no matter how benevolent. Ironically, in terms of honesty and good administration, the military ran the country much better than the preceding democratically elected governments. The Brazilians are not a brutal people. There was no widespread torture or abuse of prisoners. I'm sure there were cases of police brutality, but that was true in most developing countries. It was not a brutal dictatorship. Brazilians are not that kind of people.

There is a famous story about Brazilian conflict resolution. It involved an uprising in the south. You had two opposing factions, with generals and tanks, deployed and lined up facing each other from a distance. One general called the opposing general on the phone and said, "How many tanks do you have?" The other replied, "I have so many, how many do you have?." The caller replied, "I have so many." Then they compared numbers of soldiers. Then they discussed how the battle would go and who would win, based on their comparison of the two forces. The general with the smaller force said, "Well, OKAY, you win." Brazilians are not a violent people; they look for ways to solve a problem without violence. They have a easy going, relaxed style, and a very creative, musical culture. It was a delightful place to live. But you had a military dictatorship. You had some restrictions on some political freedom. It was a benevolent military government, staffed by civilians. No one lived in fear or was afraid of the government-except for the far left. But the situation was not like the oppression which existed under the military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile or Paraguay. Nevertheless, Brazil situation did not meet Senator Church's human rights standards, and he began a campaign to stop supporting the government. As I recall, OMB was looking for a reason to reduce the size of the Brazil program, so Church's attack fed into their efforts. That was the beginning of the end. In 1971 the mission was directed

to prepare a phase out plan, and proceeded to carry it out over the next three or four years. Eventually, all that was left was an AID Rep and a family planning program.

CURTIS C. CUTTER

Principal Officer

Porto Alegre (1969-1970)

Curtis C. Cutter was born in Sacramento, California on October 27, 1928. He attended the University of California at Berkeley and then entered the U.S. Army. Mr. Cutter joined the Foreign Service in 1958 and served in Cambodia, Peru, Brazil, and Spain. He Cutter was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: And then you went to Porto Alegre in Brazil.

CUTTER: Well, I had asked for that. Actually, when they came to me on the Peruvian desk, I had pretty much lined up my life, I thought. The people in Personnel were very cooperative. I was doing a good job in the Department, I guess. They wanted to keep me happy, and they had agreed on a year's study at Stanford and then to move on to be a Principal Officer in Porto Alegre, Brazil. My principal interest at Stanford was Brazilian economic history. So I really spent a year preparing myself for this post. Rio Grande do Sul is called the cradle of presidents. It is like Virginia is for the United States. It has produced more presidents than any other part of Brazil. So, although it is little known here, it is a city of three or four million people – a dynamic, industrial city. It has always had a very explosive political situation. A lot of political movements have started in Porto Alegre. If you couldn't be principal officer – which I couldn't be at that stage of my career, in Rio – Porto Alegre was certainly the place to be in Brazil.

I had told Linowitz, when I went to work for him, that it would be only be there for a year. At the end of that year, once again I had this problem of breaking away. He didn't think I should do anything so mundane as going back to school, that I could accomplish much more in Washington doing what I was doing. I said no, this was something that I really wanted to do in terms of my long term development. I left, and I still think it was a great choice. First of all, I had a wonderful year at Stanford. It was very stimulating to be back in an academic environment where you could sort of kick ideas around and not worry about the political downside of them. I think it is very important in an officer's career to have that opportunity to get away. You probably did that with the Senior Seminar. It was a crucial time for me in my personal life, sort of to take a step back and look at what I was doing. So I think that university year was extremely valuable, and I recommend it for anybody that really wants to think seriously about foreign affairs and what they

are doing. So, from there I went directly to Porto Alegre. I spent a full year at Stanford, including a summer of intensive Portuguese. Instead of coming back to the FSI [Foreign Service Institute], they let me take it at Stanford.

So I arrived in Porto Alegre during a period when, as you know, there was a military junta in power in Brazil. The U.S. was seen in intellectual and "left" circles as the author of that coup, which I think is totally unwarranted. Nevertheless, we are given credit for a lot of things that we shouldn't be given credit for. So the role I saw for myself in Porto Alegre, in addition to the normal, consular functions, was to try and build some kind of an outreach to the intellectual and journalistic community there, and try and rebuild some ties between the Consulate and that group. I arrived there in November 1969 and had made progress by the time March rolled around in developing some pretty good contacts.

I was having a great time, to be quite honest. The whole south of Brazil was part of my consular district. By then I had visited all of the capitals in that area and gotten to know people pretty well.

It all came to a halt in early April 1970. We were coming home from a dinner party. Christiane was sitting in the front seat. I was driving and we had a banker friend from San Francisco, Hovey Clark, in the back seat. We were driving through a rather obscure area in Porto Alegre, when all of a sudden a car cut us off, bumped my front fender. I had an American station wagon at that time – a big Plymouth Fury. This was a smaller, European car, a Brazilian built car. I thought, "Oh, heck, now we will have a discussion over who is to blame." I was just about to get out of the car when these men started jumping out of the other car. They had stockings pulled over their faces and were carrying machine guns. So, given some of the things that had happened in Brazil up to that point, I knew what was up. Our Ambassador had been kidnapped...

Q: Burke Elbrick.

CUTTER: Yes. The Japanese Consul General in Sao Paulo had been kidnapped. You just had the German Ambassador in Guatemala assassinated. So I was pretty much aware of what was happening. To digress for a minute, I had a driver who was an ex-Brazilian paratrooper. We had discussed what we would do in a situation like this, had it occurred. We were both in agreement that we didn't want to be just rolled over on our backs. If it looked like it was possible to get away, we were definitely going to make a move in that direction. There had been too much of people just throwing up their hands and saying, "Here I am. Take me." I guess there was some of that mental preparation going on there.

The minute I saw those guys jumping out with their weapons, I just put my foot on the throttle. My wife says that I just said: "Here we go." And both she and Hovey Clark very wisely threw themselves on the floor of the car. They had seen what was happening and threw themselves on the floor. I managed to hit the last one getting out of the car, knock him up onto the hood. He was lying there, with his machine gun for a couple of seconds and then I hit the front of their car, knocking it out of the way, and took off. The leader of this group -- he was the only one carrying

a pistol -- stopped another terrorist from machine gunning the car. He took careful aim at the back of the car and fired. One of the shots hit me in the shoulder and knocked me against the steering wheel. My wife asked me what was wrong when she saw me go forward like that. She says that all I said was "Damn it, I have been shot."

Clark in the back seat, who was a former Foreign Service Officer, by the way, said, "Curt, if you can keep going, don't stop! They are right behind us!" So I put my foot on the throttle and made some of the hairiest crossings of major intersections that you have ever seen. Eventually, they stopped their small car and went back to see what had happened to their associates. We continued on to our house, the official residence, where there were always a couple of guards on duty. Of course, as we pulled up, tooting the horn, there was no guard in sight. My wife got out, ran into the house, to try and see what was happening. Hovey Clark stayed with me and tried to help me out of the car. About the time we reached the stairs that went into the house, the guards did appear. They were asleep in the back yard. Fortunately, the terrorists hadn't continued to follow me. If they had, we would have been in deep trouble. We called for an ambulance. None came. Eventually, the neighbors drove me to a hospital. It was kind of funny. We went first to a neighborhood hospital, which was a really more of a clinic. Nuns came to the door and said: "No, no, we don't take those kinds of cases! You had better go to the Municipal Hospital." And it is true, if you are ever shot, don't go to a small hospital. Go to the hospital in the area where they are used to handling gunshot wounds. So they took me in, and the young surgeon on duty had handled countless gunshot wounds, I guess. He put me in intensive care and took care of the problem in a very professional way.

That started a very interesting period. I, of course, had just spent a year at Stanford, doing a Masters program on the economic history of Brazil. I wasn't prepared, just because of this incident, to leave. My attitude was: I wanted to stay. There was no question in my mind that I could stay on in Porto Alegre. I didn't think that this was a reason to leave. After the fact, of course, the Brazilians assigned a veritable platoon of guards to be with us at all times. We had six children living with us at that time in Porto Alegre, some of whom were going to local schools. That meant that they were now accompanied by an armed guard at all times, as was my wife. We were getting, after the incident, constant threats from radical groups, because they weren't very happy with our escape which resulted in the eventual capture of the three terrorists who were involved in my kidnapping. So there were bomb threats and all kinds of threats against me and my family.

However, eventually, I wanted to go back to the States and have somebody take a look at my wound and then go right back to Brazil. So the Department brought us out. Brought out the whole family for medical consultation, and we were supposed to go back. But while we were in the States, the Department decided that my family could not go back. I could go back, I could stay as long as I wanted, but my family was not going to be allowed to go back. There was no way they could assure adequate protection for a wife and six children. So we dispersed the family, and my wife went to Europe to stay with her family. I went back to Porto Alegre. It was

obvious that I could only stay a limited period of time. So I began an orderly process of disengagement, visiting the authorities, saying my goodbyes, and preparing to leave.

Then the frustration began. It started, actually, while my wife was still there. One of the big problems that was facing U.S. and Brazilian policy at this time was the whole question of human rights violations by the junta. There was a big debate about whether or not these human rights violations were real, or whether they weren't real. Whether these were just leftist allegations, or whether they were, in fact, true human rights violations. Of course, this was a very muted kind of thing. A lot of our programs in Brazil depended on our not finding them in violation of human rights provisions. So the Embassy was very careful about what they would report to Washington about human rights violations. Even after the Elbrick affair and even after my affair. There was very little hard evidence, except for hearsay evidence, about what was being done by the military to repress the Left.

One of the things that grew out of this experience was that the military and the police in Porto Alegre began to see me as somebody they could talk to very frankly and to see my family in the same light. One of the first episodes that occurred was that the lieutenant in charge of our security bragged to my wife at considerable length about the measures they were going to take to solve this case. He described in some detail the kinds of methods they were going to use if they ever caught these people, to see to it that they got them all. He was very graphic in his description of some of the things he could do, including a fellow that they called "The Mad Dentist," who was a guy who flunked out of dental school, whom they hired. They would strap people into a dental chair, and then would go ahead and perform dental care on them with drills and what have you, whether they needed the dental care or not. My understanding is that this is pretty excruciating. Then they described "The Tank," into which they could dip people, upside down, hold them in there until they were nearly drowned. Well, they went on at some length with pretty graphic descriptions of what they could do.

It seemed to me, regardless of what my personal situation was, that this was very germane to U.S. policy and that this couldn't be ignored. We did some fairly substantial reports from Porto Alegre. The reporting chain was from Porto Alegre to the Embassy and from the Embassy on to Washington. After I went back to Porto Alegre, I was even given a tour of police headquarters and shown the torture facilities. So there wasn't too much doubt that human rights violations were taking place and of a fairly serious nature. Now, of course, you enter the whole domain of the argument of whether these kinds of things are necessary. They argued that they were. Otherwise, you would have further kinds of incidents like mine. But the facts were plain. They were doing horrible things. And they were doing them in a fairly organized and systematic way. This was something that we put on the record, very plainly, to the Embassy. I must say, today, that I am not sure whatever happened to our reports which we sent to the Embassy, because later, when I was back in Washington, I looked in vain for some sign that these reports were in fact part of the record. They may very well be although I couldn't find them. All I can say is that, on the human rights issue, the facts were plain.

ALEXANDER F. WATSON

Political Officer

Brasilia, Brazil (1969-1970)

Principal Officer

Salvador da Bahia, Brazil (1970-1973)

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.

Q: Alex, you were in Brazil from '69 to when?

WATSON: From August of '69 until I think about July of '73.

Q: Where did you go in Brazil and what was your job?

WATSON: Well, first my assignment was to be a political officer in the embassy office, it was called, in Brasilia. I was only there for six months and I was then moved to be the principal officer in our consulate in Salvador da Bahia, in the ancient capital in the Portuguese colony in Brazil, up on the north coast, north of Rio. We arrived in Rio in August of '69 and it was a time of great coincidences, unfortunate coincidences and eventualities. The day we arrived in Brazil, in Rio where the embassy still was, that was the day that the president of Brazil, the second military ruler of the military period, President Costa e Silva, had a stroke. We spent a week or two – I can't remember now exactly how long – in orientation, meeting everybody in the embassy in Rio before going up to Brasilia. The day we went from, flew from, Rio to Brasilia was the day that our ambassador, Burke Elbrick, was kidnapped in Brazil. So, people started saying, Watson, you better not move anywhere because every time you do, something bad happens. At that point we went to Brasilia.

Q: I'd like to just go back to sort of your introduction into at the embassy the first week there. How were they describing the political situation and the situation with our relations in Brazil at that time?

WATSON: Well, I don't know if I said this the last time we were talking, but I had the good fortune of knowing before I went off to university training that I was going to Brazil on assignment. That's why I picked the University of Wisconsin, which, along with Stanford at that point, was reputed to have the strongest Brazilian studies program. When I arrived in Brazil I probably had the good fortune to be as well prepared academically as any Foreign Service Officer ever had been. I had a whole year and I had read everything and knew the history and the economics at some greater level of detail than Foreign Service Officers normally do. I had a little bit more of a depth in which to analyze it. When we got to Brazil, if I remember correctly, this would have been, I think it was '69, I think there was very strong and positive relationships between military governments, which was there in the U.S. There was some, there was concern of course with the outbreak of urban terrorism, which resulted in part in the capture of our ambassador. Also, I think there was concern about, at that time we were pouring huge amounts of aid money there, a billion dollars a year. There was a huge sum for education, tax reform and all sorts of things. I think there was some concern in some corridors about growing inequalities of the income in Brazil and, of course, there were concerns on the human rights front and on the democracy front. They had a military regime and there was, in response to terrorism, it was clear and violent repression by the military and police authorities in Brazil against people that they thought to be subversives and communist terrorists and that sort of thing.

Q: Was the feeling that these were sent over with more of the middle class student types, or where did they feel the terrorists were coming from?

WATSON: Oh, they were basically, it was a classic kind of disenfranchised middle class university types which most people thought were brewing, if you will. Remember, as I said, the Brazilian regime was not a _____, which is the word for dictatorship in Spanish and Portuguese. _____ meaning hard. It was _____, meaning a bland or soft dictatorship. Because, unlike any of the others in Latin America at the time, the military regimes that were prevalent at the time, the Brazilians found a way to keep the military regime with different leaders; to institutionalize it rather than personalize it. So _____ followed _____, _____ was considered to be much more intelligent, more liberal, more far thinking. _____ more _____ and more hard lined than _____. Costa e Silva had his stroke and when it was clear that he could no longer function then they brought in the third military leader, Emilio Medici, who was the guy in charge of the country most of the time when I was there. He was although quite charming he was the most conservative of the five military rulers or presidents of Brazil they were. My recollection is in the embassy at that time, Ambassador Elbrick was relatively new there. He had no experience in Latin America, as I recall. He was in Europe.

Q: How about human rights at that point? Were we looking at that?

WATSON: We were starting to look at it. You could not ignore it in Brazil because, as I said earlier, there was a clear repression going on. It wasn't anywhere near what happened in Uruguay or Argentina or even Chile a few years later. It was going on. They had in Rio, at the air base and at the navy base in Rio there were people getting the tar beaten out of them and were getting killed. Things were happening. They never got to great excess and the Brazilians so when the transition to the civilian government and democratic assistance took place, the trauma to the country to try to deal with the excesses of the past was far less than in the other countries that I mentioned or in the other countries in South America. Yet, it was a manifestation of the phenomenon every time in Latin America. Americans, very often North Americans, don't understand this all the time, we get upset about it. There's no case in Latin America that I know of that has been different from this. Once the military regime goes and you move to a civilian democratic regime, the people of the country overwhelmingly decide rather than spending a whole lot of time investigating the past and determining actually who did what to whom, when and how and where and punishing those people for that which would be an enormously exhausting enervating process and what would it lead to. It probably would not be totally successful. It would lead to all kinds of incriminations and openings of old wounds. Rather than doing that in every single case they originally come to the point where they say, let's move on and focus on the future. We will have some kind of investigatory mechanism like you have in Chile. We have developed information, but nobody is going to move on it. We will try to find out what happened to your son, daughter, father, mother, aunt, uncle, best friend and whether they were killed or buried, try to find that out, but we're not going to have any mass trials, Nuremberg style or anything like that. The only slight exception to that was the significant one in Argentina where they jailed some of the generals. Even then they released all of them. Given that reality, that's the way the Latins have dealt with this phenomenon whenever it has occurred. Given the fact that in Brazil it was a less extensive repression and abuse of human rights, although serious, less extensive than other countries, it was easier. Given the Brazilian personality, in Brasilia they say that Brazil is a country of the future and always will be. Brazilians easily move from the present to the future.

In this regard my wife said something interesting. When we moved from Brazil the second time to Peru, somebody said the countries must be very much the same. She said, "Oh, no, completely different. Brazil is a country that pays no attention to the past and it views the future as a prologue and the present is prologue for the future. Peru is a country that pays no attention to the future. It focuses on the present as the results of what has happened in the past, where they really focus their attention— completely opposite ways of approaching life in chronology."

Q: Did the United States, I mean, were we a whipping boy or was there allowed to be a whipping boy in society? I mean, the Vietnam War had reached its peak and was beginning to go down. I was just wondering, were we used as a great colossus to the north that's screwing everything up?

WATSON: Interestingly, during the military regimes of Brazil was when the U.S. military mission that I mentioned a while ago, that started in 1922 in the navy if I'm not wrong, then came '42 with the army. Anyhow, they were all thrown out of the country by the military. Brazilians were extremely nationalistic during this time and when I was there also we had planes that were flying around the Brazilian air force and others were photoremedic analyses of Brazil, snapping. There was a belief that became so strongly – unless my memory fails me – it became so strong we had to stop these things. This is all a plot for us to determine what was in the Amazon and we could see from these planes what was underground which, of course, you can do now, but you couldn't do then, but you can do now.

Q: Yes, you can.

WATSON: We were supposedly determining where the mineral deposits were so that American companies could come in. The Brazilians, and still people have this to some extent, it's hard to believe and understand where this came from, the paranoia about the U.S. taking the Amazon away from them for some reason. It was right in the middle of this, Herman Kahn at the Hudson Institute published an article or a book with the idea that we damn the Amazon and create a huge gigantic lake in the whole center of South America, which would facilitate communication among all the countries. This is viewed as absolute evidence that was the U.S. intention and plot— another example of our taking over the Amazon. So, you had this kind of stuff and you had the concern that, during the times of human rights violations, that Americans were in their face. We've always had the foreign ministry as being highly nationalistic. I've always thought that the Brazilian foreign ministry played a role similar to the foreign policy of France and Mexico, France being the most authoritarian at that time of the European countries no matter how much they focused on being a democracy. It's much more control from the center than any of the other countries. They always had sort of a liberal, or even leftist, nationalist foreign policy. The Mexicans did it beautifully. It's an authoritarian state, not so much now, but it was, and run by one party doing whatever it wanted; corruption. They could take the stand in the UN and around the world and it was generally recognized by the ____ to dupe the press and everybody that they were somehow the paragons of socialist virtue and that kind of stuff. The Brazilian foreign ministry simply was very aggressive about American stances around the world, which is extremely useful, I think, in domestic political terms.

ALEXANDER F. WATSON

Brazil Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1973-1975)

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.

Q: Alex, 1973 you went where?

WATSON: That's when I left my position as principal officer in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil in our consulate there and came back to be the political officer on the Brazil desk in the State Department. In those days, AID and State were combined in the Bureau of InterAmerican Affairs of the Department. We had a fairly large office of Brazilian Affairs. Steve Low was the head of it and we had an AID guy as the number two person and then a couple of Foreign Service Officers and another AID person and a couple of junior officers and some support staff. It was a fairly large office.

Q: Well, you did this from '73 to when?

WATSON: It would have been late '73, probably August or September of '73, just before the coup in Chile. Allende was overthrown by Pinochet. I remember learning of that while sitting at my desk after I joined the Brazil desk. I was there until about, probably about April of '75. So probably about a year and a half.

Q: What were the issues? You had come out of Salvador and in a way you were now looking at a much bigger stage. What were the issues?

WATSON: In Salvador, as I had mentioned before, I had the good fortune of having served in Brasilia before, knowing everybody in the embassy which at that point was still in Rio and having a broader perspective than I would have had had I gone directly to Salvador. I was pretty familiar with the broad range of issues that we were dealing with in Brazil. Just at this time, we had a change in ambassadors. Ambassador Rountree left and Ambassador Crimmins, John Crimmins, went down almost precisely at the same time that I was moving from Brazil to Washington, if I remember correctly. So, I'm trying to think... well, there was the issue... there was always the human rights question in Brazil under the military regime. The military came in in '64 and didn't really go out until '84 or '85. There were a lot of trade issues. I can't remember

now, it was so long ago, which ones were the most demanding at that point, but we had shrimping issues and we had other issues. We had, I think, nuclear power issues because the Brazilians were developing a nuclear submarine. It never came to anything. They were working on things like that, which was a concern to the U.S. at this time. Nuclear proliferation was a legitimate concern. There was the tension between Argentina and Brazil on nuclear issues that today seems way in the past, but there was a point where it was considered to be as dangerous, if not more dangerous, than any in Pakistan, but with a potential spark point for a nuclear configuration. I'm not sure, without spending a little more time thinking about it, that I can come up with the other issues we were dealing with.

Q: We're talking about the Nixon/Kissinger period still here when you came on, you say human rights.

WATSON: That was the last year that Nixon...

Q: Yes. When you say human rights, was this a word, I mean, a double word in those days, or was it...?

WATSON: I kind of remember something that was interesting. Human rights were a major foreign policy objective in the United States; defense of human rights and respect for human rights. It was an issue already at that point and if I'm not mistaken it was led in the House of Representatives by Tom Harkin, now a senator. Harkin and some others were really pushing this issue. In the Ford administration, which of course succeeded Nixon, there was an establishment during the Ford administration. if I'm not mistaken. congress imposed upon the administration a requirement to produce a human rights report. This was before Carter; people forget this. In the Ford administration is when you had to start putting together the first human rights reports for congress. This sounds pretty routine now, but that was a brand new requirement. It was highly criticized in a lot of countries that didn't want their human rights record unnecessarily propagated all over the world. Even people who didn't have human rights difficulties were not happy to have the United States sitting in judgment over them and writing reports on this. The executive branch wasn't too pleased with having to, in many respects, come to spend more time on this than other reports for the congress. By the time President Carter came in '77, he seized upon this in the campaign and an assistant secretary position for human rights was created. Patt Derian went into that. I think that that position was actually created during the Carter administration, but I could be wrong. It might have even been created before Carter came in.

Q: I sort of suspect it was before it was refugees and human rights together.

WATSON: Maybe that was it.

Q: What happened was we shucked the refugee side and concentrated on human rights, which gave it more power?

WATSON: Yes and Carter made it a more explicit part of his foreign policy in general, but I think what people do forget is that the first, the real impetus for this within the U.S. government actually came from the congress. My recollection is that Tom Harkin and plenty of other people as well, but I remember Tom Harkin being a leader on this in those days. That's something of course we had to deal with on the Brazil desk with a military regime. And other kinds of human rights considerations and the arbitrariness of the government and the weakness of the institution that were trying to protect people's rights in Brazil.

Q: Here you are on the desk. How did you come up, I mean I'm sure it was a negotiating of all these things were sort of negotiating, these human rights reports, but early on this must have been something that you kind of wish would go away because it's only going to cause problems.

WATSON: You know it's hard for me to recall now what my attitude was then, but it probably was something like that. I don't know. I sort of wish it weren't, but my guess is probably I viewed it as a slight imposition. My sidekick David ____ actually had to do the report. My deputy who was in the political part of the office at that part although I'm sure I reviewed it carefully and had many other eyes.

ANTHONY G. FREEMAN

Chief of the Political Section

Sao Paulo, Brazil (1973-1976)

Anthony G. Freeman was born in Newark, New Jersey, and went to high school in New Jersey. He has attended Rutgers University, Princeton University, and Woodrow Wilson School. He served in the U.S. Army in 1956 overseas and later became a Foreign Service Officer in 1961. Freeman held positions in the following countries: Argentina, Spain, U.S., Bolivia, Brazil, and Italy. He was interviewed by Don Kienzle on February 7, 1995.

FREEMAN: So that took me to mid-1973, and then in September I went out as Chief of the Political Section in the American Consulate General in Sao Paulo, Brazil. There was a labor officer assigned to me there named Jesse Clear, who was designated as assistant labor attache for the country and who coordinated with the labor attache for Brazil, then based in Rio de Janeiro (Jim Shea). Maybe at a cocktail party I would get to meet one or two of Jesse's contacts, but I didn't know many of the labor people there in Sao Paulo. I was there for three years, from 1973 to 1976, and then I decided to take a labor assignment which was opening up in Buenos Aires, which had been my first post.

So I went back to Buenos Aires in August 1976 and stayed there until mid-1980. I went there as a labor attaché but became acting political counselor for a while when the political counselor was sent on detail back to Washington. I think I was acting political counselor for the good part of a year. That was a very interesting assignment, because, as I told you earlier, I had been in on the ground floor in developing contacts with the Peronist labor leaders, and many of the guys I had met then were still around. It was like old home week. I gained easy access to lots of people on the trade union side. It was known among the politicians that the U.S. Embassy had an active Labor Attaché, who knew Argentina better than most Americans. People often called me out of the blue asking for an appointment. I had some fascinating experiences there, including some risky ones.

The situation in Argentina in 1976 was that the military had overthrown the government of Isabel Peron by coup in March. Juan Peron himself had died the previous year. It is hard for me to reconstruct this all now from memory, but there were two armed leftist insurgencies against Mrs. Peron's government. There was a Trotskyite, leftist-guerrilla, pro-Castro kind of movement, known as the ERP, and there was a more nationalist band of leftist urban guerrillas of Peronist origin known as the Montoneros, who had turned against Mrs. Peron's government. Mrs. Peron's government had dealt with this challenge in a shadowy, Machiavellian way. A close aide of hers named Jorge Lopez Rega, from his post in the government, created a clandestine right-wing group of off-duty policemen known as the "Triple A" to assassinate the leaders of the leftist insurgency. In effect, there was a civil war going on between left-wing and right-wing Peronists. The government was inept and corrupt and became successively weakened. In March 1976 the Armed Forces overthrew the government of Mrs. Peron and created a military junta in order to fully take charge of the war against the leftist insurgency and also to restore the economy which had been undermined by Peronist economic policies.

There was a proliferation of Argentine military intelligence services and they all practiced deception. I don't know how many different intelligence services they had. Maybe thirteen or something like that. Every armed force had its own intelligence service: The Navy, the Army, the Air Force, the Federal Police, the Gendarmeria. Even the Coast Guard. They were all operating there.

The right-wing of the Peronist trade union movement included the guys that I knew best and had cultivated early on. On my first tour we had worked with a different element, the Frondizi-coopted types. But over time we also came in contact with the right-wingers, too. By this time, many of the right-wing labor leaders had been coopted by, or eagerly joined, the intelligence services to fight the left-wing Peronists.

So there was a kind of Peronist civil war going on. And some of these Peronists were actually government agents, who were contract thugs for the government sub-rosa. Many of the killings were between Peronists of the left and Peronists of the right. Of the latter, some were on the payroll of one or another intelligence service. Quite a few top leaders of the Argentine trade

union movement were killed this way during this civil war. And some of these killings were contract killings ordered or approved by the government intelligence services. It was not just a civil war. The military government helped to stimulate and paid for this, and many of the bodyguards of the government leaders were from the Peronist right-wing.

Peronists of both the left and right were anxious to maintain contact with the American Embassy and tended to gravitate towards me, because I was the labor attache and easily accessible. At the same time, we had officers in the Political Section assigned to human rights; and the more middle class left-of-center victims of the repression tended to gravitate towards them. By now, the human rights policy of the Carter Administration was in full swing and there were strong denunciations out of Washington concerning the violations of human rights in Argentina. The first signs of a human rights policy actually had surfaced a bit earlier in the Nixon Administration when I was in Sao Paulo, and I had gained some experience as political officer cultivating middle class liberal opponents of the military regime in Brazil, expressing U.S. concern about the heavy-handed military repression there.

But the Carter Administration's strong emphasis on human rights policy was not the only U.S. interest in Argentina. We didn't want to see the leftist guerrillas tortured to death and then "disappeared" in secret operations, let alone innocent civilians labeled as terrorists, arbitrarily detained and then disposed of in the same way, but I believe we recognized it was in the U.S. interest to see the guerrilla threat eliminated. We wanted the guerrillas dealt with by rule of law and some semblance of due process. When I say "we" I mean the US government. It's conceivable there may have been some people in the Administration in Washington who harbored a more benign view of Argentina's rebellious youth, but professionals in the State Department (and certainly the Pentagon) saw the guerrillas as a threat to US interests in Latin America. The political model they appeared to vaguely espouse was some kind of collectivist or totalitarian society, whether of the radical left or right or some hybrid thereof, and they used terrorist methods. They were the enemies not only of the current military dictators of Argentina, but also of the liberal democratic tradition in Argentine political history, represented by the civilian governments Argentina had known in the past. They were clearly anti-American. If they ever succeeded in attaining power, there was no doubt they would take Argentina on an anti-American, "anti-imperialist" path, whether directly into the Cuban-Soviet orbit outright or into the "non-aligned" camp. And so it was in our interest to see them defeated, but we preferred this done by civilized rules and not the way the Argentine military and police were doing it. As far as I can remember, however, U.S. concern over the latent threat represented by the insurgency was not articulated publicly. This may have been "signaled" or intimated in informal (and possibly even unauthorized) conversations between Embassy staff and Argentine government and military officials, but I don't think publicly. I would need to research this to be sure my reflections on this point are accurate but, officially, I think, the U.S. took a hands-off posture as to this internal rebellion in Argentina and the government's decision to defeat it militarily, except to express concern over the human rights aspects.

The Argentine counterinsurgency was carried out in good Machiavellian fashion. I had the notion of a great deal of deception going on and imagined there were operations where Army units pretended to be from the Navy, or vice versa, just to hide their unit's identity and defend themselves from any future acts of retribution (or justice). The intelligence services would hire thugs, who did a lot of the underground killing that went on. "The Dirty War" as they called it. The French had started this kind of thing in Algeria, I think, and I suspect the Argentines had learned from the French how to do it. This was their operating style, and there were trade union elements right in the middle, either on one side or the other. Some of the labor leaders were suspected of harboring sympathy toward the guerrillas and some were with the government, or at least they were against the guerrillas. And I had opportunity to meet some of the thug types.

As head of the Political Section, I oversaw the human rights work for a time and had some personal experiences trying to protect people's lives. On one occasion during a Congressional visit, Congressman Ben Gilman (R.-NY) asked to see newspaperman Jacobo Timerman, who had been seized at his home a few months back by police and was under detention. The Embassy arranged this and I accompanied Gilman to this meeting. We met with the Minister of Interior, General Harguindeguy, and then he had Timerman brought into the room. When I asked Timerman in the Minister's presence how he was, he answered he was all right "now". Timerman's meaning was clear. He had not been tortured recently. I have recently seen a copy of the cable I did reporting this meeting, which has since been released under FOIA. Frankly, I had forgotten some of the details including the fact that it was Gilman who had generated this meeting. My recollection was that the meeting was connected with a visit that Assistant Secretary Derian was planning to make to Argentina. She too wanted to interview Timerman and hoped to effect his release. Harguindeguy was concerned that Timerman's detention could lead to sanctions by the U.S. against Argentina and he apparently agreed to produce Timerman for Gilman, to demonstrate that Timerman was an officially registered prisoner, in good health (more or less), and he would be dealt with in an accountable way. Harguindeguy's concerns were heightened by a rumor that Timerman and Pat Derian were actually family-related. For me, that was just a base, anti-Semitic, barracks-type joke, but my recollection is that Harguindeguy wanted to appear to be forthcoming to the Americans on the eve of Derian's visit.

JAMES W. CHAMBERLIN

Portuguese Language Training/Consular Officer

Sao Paulo, Brazil (1974-1976)

James W. Chamberlin was born in Miami, Florida in 1945. He received a BA from Principia College and a JD from the University of Alabama in 1972. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970 and entered the Foreign

Service in 1973. His postings abroad include Sao Paulo, Bangkok, Brasilia, Warsaw, and Rome. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed Mr. Chamberlin in 1997.

Q: Where did you go?

CHAMBERLIN: Oh, I went to Sao Paulo, Brazil, which was a pretty good assignment because, it wasn't really a visa mill. It was interesting being in a consulate, rather than an embassy the first time.

Q: You were in Sao Paulo from '73?

CHAMBERLIN: From '74 to '76 after the A-100 course, I had Portuguese language training, and so arrived in Sao Paulo in January or February.

Q: What was the, as you saw it then, political and economic situation in Sao Paulo then?

CHAMBERLIN: Well, Brazil is one of those countries that is always full of promise, and it was then. The economy was on an upswing at the time I was there. I think things deteriorated after I left, but people were optimistic then. Sao Paulo has always been relatively prosperous, and when I was there it certainly was like living in a major, world-class city. Sao Paulo had become the automotive center for Brazil, and most of Latin America as well.

Q: Were there any political tensions at that time? They had a military government of some sort.

CHAMBERLIN: Yes, the president was a general, which created some tensions, especially because of human rights issues, but I didn't feel it much as a consular officer in Sao Paulo. I think that's one difference in being in a Consulate. It was out of the mainstream of politics, except for state politics, and economic and commercial matters, which were most important in Sao Paulo. In addition, because I was in the consular section I didn't get involved very much, even in that.

Q: Well, who was the consul general.

CHAMBERLIN: Fred Chapin was. He was nice to me in the sense that he took an interest in the junior officers, but I think not a particularly special interest. In Sao Paulo, I didn't have a rotational assignment that would have given me an insight into other sections. It was a straight consular tour, so that I got no experience in the political or economic sections or at the embassy in Brasilia.

Q: Did you have any Consular cases or problems that particularly come to mind.

CHAMBERLIN: Well, one on the American Citizens Services side. There was an American in Sao Paulo, who like me was a Vietnam veteran. Apparently he had been giving away LSD at a party when he was arrested. He had a Brazilian girlfriend who stood by him while he was in jail and became his wife. He was the main US citizen that we had to look after in Sao Paulo while I was there. In Rio they had all kinds of people visiting from the US, some of whom always got into trouble. Sao Paulo was more of a business town, and the businessmen didn't get into much trouble. So this young man became my main case. We did an interesting thing for him. The Brazilian court said that if we would write a paper about post-Vietnam stress syndrome, or something like that, the court would use it in sentencing him. So, we in the consular section did; we collected some Time and Newsweek articles on the subject, wrote something based on them, and gave it to the judge. (As a Vietnam veteran, I had mixed feelings about saying that all Vietnam veterans had a propensity to be mentally unbalanced, but I wanted to help him.)

He had to stay in jail until his trial date, which in Brazil was at least 3 or 4 months, but once he was tried and convicted, the judge sentenced him to only a little more than the time already served, so that he was soon out of jail. I went to visit him frequently, because just prior to his arrest, there had been an incident in Recife where an American had been arrested, held over the weekend, tortured, beaten and the consul had been denied access to him. We wanted to make sure that nothing like that happened with our prisoner; so, I went to go visit him frequently. He was held in a mansion that had been converted to a police station in a very nice part of town. He was held in a basement with political prisoners, who he said included the son of a past President of Peru, and some Bolivian big shots. For a prison, he had a pretty soft life there. Then once he had his trial, and the judge sentenced him to about a month in jail, he went to the real slammer. I visited him there, too, and it was a different story. It was a huge, dark fortress of a prison, but fortunately he was only there for only a month before he was released.

On one visit, I brought the prisoner's Brazilian girlfriend, who had become his wife, to give him an extra chance to see her. The prison commandant would not let her in because she had on pants, rather than a skirt. After a while, she worked out a deal whereby she borrowed a skirt from a woman working at the prison. The commandant was happy because she had on a skirt when she met her husband.

Q: Well you were there most of the time during the Carter administration. Did you feel that at your level, or from the reflection of the people around you? Did you have any problems regarding human rights because this was a focus during the Carter period?

CHAMBERLIN: Yes, sure. I think we did the first human rights report on Brazil while I was on the desk. The reports were controversial, and every desk was worried about how its country was

going to respond. We were worried about what Brazil would say about its report. There was a young activist on the NSC staff working on Latin America, Bob Pastor, who used to give us lots of grief on human rights issues.

In general the perception was that we, the State Department, were too soft on Brazil, and too soft on human rights. It was about the time that they created a Human Rights Bureau, and we argued with them quite a bit. It was always a fight to get anything cleared that had to do with human rights. We often felt that they were saying things that were incorrect, and they felt that we were often incorrect. It was almost impossible to get anything cleared in those days; we would get into big fights that delayed clearance for days.

Q: So we are in the seventies up to '82, now?

CHAMBERLIN: Yes, exactly.

Q: What was the status of INR, I mean on the Brazilian nuclear issue?

CHAMBERLIN: The situation hadn't changed that much. The main thing that had happened was that Brazil had signed its deal with Germany. Everybody was concerned about what exactly the Germans would convey to the Brazilians, and what the Brazilians would do with it -- what kinds of safeguards and controls the Germans and the IAEA would have? That was the focus of what we were looking at, and how we monitored it.

Q: Well sir, I would love to get into deep classification, but I would imagine in a process between two democracies there was a hell of a lot of information around. I mean as far as things were going between Brazil and Germany.

CHAMBERLIN: Well yes and no, because the Brazilians were not helpful. They were mad at us because we had denied them the fuel for their first nuclear power plant. They tried to persuade the Germans not to tell us everything, not to have everything to be open. The Germans, of course, felt they had an obligation to Brazil for the billions Brazil was to pay for the nuclear package. The facilities in Brazil were not open. The Germans would tell us to some extent what they were doing. It was even more difficult to get information from the Brazilians. As a result, there were always suspicions about whether the Germans were telling us everything. There was intelligence, but it was seldom as good as first hand information. The intelligence focused on the bad things the Brazilians were up to. For sure, the Brazilians were keeping the stuff out of view as much as possible. So there was definitely a tension there. I don't remember the details, but I am sure there were high level démarches, and probably a few insults that were traded between us and the Germans. Whether it was the right thing for the Germans to do, and whether they were putting enough controls on it, was very dubious.

Q: Well during this '79-'82 period were there, or was there, a movement on this Brazilian nuclear issue?

CHAMBERLIN: No there really wasn't. In fact I don't know where the nuclear plants stand today. When I went to Brazil years later, none of the German plants was operational. The sale would have been huge; they would have built up to eight nuclear power plants in Brazil, as well as the whole fuel cycle operation. I hope they have a German power plant operating by now, since they have spent so much on the deal. In essence, the results proved that there wasn't too much to worry about, whether it was because the Germans made an effort to limit what was transferred by the deal, or just because the whole thing was too expensive and too complex to begin with.

Q: Was there a concern about the Brazilians, or only concern about proliferation on principle, and that we didn't want to have Brazil it? Were they worried about what Brazil might do with it?

CHAMBERLIN: The US was worried about what Brazil might do, because at that time Argentina was more advanced than Brazil was. From the proliferation perspective, people were more worried about Argentina than Brazil. The Argentine rivalry made them worry about Brazil. They worried that Brazil would try to do something destabilizing, because Argentina was so far ahead.

Q: In terms of nuclear advancement?

CHAMBERLIN: Right. So, the Brazilians were in fact interested in developing the technology and skills to match the Argentines. It did look like there was a little nuclear arms race on the Latin American continent. At that time, people were seriously worried about it, although now they are less worried. The Brazilians have always claimed to be a peace-loving country, and I think that is probably true. My own impression is that the Brazilians would be unlikely to develop a nuclear weapons capability. They just wanted to have broad nuclear expertise in case they needed it. Of course, Brazil, like any other country, was concerned about self-defense. If they really had felt that the Argentines were going to build a nuclear weapons capability, I am sure that they would have gone all out to match it. In retrospect, I don't think the Brazilians were so motivated at the time of the German deal. We probably over reacted.

JOHN D. CASWELL

Political Officer

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1974-1976)

Mr. Caswell was born in 1947 in Massachusetts, raised in Massachusetts and Connecticut. He was educated at Franklin and Marshall College, the Fletcher School of Tufts University and the University of California, Los Angeles. After service in the US Navy he entered the Foreign Service in 1974. His foreign assignments as Political or Economic Officer include Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Brasilia, Lisbon and Sofia. In Washington, Mr. Caswell served in the Department's Operations Center and in European and Latin American Affairs. He also served two years with USAID's Regional Mission for Europe. Mr. Caswell was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: with Portuguese, you've got your African Portuguese, you've got your Brazilian Portuguese, and you've got your Portuguese. Was there much of a difference?

CASWELL: Oh, yes, there's a substantial difference between Portuguese Portuguese, if you want to call it, or continental European Portuguese, and Brazilian Portuguese. I guess I would kind of liken it to the differences between, say, British English and, say, Texas English. There are both accent differences, there are differences in slang and in everyday language. They use some different words for foods and things like that. And there are even some minor grammatical differences, so it's pretty distinct. I had studied Brazilian Portuguese and then my initial posting was to Brazil, and so when I encountered for the first time continental European Portuguese, it was enough to sort of set one's head to spinning, it was almost incomprehensible.

Q: Well then, you went to Rio and you served there from when to when?

CASWELL: From 1974 until 1976.

Q: What job did you have there?

CASWELL: It was kind of like being a political apprentice for the most part. I was a junior political officer in Rio de Janeiro. Rio had been the site of the embassy until about 1972, as late as that, even though we had opened up operations in Brasilia way back in the early '60s. For a long time it was like a trailer and one or two guys in it. Most of the embassy was still back in Rio because most of the Brazilian government was still in Rio. Gradually there was a kind of a shift, and the shift of the center of gravity of staff really took place in the early '70s. So Rio was still a pretty substantial place when I got there in '74 although it was definitely being downsized, but there was still the idea that they needed to have - in those days an O4 political officer and...

Q: It's about a major.

CASWELL: ...sort of a mid-career type fellow, not quite mid-career, and a junior officer. It was almost like a training assignment. I did end up spending some time in the consular section

because they set up an informal rotational program within the consulate itself but it was not a rotational assignment in the pure sense of the word.

Q: In '74-'76 what was the political situation within Brazil proper and then within sort of the Rio area?

CASWELL: I think the most striking thing was that the military had been in power since 1964 when there was a revolution, they would call it. The military consolidated their power in the latter part of the '60s. At first when the military took over, there was a feeling on the part of many people that they would right things, stop the chaos, expel some people from the political game and then politically acceptable politicians would be in effect allowed to come back in charge again. As it turned out, that wasn't the way it was. When the military got in, developed a taste for power, and they thought they knew better than the civilian politicians how to run things, and they were going to hold on. This in turn generated some urban guerilla violence and even some guerilla movements out in the countryside in the late '60s which then led to further crackdowns and polarized things even more. By the time I got to Brazil in '74, the military president, a man named Ernesto Geisel, was thinking maybe this was the time to try to calm things down a little bit. The Brazilian economy had been growing well in the early '70s - it was called the Brazilian economic miracle - and he decided to pursue a policy of, he called it, *distensão*, which means 'relaxing of tensions', if you will, kind of like a domestic detente. So he began to try to encourage that process and he began to try to get the military security services to back off a little bit. The argument was that the situation merited it, that many of the most dangerous guerillas had either been run out of country, captured or killed, and it would make the political situation more acceptable. So that was what was going on, but not everybody in the military agreed with him. There was a hard-line faction in the military that felt that this was a very dangerous policy, that Geisel was deluded, and that in effect dangerous characters were still out there that needed to be rounded up, needed to be tortured until they talked, and if unfortunately they died during the torture itself, well, that was just too bad but 'you couldn't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs,' that type of mentality. So there was a kind of rollercoaster of tensions, as it were, as Geisel types pursued this *distensão* policy and periodically there would be embarrassing things that would happen when the military security services, despite this *distensão* policy, rounded up people and tortured people, and occasionally these people would end up becoming martyrs to democracy. That was the major domestic dynamic. It wasn't at that stage the military trying to find a graceful way to leave power - they still felt that they could run the country better than anybody else - but they were trying to make it a situation that could be maintained over the long term.

Q: In Rio where did your mayor, where did your civic government come from?

CASWELL: They had in effect kind of controlled or limited democracy, as it were. They had set up a system. Before the revolution there was a wide spectrum of politics. The military theorists thought this was part of the destabilization, this caused Brazilian politics to be unstable. So they

said, "We're going to ban certain parties, we're going to terminate the political rights of certain politicians who we think are dangerous and irresponsible. People who are acceptable, we will allow them to continue the political game but under circumscribed rules," and one of the rules was that there would be only two parties. There would be the sort of pro-government party which was willing to play ball with the military and they were essentially conservative people, and there was the legalized opposition, as it were, the sort of tame left. Those two parties were allowed to contest elections at the local level. When I got there, I think maybe the existing mayors of large cities were still appointed, but in the two years that I was in country they did have mayoral elections. They had elections for city council, they didn't had elections for the state assembly, but governors were still appointed, and the next step was going to be to have directly elected governors. So basically it was a kind of limited, ersatz type of democracy. The politicians were allowed to play the game, if you will, but really ultimate power still rested with the military.

Q: This is a period of real politik as far as the United States was concerned, with Kissinger as Secretary of State and all. There was obvious promotion of democracy, human rights, which is so much part of our repertoire today. Were those much in evidence during your time?

CASWELL: They were in evidence. Certainly one of the major elements of our brief was to look into allegations [of torture, violations of human rights]. When these came to light, they were no longer allegations, they were actual incidents - of people disappearing or being tortured. Relatives would come into the consulate and want to talk with somebody about their missing son or daughter or whatever and trying to find out what happened. Yes, we certainly followed and tried to learn as much as we could about those cases. When there were celebrated cases that began to affect, if you will, the political health of Brazil if not the ultimate stability of the country, we would report on the political impact of particular cases. It was not pushed as vigorously as when Jimmy Carter came into office. In fact, Jimmy Carter actually sent his wife, Rosalynn, down to lecture the generals about human rights, which they really hated. Human rights together with what became another major concern of ours, which was the 1974 - I think it was signed - German-Brazilian Nuclear Accord, which we were gravely concerned about the proliferation, the potential proliferation, of weapons technology out of that agreement became big issues. Our concern on those two points, human rights and the German Nuclear Agreement, really came to a head under Carter's Administration and really alienated our relationship with Brazil, which lasted for a good 20 years or so. Only we began to see the damage being repaired in the mid-'90s or so. So, yes, we did follow human rights. We did lecture them some on it under the Ford administration, but not as vigorously as when Carter came in. Our great concerns about the German agreement, trying to block it and, once it was signed, trying to get it annulled were the major issues that we had with Brazil at the time.

CLARK M. BRINTNALL

Assistant Army Attaché

Brasilia (1974-1977)

Brigadier General Clark M. Brintnall was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from West Point Academy in 1958. His career included service in Brazil, Panama, and Vietnam. Brigadier General Brintnall was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: You were in Brazil from when to when?

BRINTNALL: July of 1974 until July of 1977.

Q: So this was the first time you were there as a full fledged...

BRINTNALL: Full fledged assistant attaché.

Q: What did you see the role of a military attaché to be in a friendly country as?

BRINTNALL: First I would like to say that by then the Embassy had moved to Brasilia. I was in Rio de Janeiro sitting at the desk of General Walters overlooking Guanabara Bay on the seventh floor of the old American Embassy. My bosses, the Army Attaché and the Ambassador, were a long way away in Brasilia. It was a marvelous job in one of the most beautiful cities in the world. My job was threefold: to serve as the representative of the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army; to inform the U.S. Army what was happening militarily in the country; and to provide advice and assistance to the Ambassador, specifically in this case, the Consul General and his staff .

Q: What was the political situation in Brazil in 1974-1976 period?

BRINTNALL: Initially it was fairly quiet. But bubbling up was the Brazil-Federal Republic of Germany nuclear accord which came to a head with the U.S. Administration in 1977. During this same time, Human Rights became a major issue in Brazil-US bilateral relations. We got a preview of the nuclear issue through President-elect Carter's *Playboy* interview on the subject. Ambassador Crimmins could sense the storm brewing.

Q: Could you explain what this was about?

BRINTNALL: Brazil needed new sources of power. It already was embarked on the largest hydro-electric facility in the world at Itaipu on the Paraguayan border, but it need additional energy to grow. To meet this demand it signed an agreement with the FRG valued at up to \$10 billion. You may recall, this was the time of the long gasoline lines. There was a shortage of petroleum and Brazil opted for nuclear power.

Q: We are talking of gas lines -- of there being a shortage of gas.

BRINTNALL: Brazil wanted its own independent source of power. It didn't want to be dependent upon anybody else and it didn't produce enough petroleum itself to provide for this independence. It wanted the source of power that the major powers were adopting at that time. But nuclear controls were about to become a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, and the U.S. was concerned with safeguards.

Q: Safeguards meaning what?

BRINTNALL: What would be done with the spent fuel? Would it provide Brazil with the means to manufacture nuclear weapons? How would the U.S. be assured that this fuel would be properly stored? The U.S. came out strongly, and publicly against the accord. First, we appealed to Germany and were rebuffed. Next, we appealed to Brazil and were turned down publicly, and in no uncertain terms. I recall that Warren Christopher came to Brasilia at that time to appeal to the Brazilian Government....am I jumping ahead?

Q: Go on:

BRINTNALL: Mr. Christopher came to Brasilia to appeal to the Brazilians to give up this purchase from the Germans. He was very poorly received. As I recall it, he returned that same night after no agreement. The next thing that happened was an announcement by the Government of Brazil that our Military Accords signed in 1952 were no longer operative. They said that the U.S. had unilaterally altered the terms of the accords by requiring a human rights report on all countries receiving security assistance.

Let me say here that a number of factors came into play. First, they were furious over our public attacks on the nuclear accord with the FRG. Next, the Government of Brazil, particularly the military, was unhappy with the Carter Administration's high visibility stance on human rights. Finally, there was the size and composition of the U.S. military presence that had been bothering the military leadership for some time. But the abrogation of our military agreements came as quite a shock. The human rights reporting requirement and the nuclear issue provided the excuse to break the accords. I suspect that they had been looking for some time for a reason to do this.

Q: This happened in 1977. Were you there when it happened?

BRINTNALL: I was indeed.

Q: What did this mean? This must have been sort of like an earthquake in your specialty.

BRINTNALL: Oh, absolutely. It was a bombshell, a great surprise.

Q: Did this stop American presence there?

BRINTNALL: It certainly pared it down to a bare minimum, and in a hurry. But in reality, by that time there was simply no justification for the size and high rank in the Military Mission. Military sales were way down, as was military training.

Q: *Were there any other major developments during that period?*

BRINTNALL: I think we covered them. The nuclear accord, the breaking of the military relations and human rights.

Q: *Were you reporting on human rights...the things that you would see or was that beyond your scope?*

BRINTNALL: Reporting in the sense that when I talked to the Consul General and his team, yes. Anything I would learn, we would discuss. We would talk about human rights. We would talk about economic matters and we would talk about military matters.

Q: *What were the human rights concerns?*

BRINTNALL: Principally, torture.

Q: *Was this essentially a military function at that time? Like military police or would this be done by the equivalent of civilian police or who was doing the torture?*

BRINTNALL: I don't know how much torture actually went on. It took place and there were abuses, I would say principally by the intelligence services. Torture of even one person is intolerable, but the incidence of abuse in Brazil during this period was rather small, I believe when compared with many other countries. For example, it paled in comparison to what was happening in Cuba.

Q: *Did you find the intelligence services were sort of a service unto themselves as far as you were concerned? Could you talk to the people there, the ones who were dealing with the internal security?*

BRINTNALL: I could talk to them, though they tended to keep to themselves. They were a little bit different than the other members of the armed forces. They followed these things for years and years and they tended to be more concerned about what they viewed as the Communist threat, the terrorist threat. They saw themselves as the front line troops against the threat.

Q: *This tends to happen.*

BRINTNALL: And they lost some of their people too, since they were on the front lines. They took a stronger line than others because they were in the line of battle.

Q: *Nobody was asking you to go in and say, "Ease up" or anything like that?*

BRINTNALL: I didn't receive any specific instructions to go in and say, "Ease up". But I reflected the U.S. Government views. The Brazilians, military of all stripes, were quite aware of the United States concern over human rights.

Q: It wasn't incumbent upon you to go and preach to the intelligence people?

BRINTNALL: No. But I did bring up human rights regularly and I told them that, if nothing else, it is counter-productive. It is a dumb way to behave, because for every one you torture, you make ten enemies, because you antagonize his friends and his family. So, I carried the message of the general human rights concerns but I didn't go in with specifics about specific acts.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and we'll pick it up at the next time...I like to put at the end, where did you go next?

BRINTNALL: I went to the Army War College.

Q: This is 1977.

BRINTNALL: Yes. I went to the Army War College and graduated in 1978. Then went to the Office of Secretary Defense from 1978-83 and following that, back to Brazil.

RICHARD E. JOHNSON

Deputy Chief of Mission

Brasilia (1974-1978)

Richard E. Johnson was born and raised in Winnetka, Illinois. He attended Harvard University and served in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Johnson joined the State Department in 1947 and entered the Foreign Service in 1951. He served in Hong Kong, Canada, Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Brazil. Mr. Johnson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: Well, you left Belgrade and went back to Brasilia as DCM.

JOHNSON: In 1974 to 1978 I was the DCM in Brasilia.

Q: That was your last assignment?

JOHNSON: My last overseas assignment, yes.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at that time?

JOHNSON: John Crimmins, bless his heart.

Q: And how did you find him as a...?

JOHNSON: I really enjoyed that man. He was just a terrific guy. He saw his job in the broadest sense. He loved people; he liked to relate to them. He liked to get his junior officers in and chat with them about anything, from policy to the fortunes of the Patriots football team.

I remember one time when John had a telegram from the Department saying: "By the end of the day we want your views on a certain subject." I noticed that one of the junior officers had been in there for a long time, and they were just chatting. And I thought, "I have got to go in and interrupt them. They may be talking about some important aspect of our policies. but he has to write this telegram, and I am going to help him get to it." And so I went in, with some interruption, and as I came in, Crimmins was saying, "I just can't stand the chunky variety of peanut butter! I think the smooth thing is much, much better. Bill, you are all wrong!" He still found time to write a very perceptive telegram.

On another occasion, as I saw someone heading out of his huge, long office, Crimmins leapt up from his desk and shouted, "Run out for a pass." He was a great New England Patriots fan, and he had this football with autographs all over it that was on his window sill, and he grabbed it and flung it the length of his office. This JO made a leaping catch; otherwise it would have broken a picture.

Q: What were our issues with Brazil at this time?

JOHNSON: When I went back, the military government was still there, and there were still reports of tortures. Furthermore, the terrorist threat had subsided tremendously, so that there really was less reason for tight security. The military government was not quite so conservative and doctrinaire, but we still were critical of their human rights record. We were not outspoken about it; we didn't really confront them with it. But when somebody, like Kissinger, would come to Brasilia, he would tell the Brazilians, "We want to talk to you about human rights." He wouldn't say human rights in Brazil, and the Brazilians would then be able to say, "Oh, yes, let us talk about 'em -- human rights all over the world. We oppose apartheid; that is a terrible system." But human rights in Brazil remained a major issue in our relationship.

A very dramatic event occurred midway in my tour. A priest was imprisoned by the military in the Recife area because he was in touch with liberal organizations -- he may have been in touch with terrorist groups, I don't know; he was a defrocked young American priest. Our Consul General in Recife got word that this guy was in the 4th Army's prison and asked for permission to see him. It was denied for a long time. Finally, he was admitted and he went in and saw this guy, and it was clear why they hadn't wanted him to see him. He showed signs of having been really clobbered. Rich Brown, the Consul General, sent word on this down to Crimmins. Crimmins was this very forthright, active person; he didn't mince words, and he went rushing over to the Foreign Ministry and told them about this. And, of course, the Foreign Minister said, "Mr. Ambassador, you are accusing the Brazilian Army of torturing? Do you realize what this means?" We heard later that the Brazilians were on the verge of declaring him *PNG*. But this

heightened our determination to report objectively whatever there was, because we were certain that this poor guy had been blasted.

Q: What happened? Were we able to get him out?

JOHNSON: Yes, he was released a bit later. But what made the Foreign Ministry so angry at Crimmins was that he told the press about it right after he came away from the Foreign Minister. You could ask why would he do that -- this was a matter between us and the Brazilian authorities. And that was the position that the Brazilian authorities took. But the American press knew this guy had been imprisoned and that Rich Brown had been trying to see him, so the question about his condition was put to the Ambassador; he didn't volunteer it. He said, "Well, I don't know, I don't want to say anything, you know; I don't want to imply torture," and kind of waffled on it, it would have put him and the Department in a bad light later, because this guy went back to the States and was on the *Today* show, telling about everything that had been done to him. He praised the Ambassador for his forthright activity.

That brought our relations with Brazil really to an all- time low point. As did the evidence that led us to believe that they were trying to develop a full nuclear cycle capacity. We were very concerned about the dissemination of nuclear capacity around the world, and we didn't want the Brazilians to get it.

Q: It is still an issue, isn't it?

JOHNSON: It still is, to some extent, yes.

Another issue was this: what we suspected was an interest on the part of the Brazilians in developing a full nuclear capacity. Not necessarily a capacity to build a bomb; we didn't have any evidence that they were determined to do that.

ROBERT W. ZIMMERMANN

Bureau for Latin American Affairs

Washington, DC (1974-1979)

Robert W. Zimmermann was Born in Chicago, Illinois and was raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He received a degree in economics and political science from the University of Minnesota. He graduated from Harvard Business School in 1942. In 1947, after Serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Mr. Zimmermann entered the Foreign Service. He served in Washington, DC, Peru,

Thailand, The United Kingdom (England), and Spain. Mr. Zimmermann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: Then you came back in 1974 to serve in ARA for five years.

ZIMMERMANN: That is right. I really didn't have an assignment when I came back. I had interviews with the Inspection Corps, with Ken Young and also with Bill Bowdler in ARA. Bill said, "We want you to take over Brazilian affairs. You have Portuguese and we think it will be great." It looked pretty good to me; I didn't see anything else on the horizon at that point. I had not ever been in Brazil before, and I had to do my homework fast. There was an excellent Ambassador at the other end, John Crimmins. It was a great assignment and I really enjoyed it. There were many problems and it was a very busy time.

It became even busier when the office became responsible for all East Coast Affairs including Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. We were having problems over nuclear facilities in Brazil and the military agreements were going a little sour because of friction on nuclear matters. They also wanted a lot more military aid than we were prepared to give them at that point. Also, the "dirty war" was going on in Argentina and Uruguay.

Q: The "dirty war" being?

ZIMMERMANN: The "dirty war" was referred to the atrocities committed by both the military government and the opposition. There were hidden massacres and burials at night that nobody knew about. People were abducted and never heard from again. People were dropped out of planes over the river. It was a very dirty war.

At one point Robert Hill was Ambassador. I stayed with him usually when I went to Buenos Aires. I remember riding with him with four lead cars and two behind. It was that bad in terms of threats against Americans who were accused of being too sympathetic with the "opposition".

It was a very dirty problem. Obviously the human rights organizations here were very much up in the air, and, of course, we were too. The Carter administration properly placed great emphasis on human rights. There was great pressure from the White House on these things.

Q: Basically you had military governments in all three countries.

ZIMMERMANN: That is true, and Stroessner had been in Paraguay since 1955.

Q: And Uruguay had a military government?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes.

Q: I think it is very interesting to look at the impact of the human rights policy during Carter on the Foreign Service and its almost visceral reaction about how this sort of upsets all sorts of

other things. I think we have learned to live with it. But this was the beginning. Did you and your colleagues have trouble adjusting to this major emphasis on something... ?

ZIMMERMANN: I don't think any of us held any objection to this being a real goal in our foreign policy. I think what gave many of us problems was that it became almost the only goal in some ways. It certainly became a predominant goal and other means of achieving ends were sort of left in limbo.

Q: Did you find yourself going head-to-head with Pat Derian, head of the Human Rights office, or others in her office?

ZIMMERMANN: No, you didn't go head-to-head with Pat Derian. Our Assistant Secretary was very careful on this score. We followed his lead. Fred Rondon, who was my Argentine Desk officer and later my deputy, had the most contact with Pat Derian. In fact he accompanied her on a trip down to Argentina. He was a good man for it and was bilingual in Spanish and could help out a great deal with Pat. He also had good rapport with her, I think, given the circumstances. We took our lead from the Assistant Secretary really on how to play this.

Q: How did this translate with relations? Was it one of these things where we would go up and say you have to be more human rights-ish and then go on our way and nothing would happen but we had made our bid?

ZIMMERMANN: My opinion is that our representations seldom led anywhere in Uruguay or Argentina -- certainly not in Argentina. In Argentina, one feels half out of the real world. There is a feeling of being isolated from world events. Certainly, they, in their own activities, felt that; they didn't give a damn about opinion elsewhere.

Q: They can live off their own resources.

ZIMMERMANN: Exactly. We tried hard. I mean the violations were so egregious that it wasn't hard to be in support of human rights -- believe me. The violations were incredible, including by the Tupamaros in Uruguay. We may have had a slightly restraining role in Uruguay in some cases, but not a great success.

Q: How about with Brazil and human rights?

ZIMMERMANN: Human rights was a factor in Brazil -- the death squads and so forth. But violations had tapered off as an issue in some way versus what it had been earlier, and certainly Brazil in this respect was way over-shadowed by Uruguay and Argentina. But there were still problems. We got wind of violations less than we did in Argentina. Information came from interviews with people who had been released from prison some time later. Also, we had other fish to fry in Brazil, including the nuclear issue, because they were by far the most advanced in nuclear research, etc., and were dickering with the Germans.

Q: What was the issue on the nuclear side that got us so involved?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, the issue was basically what their ultimate intentions were. We discouraged the production of enriched uranium, which we tried to keep away from most countries. Were their goals just nuclear power and research or were they intent on developing military uses? We had a similar problem with the Argentines. We were very concerned. They would not let us see their reactors except from a distance. But the issue didn't come up as sharply as it did in Brazil because Brazil was dicker with German firms for plutonium enrichment equipment and processes. In the end, the German processes did not prove very successful as I remember. I think they were systems that had not really been proved in themselves and as far as I know, did not prove to be very useful to the Brazilians either. It cost a lot of money and time and plus bad relations for a while.

Q: Brazil, unlike most of the other Latin American countries, hasn't really fought any wars with anybody for a long time. Why would it want a bomb?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, Brazil sent troops to fight with us in World War II and were the only Latin Americans that did.

Q: Yes, and they fought the Italian campaign. But you don't have a feeling that the Brazilians are after slices of territory. What would they use a bomb for?

ZIMMERMANN: Argentina. This was the big rival on the continent and they were aware that the Argentines were also pursuing nuclear development.

Q: Was it the feeling that the Argentines are messing around with nuclear things so we better have one ourselves?

ZIMMERMANN: That was the feeling on both sides, absolutely.

DAVID E. SIMCOX

Political Counselor

Brasilia (1975-1977)

David E. Simcox was born on November 25, 1932 in Frankfort, Kentucky. He received his BA from the University of Kentucky in 1956. He joined the Foreign Service in 1956 and has served in many countries throughout his career including Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Ghana, Spain, Brazil, and El Salvador. Mr. Simcox was interviewed by Kristin Hamblin on August 26, 1993.

Q: From Madrid you returned to Latin American affairs as Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs in Brasilia until October, 1977. What was our policy in dealing with Brazil at that time?

SIMCOX: There's another country that had a military government for a number of years. It was just embarking on the process of questioning how much longer a military government should go on and what should lie beyond it. It was a mixed government. The military generally ran things, but they at least kept the trappings of a Congress, which was allowed to make policy on less important matters in which the military did not feel any strong interest.

Once again, our most troublesome concern was in the area of human rights. That was the area where the greatest tension was. Passionate feelings arose over differences between the Carter administration, on the one hand, and the Brazilians, on the other, regarding human rights standards, because there had been torture in Brazil. There was, indeed, a lot of torture. There always has been torture in Brazil. But when torture began to reach the upper middle class and was administered for political reasons, it sounded alarm bells in the western world, whereas the kind of torture which had been going on for centuries, against the working class and the farmers, never really was much a matter for concern.

There was a lot of tension there. I recall that Brazil broke off its military relationship with the U. S. This happened in 1976, because of what the Brazilian authorities regarded as a "humiliating" human rights report by the Department of State on the situation in Brazil.

Q: They actually said that the Brazilians were improving, didn't they? We had pretty close relations with Brazil. The Brazilian authorities were antagonized, also, by our opposing a deal which they had reached with Germany in connection with nuclear power plants.

SIMCOX: Yes. And there were a lot of trade tensions between the United States and Brazil because Brazil was becoming a major exporter of agricultural commodities, invading our traditional markets. So we were using a lot of the machinery of our trade processes, like countervailing duties and anti-dumping laws, to try to block their exports. The Brazilian authorities saw all of this as one big ruse to cut down on Brazilian exports, a form of massive protectionism for which there was no justification.

But the nuclear issue--it's interesting to look back now. The Germans and Brazilians about 1977 announced an agreement to build a facility capable of producing highly enriched uranium that would have made it possible for Brazil to build nuclear bombs. I was there when then Deputy Secretary of State Christopher came to Brazil to reason with the government and to argue with the Brazilians personally, in an effort to persuade them to give up this idea. Throughout the two years that I was there we kept hearing assurances from our Brazilian colleagues in the Foreign Ministry and in the military, "Don't worry, even though this gives us the capability to build an

explodable nuclear device. We want it for peaceful uses, so you needn't worry about any of these things." Only after a number of years--I think it was in the last three or four years--has the press revealed that when a civilian government came into power in Brazil under President Collor. The man who was recently thrown out. They found that, in fact, the Brazilian Armed Forces had constructed a nuclear testing site in the Amazon capable of testing some sort of explodable, nuclear device.

Q: This happened at the same time when, I think, Argentina also wanted to build--I don't know whether they were trying to build a nuclear device. The Argentines were saying, well, we're not doing that. We respect the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and they were saying that we are a sovereign nation and no one can tell us what to do.

SIMCOX: Yes.

Q: Since you were there toward the end of the Ford administration and the very beginning of the Carter administration, how did you see our relationship with Brazil change? I think that when Secretary of State Kissinger visited Brazil, at some point he made a comment that Brazil was a leading Latin American country or some such thing as that. When President Carter came into office, a high U. S. official made a comment in a different South American country that we're not going to look at Brazil in the same light. Did that sort of thing cause diplomatic problems?

SIMCOX: I vaguely remember that. It was a short-lived sort of thing. It was one of those things that Foreign Service Officers dread, where your whole approach to a government has to change overnight on some key issue. In effect, you have to swallow your words or act as if the things you said in the past, under one administration, were never said, or certain positions were never taken. That's one of the things that really tests the mettle of a Foreign Service Officer. During my career I never felt really comfortable with that sort of thing. Administrations change, it is true, and they have different ideas. Unfortunately, I can't change that quickly.

Kissinger was never warm to the idea of human rights as a major foreign policy issue. He only, and reluctantly, got into it, due to prodding from Congress. When President Carter entered office, human rights were, of course, a major plank in his platform. He had people around him who attached the utmost importance to this issue. They were in key positions, like Andrew Young, who, you may recall, ran for governor of Georgia not too long ago.

We had taken a strong line with the Brazilians on their role in Angola, when the FPLN [People's National Liberation Front] was recognized as the government in Angola. The United States objected, and we put some pressure on Brazil not to recognize the FPLN but rather to wait until a consensus government emerged among the different, warring groups. But the Brazilians were eager to play a role in Africa. They felt some kinship with the FPLN personalities. The FPLN

leaders were mestizos [of mixed white and black ancestry], and, of course, the same language was spoken in Brazil and Angola.

Brazil was very ambitious in its African policy in those days. I don't know how they are now. During the Ford administration we gave them all sorts of reasons why [recognition and support of the FPLN] was a bad idea which would have dire consequences; the Cubans in Angola would be a force for disruption. And then the Carter administration came into office. He had people on his payroll who said just the opposite. Andrew Young made a statement that the Cubans in Angola are a force for stability [laughter]. So we had a situation where the Brazilians in the Foreign Ministry were quoting our own officials back to us. Their positions were based on what was being said back in Washington. Of course, we weren't getting any guidance--there was a lot of confusion in the Carter administration as to who spoke for what--who, what, and why. Cyrus Vance was Secretary of State, but he didn't assert a very strong hand, and some personalities like Carl McCall, Andrew Young, and Pat Derian, Hodding Carter's former wife, were running around, taking human rights to the brink, really. They didn't really represent the consensus on policy in the State Department. We somehow had to deal with them abroad, without instructions.

JAMES F. MACK

Political/Labor Officer

Sao Paulo (1975-1977)

Ambassador Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin American where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: When did you leave Costa Rica?

MACK: I left in mid '75, took four or five months of Portuguese language training and at the end of the year went to Sao Paulo.

Q: Now Sao Paulo, of course is a huge city.

MACK: Indeed and the industrial center of Brazil. This was during the military government period. At that point, Gen. Geisel was President. He proved to be a more open-minded leader than some had expected. The Labor movement was ostensibly under government control. But

believe me, underneath their control a lot of things were going on. And in any event, basically my job was to maintain relations with the Sao Paulo labor movement, which I did. I spent a lot of time with the labor union leaders and sent a few off to study at the AIL-CIO's "George Meany Institute" outside Washington, etc. I also reported on how the government kept union leaders under control. They had systems for doing this. I won't bore you, but it was very interesting. One of my union contacts was a guy named Ignacio "Lula" da Silva, now president of Brazil.

Q: Oh Yeah!

MACK: While I was in Sao Paulo, Lula had become head of the Metallurgical Workers Union that covered the three satellite cities around Sao Paulo where Brazil's automobile and truck manufacturers were located. Lula's union was probably the strongest and richest in Brazil. We became really pretty good friends. I liked him a lot. I recognized that his union had some strong leftist influence particularly among the lawyers who at that time were often the powers behind the throne of Brazilian unions. And some were members of the Communist Party of Brazil. But Lula was a bright young guy, honest and forward looking. He also was fairly open minded, though obviously being schooled by some of the advisors that I just spoke to you about. Lula and his wife were guests in our home. I also invited Lula to attend the George Meany Institute for a month's training. He had never been out of Brazil and was very excited to have this opportunity. He really could not wait to do this. But a couple of weeks before he was to leave for the US, he phoned me and said, "Jim, I am sorry I just can't make the trip; I have other commitments". At that point it was clear to me his advisors had told him not to go the United States. Perfectly clear.

Q: It sounds like these advisors were sort of – they represent the left wing intellectuals hanging around. Not really workers but --

MACK: Right, they were labor lawyers. But in Brazil, union leaders typically had lawyers to advise them, to write speeches for them etc.

Q: The lawyers were advisors.

MACK: Yes. So anyway Lula did not go and the rest is history. He became a very successful Labor Leader and then ran for President, I guess twice before winning his third time. And he is turning out to be a very, very attractive pragmatic leader of the left. The US has developed a good relationship with him despite the ideological differences; he has shown his pragmatic side, which was pretty obvious even way back then.

Q: There is a certain amount of concern when he became President?

MACK: Yes there was.

Q: Which way is this guy going to go? Is he going to be another, not necessarily a Castro but somebody who is going to dismantle the whole apparatus?

MACK: But he turned out not to be that way at all. Though he is socially very progressive. And he is intent on righting some of the social wrongs in Brazil. And definitely wants to improve the lives of the workers. He also recognized that he couldn't do that by destroying the economy. He needed the support from the industrialists and foreign investors to keep the economy moving. He is acting in a very, very responsible way.

Q: Was the Brazilian Labor Movement a tough bunch. Did they use muscle for this or that. I thinking about the teamsters or something like that?

MACK: It could well have been the case with regards to the dockworkers in Santos, Sao Paulo's port city. But up in San Paulo I don't recall that was a problem. Keep in mind the military put a lid on a lot of overt labor organization activities. I mean the unions had quite good physical infrastructure - buildings etc. However, their trying to be militant defenders of Labor Rights was another issue. Everything was very, very controlled and orchestrated by the Government.

Q: Now Labor Officers during the Carter Administration were often also Human Rights Officers. This is was because Political Officers did not want to mess around with their Human Rights. As a labor officer in Sao Paulo did you get involved with Human Rights at all?

MACK: Well, I don't recall being directly involved in Human Rights issues. There were instances of people being arrested. Not frequently, but Tony Freeman, the head of the political section, would have followed that issue, as I have since, but not at that time.

Q: What was your impression of the Sao Paulo Labor Unions you were dealing with? Were they doing well by their people? Sometimes Union Leaders do well by themselves and not as much for the rank and files.

MACK: I told you the military government had put a lid on the labor movement. The structure was all there. The physical structure was definitely there. The Government saw to it that the unions had money and could provide certain kinds of services for their members. Union leaders who played the game could live comfortably. But I don't remember their living in absolute luxury.

Q: You left there, when in '70?

MACK: '77.

GREG THIELMANN

Consular Officer/Staff Assistant

Brasilia (1977-1979)

Mr. Thielmann was born and raised in Iowa and was educated at Grinnell College and Princeton University. A specialist in Political-Military Affairs, he held a number of positions dealing with such matters as Strategic Proliferation, Arms Control and Missile Programs. He also served abroad at several posts in the capacity of Political Officer and Consular Officer. His last position was Chief, Office of Analysis for Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs in State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Mr. Thielmann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004

Q: Well, then you were assigned to Brazil, Brasília. You were there from nineteen-when to when?

THIELMANN: This would've been 1977 to '79. Ended up being a little short of two years because of the language requirement.

Q: What, talk about Brasília at the time, what was it like?

THIELMANN: I can make some comparisons because I served there again from 1995 to 1998. Brasília at the time even though the city had been in existence at that point I guess nearly twenty years. The city was basically built in three years, a city of a million people. When I arrived there, there was still a lot of the planned city that was unbuilt. I mean, you had an architectural design that was sort of in the shape of a bird or a plane or whatever. One of the wings had clearly not yet been filled out. Even the older wings and the superblocks as they were called still had a lot of red earth with just sort of scrub on it rather than manicured grass, that I found during my later tour. There was a much more powerful sense of isolation there than later also. Brasília being deep inland, 900 miles from the coast, a two-day drive to Rio, a day drive to Belo Horizonte, really quite a long way from any competing center and really surrounded by not quite empty savanna but very sparsely populated savanna that for the most part looked like there was no livestock, no cultivation, nothing. So added to that was the fact that the electronic age hadn't arrived. It was clearly where you get island fever and, in fact the post at the time had an isolation differential in acknowledgement of that situation. Brasília has always and continues to be a unique Brazilian city because so many of the things that one associates with other Brazilian cities don't take place there. You have much less density in terms of the population. The privileged and the wealthy want to live right in the heart of the city, and the suburbs are for poor people. Brasília was almost on the American model. The nice apartments in the city were where Brazilians, I think, instinctively wanted to be. It turned out that they were a lot of developments like American suburbs on the other side of the lake, which increasingly would attract people. There everyone could have their own swimming pool and their own yard and a relatively short

drive to work, and it took on an American city kind of flavor, much more than one would associate with Brasília.

Q: I realize you were at the bottom of the feed line, but where, what, how were relations with Brazil at that time in '77 to '79?

THIELMANN: Relations were bad. I'm not sure this would be described as the low point in the relationship. But it was at least a close competitor for whatever the low point was. The ambassador was named Crimmins.

Q: John Hugh Crimmins?

THIELMANN: I was lowly enough that he was just Ambassador Crimmins to me. But my understanding was that he had nearly been PNGed shortly before I arrived. We did not have a long overlap. It was I think just a few months after my arrival that he left. But he had a very serious dustup with the Brazilian government, actually over the fate of a particular American missionary who had been sort of kidnapped by Brazilian security officials and was probably on his way to being killed. Crimmins was very persistent in asking the Brazilian authorities who first said they had no information. But eventually his persistence resulted in his release, and his persistence and some of the comments he made about the Brazilian government were not appreciated by them. This was during a period when Brazil was still under a military dictatorship.

Added to that was the fact that in 1977 with the Carter administration, there was much more of a focus on human rights and nonproliferation in U.S. policy. That was like a one-two punch to the bilateral relationship with this particular military dictatorship because Brazil had a missile program and a nuclear weapons program at the time. It had an oppressive military government albeit less so than Argentina and Chile. So, as the Brazilians were very quick to notice, Vice President Mondale's first international trip was to Germany. One of the most important items on his agenda was to talk the Germans out of selling nuclear reactor technology to the Brazilians because of our concern about how it could be used. Then with Carter's very visible pro-human rights profile, the Brazilians, I think appropriately, saw themselves as one of the targets of his policies. With those two overwhelming burdens on the bilateral relationship, I thought it was basically a good thing, an appropriate thing for the U.S. I saw Brazilian relations with the U.S. in some respects as in kind of a downward tailspin at the time I arrived and probably during much of my tour. I remember things like the newly appointed head of human rights at the State Department Pat Derian going to Brazil and seeing rolling eyes everywhere about how are we going to seat people at a meeting or at a dinner for this guest. It was like a pariah. No, it was a combination of this sort of Latin American machismo about what's a woman doing in a foreign affairs position. Then charged with the subject the Brazilians didn't want to talk about at all. To me that was kind of one of the most dramatic memories about how difficult U.S.-Brazilian relations were.

Then on the nuclear front in fact on both of these issues, I think the U.S. was on the side of history. During my second tour there it was very dramatic to see for example former President Jimmy Carter coming back to Brasília, sitting around a table with NGOs and having the Brazilians recall how some of them were in prison at the time and how important for them and their cause it was to have the American president taking this position. So we were definitely benefiting in the 1990s from the positions the U.S. had at the time. My second tour in Brazil was in one of the best possible periods of the U.S.-Brazilian relationship. So it's really going from the nadir to the peaks to look at those two tours.

Q: I'll come back to some other things. But while we're on this subject, did you find that the "chief" -- I use the word in quotes because you were it of the consular section, you did sit in the country team. Did you sense almost resistance in particularly the human rights policy and all? I mean saying well, it's all very well, but we've got other things to do, and this is screwing up our way of getting this deal or that deal or something like that.

THIELMANN: I think it was early enough in the introduction or let's say raising the profile of human rights issues that I had the impression as a young officer that it was almost instinctive by career officers saying human rights is kind of unseemly to bring into conversations here. It's unpleasant. It will have immediately negative consequences, and my own feeling is that a lot of the career foreign service officers were still in a state of shock about engaging in a different way of doing business. What I would say sympathetically to them is, of course they had an acute appreciation of how a concern about human rights can very easily turn into an arrogant position of "we are better than you," we know how you should behave. This is particularly the case when policies are controlled by political types who maybe don't have a very sophisticated view of the world. I'm not necessarily putting Carter in that position, but we've certainly seen a number of others in that position. I think it didn't take the Foreign Service long -- I would really date it from Carter -- to see the advantages of having a human rights report and seeing the long term advantages of being perceived by populations, even if not by governments, as being on the side of human rights. So I saw a lot of evidence of resistance when I entered the Foreign Service, but within a relatively short period of time, I think even some of those veteran officers changed their own views about how a properly administered concern about human rights could work.

TERRELL E. ARNOLD

Consul General

Sao Paulo (1978-1980)

Terrell Arnold was born and raised in West Virginia. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1943 and served in the World War II and Korean War. He has attended Columbia University, San Jose State College, and Stanford University. Arnold entered the Foreign Service in 1959 and has held positions in the U.S., Egypt, India Sri Lanka, Philippines, and Brazil. Arnold was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 9, 2000.

Q: Where did you go in '78?

ARNOLD: In '78 we went to Sao Paulo.

Q: I think this might be a good place to stop, because we want to spend some time on Sao Paulo.

ARNOLD: Yes, we do. It was a fascinating experience, fascinating time.

Q: It's a very important post. It's really equivalent to an embassy.

ARNOLD: It drove me sufficiently, I must say, and it was bigger than most embassies I had inspected in Africa.

Q: We'll pick it up when you go to Sao Paulo from '78 to when?

ARNOLD: '78 to '80.

Q: Good, we'll pick it up then.

This is January 10, 2001. Terry, we're in Sao Paulo, 1978. How did you get the job? It's the equivalent to an embassy. I mean it's considered sort of like Hong Kong and a few other places that are sort of really major. How did you get the job?

ARNOLD: I got the job for two reasons. One, it was timely for me to undertake something like that. I was just emerging from the Office of the Inspector General as a senior inspector. I had looked at 24 different posts at that point including some of the biggest, and among them Brazil. I had worked for Ambassador Robert Sayre, who was then the Inspector General, and had done all of my inspection work for him, and he was pleased with my work. So when I came up for assignment, he was about to go to Brazil as Ambassador, and he asked me to be his CG in Sao Paulo. That's how it worked.

Q: I can't remember. Had you served in Brazil before?

ARNOLD: No, I hadn't served anywhere in Latin America before.

Q: What was the situation vis-a-vis the United States with Brazil in particular, and then we'll come down to Sao Paulo, in 1978?

ARNOLD: It was kind of friendly, arm's length situation. We were not having any problems in Brazil, but as an illustration of an arm's length situation, there had been an historic close relationship between the National War College in the United States and the Escola Superior in Brazil, but they weren't talking to each other at that stage. Our military people were tolerated but not embraced, as it were. I had no difficulty as Consul General getting around to see anybody I wanted to see, including the military people. But Brazil was still emerging from a period of autocratic and repressive rule, and changes were coming but they were not quite finished yet.

Q: Who was the President at the time, Kubichek? Well now, he was an elected President?

ARNOLD: He was an elected president but still part of an old regime. The role of the military was still very strong. I would say the three most powerful people in Sao Paulo in the overall political environment I was associated with at that time were the Governor of the State of Sao Paulo, who was a conservative ally of the presidency, a Palestinian really a Lebanese by the name of Paulo Malouf. And the second most powerful person there - and maybe the first, I don't know, I never had it put to a test in any way - was the Commander of the 2nd Army. The third was Cardinal Paulo Evarista Arns of the Catholic Church. I have to say those were the three poles, I think, in that region at the time.

Q: What were the concerns of the business community in the Carter Administration?

ARNOLD: That the Carter Administration policies on such things as human rights would interfere with receptivity to our business activity in that country. And there was some illogic in their concern, but, you know, we had a very well established business community in Brazil. They had been there many years, and the interrelationships between the North American and South American business people, not merely Brazilians but from all over the region, those relationships were well established. That was not as easy, therefore, to disturb as some business people might have expected. But I was always present in the American Chamber monthly meetings, and I never took a lot of punishment for anything. I was often asked for views on various things, but I didn't get knocked around the way I had, for example, in Manila as Economic Commercial Counselor.

Q: The Carter Administration with human rights, you might say he set a slightly higher moral tone in our policy which included - maybe in started before then - of not making it a prosecutable offense to pay illicit fees, in other words, to submit to corruption and all that.

ARNOLD: That all really happened before the Carter Administration, although the passage of the legislation on it I can't place exactly in that picture, but that concern in American policy gave me troubles in Manila, a lot of troubles in Manila.

Q: But it had already worked its way through. Was corruption a problem particularly for American business in Brazil?

ARNOLD: Not as big a problem as I saw in the Philippines. Very difficult situation there because of - well, part of it was due to the narrowness of the political pyramid at the top in Manila versus the very sprawling operational policy and management environment in Brazil. Things are scattered over an enormous territory, and regional managers had power. They had a great deal of power. Governors had power. It's just a different situation.

Q: How about the environment? The Amazon was out of your territory, or was it?

ARNOLD: It was out of my territory. The western region over toward the Bolivia was part of my territory. Rio Grande de Sul was out of my territory. My consular district ran all the way over to Paraguay and Bolivia, so I had an interesting landscape.

FREDERICK A. BECKER

Political Officer/Staff Assistant

Brasilia (1978-1980)

Brazil Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1980-1981)

Frederick A. Becker was born in Missouri. He graduated from Washington College in St. Louis, and Berkeley and Claremont Graduate Schools. After entering the Foreign Service in 1975, his postings abroad included Bucharest, Brasilia, Quito, Panama City, and Managua. He was interviewed in 2004 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Today is the day after Thanksgiving, November 26th, 2004. Rick, just to get this, you were in Brazil from '78 to when?

BECKER: '80.

Q: '80. Let's talk first, what was the situation in Brazil, sort of economically because that's always very important and politically at that time.

BECKER: We had --and this was drilled into us at every turn -- a very high Carter administration priority on human rights and democratic development. Brazil under the military dictatorship was one of several southern cone countries so inflicted, was very much a part of our calculations and

our concern as embassy officers. That said, Brazil's problem with the domestic democratic forces, the "disappeared" and the victims of the dirty war was not as serious as in some of the other countries in that area.

Q: Particularly Argentina.

BECKER: Argentina and Uruguay, particularly. It was much worse there, if measured by the body count, although Brazil went through a period of rather severe repression of political dissent in the early years of the dictatorship. By the time I arrived in '78, much of that police state repression had eased considerably. The Brazilian generals had made it very clear that they were not going to rule alone and that they always intended to turn the reins back to civilians at some point in time. Indeed, they left most of the economy in the hands of civilian technocrats, having probably learned the historical lesson that managing economies over time goes very badly under the best of circumstances. Indeed, they did not want to be tarred with the full weight of whatever was happening in Brazil, including an historic roller coaster of economic booms, inflationary spirals and bouts of calm and instability. At the time I arrived, Brazil was going through one of its hyperinflation phases and there was a lot of pressure on the central bank and the finance ministry to stabilize the economy. The Americans, paid in dollars, were pretty well shielded. Brazil had a crawling peg monetary policy whereby there were a dozen or more mini-devaluations against the dollar during the course of the year, so the 100 plus percent inflation was hardly felt by those of us who earned dollars. I understand the situation in Argentina at roughly the same time was much worse partly because the State Department bureaucracy could never keep up with severe hyperinflation. There was always a lag time between price hikes and USG salary adjustments, and the Argentine government did not have a monetary adjustment policy. Brazil also had a serious problem of uneven economic development, between social classes and between regions. There was the rich, self-sufficient and productive "European" part of the country in the South, and then there was the impoverished Northeast and the Amazon basin, which seemed to be impervious to most of the development incentives and the income and resource redistribution policies of the government.

The capital Brasilia, a new city, was only partly finished by the time we arrived in 1978, but it was already taking shape in terms of the class structure that Brazil reflected. There was a significant middle class, largely civil servant population in Brasilia, fairly affluent, mostly bureaucrats. A lot of mid-level bureaucrats flew home on the weekends, home being Sao Paulo or Rio. Airfares were not cheap. Satellite cities were emerging on the periphery of Brasilia, where working class and the poor lived and basically fed off of or survived on the basis of their dependence on the people in the capital.

Q: Well, then.

BECKER: The main issues we had with Brazil, in addition to human rights standards, revolved around the lack of free speech, assembly, and the right to choose one's own government. There

was also a serious issue of Brazil's nuclear development. Brazil was in competition with Argentina. Both were developing ostensibly peaceful nuclear capabilities. They were not parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco or the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and it was apparent from all the information we had that there was some spillover from their energy programs into potential weapons development. So we were very much intent on reining in Brazil's nuclear ambitions. But Brazil was on the verge of being a great power and was not about to be told by the United States or anybody else how to order its national policies.

Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there?

BECKER: Crimmins left before I arrived, as I indicated earlier, and there was no ambassador in Brasilia when I arrived. A couple of months later Robert Sayre arrived as ambassador. He had been ambassador to Uruguay and to Panama previously so he was an experienced chief of mission. If I can speak frankly, I found him -- compared with my first ambassador -- not at all equipped to handle the needs, the demands, and the requirements of directing a large full service multi-post mission, because it was not only the embassy in Brasilia but also two super-consulates general in Rio and Sao Paulo. There were also consular outposts in Salvador da Bahia and Recife on the northern coast, a public affairs office in Belo Horizonte, a major inland industrial center, and a consulate in Porto Alegre in the far south.

Q: Sometimes when you have an ambassador who does sort of the ambassadorial thing and he has a DCM who is in charge of managing it. Did you have such a DCM?

BECKER: We had a first rate DCM. His name was George High and he did have a fairly clear division of labor with the ambassador. My sense, however, was that the DCM carried much of the load both inside and outside the mission. Ambassador Sayre was not a vigorous, outgoing representative of U.S. policy. He preferred to speak Spanish despite the fact that it offended many Brazilians, and indeed on a personal level he was almost painfully shy in dealing with his staff. I learned most of this first-hand in my second year at post when I became his staff assistant -- against my will, by the way.

Q: Well, we'll come to that, but let's talk about the first part when you were dealing with human rights and church relationships and also what there was of the legislature. The human rights, what were the problems, how were we dealing with them?

BECKER: Issues as I recall centered on freedom of expression, whether media expression or individual expression. The capital, Brasilia, was somewhat isolated and in many ways very artificial. Most of the political activity and most of the social concerns were in the rest of the country. I had the opportunity to do a fair amount of traveling to Sao Paulo and Rio and to the Northeast to consult with our consulates and to interview human rights activists. I found that the church-state relationship proved to be the most interesting element in my portfolio. The Catholic Church leadership -- the Episcopal Council -- was seated in Brasilia and met periodically. The cardinals and archbishops represented constituencies throughout the country. I got to know many

senior church officials. One of the most colorful was Dom Helder Camara, the Bishop of Recife, also known as the “red bishop.” Every Catholic country seems to have one.

Q: Oh, yes.

BECKER: The Brazilian church was motivated by liberation theology in a way that most other churches in Latin America had not been.

Q: Explain liberation theology.

BECKER: Liberation theology was an outgrowth of -- and this is coming from a Jewish boy who is trying to learn the dynamics of how the Catholic Church thinks and operates -- the Vatican II conference in the early '60s, which commanded the church and its representatives to become much more of a popular church, to become much more attuned to the needs of communities and people, and to call upon the church hierarchy to live the faith alongside the faithful at a most basic level. Latin gave way to national languages in the mass. Parishes became centers for social activism, often encouraged by and with active participation by the parish priests. This went all the way up. A couple of Brazil's cardinals, including the very influential Cardinal of Sao Paulo, Cardinal Paulo Arns, spelled “A-R-N-S,” was very much identified with liberation theology and the more progressive views of the church and its role in society. The church's activism and the struggle for human rights and democracy were closely intertwined. It was particularly interesting to follow church affairs with this in mind. The church was somewhat more shielded than other reform-minded sectors from the full weight of the military dictatorship, simply by its prominence, influence and tradition of autonomy. However, the Brazilian church was quite divided over liberation theology, as was the entire Catholic Church at that time. So there were many conservative cardinals and bishops that tended to act as a counterweight to this progressive trend.

It appeared to me that the government was also ambivalent about what to do about the church's left-leaning, anti-military tendencies. The ambivalence probably translated into a degree of tolerance that was not intended, but the church operated with a great deal of freedom. I don't recall a lot of active repression. This was well into the second decade of the military dictatorship. The dictatorship installed in '64 was already 15 years old, and the dictatorship and its civilian allies were already starting to get a little tired of the responsibilities of government and were talking about handing over the reins of power to civilian authorities. It was during this period that the generals actually set a date, 1985, when they would hand authority back to an elected government. Although Brazil did have presidential elections, in fact the designated general or the general in charge passed the baton to another general. There was a presidential election and the inauguration of a new president in '79 while I was there.

Q: How did we treat that?

BECKER: We sent a fairly high level delegation, though it might have been even higher if our relations with Brazil had been more cordial during the Carter presidency. It was headed by Joan

Mondale, the wife of the Vice President, and it included several cabinet members, including our secretary of labor. It was shortly before this event that chance fell to me to pick up the labor affairs portfolio. We had a labor attaché at our consulate in Sao Paulo, but the assistant labor attaché position in Brasilia had been assigned to an officer who had no love for it, no interest in it and found the work rather demeaning. He was desperately trying to get back to his consular specialty and so ignored the responsibilities to which he had been assigned. The DCM came to me one day and said, "There are five or six major labor confederations headquartered in Brasilia. They represent different points of view or a different slice of the labor movement – the labor aristocracy if you will -- whereas our labor attaché in Sao Paulo is an experienced man who has got his feet on the ground dealing with local trade union leaders, including a certain metal workers' union leader by the name of Lula."

Q: Well, did you find, I mean you weren't there overly long, but was there a major change or did you see a real change in our approach to Brazil when the Reagan group came in?

BECKER: No, I didn't. The Reagan administration came in with the idea that we could always extract more from Brazil on the nuclear issue than we were getting under the Democrats, and that our human rights concerns were overblown and needed to be removed from the negotiating table. But the Republican administration was not prepared to hit Brazil as hard as they said they would during the campaign. They would not go to the wall on Brazil's nuclear development because they were looking at bigger strategic issues. They very much wanted Brazil to play a more constructive role in international economic and political fora, so they pushed aside our hard differences despite their previous opposition to Carter administration policies. They were not prepared to do it any better.

ROBERT M. SAYRE

Ambassador

Brazil (1978-1981)

Ambassador Robert M. Sayre became interested in the U.S. Foreign Service after serving for four years in the U.S. Army during World War II. He began his career at the State Department in 1949. Ambassador Sayre held positions in Peru and Cuba, and ambassadorships to Uruguay, Panama, and Brazil. He was interviewed in 1995 by Thomas Dunnigan.

Q: Well, after your experience as Inspector General, you were sent to Brazil in 1978 as Ambassador. What was the situation like when you arrived there? Did we have major problems with Brazil at that time?

SAYRE: It was difficult for me to evaluate how bad they were. Because my experience up to that time working in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs and with Brazil generally, the relations with Brazil couldn't have been better. We were real partners. But when I went to Brazil in 1978, I think the relations with Brazil were the worst they had ever been. It all stemmed from the human rights policy of the United States. There had been some human rights abuses in Brazil, but the President of Brazil had dealt with it. He had removed a four-star general who didn't deal with the problem. And when his Minister of the Army objected to him removing the four-star general, he removed the Minister of the Army. The United States continued to accuse Brazil of human rights abuses. So we had a real problem on that. There was a problem on nuclear matters because we were not supplying Brazil with what we had agreed to in terms of helping Westinghouse build a nuclear energy plant and so on. The Brazilians went to the Germans to get the help because we said we couldn't help them. The Germans entered into about a thirty billion dollar agreement with Brazil and they were going to build four more plants. Without telling the Brazilians, Vice President Mondale, after he was elected, went over to Germany and talked to the Germans about canceling the agreement. The Brazilians found out about it. What happened? The Brazilians canceled every military agreement they had with the United States, they canceled all other agreements. U.S.-Brazil relations just went to pieces.

By the time I arrived there in 1978, because my predecessor had been called back to do something else there had been quite an interim between my arrival and his departure. Nothing really happened in improving Brazil-U.S. relations until President Carter went to Brazil several months before I got there. He talked to the Brazilian President and the relationship began to improve, especially between the two presidents. But that was just before I got there.

Q: Am I not right in thinking that historically our relations with Brazil have always been quite good?

SAYRE: Oh, absolutely. I mean the Brazilians were with the United States in both the First and the Second World War. They had a division in Italy. They cooperated with us on all kinds of defense matters, economic matters, everything else; the relationship was great, but it came apart. I tried very hard to get all of these issues straightened out. I really only resolved two of them.

The human rights issue we got settled, and we stopped reporting the way we had been reporting. The Brazilians were really doing everything to straighten out the situation and in fact President Ernesto Geisel and President Joao Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo just got the human rights problem straightened out and that is what we reported.

We also reestablished the military relationship with a meeting between staffs of the Joint Chiefs of the two countries once a year. That is still going on. But the rest of the problems, my

successors also tried to resolve, and we are still trying to work them out. The one I would like to see get worked out is the economic relationship. We need to get our economic relationship back together.

GEORGE B. HIGH

Deputy Chief of Mission

Brasilia (1978-1982)

George B. High was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1931. He received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and attended Columbia Law School until 1956. Mr. High entered the Foreign Service in 1955 and served in Angola, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. Mr. High was interviewed in 1993 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You left there and got a very interesting job as Deputy Chief of Mission in Brasilia. I take it this stems from your connection with Bob Sayre?

HIGH: Yes.

Q: You were there from 1978-82, so you had two Ambassadors?

HIGH: Yes.

Q: What was the situation in Brazil during this period?

HIGH: Brazil was still under a military government. Ernesto Geisel was the chief of state and head of government. They were having some major economic problems because the economic miracle of the years prior to 1978 was beginning to fade. Brazil had just grown like Topsy after the military took over, but the steam was petering out and people were blaming the military for their difficulties. The politicians were becoming restive, the students were becoming some active once again, and Brazil was becoming increasingly independent and critical of the United States.

The United States was also coming out from under the impact of the early years of the Carter Administration's foreign policy. Carter had started off his administration being extremely critical of Brazil's human rights record and also of its effort to get nuclear reprocessing facilities from the West Germans. There was a contract with the Germans and nuclear plants were going up in Brazil. There was concern, which I think was confirmed later on, that Brazil was moving toward gaining a nuclear war capacity.

The initial steps the Carter Administration had made very public and were extremely damning of the Brazilian government, and the Brazilians had taken deep offense at this. This followed

decades of very warm, very personal relations with the United States. Brazil had fought with the United States in World War II. Vernon Walters served with the Brazilian troops in Italy. He was the attaché in Brazil at the time of the military *golpe*. He was friends with Brazil's military leaders. Brazil was also a big recipient of assistance under the Alliance for Progress. Many of the Brazilian leaders in the private sector and the government studied in the United States under AID grants, and this had gone on for years.

There had been this awfully close relationship, virtually going back to Brazilian independence, and then all of a sudden, out of the blue, came these two very public slaps on human rights and nuclear reprocessing. It was a total surprise to the Brazilians and naturally, from their side, they were hurt and angered, whatever the American viewpoint.

The previous Ambassador, John Crimmins, had borne much of the brunt of that reaction. When Bob Sayre went to Brazil, the Carter Administration had had time to think more about this and to conclude that it needed to work on these issues in a more harmonious way. And so, as I understood it, our objective was to rebuild the relationship, certainly to pursue those subjects as well, but in a less public and contentious way. In effect, we should treat Brazil as a close associate and somebody who was worth our attention. That was our agenda in Brazil.

There were increasing Congressional visits to Brazil while we were there. Early on they were very positive. There were visits by American military officials to develop a dialogue with the Brazilians, to put life into what had been a very close relationship between the two military establishments. There was also an effort to encourage further American business interest in Brazil.

The head of the State Department's Policy Planning Council came to Brasilia and held policy discussions with the Brazilians for the first time -- just as U.S. policy planning experts met annually with our major allies. The Brazilians had their own policy planning unit in the Foreign Ministry, modeled after ours. It was a natural partner to benefit from the opportunity to talk over world and regional problems.

The Brazilians seemed at first apprehensive about this. They felt that perhaps we were there to co-opt them. Antonio da Silveira, the Foreign Minister, had the reputation of being an ardent nationalist and of almost looking for ways to frustrate the United States, to show that Brazil was independent and had its own interests to look after. I saw no indication among any of us working on Brazilian affairs at the time of any idea that our object was to co-opt the Brazilians in any way. We wanted them to realize that we had many things in common, matters we could talk about and discuss, and that it paid both countries to try to resolve some of the problems that were existing between us so that we could work more cooperatively on matters of mutual concern.

Remember, in years past, we had encouraged Brazil to provide the general who led the inter-American force that intervened in the Dominican Republic. Years later they weren't very pleased with that role. The Brazilians might have some preoccupation of what we were trying to sell

them this time. We needed to overcome that reluctance; we didn't have anything to sell them except mutual interest. That really was a lot of what the whole relationship was about at this period of time.

Bill Bowdler became Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs toward the end of the Carter administration. He visited us in Brazil. One of his comments to Bob Sayre was that he hoped that he could clear his desk enough so that he could give more time to Brazil than Brazil had gotten from the bureau over recent years. To his way of thinking, Brazil and Mexico were the keys to the American relations in the hemisphere. We needed to become more closely associated with both countries.

The truth of the matter was that really never happened on our watch. We got a little more time, a little more attention, but we were always second fiddle to those larger, more immediate problems that were overwhelming to anyone who was in the bureau at the time. There was the Mariel boat lift, difficulties with Mexico and Central America, and other crises that commanded attention.

There were some limitations to our diplomacy in Brazil, too. One element was the number of Congressional visits we had. Delegations came down to learn and to listen to the Brazilians. Initially that was helpful; it was new. But eventually there was backlash. These delegations, whether made up of one or two persons or usually more, would fly into Rio on Day One. They would go out and spend the night in Rio and maybe into the next day.

On Day Two or Three came their visit to Brasilia, about an hour and a half away by air. They would get into an airplane around 8 or so in the morning, fly up to Brasilia, arriving about 10:00 or 10:30. They would be taken to the Embassy for a half hour or forty-five minute briefing, a real quick one. Then they would go over to the Brazilian Congress building, and for an hour and a half maximum they would call on one or two leaders of the Brazilian Congress. With luck maybe it would be separate meetings with two people.

Next, the Brazilians would hold a luncheon for them. Spread around a big u-shaped table, there would be scads of people. There might be a little bit of talk around the table, more social than substantive. Someone would get up from the Brazilian side and say something substantive. Someone on the American side would get up and very briefly say, "We appreciate your hospitality; we like this dialogue and we need to do more of it."

Then the delegation would hurry back to its plane so that they could get back to Rio before the afternoon traffic jams and have one last night in Rio. Next day they would be off to their next country.

Too often the visits were redundant and didn't get much beyond initial exchanges between well-intentioned strangers, "We are in a hurry, give it to us fast, boys, and let us move on," was the message conveyed. That happened so often that I think the positive contributions of the visits began to deteriorate. There were a couple of Congressmen and others who were serious. One was

Rubin Askew, who I think was in Congress and had been Governor of Florida. He had us take him out to one of the shopping centers in Brasilia, not to buy tourist things, but to see what the prices were in the supermarkets and in a department store to get some sense of how people lived. Occasionally, somebody who would stay long enough so that we could drive out of the capital into one of the satellite cities, where most of the workers lived, to see what those places looked like.

CLARKE M. BRINTNALL

Office of International Security Affairs, Department of Defense

Washington, DC (1978-1983)

Brigadier General Clark M. Brintnall was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from West Point Academy in 1958. His career included service in Brazil, Panama, and Vietnam. Brigadier General Brintnall was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: Were you getting anything from the Brazilians, who, as you say, their main military is sort of "within call" to the Argentine border, isn't it?

BRINTNALL: Yes.

Q: A certain amount of feeling that this is not a very good army? Were you getting any of that?

BRINTNALL: Well, yes. It made a lot of armies take a good look at their logistics capabilities. I think a lot of armies at that point looked at themselves and asked, "What could we do?"

Q: Did this cause an increase in looking to the United States to help?

BRINTNALL: Not that I am aware of.

Q: What did they do about it?

BRINTNALL: Well, they looked at themselves, principally. Brazil could not look to the United States. Remember at that time, we still could not provide security assistance because of restrictions imposed by human rights and nuclear proliferation legislation. We were also beginning to have problems with space launch vehicle technology. So, even if they wanted to look to us, there was not a lot we could have done at that time. We were barred by law from doing very much.

Q: Did you feel the hand of Richard Perle? Was he there at that time?

BRINTNALL: He was there at that time.

Q: Because he is, I've heard him labeled "the Prince of Darkness." I mean he is a very strong and has very strong ideas-he had been a Congressional staff person and had come in and did you feel that he was a force of direction? Anyway, did you feel his hand?

BRINTNALL: Yes, we felt his "hand," particularly in the area of the Space Launch Vehicle Technology. Richard Perle didn't want anything to...

Q: Could you explain what that is?

BRINTNALL: Brazil considers itself a major, sovereign nation with a need to have its own space program and launch its own satellites with its own technology. It doesn't believe that it should have to justify this to anyone. In order to launch a satellite, one must have rockets capable of doing so. You must also be able to guide this rocket into orbit. What is the difference between a civilian and a military rocket? Basically it is where it is aimed and what it carries. The U.S. Government was therefore concerned not only with space technology, but nuclear technology as well. The U.S. did not want to see Brazil develop a nuclear weapon and also have the capability to launch it. Our problem was to find ways to work with Brazil and find ways to introduce safeguards so that we could cooperate in these areas. Richard Perle and his team were properly concerned about nuclear and missile proliferation throughout the world. The problem was that Brazil was going forward in both areas. Just saying "no" wouldn't put the genie back in the bottle. I saw the problem as how could we work together with Brazil and develop such safeguards?

Q: His position at this time in the Department of Defense was...what was he?

BRINTNALL: There had been a reorganization that split ISA, or International Security Affairs, into two parts, ISA and ISP (International Security Policy). ISP was responsible for NATO and global issues to include nuclear non-proliferation and missile technology.

Q: Was the thrust of Pearl and his supporters that we are not going to give anything to Brazil because Brazil might cause trouble there or because somehow Brazil might tie into the Soviet Union?

BRINTNALL: He didn't want to see any new countries acquire or develop these technologies. If we just said "no" long enough we could keep it from happening. Of course, that isn't true. Saying "no" may slow things down, but it won't stop them. Eventually, they will acquire the technology.

STEPHEN F. DACHI

Cónsul General

Sao Paulo (1985-1988)

Stephen F. Dachi was born in 1933 in Hungary. He attended the University of Oregon Dental School and then joined the Peace Corps. While in the Peace Corps he served in Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil. During his career in USIA he served positions in Hungary, Panama City, Brazil, and India. Mr. Dachi was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 1997.

Q: When you went to Brazil in 1985, what was the political-economic situation as we saw it and American interests there?

DACHI: U.S.-Brazil relations have always been dominated by economic, trade, and investment issues almost to the exclusion of others, to a much greater extent than most anywhere else. Brazil had had a 20 year period of military rule that was coming to an end just as I was going down to Sao Paulo. We certainly looked with favor at this transition to civilian rule, although we never exerted much proactive diplomacy to get it to happen sooner. We got along quite well with the military regimes. There might have been some minor exceptions, but not many.

So, the U.S.-Brazil relationship has always had an unusually small political component and an extraordinarily large economic component. One reason for this is that Brazil is very sensitive vis a vis all of its Hispanic Latin American neighbors not to be seen as some kind of a leader of Latin America, a trendsetter. They always thought it was more important to promote their interests in the economic sphere than to exert leadership in the Latin American regional context. They were, however, somewhat interested in playing a greater role at the United Nations, where they felt they were entitled to a permanent seat in the Security Council as the largest and most important country in the Southern Hemisphere.

As I was saying earlier, the most important political and ideological influence in the Spanish-speaking Latin American countries has always been wielded by Mexico, until they got into the economic reform and liberalization phase in the 1980s. They were the anti-American ideological trend setters. They were the ones that never broke with Cuba, the ones that voted for Zionism as racism in the UN and almost always opposed U.S. Latin American policy initiatives, just to show their independence from the U.S. This, in turn, was done to compensate for the obvious and painful reality that on the economic side they were totally dependent on the U.S. It was virtually impossible in those days for any Spanish-speaking Latin American country to openly side with the U.S. on any issue, for fear of displeasing the Mexicans and appearing to break solidarity ranks.

The Brazilians always felt they wanted to stay out of most of that. They did to some degree want to make it clear they were not under U.S. influence in any way, and there is certainly plenty of nationalist sentiment in Brazil. On the whole, however, they felt that the business of Brazil was business. They didn't want to be Latin American ideological leaders. They were interested in exporting, investing, expanding their markets around the world and keeping the international

banks they were “stiffing” on their massive foreign debt off their backs. This has always bothered a lot of people in the academic and think tank Latin Americanist community in this country, who all are much more politically than economically oriented and are always looking toward giving the U.S.-Brazil relationship a more heavily political character. It has never been in the cards, not during the military regimes, not during the unstable civilian regimes that followed, and not during this latest period of greater economic stability, progress, and growth that has taken place in the last three years under the most recent president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

When I got there, two things were noteworthy. First it was the period when the first civilian president, Tancredo Neves, was going to take over after 20 years of military rule. He was not popularly elected, but indirectly elected by state and federal legislatures. But he became ill and died before taking office. Then Jose Sarney, who had been elected to be vice president, actually became the first civilian president. So, this was an important historical transition.

The other thing, the really big issue, was that about six or eight months before, Brazil had passed the so-called Informatics Law that cut out U.S. trade and investment in the area of computers and software and eventually tried to squeeze the U.S. out of other high tech electronic market segments. This created quite a problem. It ended up becoming the first case where the United States brought a 301 action for unfair trade practices against another country under the U.S. Foreign Trade Act. From the standpoint of the birth pangs of the early days of economic reforms and globalization, this was historically a landmark case. That was just beginning at the time I got there. It was tremendously significant in a process (globalization) that today is far down the road from where it was then. That was a turning point. Those were the two things. I was up to my neck and heavily involved in both of them.

Q: The two issues...

DACHI: One was the conversion to democracy and civilian rule from the military and the other was the so-called Informatics Law. Informatics means what today we call information technology, everything that is computers, software, electronic controls, information and telecommunications technology etc. They used the word "informatics" in those days.

Q: Why don't we deal with that first and then we'll go to the transition period. Why and what was this law and how did it impact on us?

DACHI: This is really a big, terribly important subject. What was the thing about this law? First of all, Brazil along with most of the rest of the developing countries in Asia and Latin America, were still following the import substitution economic model. These economies were basically closed and the policy was to become as self-sufficient as possible by maintaining very high tariffs, stimulating and subsidizing public and private domestic industry, having huge state enterprises, and shielding the economy from foreign competition. We still see these giant state enterprises in China and elsewhere, including Western Europe. In Brazil, as we speak, most of the state enterprises have been or are about to be privatized and the economy has been opened up.

In spite of having a closed, protected economy, Brazil had an unusual amount of foreign investment, more so than any other import substitution economy in the world. This seeming contradiction was more apparent than real and was an example of Brazilian ingenuity in trying to have their cake and eat it too. The case of IBM is one of many illustrative examples. They were allowed in, but once there, they became captives of the protected economy. They had to play according to the anti-competitive rules established by Brazil, which of course was fine with IBM, since they became its beneficiaries rather than victims. If they played along, as IBM and the most of the others who were allowed in in fact did, other foreign competitors including Japanese computer firms, for example, were kept out.

The basic rule was that no foreign company could get in the way of any Brazilian company that wanted to develop and dominate a particular market sector for itself. So, outsiders were allowed to come in, invest, and do certain things that Brazilian companies were not ready for or interested in, even though they were a foreign investor. In return for being “good companies” and playing by “Brazilian rules” they were then also protected against other foreign competitors as if they were a Brazilian company. This was done for a lot of industries.

The historically significant point here was that once the high-tech revolution broke out all over the world and started introducing personal computers, software, etc., this by definition meant that you could no longer have national barriers, and closed economies. It became impossible. No customs or tariff barriers could possibly keep such foreign products out. For one thing, they were absolute musts for any Brazilian company that had any hopes of remaining competitive in either the national or global marketplace. Secondly, it always was and still is child’s play to smuggle such products into Brazil through Paraguay and even in those early days contraband computers, software and electronic products were practically inundating the Brazilian market via that route.

Brazil was the first and only country that thought it could control the “foreign threat” from the high-tech revolution the same way they successfully did for all the other areas of investment, just like all the other countries in Southeast Asia, India and Latin America that were wedded to the import substitution economy. The latter all stopped short, however, of trying to extend that to information technology. That was a preposterous and unworkable idea.

In the case of IBM, which was already there, they took away many of the rights they had to make certain kinds of computers, and passed a law saying that personal computers, mini computers, and a number of other products could only be manufactured or assembled by Brazilian companies. They bought off IBM by allowing them to continue making mainframes and certain large printers, and so on that were beyond the capacity of the newly-formed Brazilian companies, and allowed them to sell those at three times the “normal” profit. In effect they “bought off” or co-opted companies like IBM by cutting down their product lines by two-thirds, and then allowing them to triple their profits on the remainder, guaranteeing them a non-competitive domestic market and making the consumers pay for it by keeping out all the alternatives.

Q: When was the law passed?

DACHI: In the fall of 1984.

Q: So this was just before you arrived.

DACHI: Right. So, the main reason was to try to bring information technology into the traditional system of economic control and protectionism. But there were other reasons. We have to go back a couple of years to the Falklands War to understand the background. The Brazilians had nothing to do with that war directly, but when the Argentines managed to sink a couple of British ships with Exocet missiles, one of the most up-to-date versions of missile technology at the time that they had bought from the French, everybody in Latin America was ecstatic. I wasn't stationed in Brazil yet, but I happened to be traveling through Bolivia and Chile. Chile was normally antagonistic toward Argentina, but in this case even they were excited. For a few brief days everybody fancied that missile as the great equalizer between the powerful developed countries and the poor, underdeveloped Latin Americans. They wanted to believe that even a relatively small country like Argentina, given a few Exocet missiles, could sink the British navy.

This had an incredible impact on Latin American minds. Who would have ever thought that a Latin American country could face down a powerful Western military force like that of the British. But what really happened? After they sank the two ships and fired a few more missiles, they ran out of them and had to get more. But the French said "No, there is a war going on. We're not giving you any more." The United States did its part, by weighing in with France not to sell the Argentines more of the missiles. All of a sudden, Argentina woke up to the fact that the "great equalizer" vanished into thin air virtually overnight. As much euphoria as there was before, now there was this tremendous wave of revulsion that "These Westerners have got us again. When we really need this stuff, they cut us off."

The Brazilian military drew their own conclusions. "See, you can't rely on foreigners. We have to be self-sufficient in technology just like we became self-sufficient in everything else. We can't let foreigners dominate high technology; otherwise we can no longer assure our own national security. When we really need it, they're going to see to it that our country is defeated in a war just like they did with Argentina when the chips were down." So, the idea was spawned not just by the import substitution economists. In Brazil, the military regime labeled information technology as a national security issue. That would facilitate their subsequent decision to retain veto power over that policy, as one of several preconditions to turning the country over to the civilians in 1985.

The Generals were already aware of the fact that the time was coming when the military had to step back and let the civilians in after 20 years. This had to be a very delicately negotiated process, not only in Brazil but in every one of the South American, Southern Cone countries. In Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, even more so than in Brazil, the issue of amnesty to the military officers who had committed so many crimes and human rights violations while in power had to

be resolved before there was a chance to get them to agree to a return to democracy and civilian rule. These military weren't just going to withdraw to their barracks, let the civilians take over and be put on trial for their human rights crimes.

In the Brazilian case, the political compact that the military imposed as the price for allowing the civilians to return was that the military would retain residual rights in certain areas. One of them was to retain control over policy for the Amazon region and the security issues, as they perceived them, that played themselves out there. That included veto power over any initiative the government might undertake to restrain logging and agricultural settlements in the Amazon rainforest, and the attempt to rein in the rampant burning and deforestation that was reaching new heights. The other was in high technology. They were going to have the final word and absolute control over what happens in the area of high technology. As far as the Informatics Law was concerned, the word of the military was decisive, "Yes, we have to be self sufficient, so we're going to build this into our closed economy and develop our own national industry." So, this was settled as part of the necessity of granting them their residual rights in the last few months before they actually left office. No one in the civilian domain, even had they wanted to do it otherwise, could have stood in the way.

There was a third area, a kind of mixture of politics, old, and new. Brazil has always been haunted by inflation, the kind of inflation we can't even fathom, up to 40-80% a month. One of the sectors that became astronomically profitable as a result of inflation was banking. You can imagine what interest rates are when there is that kind of inflation. So, to put it in the simplest possible terms, if banks can take three days to pay a check that you wrote and collect the money due to them in one day, that two day interval float between what they take in and what they pay out, they make a hefty profit. Actually, that is also how many other industries and companies survived in Brazil. Everybody was trying to do the same thing: keeping their heads above water by collecting in 20 days and paying in 30 or 40. You couldn't make any money by increasing production, because of the inflation.

For the banks, it was absolutely imperative to stay on top of the inflationary process, knowing they could make a ton of money if they handled it right. The way to make this thing work was to computerize the entire banking sector as quickly as possible. They decided that the quickest and cheapest way to do it was by developing their own domestic computer and ATM industry. So, it was the banks that decided, with full government blessing, to stake three Brazilian entrepreneurs to start up their own computer companies. They financed it, bought the stock, and literally controlled it lock, stock, and barrel. All of a sudden, three Brazilian companies popped up that were going to make Brazilian computers, obviously with "borrowed technology," to put it euphemistically, and they were going to have a huge, instant, protected, guaranteed market in the banking sector to help them get launched and compete against some of the most experienced, technologically advanced and cost-efficient multinationals. Without that protection, they wouldn't have had the ghost of a chance.

Not surprisingly, countless Brazilian and foreign companies, large and small, that had needs for thousands of new computers refused to buy these overpriced second-rate Brazilian computers built with pirated, obsolescent technologies. That was the beginning of a gigantic contraband operation that resulted in the smuggling in of American computers through Paraguay, to the tune of an estimated \$300-400 million a year. But none of it made any difference. Brazilian authorities turned a blind eye to it all for a long time, because there was too much money to be made at their end of the operation. The three Brazilian manufacturers were guaranteed to sell thousands of computers and all that goes with them, including tens of thousands of ATM machines, to the banks that owned them, so that the banks could automate their operations and lock in these incredible inflation-derived profits. That is, in fact, what happened. In order to do that, they shut down the corresponding product lines of their foreign competitors, IBM, Hewlett Packard and what is now UNYSIS. They called the policy “market reserve.” Those were the main ingredients and the hardball tactics that signaled the inception of the informatics law.

In 1985, the year after the law came into effect, nobody appreciated or understood yet all the global dimensions and implications of what was happening. We were just dealing with the minutia. Nobody had the context. I certainly had no idea. But we knew that this law was damaging to U.S. economic interests. IBM was the first to start complaining. There were many others who soon followed suit. Soon enough though, many of them stopped complaining when they woke up to the fact that the government would “buy them off” by granting them market reserves of their own in product lines that did not impinge on Brazilian companies’ interests. Things got worse later in the year because after they did it to computers, Brazilian policymakers realized that you can't stop there. They moved on to software and the gamut of electronic products, optical scanners in supermarkets, electronically controlled windshield wipers in automobiles, computerized numerical controls for factory machines, and even computerized system controls for entire industrial production lines. So, this grew like topsy over the next 12 months. And in all these latter fields, buying off the multinationals proved to be much more complicated than was the case with computer hardware.

It was very tough back then to really know how exactly U.S. interests were going to be hurt. But by that time, there was something else going on in Washington. Democrats in Congress led by Richard Gephardt began to accuse the Reagan administration of not being sufficiently zealous in defending our commercial and economic interests in other countries and not backing and supporting the American private sector as much as the Japanese. In particular, the administration was faulted for not combating unfair trade practices against U.S. exporters vigorously enough. Remember that in those days the Japanese were seen as all-powerful in international trade, due to heavy government support and subsidies that allowed them to run circles around American companies. That sounds pretty funny today as we have witnessed the vaunted Japanese economy flame out in many areas, but it seemed real to a lot of people back then.

Section 301 of the Foreign Trade Act was available to us to press for resolving such unfair trade practice, and failing that, to invoke sanctions. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

(USTR), was set up to deal with this kind of thing, but the administration had chosen not to pursue any cases under section 301 up to that time. Now Congress was saying that they were going to take away from the administration some of the leeway that over the years it had given to the Executive Branch to deal with foreign trade. After all, in the Constitution, that function is given to Congress. There was a concerted move in Congress to tighten up foreign trade legislation and basically reduce the administration's flexibility in conducting foreign trade policy on the grounds that they weren't tough enough. So, by the summer of 1985, it became apparent to the White House that in order to head off these congressional initiatives, it was essential to find some device to start acting tougher and find some cases to invoke Section 301 of the Trade Act. That provision basically says that if a country practices unfair trade practices, we investigate it, determine what that unfair trade practice is and the extent of the damage it has caused to U.S. exporters, and try to negotiate a solution. If we can't negotiate a solution, we apply sanctions.

Sanctions have increasingly become a big part of our foreign policy, many times in ways that I think are counterproductive, but at other times, they make a certain amount of sense. This was one of the early steps in the intensification of that process in the foreign trade field. By August, the administration decided to bring a couple of 301 cases on an accelerated basis. It was deemed politically imperative to head off Congress.

So, in September, the first two 301 cases were brought by the administration. One of them was with Korea. I'm not familiar with that one. The other was with Brazil, specifically about the Informatics Law. It was obvious that this was something new and had potentially far reaching consequences. There were a lot of big American companies involved. The political decision was made at the White House that they had to move quickly on a 301 because Congress was breathing down their necks, and they picked this one. But because of the political urgency, they rushed into bringing the case before they really knew very much about exactly what the problem was in terms of the impact on U.S. companies.

The Informatics Law was a great topic of discussion even before I went to Sao Paulo. At the time, I didn't even know that there was a U.S. Foreign Trade Act, but it quickly became apparent to me that this thing was going to be an issue in our relations. Most of these companies and industries, both the Americans that were being harmed and the Brazilians who were the beneficiaries, were in my consular district. Sooner or later, I knew that I would have to come to grips with this topic. At the outset I was completely ignorant. I didn't know a chip in a computer from a chip in a chocolate cookie. I set out on my own to try to learn something about the computer business from the ground up. I started going around educating myself. By September, I had learned probably about five or 10% of what I needed, but it was a start. It seemed to me that I had learned a lifetime's worth, but compared to what was left, it was nothing.

Somewhere in late September, USTR decided that according to Section 301 it was time to start an investigation and prepare a report defining what our problems were. Then we would have to go to the Brazilian government to try to negotiate and resolve the problem. I ended up getting the

task of doing this investigation and documenting the case in an environment in which nobody yet had any idea what the specifics of the problem were. Then, of course, they had to have it by November 10th or 15th. There was no way on earth I could get it done by then, but I did get it done by the end of the year. It was a hundred page report that brought out a lot of information, although in hindsight it still only scratched the surface of the totality of the problem.

ROBERT E. SERVICE

Deputy Chief of Mission

Brasilia (1989-1992)

Robert E. Service was born in 1937 in China to American parents. He received a B.A. from Oberlin College and an M.P.A from Princeton University. His postings abroad have included Managua, Salvador Bahia, Mexico City, Santiago, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Brasilia, and Montevideo. Mr. Service was interviewed in 1998 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: *You were in Brasilia from when to when?*

SERVICE: From November of 1989 to August of 1992.

Q: *Was Melton the Ambassador the whole time?*

SERVICE: Yes.

Q: *How did he operate?*

SERVICE: Who, Melton?

Q: *Yes.*

SERVICE: Very much like me. We are very similar. He is a professional, subdued, thoughtful, and careful about details. He likes to know what is going on and then follows up. He is very low-key, not emotional. He is a very decent person, a very sound person, and has excellent judgment.

Q: *I've done an interview with him. You had been in Brazil before hadn't you?*

SERVICE: Yes, I served in Brazil from 1963 to 1965 in Bahia, the old capital.

Q: *What was your impression of the Brazil you went to in 1989?*

SERVICE: Well, of course, I was in Brasilia. It is not an impression of anything, other than suburbia. It is not a city. There is no center. You have to work hard to occupy your time because there is no culture, there are no stores to speak of. It takes no time to get anywhere. All of the things that consume time in a normal city, you don't have. Well, what do you do? People who liked it were the ones with a lot of kids. It was a good place to raise them. Those who liked to play golf and tennis, and other outdoor things were very happy. I suppose there may have been a few others who liked it for special reasons. But, it is not the real world. Brasilia is not the real anything. It hadn't changed much at all, a little more built up, than when I had seen it first in 1965. Brazil, itself, was poorer, not poorer in an absolute sense, but in a sort of psychological sense. Rio had become one of the most dangerous cities in the world if you want to believe our listings. And I do believe them in this case. Almost everyone in our Consulate General had had something happen to him or her. At most posts, that is a rarity. Brazil was going through a tough time for a variety of reasons, primarily because the economic model had run out of steam, and because of the vast disparities in income.

Q: What was the government like at that point?

SERVICE: I don't know how much you know of modern Brazilian history, but the military had run the place from 1964, when I was there the first time, until, I think, 1986. They agreed to step back at that point. The person who was to become President was elected, indirectly, but then died before he could take office. That was Tancredo Neves. His Vice President, Jose Sarney, became President. He was not an inspired or inspiring leader. I can't say that he was a bad one, but he was not a new broom, or new brain, or anything else. I got there just before the next presidential election. It turned out there were two of them. They have a system where if you don't get 50% the first time, you have a run-off with whoever finished second. There was a certain amount of excitement over a young politician from Alagoas, a poor northeastern state. Fernando Collor de Melo. He was only about 40. He was physically attractive, modern supposedly. He was the man who would lead Brazil into a bright new future. It was exciting to be there at the time. His main opponent was Lula, the leader of the Labor party. That, of course, worried the more conservative part of the population. Anyway, Collor won and everybody wanted to see what he could do. He wasn't very successful, and not entirely for reasons of his own making. Brazil is a very hard country to govern. It has a multiplicity of parties. The parties don't have much discipline. People move in and out of parties with great abandon. They have a federal system. I doubt if it gives more power to the states than we do here, but in a country with Brazil's history and its poverty and its inequities, federalism in some ways makes it harder to govern. Collor was eventually forced out of office because of rather blatant corruption. We were surprised. We had reasonable hopes that he would be a progressive president, and would do some important things. It turned out to be a rather tawdry episode in Brazilian political history.

Q: Was it that the political system was essentially corrupt and this was the first time somebody was being called on it or was he corrupt more than was generally accepted in that society?

SERVICE: Don't forget you had 20 years of military government. I suspect, at the beginning at least and maybe throughout, the Presidents were pretty honest and clean. I think the Brazilian military has a considerable degree of discipline and self-regard, and they had their brother officers looking over their shoulders. It was not common to have massive corruption at the top; perhaps before the period of military rule there had been. But I think the country had come to expect more. Collor certainly promised more. Because he was so young, there was a temptation to think he was some brilliant politician. They found out that this guy was as bad or worse than the rest of them. I think that was disillusioning. Furthermore, we in the United States had demonstrated you could impeach a President. The Brazilians figured out that even in Latin America it was possible to impeach a President who breaks the rules excessively.

Q: As you mentioned before, Brazil never really had a strong orientation toward the United States. Was it Latin American centered, or how about ties with Europe?

SERVICE: I disagree with you there. Brazil, until at least the 1960s, was perhaps the closest country in South America to the U.S. They decided that because we were both continental size countries, had federal forms of government and racially mixed populations, there was a lot of commonality in our two experiences. This began to change after the military took power in 1964. I think the Brazilian elites realized that the relationship was lopsided. They had been attributing much more importance to it than we did. They were depending on the U.S. to be the guiding light and so forth. When we didn't reciprocate adequately, when they realized that our priorities were not necessarily the same as theirs, when we started to put human rights and non-proliferation at the top of our agenda, they felt that they ought to reduce the importance of the U.S. relationship substantially, and start to look elsewhere.

Q: We weren't the big brother or anything like that at that point.

SERVICE: Historically Brazil had a military rivalry with Argentina. That is no longer the case, in part, because Brazil had so far surpassed Argentina in economic size and power. Therefore the U.S. is no longer needed as a potential balance against Argentina. As mentioned, Brazil and the U.S. diverged sharply on a variety of issues in the 1970s and early '80s. Meanwhile it became possible for the first time to think in terms of an alliance of the South American countries, at least economically, with Brazil at the center because of its size. It's only now, after all these changes, that U.S./Brazil relations are starting to improve and to move back somewhat in the direction of where they were before 1965. But they will never go back to where they were because Brazil has greater confidence and more options.

RICHARD H. MELTON

Ambassador

Brazil (1989-1993)

Richard H. Melton was born on August 8, 1935 in Rockville, Maryland. He received his BA from Cornell University in 1958. He later attended Wisconsin University where he received his MA in 1971. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961 and served in many countries throughout his career including Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Portugal, England, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. Mr. Melton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 27, 1997.

Q: In 1989, you were nominated to be our Ambassador to Brazil. How did that come about?

MELTON: A few months after my return from Nicaragua, the time came for Bureaus to make their preferences known for upcoming ambassadorial vacancies. A new Assistant Secretary, Bernie Aronson, had come on board, was now leading the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. I was considered for a number of these vacancies and the conclusion seemed to be that I would be the Bureau's candidate for Peru. That was fine for me, and the long process began. I continued my work as deputy assistant secretary. I got to know Bernie better and better. Somewhere along the line, he decided that he wanted me to stay to be his principal deputy. We talked about that possibility several times. In the meantime, a vacancy had developed in Brazil. After making another effort to convince me to become his principal deputy, Bernie agreed that I should go to Brazil and was delighted to find out that I had been there before and knew Portuguese. So the powers-to-be decided to nominate me for Brazil rather than Peru. That was alright with me, even though I knew that there would be many candidates for one of the most important assignments in Latin America. Some of the candidates were good friends and some thought they were clear shoo-ins. The Bureau's decision to nominate me was a last minute affair; it had the support of people like Larry Eagleburger. So the front runners were swept aside at the last minute; that made for a number of hurt feelings--including among some of my friends who had sought the job.

As US attention turned to Latin America in the 1960s, Brazil was recognized as a potential economic and political force which made it somewhat different from the countries in the region. So the Department decided to train some people to be specialists on Brazil, giving them language and area training and several assignments to that country or in Washington working on Brazil matters. Steve Low was one of those officers, as was Alan Watson. The cadres developed in this way helped to provide some continuity to our approach. But by the late 1980s, this group of specialists had long since been disbanded; the systematic effort to develop a corps of Brazilian experts had long dissipated. We continue to pay a price for our loss of foresight in this area.

I knew something about Brazil having served there and having done some academic work on that country. So I was very happy to return to familiar territory. I arrived in Brazil on December 11,

1989--and stayed for four years to December 15, 1993. My confirmation process was again a delayed one--such delays had become almost the norm. Senator Helms and the Foreign Relations Committee routinely held up confirmations for one reason or another. Even after I had been nominated, there was an extensive period when no hearings were held--for much the same reason as with my Nicaragua nomination; i.e. Committee members trying to gain some advantage in their dealings with the administration by holding up nominations. So I sat around for months and months waiting for hearings. Once the hearings were held, the confirmation process went rather rapidly. My involvement in Central America matters was raised in the hearings. The "Washington Office on Latin America" and other critics of our policy distributed materials to Committee members opposing my nomination as an alleged "architect" of our "catastrophic Central America policy." Then there was a story from Brazil repeating an allegation that I had been present at the interrogation and torture of a political prisoner at the Recife federal police station. That story appeared in the Brazilian press and was noticed in Washington.

The Brazilians have an excellent Foreign Service which keeps the government well informed about the State Department and our Foreign Service. They were aware of my involvement in Central America and I think were mildly disturbed by that. When the Recife story came out, they let the story run on to see how it would play out. That was not a normal pattern for the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. At the time, of course, the Brazilian government could have killed the story, if they desired, but in this case, permitted it to run on. I asked a number of people, including our Chargé in Brazil and a former Ambassador, Tony Motley, what might be done about the story--I had learned that in a confirmation process, the candidate has to take an active role if the outcome is to be positive. The advice was that I should respond firmly to this; that was in any case my inclination as well; so I did. Before doing so, I reviewed my reporting messages from that period and found that the only time I went to the federal police station was when I tried to ensure that two American priests, who had been detained, would not be abused by the police. My record in defense of human rights was directly opposite to the allegations coming from Brazil. So I got the Embassy to issue a brief statement to that effect. I was prepared to provide additional information and to bring forth witnesses from Recife on my behalf--including Archbishop Dom Halder Camera. The story faded and the Brazilian government granted the *agrément*.

In retrospect, I suspect that an informed network was at work against me. It consisted of people who had followed Central America for many years; they were activists both in the U.S. and other countries. Somehow my name had become part of their list of "wanted." Both the Recife story and those given out by the "Washington Office on Latin America" suggest that there was probably some linkage. None of the accusations had any factual basis, and they had no resonance in the Committee once it agreed to consider my nomination and those of others.

What we in the Embassy were trying to do is to take small steps, one at a time, which eventually might lead to a comprehensive agreement. We had a very pragmatic approach. There was no difference between the "purists" and ourselves on the final goal--bringing Brazil's nuclear and space launch programs into an international control regime which would have restrained the use of technologies for non-peaceful uses through a system of inspections and other internationally supervised control mechanisms. I don't think Brazil was ever viewed as a wanton destabilizer with aggressive intentions, but it was potentially capable of transferring dangerous technology to other less peaceful parties whose purposes might have been inimical to the US.

Let me turn to other subjects. Human rights issues were always on the agenda, with excesses being committed by the Brazilians--as they are still being perpetrated today. Brazil is a huge country organized along a federated system. Much of the law enforcement falls on the states and the municipalities. The reality in Brazil is that the writ of authority does not reach down to the local level in many parts of the country. The excesses almost uniformly are committed by local authorities--if authorities are involved at all. We encouraged in those cases an extension of federal authority in order to hold local authorities accountable for any deed within its jurisdiction. We went to the Minister of Justice, Jarbas Passarinho, to seek his intervention because, under some circumstances, he could invoke federal authority and jurisdiction in human rights cases. In other situations, we pushed the state or the municipality by dealing directly with officials at those levels to try to get them to take remedial actions--in addition to urging federal authorities to be more vigorous in their pressure on state and local officials. Our interventions were not always welcomed by the Brazilians; we were after all interfering in domestic affairs of a democratic country. But human rights are also internationally recognized under the UN charter, and therefore an obligation of all states. That was a constant theme during my tour. In dealing with Brazilians there are certain issues in which the U.S. has to stake out its position and make that position, popular or not, eminently clear to all. What I and my staff tried to do is to make sure that people knew where we stood through press releases, public statements, speeches, and other tools of public diplomacy. For example, I would regularly write Op Ed pieces which were published in major Brazilian newspapers. We tended to focus on the Rio and Sao Paulo press which were widely read, and quoted in all parts of the country. I must have written dozens and dozens of these articles--almost on a monthly basis. That got our message out; these pieces were read by the authorities, who would frequently give me feed-back, particularly if they objected to my views. I was very careful in preparing these Op Ed pieces so that I could stand behind every word expressed.

In addition to public diplomacy, we worked very hard behind the scenes--in private--to advance US positions. Diplomatic conversations were strictly private; my interlocutors had to know what they said to me would not find its way into the public domain. As they saw that their confidences were respected, their trust in me increased. They may have preferred to have a less public American Ambassador, but eventually they accepted that this was part of my *modus operandi*.

But having observed that their comments to me remained private, they became increasingly frank; we covered all issues in the most candid and bluntest fashion and no offense was taken because the officials knew that these were the views the U.S. presented in an unvarnished fashion. I think that was an effective way to conduct business. We obviously did not always see eye to eye. For example, toward the end of my tour, there was an egregious human rights case involving Indians in the northern states--apparent complicity by local authorities in murder and torture. We consulted with other diplomatic missions with an interest in human rights. I told the Brazilians that we would be sending an Embassy officer to monitor the situation on the ground. I sent her to Amazonia; she was accompanied by a representative of the British Embassy. When they arrived at their first departure point near the site of the incident, the local authorities blocked them from reaching their first destination; they were "detained" which brought a major and instant protest from us. Initially, the Foreign Ministry reacted very negatively--our action was an "infringement of Brazil's sovereignty." Eventually, the Ministry backed off; we had established our principle and would not back off. So there was always some tensions in our relationships with the Brazilians on such issues. The Embassy was set on promoting and defending US interests; the Brazilians did not always embrace that role, but I think in the end they accepted our advocacy as reasonable and appropriate, even if it made them uncomfortable.

Many observers, including me, view the Brazilian Foreign Service as one of the world's best. It is an elitist service, recruited from a large population. It is relatively small, by US standards--in the hundreds, not thousands. Traditionally, the officers are selected from the upper class. The requirements in academic attainment, including fluency in at least two languages, are very high. In addition a Brazilian Foreign Service officer can expect to go through a rigorous diplomatic training program before he or she reports to the first assignment. They are tested before each promotion. Great emphasis is placed on language skills, which reinforces Brazil's emphasis on multilateral diplomacy. In addition to Washington and a few other major world capitals, the key assignments in the Brazilian Foreign Service are Geneva and New York--centers of international organization activities. The fast track for Brazilian Foreign Service officers is through assignments to Brazilian missions to international institutions. Brazil continues to assign its "best and brightest" to these posts. As a consequence, Brazilian senior Foreign Service officers are extremely knowledgeable about global issues and very much at home with multilateral diplomacy. A Brazilian Foreign Service officer, after several years of service, can be assigned to any of these multilateral organizations and find himself or herself immediately productive because there is virtually no learning curve. They are already familiar with the organization and usually know the staff well from previous assignments. Those elements combine to give the Brazilian Foreign Service its world class status; they are proud of that standing and work hard to maintain it.

JOHN D. CASWELL

State Department - Latin American Affairs

Washington, DC (1993-1995)

Political Section - Deputy Chief

Brasilia (1995-1998)

Mr. Caswell was born in 1947 in Massachusetts, raised in Massachusetts and Connecticut. He was educated at Franklin and Marshall College, the Fletcher School of Tufts University and the University of California, Los Angeles. After service in the US Navy he entered the Foreign Service in 1974. His foreign assignments as Political or Economic Officer include Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Brasilia, Lisbon and Sofia. In Washington, Mr. Caswell served in the Department's Operations Center and in European and Latin American Affairs. He also served two years with USAID's Regional Mission for Europe. Mr. Caswell was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

CASWELL: '95 as the Deputy Director for Brazil and Southern Cone.

Q: Well, when you got to Brazil, what was the situation?

CASWELL: Brazil was emerging from a period that was known as the lost decade, which referred to essentially the 1980s when Brazil really got hammered very badly in the financial crisis that rocked Latin America. It started out initially in Mexico but then it spread. Brazil has developed itself over the years in a very inward-looking, autarchic sort of country and economy. In part I think it's because it's a country of continental proportions and they always felt that the internal market is the important thing: "We have virtually all the natural resources that we need, except for oil, in a big way, and we can pretty much develop the way we want to do develop. We don't have to do adjust ourselves to do international market realities or whatever." Their sense of isolation was also, I think, encouraged by the fact that they spoke Portuguese [rather than Spanish like the rest of South America]. They had a very strong sense of their own identity, their own uniqueness, and dating back in the 1950s they decided the way to develop economically was through import substitution. They decided early on, for instance, that a strategic industry to develop would be the motor industry, the automotive and trucking industry. As the country initially developed it would satisfy its transport needs by importing cars and trucks from the United States or from Europe, and then they said, "Well, if we're going to really get into the big leagues and fully develop and so forth, we need to have our own automotive and trucking industry. How do we build this industry when it's cheaper to import the cars and truck from overseas?" Well, the way you do it is you put up high tariff walls that will make it very

expensive to import cars and trucks into Brazil, and at the same time you encourage the foreign manufacturers to build their own factories in Brazil to serve the Brazilian market. Thus Brazil would encourage foreign investment or, what came to do be even more typical of Brazil, they created state-owned companies in order to access the capital you need to build the factories or whatever, you create “a national champion”, if you will, that can compete with the big foreign companies and can raise the capital to build a factory to do whatever, make steel. That was the way they developed the steel industry. They created a national steel company and that went and built the steel mills, but to allow that industry to develop and to reach its potential, you had to have very high tariff walls because initially these infant industries couldn’t compete on a price basis with imported steel or imported cars or whatever. So then you create this industry. But then there’s the classic problem of the infant industry which doesn’t want to do grow up. It’s very comfortable behind the high tariff walls, it never develops the efficiency required to compete internationally, so it can’t export, and furthermore it produces sort of an inferior-quality product at a higher price because it’s been protected from international competition. These industries become very politically influential. If the government ever thought about lowering the tariff, they would scream bloody murder and say, “You can’t do that, you can’t throw us out of business, you can’t sacrifice the national interest.” So they had a whole economic model that developed over the years that basically was a hothouse economy that couldn’t really effectively compete and remained dependent upon new infusions of cash either in forms of investment or in the form of loans. Increasingly over the years the bulk of how capital came was in the form of loans and Brazil became more and more indebted, [but couldn’t export enough to earn the foreign currency to pay back all the foreign loans].

Q: How can a person survive under that? I’m thinking about I get a salary or a pension, and all of a sudden essentially you have no money.

CASWELL: What happened basically was that - how can I put it? - unsophisticated people who lived from paycheck to paycheck, the poor and the downtrodden - there are people in Brazil who are so poor they don’t have paychecks - they continued to do scratch out some kind of existence outside the money economy either in the countryside or begging or thieving or selling small items in the streets of the cities or picking their way through garbage dumps and so forth; but the people who got hammered the worst by the inflation were the people who essentially did get some sort of money pay but who lacked the sophistication to take advantage of developments in the Brazilian financial industry which were set up to try to protect people from the scourge of inflation. Brazilians are rather sophisticated in many ways, and the financial and banking industry became adept at learning to live with high inflation rates by putting in - the phrase they used for it - ‘monetary correction.’ In effect they indexed the economy for inflation. They didn’t try to end inflation. The government in effect said either, “Well, inflation can be benign,” and/or “It’s impossible for us to fully eradicate it, so what we need to do is develop a mechanism to make it possible to live with the beast.” So they worked out an index for measuring how much

the cost of living increased from month to do month, and as a matter of fact, in later days the monetary-correction index came down to day by day, but I think initially it was month by month. Then every price in the country, or virtually everything in the country, was allowed to do go up by that index. It would be adjusted monthly. So, say, you were paid 1000 *cruzeiros* a month when monetary correction was introduced, then once that happened your monthly salary at 1000 *cruzeiros* every month would be adjusted according to do the inflation rate of the previous month. So, say, the inflation rate the previous month was 10 percent, your 1000-*cruzero* salary the next month wouldn't be 1000 *cruzeiros*, it would 1100 *cruzeiros*. So if this happens and the adjustments were made frequently enough - your bank accounts also had monetary correction; it would pay interest plus monetary correction - if you had your salary and your bank account and enough things around had this index in place to protect you, like a full COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) in effect, you could be protected to a substantial extent from the inflation. Another thing that people who had money would do, obviously they wouldn't keep their money in *cruzeiros* sitting around, they would either go out and buy land or some other asset which they thought would appreciate as fast or faster than inflation, or they would get it out into dollars. I can't remember exactly when it happened, but it became allowable - it wasn't necessarily ever encouraged, but it certainly became legal - to do have dollar bank accounts with Brazilian banks in Brazil. You didn't even have to do move the money out of the country. So people in the middle classes and the upper classes, the monied classes, could protect themselves from this inflation. It was the working poor, if you will, who really bore the brunt. Since they are politically inarticulate and didn't really call the shots or could not bring to bear their voting power in a significant way in the way Brazil was governed, it was a fine system. The people who mattered, who had political power, could protect themselves from inflation, and the other people just got screwed. Well, they're just maids anyway - who cares? - or taxicab drivers or whatever. So the more you'd gotten into this inflationary situation, of course, obviously as soon as you get your pay, if you were a person of modest means, you went right to the grocery store, bought up a month's worth of groceries and necessities right then and there before the price could go up anymore. Then also sophisticated people would keep their money in interest-bearing checking accounts - this was another thing that they would do - and you would never hold cash. By the early '90s you would never walk around with cash in your pocket because it was losing value as you walked down the street. If you had a checking account, you kept all your money in the interest-bearing-plus-monetary-correction checking account. If you walk into a drugstore to buy some medicine, you write out a check. If you walk even into McDonald's and you buy a hamburger, you write out a check. Then what happened was, part of this Brazilian flair for creative financing, your salary doesn't go far enough, say you want to do buy a hamburger today, October 31st, write out your check but you date it November 10th so it won't be cashed till November 10th. So in effect Brazilians were floating loans by back-dating checks. So that's how people survived. Anyway, getting back to do your question of where we were with Brazil in this period of the '80s and the '90s, Brazil was very isolated in its thinking, very inward looking, and did not have a very good relationship with the United States ever since the period of Carter when

he criticized Brazil so sharply on human rights and even sent his wife Rosalynn down to do lecture the Brazilian generals on human rights. This was kind of the ultimate insult to the Brazilian generals, to do be lectured by a woman about how to do govern their country and how to respect the human rights of the Brazilian people. President Carter's other major concern about Brazil was their burgeoning nuclear industry and what we felt were ill-conceived and ill-concealed attempts to do get the bomb, [the ability to do build nuclear weapons, as part of Brazil's drive for grandeur - a bigger international role]. U.S.-Brazilian relations had not been good for some time. As a matter of fact, they had been rather testy.

Q: Any sort of political challenges to the United States within the body politic of Brazil at the time?

CASWELL: Political challenges? I can't say that there were. The major issues: Cardoso was trying to pursue a course of action that required constitutional reforms to do some of the things he wanted to do, to consolidate the process of opening up the Brazilian economy and privatizing the Brazilian economy and to get better control of the Brazilian budget, which was required if he was going to keep inflation under control. That was the major preoccupation of the Brazilian government, biting the bullet and making these reforms. The Brazilian Constitution is like the Manhattan phone book - it's very thick and specifies all kinds of things - to make significant changes in the Brazilian economy and regain control over the government budget, you had to change the Constitution, and so you had to get a two-third majority to make a lot of these changes. So this was politically a very difficult thing for the government to try to do and they were very much preoccupied with that. Those sorts of changes were very much in the interests of the American business community. Both people who had already invested in Brazil or people who wanted to think about future investments in Brazil or who wanted to sell in Brazil were very interested in the opening of the Brazilian economy and the stabilization of the currency and getting the fiscal reforms to get the budget under control so inflation wouldn't come back. All that was very positive.

On regional security issues the Brazilians, like we talked about before in the Peru-Ecuador process, they were very constructive. They were very helpful and supportive sharing our concerns about the threat to democracy, such as it was, in Paraguay. There was a rogue general named Lino Oviedo who was threatening a coup against the constitutionally elected president of Paraguay. There was a question of whether there'd be a coup in Paraguay. Paraguay's a funny country. The Brazilians used to joke that Paraguay was their Haiti, so they understood our problems with Haiti since they had similar sort of problems with political instability, crime, etc. in Paraguay affecting Brazil. Well, we would collaborate or we would coordinate closely with the Brazilians as well as the Argentines, who also had some influence in Paraguay, about problems there. As I said before, Brazilians were doing the right thing on a number of things

relating to nuclear non-proliferation, missile technology nonproliferation, after years of basically challenging the U.S. position on these things.

The Brazilian government even agreed to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the NPT, which was a major reversal. The Brazilians, along with the Indians and the Pakistanis, had been major remaining opponents. Brazil finally came on board with that and tried to cooperate and tried to bring pressure to do bear on people like the Indians to also come along.

Human rights, there was another question where for years and years we fought and tangled a lot with the Brazilians about human rights issues. Cardoso agreed and named in effect a kind of minister for human rights, as it were. Actually it wasn't a full-blown minister but a senior officer within the Justice Ministry. After years of criticizing our annual human rights report, the Brazilian government began to put out its own human rights report, which was critical of the situation in various parts of Brazil where you had real problems with police running amok or landowners taking the law into their own hands, a lot of problems like that. The Brazilian government said they agreed there were problems and they were trying to do the right thing to protect human rights.

They were also trying to do the right thing in terms of stopping or controlling the environmental degradation in the Amazon. Maybe it wasn't always as much as we would have liked to do see, but they were moving in the right direction.

We did have some problems, but they were relatively minor ones. There was an extradition case when I was there involving a man who was wanted for arson and murder in the Seattle area - he was named Martin Pan - and he fled to Brazil because we didn't have a really good up-to-date extradition treaty with Brazil. It was a very antiquated and difficult extradition treaty to work, and I guess he somehow got the idea that Brazil would be a good place to avoid the long reach of U.S. law enforcement agencies. He hired a clever lawyer and we had a prolonged problem, because literally any extradition out of Brazil had to be handled by the Brazilian Supreme Court. So it was a prolonged process, it was a difficult process, and differences between Brazilian law and U.S. law, particularly as they define the crimes of arson and murder and the death penalty, made it very difficult to get him extradited. We ended up having repeated calls from Janet Reno, both to the ambassador and Brazilian justice minister...

THEODORE WILKINSON

Political Counselor

Brasilia (1994-1996)

Theodore Wilkinson was born in Washington, DC in 1934. He received his BA from Yale and his MA from George Washington University. He served as a lieutenant in the US Navy from 1956 to 1960. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961, and his postings include Caracas, Stockholm, Brussels, Mexico City, Tegucigalpa and Brasilia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 11, 1999.

Q: *When you arrived there in '94, what would you describe as America's interests in Brazil?*

WILKINSON: Secretary Christopher came to visit in the spring of 1996, and I was his control officer and went with him on several of his conversations. I thought he put it very nicely at one point in talking to the foreign minister, when he said, "Brazil really can move South America because it's the dominant country of the continent, and when Brazil and the United States are on the same wavelength, we can move the entire Western Hemisphere. And if together we can move the Western Hemisphere, we can move the world." That, of course, is not always the case, but coordinating our goals and policies with Brazil gives us a nucleus of very important solidarity on the basis of which we can achieve a great deal in foreign policy. Brazil and the United States have traditionally not been on the same wavelength. Brazil, throughout the '60s and '70s, probably through much of the '80s, was a Third World country, and was notoriously difficult to manage in international organizations, often not only opposing U.S. points of view but leading contrary movements in the north-south dialogue and sometimes also on security issues. Today, particularly under Cardoso and under his foreign minister, Luis Felipe Lampreia, who is a very sophisticated and American-oriented foreign minister, Brazil is independent and not always in agreement with the United States, but much more tractable and much easier to deal with; and our interests continue to be in improving that relationship and maintaining that mutual understanding that I think we developed in the last four or five years. Former Brazilian foreign minister, Celso Amorim, is now the ambassador to the United Nations, where Brazil is a member of the Security Council.

He is less helpful and attuned to our wavelength than the current foreign minister, Lampreia. But one example of our interests, and I'll talk a little bit about Brazil's foreign relations when I do that, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry is usually called Itamaraty. That name comes from the palace in Rio where the Baron of Itamaraty had, in effect, given his palace to the government when Brazil became a republic in 1889, and the Foreign Ministry was housed there until the capital moved to Brasilia in 1959. So Itamaraty is very much like the Mexican Foreign Ministry. It's staffed with intellectual people, artists, authors, very proud of their heritage, many of them sons and grandsons of former foreign ministers and cabinet ministers, somewhat democratized, but nowhere near as democratized as the American Foreign Service has become, and a little bit condescending towards the less aristocratic American way of dealing with foreign affairs. Cardoso himself began to change the system to make it somewhat more democratic, and after the beginning of the Cardoso administration, Brazilian diplomats told me they were very happy that people were finally being assigned and promoted on the basis of merit and not on the basis

simply of personal friendships. The Brazilians, as evidence of their movement towards the U.S. and growing sympathy for United States foreign policy goals, became members first of the missile technology control regime, an effort sponsored by the U.S. to prevent the proliferation of missile technology. They agreed that they would not allow exports to “rogue” regimes, and then they moved one step further - they had already moved in the previous administration of Fernando Collor to proscribe nuclear weapons, together with Argentina, from their two territories - they converted that commitment into a more general one by becoming parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the Cardoso Administration.

I was also very impressed when the new foreign minister, even at the beginning of his tenure, announced in his introductory speech that Brazil was going to focus on improving its own record in human rights and would collaborate much more effectively with the UN and with the U.S. in trying to improve human rights performance worldwide. One of their principal diplomats is now the director general of the organization set up in The Hague to police the chemical weapons treaty that is now entering into force.

I also wanted to mention, with regard to the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, that they’re paying much more attention, as we are, to non-governmental organizations. That in effect is another example of democratization, where Foreign Ministries, as ours does, draw on the advice and expertise of non-governmental organizations in formulating policies. So we’re listening to the experts on the outside, and the Brazilians are doing the same.

So those are some of the thoughts that I was struck with about Brazilian foreign policy and its relationship to the United States during those years that I served there.

Q: Were there any particular issues? It sounds like this is really almost a feeling of pleasure working with this new government that came in, that you were both on the same wavelength and that, while there might have been differences, you were really going in the same direction. Did you feel that way at the time?

WILKINSON: Yes, very much so. Christopher, when he came, in 1996, his last previous visit to Brazil had been in the late ‘70s, when he was the deputy secretary of State, and he had come down with the message that Brazil was not cooperating with the United States, in particular in the nuclear area. Brazil had just reached an agreement with Germany for the Germans to export nuclear technology and build a number of reactors, the by-product of which could have been used for nuclear weapons, and it was not going to be satisfactorily controlled. And we insisted with Germany and with Brazil that that deal not continue because Brazil was not committed not to produce nuclear weapons. He also was spokesman of the Carter human rights policy, and Brazil’s human rights record was being criticized. It was a military government, and there were people who had disappeared. So Christopher had an unenviable diplomatic task in the 1970s, and he was happy when he came in ‘96 to be able to say, “I no longer have this kind of problem to

talk about. The only problems we're talking about are the kinds of disagreements that one has with close friends about how best to achieve something." An example of the kinds of disagreements we had was on the pace and organization of the "Free Trade Area of the Americas" [FTAA]. We had agreed with the Brazilians and others in December, 1994, really just after I got there, at the Miami Summit Conference, the Summit of the Americas, organized by President Clinton, and a keystone of American policy in the hemisphere, to broaden the NAFTA or - if you will - to start from scratch and create a hemispheric free trade zone. And the U.S. at that time, hoping to get "fast track authority" for these negotiations from the Congress, was pressing very hard to move fast on this front in 1995 and 1996. The Brazilians' concern was that their own Southern Cone common market was still in its early stages and wasn't really ready for a complete open market for the entire hemisphere; that their "Mercosur" group, which consisted of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay (with Chile and Bolivia in association), couldn't stand free trade competition directly from the United States yet, and that the pace should be a lot slower. So in the years '96 and '97, we sparred with Brazil about how fast this operation should go, and in the end, when President Clinton was unable to get fast track authority, which he needed to negotiate fully, it became clear that we too were not ready for that accelerated negotiation, and so the issue became a little bit moot. Now the only issues between us and Brazil of any great importance, I think, are how to organize international efforts to improve the environment, given that Brazil has such an important role. And we, of course, want Brazilians to do their best to preserve their own forests and curtail environmental degradation. And Brazil, although committed to that goal, is having difficulties implementing it in its own vast country and is saying, in effect, we need more international help. If we're going to be given so many responsibilities, who is going to help us with the costs? And our attitude is kind of "Don't bother me with the costs; just do it." So that creates a certain amount of disagreement and tension. Of course, the other area of disagreement with Brazil today are our financial norms and the international financial institutions telling Brazil to curtail costs and restore the balance of the federal budget at a time when they're finding it very difficult to do that constitutionally and legally.

GILBERT J. DONAHUE

Deputy Principal Officer

Sao Paulo (1994-1997)

Gilbert J. Donahue was born in Virginia in 1947. He received his bachelor's degree from American University in 1968. His career included positions in Mexico, Ivory Coast, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, and Brazil. Mr. Donahue was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 2000.

Q: So, you were in Brazil from August 1994 until when?

DONAHUE: Until July 1997.

Q: What was your job?

DONAHUE: I was deputy principal officer in the Consulate General and head of the combined Economic and Political Section, which also included labor reporting.

Brazil is one of our multiple post missions. That is, in addition to the embassy, there are several constituent posts, including some cities that are more important than the capital city where the embassy is located. In Brazil, both Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo are more important culturally and economically than Brasilia. Other countries with similar characteristics are: Australia, Canada, China, India, South Africa, and Russia. One of the challenges for such a mission is to maintain open lines of communication between the embassy and the posts, coordinate closely on the implementation of the mission plan, and utilize the knowledge and strengths available in each post for the benefit of the overall mission. Brazil was a considerable challenge in this respect. The vast size of the country and the high cost of travel meant that mission personnel were not able to see each other very frequently. Although the entire country is Portuguese-speaking, there are significant regional differences, and each city where the mission had an office has a distinct personality. That meant that there would be a different way to arrange meetings and get things done. Although each of our multiple post countries is distinctive, they all require a special approach to management to ensure that resources are being put to the best use.

Q: What was your main occupation?

DONAHUE: My job was equivalent of a DCM in an embassy. Sao Paulo was a large post with maybe 35-40 American officers and 200 or so Foreign Service national employees. We had a large consular district when I got there that grew even more. During the period that I was there, we closed our consulate in Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state in Brazil. So, our consular district went all the way down to the Argentine border. A lot of time was spent in traveling the consular district, making sure that we had good relations with the states and principal cities, that we knew what was going on. There was substantial interest on the part of American business in many of those states, even the landlocked ones where a lot of agricultural production was taking place. I managed consulate operations from the standpoint of making sure the needs of the various sections were maintained. I was also the principal interface with the American Chamber of Commerce, and served on the trade and investment committee. Amcham was the only organization that could support us when we had high-level visitors, and we relied a great deal on the Chamber to put together programs or provide a venue for our ambassador when he came to visit businesspeople, and when Secretary of State Christopher made a visit.

I also spent a lot of time with people in the financial community. Just before I arrived in Brazil, the Department of Treasury had pulled its Treasury attaché out of Brasilia. I guess they had had one or two local people, FSNs, in that office. The office was closed. They really did it without any prior notice to the State Department. Ambassador Levitsky was quite unhappy with that decision. State did not increase the staffing of the Economic Section in Brasilia nor did the Embassy have someone with the same kind of background and credentials as the Treasury person. So, I worked very closely with my counterpart in our embassy in Brasilia to make sure that there was enough financial reporting. There was certainly a need for it. There was a close interest in following what was going on with inflation, whether the other reform policies that the government needed to take place were going to be done, what the impact on the financial markets would be, and so forth. The main commercial banking center for Brazil was Sao Paulo. The main stock market, the futures market, all of that was in Sao Paulo. So, we spent a lot of time following those markets. Sao Paulo was also the major center for agricultural trade. In fact, the Cargill representative for all of Brazil was in Sao Paulo. Cargill is a major grain buyer in the world and provider of seeds for farmers that cooperate with it. Sao Paulo and Santos, its port, were also the primary centers for the trade of coffee and cocoa, the principal Brazilian commodities sold in the world market. Sao Paulo state was the largest producer of sugar. In the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other parts of the government, they followed the sugar prices on a regular basis. So, there was a lot of activity of the economic type.

I also oversaw political and labor reporting. We had a Labor attaché. There may have been only one other Labor attaché on the continent of South America. That would have been in Buenos Aires. Our Labor attaché spent a lot of time with the major unions that were headquartered in Sao Paulo and he reported on union activity. That would include safety of workers; child labor, which became a big issue; and human rights related to labor. With the political officer, we worked closely together on the issue of human rights. Back when I first arrived in Sao Paulo, I drafted our contribution to the Embassy's Human Rights Report. We sponsored a number of nascent or developing civil society organizations, NGOs, operating in the area of civil rights, children's rights, women's rights, improving race relations, the whole panoply of social/political issues. On many occasions, I backstopped our political officer in those efforts and helped expand the consulate's contacts.

NADIA TONGOUR

Senior Political Officer

Rio de Janeiro (1994-1997)

Nadia Tongour was born in Turkey and raised in South Carolina. She was educated at William and Mary and Stanford Universities 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.

TONGOUR: But, in any event, I soon had to return to the cycle of bidding on normal tours of duty. In fact, that had started even before I went out to California because the bidding cycle in effect begins sometimes more than a year in advance. In my case, I found out after I arrived in San Francisco that I would next go to Rio de Janeiro, by way of a short course in Portuguese. Consequently, after leaving California in the summer of 1994, I came back here to Washington and spent three or four months at our Foreign Service Institute studying Portuguese. And in December of 1994, I headed down to Rio.

Q: Good heavens. This is quite a change.

TONGOUR: Isn't it?

Q: You were in Rio from when to when?

TONGOUR: I was there for two and a half years, from December 1994 to the summer of 1997. The reason for this slightly unusual period is that I curtailed my tour by a few months in order to get onto what was called the summer cycle for the Department, since most jobs become available then. .

Q: Well, how did this come about? I mean, your Caribbean time could not carry over to Rio and the rest of the time you were pretty much, you know, Eastern Bloc.

TONGOUR: When I went out to San Francisco, it was just a year and a half, and we left a year later. While I was well aware that from a career standpoint it would make sense to go next to Georgia or Moldova or elsewhere in Eastern Europe, I thought it might be very difficult from a family perspective. So I consciously bid on assignments that I thought would be satisfying and that would allow for nanny care and all that goes with it. Having already served in Latin America (my first posting in Mexico) and done a stint in the Caribbean, I was not out of the question as a candidate for an ARA, now WHA (Western Hemisphere Affairs), posting. And the other part of it was that Rio de Janeiro was at that time one of our largest consulates, having something on the order of 70 American direct hires and a much larger contingent of Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs); nevertheless, it was a consulate and many ambitious officers would have had second thoughts about serving in such a post. In a way that might have been a mistake for those who wrote of Rio or Sao Paulo because Rio had long been the political capital of the country and many of the most prominent Brazilians, the movers and shakers, still tended to scorn the inland

capital of Brasilia, which then still lacked charm, and spent as much time as possible in their home cities of Rio or Sao Paulo. In other words, Brazilian political leaders of that period had somewhat of a commuter existence, spending Tuesdays through Thursdays in Brasilia and the remainder of the week and all holidays in their home cities. For political officers this was wonderful in that we gained access to many officials who might have been too busy to see political officers in Brasilia since their time there was devoted to attending congressional sessions or other required activities. Back home, however, they tended to be more relaxed and accessible to us. Of course, Rio was a beautiful city to live in, with numerous advantages as well as some drawbacks.

Q: What was your job?

TONGOUR: I was the senior political officer. We had a combined pol-econ section. I actually wound up running the section for about seven or eight months during a staffing gap, and for a month or two I served as Acting Consul General, again because of a gap between the former and prospective Consul General.

Q: In your area were there any sort of crises or anything, at least from your perspective, that you had to deal with?

TONGOUR: Crises is probably too strong a word because essentially the kinds of things that were of interest to Washington revolved around issues of narco-trafficking, corruption and how to make our assistance more effective. We were concerned about fighting crime and narco-traffickers and wanted to support the police; at the same time, cops were involved in the killing of street children. The quandary we faced was how to help people who might be doing good on one front when some of those very people were not necessarily predisposed toward us. These were the types of issues we discussed, namely given limited resources should we send to the United States potential leaders who might now be critical of the U.S. Could they be brought around to understand our viewpoint, etc? I don't think you could say that there were major crises in our relationship with Brazil at that time. To be sure there were various pressures, including from environmental groups and NGOs to take a strong stand on developments in the Amazon or on human rights issues. On the latter, we really did try. I personally met with a lot of NGOs who frequently came in and provided invaluable information on human rights abuses in Brazil. But the problem was that most human rights abuses in Brazil were not officially being carried out by the government of Brazil. What does one do when an off-duty cop -- a cop by day, a paid security guard by night -- kills kids at night or goes after people who then disappear?

Q: Why were they killing people, killing children?

TONGOUR: Children were only one small segment. The case that became most famous, the so-called Candelaria Massacre involved the killing of children. But such killings were rare. The

disappearances, the rounding up and abuse of victims was more common. A few years before I arrived, there had been what many described as an invasion of locusts, of children and teens roaming the beaches and robbing tourists and others. Officially, the police would clean that up, because after all, for a city such as Rio de Janeiro, tourism is a major industry. So, the police were there to clean up the beaches, and they did. Crime was definitely a problem and the favelas (slums) were breeding grounds for drugs; the police would invade these areas and clean them up. Some of the people rounded up were quite young, but the overt actions of the police were viewed as legitimate. The other aspect, their off-duty work, such as what occurred outside the Candelaria Cathedral in downtown Rio were more brutal -- resulting in the killing of children who were literally sleeping in front of the church. Apparently storekeepers in the vicinity did not like to see these children sleeping on the plaza in front of the church. They considered it bad for business. Who paid whom, who did what to whom, was never clarified but eventually some off-duty policemen were tried for the killing of half a dozen or more kids and the wounding of others. The so-called Candelaria Massacre became a visible problem, creating a sense of outrage among the more enlightened members of Brazilian society and the outside world and spawned considerable social activism. One of the people I got to know well in Rio, who was related to the UN Rep Vieira de Melo, was very involved in working with street children after this massacre. She was a woman who came from a very wealthy family. Yet she wound up working with these kids. And I am talking not this street group or that street group; there were thousands of children who are essentially living on the street, living in squalor in cardboard shacks.

Q: Where do they come from? In other words, are they disconnected from at least their mother or something like that?

TONGOUR: Some of them are not disconnected from a mother or other family members. In fact, some come from families that lived in the cardboard shacks. The woman I mentioned invited me to go with her on one of her visitations to see a group of kids she often brought food. Many of them slept under aqueducts or bridges where they created cardboard shantytowns. These children ranged in ages, and sometimes they lived with a parent; thus, they were not always alone. However, the parent might actually have been working somewhere. Alternately, a 10 or 12 year old might well have run away from an abusive situation or be living with one parent in the cardboard shanty, but that parent might be somewhere working as a maid or in some menial profession. Their backgrounds and where they came from was unclear. Many were clearly from rural areas and came to the big city to find work, given their bleak situation elsewhere. Things have gotten better in recent years, but 10-15 years ago there was considerable poverty and many such squatter settlements. Then, too, there were many favela kids who would come down from the hills to sell "whatever" (Chiclets and odds and ends) on the streets. Sometimes these were runaways from abusive situations, but often they would simply leave their favelas during the day and return at night. The worst off had nowhere to go and simply slept under any available arcade in downtown Rio. One could spot them any evening when walking around the city; they would

be sleeping on the sidewalks, under building arcades if they were lucky. Fortunately, the climate in Rio is generally mild so this is feasible.

LACY A. WRIGHT

Deputy Chief of Mission

Brasilia (1995-1997)

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.

WRIGHT: I went to Brazil, also as DCM.

Q: *And you were in Brazil from '95 to—*

WRIGHT: '97. I was there two years.

Q: *How did you get that job?*

WRIGHT: Well, by the time I left Jamaica, partially, I think, because of the Haitian matter and the way that the Jamaicans and, I guess, the embassy had performed, my stock was fairly high in ARA, so I think I pretty much could almost have had my pick of the jobs that were open at that point. In fact, I had a couple of other offers to be DCM's in embassies. What I went after, actually, was not this job but was another job in Brazil, and that was consul general in São Paulo. It turned out that the ambassador, Mel Levitsky, had really three jobs which he considered to be about at the same level, and he had all of them in mind when he offered me any of them, and those were consuls general in São Paulo and Rio and the DCM-ship. Well, my chances of going to São Paulo went up in smoke when Melissa Wells decided that she wanted to go to São Paulo. Melissa had been ambassador a couple of times. She was, it was thought, coming to her last assignment, and she decided that for family reasons—that is, her son lives in São Paulo—that she would like to have her last post there. And once she decided that, that was that. So that job vanished, but I then switched my sights and I was chosen by Mel Levitsky to go there as his deputy.

Q: *What was the situation in Brazil during this two year period that you were there?*

WRIGHT: Well, it was a pretty good situation in the sense that Fernando Enrique Cardoso was, still is, president. He had been elected pretty much on the strength of his plan to save the local currency, called the Real Plan, in which he had founded a new currency, pegged it pretty much in the beginning to the US dollar, and then did everything possible to defend it while he was minister of finance, and did end the very high inflation from which Brazil had suffered for a long time. So it brought that all to a stop, and that lasted, it guess, from about 1993, when it started, and it's still going strong. I think inflation this year in Brazil will be about seven per cent; it probably used to be about that much per day.

And Cardoso not only did that but he instituted a number of other economic and social reforms. He himself is a man of real stature, a man who had made a career for himself as an academic before becoming a politician and who is personally irreproachable, who has lived in a number of countries, speaks three or four different languages fluently, including English, of course, and who, for the first time in a long time, maybe for the first time ever, has provided the Brazilians with a president who has real respect internationally.

Q: How did Mel Levitsky, who's a regular Foreign Service officer, use you?

WRIGHT: First of all, when I went there, I knew little about Brazil. I'd never been there before, so I stayed, I would say, in large part within the embassy and looked to the administration there. Naturally I did a certain number of things outside, too, but I would say that, more than some other assignments, I spent a lot of my time on administration of the embassy. Mel Levitsky, on the other hand, knew all the issues between our countries backwards and forwards. He didn't need any help in those areas at all. So I would say that generally that was the division of labor.

Q: I've never served in Brazil. I understand that São Paolo is becoming more important in contrast to Rio as a post. You, as the DCM and managing it, did you see a development like that?

WRIGHT: Well, I didn't see anything develop during my time there, but certainly, from our point of view, yes, São Paolo is a more important place. Rio is still a very important city, but it's one which I wouldn't call it a shell of its former self, but it's lost a certain amount of the pizzazz that it had as São Paolo has become more and more an economic powerhouse. You know, when you stop to think that, I think, the state of São Paolo or maybe it's the city has a larger economy than all of Chile, you begin to get some idea of the enormous size and sophistication of that area.

Q: Well, looking at Brazil, I mean, you hadn't been in Brazil before, and this is the colossus to the south. But it has been going through, you know, almost from the beginning, has never quite lived up to what it should be. How did Brazil strike you?

WRIGHT: Well, what you're referring to has been captured in an aphorism, which is "Brazil is the country of the future, and always will be." I think, yes, that may have changed. Probably many of the reforms that have been introduced are irreversible – privatization, for example. Just the other day, a part of Brazil's national telecommunications company was auctioned off for

\$18.8 billion, much of it to MCI, so the whole telecommunications system will probably in the end bring in, I don't know, \$30 or 40 billion to Brazil, and once they privatize it, they'll have a terrific telecommunications system, by the way, which they certainly don't have now. So that's one example of a very important infrastructure area which is being transformed in Brazil to the great benefit of the national treasury, as well as the citizens. So in other areas, in the nuclear area, we used to regard Brazil as a kind of bad boy of South America, along with Argentina, always fiddling around with things that they shouldn't be. That's all a thing of the past. Human rights—there are still horrible human rights travesties—*travesties* is not the right word—incidents in Brazil, but I'm convinced that the government is serious about human rights. They have good people in charge in this area in Brasilia who are very much trying to do the right thing. It's going to take a while longer, but they're moving in the right direction and trying very hard to cope with that situation. Probably Brazil's most serious long-term problem is education. They have a very poor primary and secondary educational system, but they also have a terrific minister of education, who is making big changes in that area, so as you look around the landscape, even though they still have very big problems—they have a horrible income distribution in Brazil, which dovetails with their horrible education system—all that having been said, things are moving in a very good direction.

GREG THIELMANN

Deputy Principal Political Officer

Brasilia (1995-1998)

Mr. Thielmann was born and raised in Iowa and was educated at Grinnell College and Princeton University. A specialist in Political-Military Affairs, he held a number of positions dealing with such matters as Strategic Proliferation, Arms Control and Missile Programs. He also served abroad at several posts in the capacity of Political Officer and Consular Officer. His last position was Chief, Office of Analysis for Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs in State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Mr. Thielmann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004

Q: Okay, well this is probably a good place to stop. In '95 where did you go?

THIELMANN: After the Germany desk I was planning on going to Germany. But alas in the strange ways of personnel, of two jobs that I had my eye on, one was eliminated. The sure fall back went to the special assistant to the head of the European Bureau, and I ended up going back to Brazil as a political officer.

Q: This was from your first tour.

THIELMANN: It was my first tour, and it ended up being my last foreign tour. So back in the same political section in the same embassy—

Q: And you were there from '95 to when?

THIELMANN: To '98.

Q: Okay, well, we'll pick this up the next time at that.

Today is the 22nd of March, 2005. Greg, all right, we're off to Brazil. You were, I assume in Brasília. You were in the political section. What were you doing there?

THIELMANN: I was one of the more senior line political officers there. It was a little demoralizing to me when I first got in the embassy because I literally was sitting in an office just two down from where I was at the beginning of my Foreign Service career in 1977. It seemed a little bit as if I was moving up the political ladder like one rung after seventeen years. That kind of overstates the degree of change. But all of us in the political section actually divided domestic responsibilities and foreign affairs responsibilities. So, for example, because of my background, I dealt with all of the political military issues involving Brazil. I was the one who interfaced with the defense attachés. I had some of the Brazilian political parties--and there were quite a few--in terms of keeping track of them and some aspects of national policies. So that's really how I started my three-year tour. I might just mention an interesting tidbit on the language front: I came back into a Portuguese refresher course shortly before leaving for Brasília again. There had been a seventeen-year interval since I had last served in Brazil, and there was very little opportunity to maintain my Portuguese during that time. In the intervening time I had served in German-speaking and Russian-speaking posts. So it was a very interesting experience of trying to extract from the far corners of my mind those Portuguese words, and I remember one little problem I was having. I kept inserting like one Russian word in my Portuguese sentences, and the frustrated Portuguese teacher after a while asked me who this person was that I kept mentioning, but it was just a Russian word that was sort of mixed into a Portuguese construct. So I found that obviously learning Portuguese the second time was much faster than the first, and it was. My language was pretty serviceable when I arrived at post.

Q: Did you find being in Brasília a difficult place to sort of cover the country because of São Paulo and Rio or other places. Was it difficult to work out of it?

THIELMANN: I would say no, but one of the problems we had, of course, was as in most places the travel budget was somewhat limited. We had the usual sense that we were penned down in the embassy by the responsibilities of the time, and travel opportunities even when the money

existed were more limited than we would want. The country's enormous. The land area is the same as that of the continental United States. We did have fairly good plane connections from Brasília, but it was a challenge as it is any time you have a number of constituent posts and a particular challenge in the economic sector since the vital beating heart of Brazilian economy is in São Paulo, not in Brasília. So it was a challenge, but it was one that I thought that we handled fairly well, and this is probably a good segue into what happened after I had been there one year. Our political counselor retired.

Q: Who was that?

THIELMANN: That was Ted Wilkinson. The deputy political counselor, my boss, moved into the political counselor position, and I became the deputy political counselor. So whatever reservations I had about that very modest move up in the seventeen years seemed a lot different after one year in Brasília when, as political counselor, I had more of an involvement in the management and the orchestration of political reporting throughout the country. I tried to be very conscious about orchestrating how we would report on national events, nationwide elections and everything with close coordination from the political officers in our constituent posts or in some cases with the principal officer who was the only officer. That was challenging and enjoyable because I realized that I liked that kind of coordinating, managerial function of sort of orchestrating how a number of posts do a coordinated and coherent job describing what's going on in the country to the Washington audience. There were also opportunities for me to travel to the various posts, meet with some of the people doing the reporting and make some of my own personal contacts. One of the most memorable of my trips was a trip to Marabá which was a city in the Amazon that had a real Wild West flavor to it. It was one of those cities where there was only marginal control by civil and police authorities. There were huge disputes over the ownership of land. There was an influx of poor Brazilians who had been granted little pieces of land along some of the highways by the Brazilian government as part of a land reform program. There was in the general region great mineral wealth, huge iron ore deposits, and it seemed like a real natural for me to plan a trip there with one of the political officers that was reporting to me as deputy political counselor. He was the one who was drafting the human rights report in fact and, since this was an area where so many of the abuses originated, we thought it was a natural for a trip that actually had us both going into the region through different angles. I went through the state of Maranhão in northeastern Brazil, and then I took a Brazilian passenger train that was run by a big iron producing company all the way into Marabá sort of an all day trip. He approached from a different direction, and then we were planning to spend several days together, but the ambassador originally thought this was too extravagant to have two officers going to the same place. We had to make a pitch to him with a justification to override his own reservations. It turned out that about a week before we were scheduled to arrive, there was a massacre of peasants at a rural road junction that became one of the most significant human rights development in the entire year. So the timing of our trip, while fortuitous, was really the perfect

thing for the embassy to report on this development including both of us inserting ourselves into the interrogation of some of the people involved and having that kind of firsthand account. We got some coverage at the time also as being the first diplomats going into the area to investigate this and manifesting the U.S. government's concern about the allegations of what had happened. While part of it was accidental in terms of timing, I thought this was really a great use of embassy resources to combine human rights reporting, political reporting, on the scene with some of the let's say more academic or distanced commentary from an embassy perspective.

Q: Well, how about the local officials? I'd think they'd be kind of unhappy to have you mucking around there.

THIELMANN: There was a combination of reactions. Certainly some were not happy to see us. There were a lot of non-government organizations operating in the area that were very happy to see us, delighted to see some manifestation of concern for some of the things that they had been complaining about for a long time. But even some of the politicians were people who were trying to do their best in difficult circumstances, and they were not happy at all with the massacre that took place, and it was not as uniformly hostile as one would suspect in that kind of situation. So that was one of the highlights of my tour there. Another thing related to the human rights front should be said. The human rights report was still resented by the Brazilian government as probably it is in almost all countries. But we had a kind of unique glimpse there. Since I had this vivid memory of how much the U.S. inserting itself into human rights during the time of the dictatorship was resented. There was a fascinating meeting that we hosted in the embassy between the visiting former president Jimmy Carter to Brasilia and a group of Brazilian human rights organizations including representatives of the Brazilian government's human rights commission. The incredible thing about this session was people roughly my age in their fifties or in their forties telling Jimmy Carter about the importance of the U.S. position on human rights events at the time in the late '70s when there was a lot of open oppression. Some of these people who had been in prison at the time, others in exile, others who were now serving in government were part of the opposition movement and the pro-human rights movement at that time. So there was almost unanimity around the table about what a vital service the U.S. had performed in the human rights profile at the time. It was a good reminder that the way it seems at the time is not always the enduring legacy of a particular policy.

Q: No, I have to say I was in Korea at the time in the late '70s during the Carter thing, and we had North Korea thirty miles to the north, and so many divisions poised to come in. We were very unhappy with this. Why are we monkeying around with human rights? We've got a real problem here but in the long run, I mean it took time but it has become part of the vocabulary, world vocabulary.

THIELMANN: Yes, the human rights report is something that a lot of people turn to. Amnesty International does one too, but the U.S. government does have certain sources that others don't have, and so it's become a much quoted reference document.

Q: Did you have a problem with the human rights report while you were there?

THIELMANN: I would say we were quite successful, successful also in getting it through the Department, which is always a challenge.

Q: That's the real negotiations.

THIELMANN: And also in not arousing more than the usual kind of grumbling about hypocrisy, and I'm quite proud of it. I mean the glory goes to the drafter really. But I feel very good about it not being vulnerable to attack. We, no one really, found us deficient in our statement of facts.

Q: Where were students going at this time? Were they going to Europe or were they going to the United States? Where was the flow of young people going?

THIELMANN: At my time students were still going to the United States overwhelmingly, and this was very significant because in another generation there was a whole series of Brazilian intellectuals who were educated in Europe, and Cardoso was a good example of that. I mean, he was very French-oriented in terms of his education. Even though he later spent time in the United States while he was in exile from earlier Brazilian military governments. But there's a strong sort of European continental Brazilian intellectual thrust, which of course originates in the fact that the colonizer was Portugal, but it kind of extends into a broader European intellectual thrust.

Q: You've said an awful lot when you get into intellectual thinking centered in France, in Paris.

THIELMANN: Yes, I think that's right. Culturally and temperamentally Brazilians were quite happy throughout the Latin-speaking world, and Italy would be another place, but in terms of the intellectual centers I think more Paris and secondarily Portugal in terms of the traditional education of the Brazilian elite. But the U.S. was still a very powerful magnet when I was there, and since I left of course, I have wondered about how our visa restrictions have changed that now.

Q: It's a concern. Did you find when dealing with Brazilian politicians and the military that they understood the United States? This was always a problem. America's a complex country, and our politics are difficult for an American to understand and yet they drive what we do, and it's nice to have a political body that understands at least where you are coming from. Did you find this?

THIELMANN: I found what I usually find in other countries -- that the understanding of the United States and all of its complexities even among educated natives is not very astute. In the case of Brazil, though, there was so much more Brazilian understanding of the U.S. than there was American understanding of Brazil. Put in that comparative context, I would say the Brazilians seemed to actually understand the United States fairly well. In terms of the Brazilian

elite, not only had they been to the United States, but their kids were sort of raised in Disneyworld or so it seemed. They, the Brazilians, visiting the United States absolutely loved New York City. California, or let's say the more cosmopolitan coastal U.S. was something the influential Brazilians, had a lot of personal contact with. They still had kind of a Hollywood version of the United States in many ways. As my wife told me when she first went to Brazil, in the smaller villages and even some of the larger cities in the rural areas, they were shocked to see that she didn't have blonde hair. I mean, there was that kind of very simplistic image of the United States. Even in the more sophisticated circles that I would run in, there was often surprise when the Americans did something that didn't fit the stereotype of a kind of heavy-handed imperialistic approach to issues. So it's hard to say the Brazilians really understood the U.S. and all of its nuances, but, in comparison with some of the other countries that I've served in, they had a pretty good knowledge of their big brother to the north.

CHILE

In 1952, the people had Ibenez del Campo reelected for another 6 years. After that, Jorge Alessandru took over in 1958 and brought back Chilean conservatism back into power democratically for another term.

HEWSON RYAN

Information Officer, Public Affairs Officer, USIS

Santiago (1956-1961)

Assistant Director, Latin American Operations, USIA

Washington, DC (1961-1962)

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Latin America Bureau

(1974-1976)

Ambassador Hewson Ryan entered the USIA in 1951. His career included posts in Washington, DC, Colombia, Bolivia, Chile, and was ambassador to Honduras. Ambassador Ryan was interviewed by Richard Nethercut in 1988.

RYAN: And the same thing happened in Chile. My next assignment was in Chile where, after having been Cultural Attaché in Bolivia, I was sent as Press Attaché or Information Officer. I went on a direct transfer to Santiago and that was an exciting time because Chile was in the full flower of democracy as perhaps the model democracy of Latin America. There was a functioning parliament and thirteen daily newspapers. I think there were about fifteen different political parties represented in the Congress. And a rather exciting time for me to be the Information Officer, because I would do a lot of spade work for the Ambassador and for the Political Section because I had better Spanish than anyone else in the Embassy. I would go to the newspapers and pick up the gossip on what was going on in the parliament and so forth. It was probably bad for my liver because the Chileans are great red wine drinkers, and going around to the newspapers in the evening -- most of the newspapers went to bed around 9:00 or 10:00 -- and then after that the staff would go off to the nearest grog shop and drink red wine and talk politics. So I got to know a good bit about the whole inner workings of the Chilean political system.

Now, as far as the other things that I did in the ARA Bureau, I also handled South America, and in this I was very much involved in the human rights problems. The pressures from human rights

organizations in the United States on the U.S. Government to intervene in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Chile, were very strong. Secretary Kissinger was adamant in that we would do this by quiet diplomacy and not public statements or public diplomacy. Therefore, we did a great deal, some of which is slowly coming out into the public domain, in bringing pressure on the governments of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay to some extent, and certainly Chile, by calling in ambassadors, by sending private groups down and sending officials to talk to these governments about their miserable human rights image in the United States. I personally went to Argentine and Uruguay, Brazil, on this. We were able to successfully arrange the release of a good number of intellectuals and scientists during this period. Usually when we would get word from an American group we would immediately go to the post and ask them to go in and talk privately to the people. But I think that we were remiss in some ways.

I know of one case, which has never come to public attention, of the fact that we knew fairly early on that the governments of the Southern Cone countries were planning, or at least talking about, some assassinations abroad in the summer of 1976. I was Acting Assistant Secretary at the time and I tried to get a cable cleared with the 7th Floor instructing our ambassadors to go in to the Chiefs of State, or the highest possible level in these governments to let them know that we were aware of these conversations and to warn them that this was a violation of the very basic fundamentals of civilized society. Unfortunately that cable never got out and about a month later former Chilean Ambassador Letelier was assassinated on the streets of Washington. Whether there was a direct relationship or not, I don't know. Whether if we had gone in, we might have prevented this, I don't know. But we didn't. We were extremely reticent about taking a strong forward public posture, and even a private posture in certain cases, as was this case in the Chilean assassination.

PARK D. MASSEY

Deputy and Acting Director, USAID

Santiago (1973-1975)

Park D. Massey was born in New York in 1920. He graduated from Haverford College with a B.A. and Harvard University with an M.P.A. He also served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946 overseas. After entering the Foreign Service in 1947, Mr. Massey was posted in Mexico City, Genoa, Abidjan, and Germany. While in USAID, he was posted in Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia, Chile, Haiti, and Uruguay.

Q: Of the AID Mission?

MASSEY: ...of the AID Mission; Deputy Director and Acting Director of the AID Mission in Chile: a similar position in Haiti, a very frustrating period because of the fact that Haiti is impossible to do any good for; and finally I was made Mission Director of the United States AID Mission to Uruguay, which I ultimately closed out, which I think was a mistake, but at the time seemed like a good idea because our assistance was not really helping the Uruguayans in solving their economic problems. During all of this time, I saw little or nothing of an interest in either trade unions or labor or manpower in any of those missions in which I served. I did not take into much account labor and manpower concerns, although I was in the top management of the missions that were involved. I don't know why that was. It may have been that the concerns tended to move in other ways, or in some cases the trade union movements in many of these countries were so fragile and the understanding of manpower problems within my own mission so weak as to tend to let them be pushed aside. But labor and manpower were not really terribly important in those missions.

Q: The human rights situation, any work in that area?

MASSEY: Very little. We had to certify in projects towards the end of my AID career as to human rights conditions as part of a project. That became most important for me in Chile and in Uruguay, both of which had severe human rights problems. But the human rights problems were that basically we could not justify new major assistance to Chile under the conditions of the Pinochet dictatorship.

STUART VAN DYKE

Mission Director, USAID

Santiago (1974-1976)

Stuart Van Dyke was born in Idaho in 1915. He graduated from Indiana University in 1935. Working for ICA and AID, Mr. Van Dyke served in various countries including Germany, Turkey, Brazil, and Chile. He was interviewed September 18, 1997 by Scott Behoteguy.

VAN DYKE: Yes. After about two years I was again looking for somewhere to go, and I was offered the job of Mission Director in Chile. I seem to have been destined to go to countries where military coups had just happened or were about to happen. In Chile, the military had just overthrown Allende, who had been bumbling his way toward communism. In Brazil, the same thing had happened shortly before my arrival in Rio, and the military were in charge during my

entire assignment there. In Turkey, the military intervened twice during my tour to throw out the incumbents, schedule elections, and supervise the installation of a government which would adhere to the Ataturk formula.

Chile's transition had been the bloodiest of the three. It was estimated that two or three thousand people had been killed or disappeared during the Chilean coup. After the fighting stopped, a military junta consisting of the heads of the army, the navy, the air force and the national police took charge. In this group of four, the leader was Pinochet, the army chief. He quickly gathered up the reins of power and made himself the country's dictator.

Chile had a history of democratic participation, and U.S. policy toward Chile was based on the assumption that, after cleansing the bureaucracy and the universities of left-wingers, Pinochet would call for elections and quietly step down. Well, it didn't work out that way. Pinochet liked the job and wanted to stay on, and he stayed for more than ten years. A lot of Chilean left-wing intellectuals had gone into exile when the coup occurred, and, while there was no overt opposition to the Pinochet regime within Chile, the exiles mounted an effective campaign abroad to discredit it. Among liberal circles in the U.S., its "human rights" record was heavily criticized. A prominent exile was killed on the streets of Washington, DC in what looked like a political assassination. Jack Lemon starred in a movie based on a story about a young American who disappeared during the coup and whose body was never found.

I left Chile in the summer of 1976 -- their winter. About three months after I left they presented a letter to the American ambassador saying, thanks very much for your aid, but we can now get along without it. Their economic situation had improved dramatically, but I suspect that even more importantly, they had simply gotten tired of our lectures. We had been under instructions to remind them at every opportunity how difficult it was to justify aid to a non-democratic country with a record of human rights abuses. If there were no aid to justify, there would be no occasion for such lectures. The government has now passed into civilian hands. The situation is again pretty much as it was before Allende, with one huge difference. Instead of seeming to drift inexorably toward socialism, it is now firmly in the capitalist camp, and getting rich in the process.

THOMAS D. BOYATT

Deputy Chief of Mission

Santiago (1975-1978)

Ambassador Thomas D. Boyatt was born in Ohio. He joined the Foreign Service in 1959. In addition to serving in Chile, Ambassador Boyatt served in Luxembourg, Cyprus, and was ambassador to Upper Volta and Colombia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: In 1975 you'd finished the Senior Seminar, along with yours truly, and went to Chile as DCM where you served from '75 to '78. How did you get the job, and given the fact that you were sort of persona non grata in the Kissinger scheme of things when he was Secretary of State, how did you get that job?

BOYATT: Well, I got the job, and this will be covered when I speak about my time on the Cyprus desk. Cyprus was one of the cases which the two special intelligence committees, the House and Senate committees which were established in '74-'75, decided to concentrate on. They decided to focus on Cambodia, Chile, and Cyprus. And in the context of their hearings on Cyprus there was a long involved struggle to get me to testify. I was in the middle between Kissinger who didn't want me to testify, the whole thing had constitutional overtones. The long and short of it was, that at the end of that whole Cyprus period, and senior seminar period, which terminated in the spring of '75 with this Congressional problem, Larry Eagleburger wanted to save my career, and Henry Kissinger wanted me out of town. So the perfect solution was for me to go to Chile, which is a hell of a long way from Washington, which made Kissinger happy. It's great assignment, a great spot to be DCM. It's a country where, as you know, I'd served before, I speak Spanish with a Chilean accent. I knew everybody in the country because I'd met them all in the '59-'62 period when they were more junior. I had known Allende. He, of course, was dead by '75. I had known Frei when he was a Senator from the north, and I had known Pinochet when he was a major and lieutenant colonel in the north where I was. So I really was the perfect person to send into that job, and, of course, when the Chileans heard that I was coming, they all said, "Ah-ha, nuestro gringo", these Americans they're so smart, they punched up the computer for the perfect guy for this job, and out popped Boyatt. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. I went down there because Henry wanted me out of town. But, anyway, I really was the right guy, in the right place, at the right time.

Q: What about the ambassador? What was his role, and who was the ambassador?

BOYATT: The ambassador was David Popper, an excellent professional, as you know. His position was a very difficult one because, and this difficulty continued into the Carter Administration, but the difficulty in '75-'76 was that we had a Henry Kissinger in Washington. Let me put it to you this way: One of the cables from the embassy wherein we suggested very sort of suavely that to some degree our foreign policy should be linked to the human rights issues and the way the Chileans treated their own people. Kissinger scribbled across the cable, "Tell Popper to knock off the God damn social science lectures. This isn't apropos." Someone showed me the cable with his note on it. We were in between the Democratic Congress, and the human rights advocates in our own society, and, let's face it, the political left wing who were horrified

that Pinochet had overthrown Allende even though Pinochet had the support of 75 percent of the people. It didn't matter.

Q: Because some of these things will be read into the 21st century, these transcripts, Allende was a tremendous darling of the left, as well as the hard core left.

BOYATT: Yes. It was hard to understand because his government was a disaster, and his own people turned on him, including the so-called lower classes in Chile. I mean all of those demonstrations of women beating pots and pans, those weren't upper class people from the barrios altos, from the upper class neighborhoods. Those were just people. And what had happened was that he tried to impose a Marxist-Socialist economic regime on Chile, and it just failed. It was a terrible disaster, it didn't work. In this rich country people couldn't get food, they couldn't get toilet paper, and by the way Stuart, the toilet paper index never fails. Once people can't get toilet paper, you can be sure they're going to revolt. That's happened every place I've been, and it happened in Chile.

Allende's overthrow was a popular movement, it wasn't an army coup. The army tossed him out of the Presidential Palace, and put enough pressure on so he blew his own head off. The army defeated his group of mercenaries from Cuba and elsewhere, the so-called grupas, the Amigos del Presidente, the GAP, the group of friends of the president, which was a kind of second army. But, essentially, this thing had widespread popular support from the Democratic Party to the left in the United States, and the world, nobody wanted to hear that, although it was true.

On the other hand, the Pinochet regime was committing human rights violations, and we were reporting these, and suggesting to some degree we ought to try to do something about it. And Kissinger didn't want to hear that. So we had sort of a realpolitik from the executive branch, and the human rights driven pressures from the legislative branch, and the media, and so on. And we were in the middle. That was '75 and '76.

Q: How were we viewing, at that time, the changes in the economy? Because if I recall, Pinochet had his University of Chicago boys who all had been educated hard core, Chicago-style, economics.

BOYATT: Yes.

Q: . . . which was essentially what, a very free market?

BOYATT: Yes, it's a very important point. Typically when a Latin American military group takes power, they try to militarize the economy, and make it a government bureaucracy responsive to them. They're statist generally. But in this case, Pinochet came in and made a strategic decision early on, and in 1974, that he was going to turn economic policy over to the civilians, and to the free market civilians. For one reason or another, I think primarily because

he'd seen the success of it in the United States, he was emotionally, intellectually, and operationally, in support of the free market model. So beginning in '74 the country changed overnight from the sort of extreme marxist model which was applauded by conservatives. And the amazing thing was, the free market model worked. Chile began to recover dramatically.

Just to put a final point to that story. Chile is today the strongest country in Latin America, perhaps the strongest country in the Third World outside of Asia. It is the Singapore and the Taiwan of Latin America. It has a low inflation rate, an unemployment rate that is lower than ours, a stable economy that's growing 5 or 6 percent a year. It's in extremely good shape. A positive balance of payments, budget surplus, and they're beginning to be very successful in spreading the wealth downward on the economic AUA. . .it's a hell of a success story on the economic side. And, of course, we knew that in the '70s too, and we reported that, but nobody wanted to hear that either.

Q: How did you feel? Let's take before Carter, your time there was divided into two parts. One, a hardnosed Henry Kissinger type who really was very happy to get Allende out. And then you moved to the Carter period, which was quite different. During period "A," the Kissinger time, what was the attitude? You, the ambassador, and also the staff, you're looking at this situation, and on one side you're concerned about human rights. What was the mood at the embassy?

BOYATT: Well, the Congress was cutting off Chilean assistance in spite of the overriding executive...stopped economic aid, stopped military aid, Peace Corps out, a voting against Chilean loans in the World Bank, Inter-American, that sort of thing. That was mostly legislative driven. On the other hand, Kissinger clearly supported the regime, and other elements in the United States supported the regime because they had thrown the communists out-in effect the communists, the Marxists. Others in the United States supported the regime because it was pro-free market, and pro-business.

The mood in the embassy was that our job was just simply to report it accurately back in Washington as best we could, and that's what we tried to do. So we told them what was true. We told them that the economic policy was working, on the good side. We told them about the human rights violations on the negative side. And we told them about Pinochet's popularity. I would say that the mood in the embassy was very positive. We thought we were doing good work, and in fact we were.

Q: What about the media? Did you have American press coming down there and sort of kicking at you?

BOYATT: Sure. Absolutely.

Q: Was this the period they were beginning to talk about the movie Missing. You might explain what that was about, and how it affected you.

BOYATT: Well, Missing is about allegations that the U.S. Embassy colluded the arrest, and murder of an American kid and his friend, who were down there trying to make Allende's government successful. The facts are otherwise. The facts are that these people were down there trying to help Allende, and they were picked up early in the Pinochet activity and shot. But there was no embassy collusion, we were not involved in it, and there was nothing we could have done to stop it. By the time we found out about it, it had already happened. But, yes, the U.S. press was totally anti-Pinochet, and they came down there, and often we would have to fight to get them into the country. And then they would go out as journalists; they run as a pack. No American journalists, or European for that matter, was going to come down there and write something positive about Chile. And none ever did. Which meant that they had nothing to say about Pinochet's popularity, denied it, had nothing to say about the economic progress. They only came down and reported about human rights, and that's fine. But a professional Foreign Service person can't do that. Foreign Service people have to write about it all, and write about it as accurately as they can.

Incidentally, you asked me about what was my position. My position with the ambassador was delicate, not because we weren't then, and aren't now, good friends. But because Pinochet knew me personally, and he would often send an invitation over to the Embassy, or have one of his aides call up, and invite me to a private lunch, which put me in a hell of an awkward situation because I'm the number two, I'm not the Ambassador. So invariably I would go in to David Popper, and I would say, "Mr. Ambassador, President Pinochet has invited me to lunch, but I will understand perfectly if you want me to decline the invitation". And invariably he would say, "Yes, dammit, decline. If he wants to invite somebody to lunch it ought to be me. I'm the President's representative here". And I would say, "Yes, I quite agree". And I'd go back to my office, and instead of immediately turning down the invitation, I'd wait because I knew that within a half an hour, or an hour, David would change his mind and he'd come in and say, "Well, this is a unique opportunity, and we really can't afford for you not to go and I want you to make the following points". So that's how that worked out, just as an aside.

Q: Let's talk about your impression of Pinochet, and your dealings with him at that time, because there are several Pinochets. I mean toward the end Pinochet turned sort of rancid, I guess. But anyway, this is at the height of his power, wasn't it ?

BOYATT: Yes, it was at the height of his power. The height of his power lasted a long time though, Stuart. You have to understand that. My impressions of Pinochet? My first impression of Pinochet is that he is a very good politician. He understood the dynamics of power. My second impression of him is, that he made a huge right decision, and that was to turn the economy over to the free market model. Chile is today about where Spain, and Greece, and Portugal, are. And it's only because of one man's decision, his. He turned the whole economy around, and it was so successful that today the Christian Democrats, and a good part of the socialists, have as their

economic plan that they will follow the free market model of the economy. And in fact, the Christian Democrats, who have been in almost four years now, the fourth year is next year, did not change his economic policies at all. Indeed, they intensified them.

On the other hand, he permitted, I think more like Henry II, serious human rights violations. His intelligence people did a lot of things that they are accused of doing, and that cannot be forgiven. Look, the proof of this pudding, Stuart, is that in 1988 or '89, whenever they had the referendum, it was a free election which was certified by the international community who was there in droves; wherein the Chilean people could have chosen Pinochet versus all other political parties after 15 years in power, he still got 43.3 percent of the votes, pal. More than any other single political party. That would not have happened if the Chilean people had turned their backs on him. He would have gotten, like some of these Africans did, 5 percent or 3 percent. But he didn't. Right up until the very end he had strong support, and he had strong support because he saved the country from Allende, and because he put it on the right course economically, and the people knew that. And even today, if he were to run today, he'd get one-third of the damn votes.

And Stuart, one other thing, tell me one other dictator who has peacefully, and in an organized way, turned over power to a democratically elected successor. Tell me one.

Q: I can't think of any.

BOYATT: I can't think of any either, and he did that, too. He didn't have to do that. With 43 percent of the popular vote, and the army with him, he could have stayed in a dictatorial mode, but he didn't. And those are the facts – some things on the negative side of the balance sheet, and a lot of things on the positive side.

Q: When you were sitting down having these lunches, you had your points to make. What was his view of American process, our interests?

BOYATT: He couldn't understand why the United States was opposed to him, because he saw himself as the man who had saved Chile from communism. Therefore, the United States should support him on those grounds alone. And the man who was in the process of turning Chile into a free market economic miracle. So we should support him on those grounds. And he simply didn't understand why elements in the United States were against him. For my part, I tried to convince him that what he should do was to form a legitimate political party, and to throw the process open. And that was consistent with U.S. policy, I mean I wasn't free lancing. Our policy was to restore democracy, and this was the way we saw to get that done. If he'd done that, Stuart, in '76, or '77, or '78, and had the election, he'd have won the damn thing. But he didn't, and he kept putting it off, and putting it off, and when he finally had the election 10-12 years later, he lost.

Q: Here Chile had been a real democracy, more than really any other place in Latin America, until then a very well disciplined but neutral military force. Allende kicked over the bee hive. But

why did the military respond with such fervor, rather than showing more discipline, rather than going through this really very bad human rights problems. What was our analysis at that time?

BOYATT: Well, the Chilean people, in the majority, wanted the army to intervene. And you had a situation in which women were throwing handfuls of corn in front of anybody in a uniform in the streets of Santiago. That means in Spanish, you're chicken, chickens eat corn.

Q: This was before. . .

BOYATT: . . . Before the overthrow of Allende. There was a lot of public pressure to do it. There was the belief that they were doing the right thing in terms of the western alliance, heroically simplified, broadly defined. There was also the fact that Allende was building an alternate armed force in the form of GAP, this group, Los Amigos del Presidente. There were Cuban hoods there, and he was bringing in arms clandestinely to arm them. In other words, he was creating a parallel army, but there was no way the Chilean Army was going to accept that. When he did that, he really signed his death warrant. And when the Army took over, their position was that they were going to eliminate this threat, and they did.

But at the end of the day, Stuart, there weren't all that many people killed, some thousands, a lot less bloody than Yugoslavia today, for instance. It wasn't as bad as it was painted in the press up here. But, you know, they had what they saw as provocation, and they took it upon themselves to clean it out, and every left winger with a weapon was shot.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover on Chile?

BOYATT: That was a wonderful assignment, it's a wonderful country, and they've just done a terrific job. I've had a lot to do with Chile in the last 10 years that I've been in the private sector, and it's just marvelous, Stuart, the way that country is developing. It is a textbook case, and of course now, the rest of Latin America is emulating the Chilean example. There are Chilean consultants, and former ministers, all over Latin America; advising the Mexicans, advising the Argentines, advising everybody under the sun on how to do it. They've got a "how to" corps. It's incredible.

Q: Is everybody sending their intelligent sons to the University of Chicago?

BOYATT: They're sending all the Chicago boys to these other countries to advise them. They send them to Harvard Business School now, they're smarter than that.

Q: Did Patt Derian, who was head of Human Rights, who was a zealot of the first order, I suppose, did she come down to Chile?

BOYATT: No, she didn't come while we were there. I think that we convinced her -- I mean, we were doing all the reporting, and the reporting was accurate. We weren't pulling any punches, we

were trying to help get people accused of political crimes out of jail, we had an amnesty program, we brought 1000-1200 of them to the States. We made a real difference on the human rights side down there. We got a lot of people out, and we kept a lot of others from being killed, by our special pleading. It was really an incredible situation, Stuart. We were absolutely in the middle from everybody's point of view. We were saving the lives, and getting people out of the country, that three years earlier had been killing Americans from the extreme left, from the Allendestas. And we had our former enemies, all of whom had done nothing but denounce the United States all of their lives, coming into the Embassy and asking us to get cousin Fulano "so and so" out, or whatever. It was the perfect example of the United States in the middle, and an embassy in the middle.

ROBERT S. STEVEN

Chile Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1977-1979)

Mr. Steven was born in Massachusetts and raised there and in Rhode Island. He graduated from Brown University and served in the US Army before entering the Foreign Service in 1957. Mr. Steven became a specialist in Latin America, where he served in Mexico, Chile and Argentina. He also served in Burma, Vietnam and Japan and had several senior assignments at the State Department in Washington. Mr. Steven was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001

Today is September 13, 2001. Okay, 1977, you went to the Chilean desk from 1977 to when?

STEVEN: '79.

Q: What was the status of things in Chile as you saw them when you came in '77?

STEVEN: It hadn't changed that much from when I left there to go over to Argentina. The military were increasingly clamped down and repressive. It had not changed, as I think many people thought it would, after the initial flurries, after the initial rage and anger had been overcome and things settled. But the military would have lifted their hand somewhat, brought in what effectively would have been people they controlled but at least a civilian government and tried to reestablish some sort of a normal situation in what had been a democratic country. I think, to the surprise of even many of the so-called Chile experts, the Chilean military remained very, very hard line and even went so far as to have papers written up by their civilian advisors on how Chile's government should be reformed with a new constitution, all that sort of thing, which, as I believe I said earlier in these interviews, was language very reminiscent from the 1930s in places

like Portugal, Spain and so on. Fascism, the corporate state, etcetera, was very much being pushed, and the human rights violations, shall we say, the lack of due process, had continued. It wasn't getting better. It continued to be very hard line. So when I got to the desk in Washington, it was two very different strands of thought, two very different policies, mingling but also opposing each other within the Department as well as within the government and even the country. Many people were outraged, of course, by what was going, and their basic reaction was to do everything possible to revenge what the military had done, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. The other attitude is extreme on the other side: "No, no, these are our boys. We wanted this coup. Chile is now safe from socialism. We have to chastise the government and tell them not to be too rough but at the same time indicate our support so that they will eventually be able to establish a stable Chile." I was, as the desk officer, of course, aware of all this. As an example of what happens - this would be of interest to people who have been in the Department...

Q: The Carter Administration had just taken over.

STEVEN: Yes, but as an administrative note, it should be of interest to some people. I was in Argentina, Buenos Aires, in the summer of '77, and I received orders then to report directly to the desk without any home leave. Well, I had already agreed to transfer from Chile to Argentina without home leave, so I had gone almost four years with no home leave. Things were piling and I needed to have a break, and I talked to the Department about this. Well, the fellow who had been on the desk had to get on to his next assignment, so the desk was actually vacant and they had to have me right there. I said, "Why didn't you keep him?" Well, he had to get on to his next assignment. So I did something which is probably not good for the discipline of the Foreign Service, and I said, "No, I have to have a month for my family and to do other things, and if that can't be worked out, then I need to be reassigned to something else." They bought that and said, "Okay, we'll just manage." So when I arrived, the desk was literally a foot high with paper. Among them, I think, was something like 50 Congressional referral letters, most of which were simply, "My constituent, so-and-so, wants to know why things are going on this way in Chile. Please answer." And at least 50 were piled up on the desk that nobody had tried to take care of. So the very first thing I faced was an enormous pressure to move all this Congressional correspondence, and at the same time all these other things were happening in Chile. To make it even more difficult, as you may remember, in 1976 there had been the assassination of the former Chilean ambassador, Letelier, Orlando Letelier, here at Dupont Circle, and nothing much had happened for about a year. The investigation was certainly being carried on with full faith and effort by the FBI but they hadn't gotten very far. The suspicion was that it was Chilean secret intelligence agency, the acronym being DINE. The DINE had done this. But how do you prove it? So nothing much had happened, and as I settled onto the desk, working nights and everything else trying to get up to speed, I found things in the files that made me wonder, because if this information was available, why hadn't certain types of investigations been made, why hadn't this been followed up. Well, I discovered that essentially the Department of State had told its people, including its desk officer, my predecessor, and the Bureau, to cooperate in every

way with the Justice Department. That had been interpreted to mean that anything that Justice asks for, by all means give them, but it did not mean that you had to go out of your way to find something to tell Justice if they didn't already know it. That's not in writing, and I think if this interview were looked at, there would be those who would challenge in frankly. All I can say is that is the situation I found and understood when I took over.

Q: Were there any other issues that you got involved in on Chile besides the Letelier case?

STEVEN: Well, the overall human rights issues. There was an effort, driven considerably by Patt Darien in Human Rights, Human Affairs, HA, at the time and her cohorts, who were pressing, as they properly should have, the importance of the human rights. But it went to the point where - I do remember specifically one case - there had been a *Carabinero* officer, police officer in Chile that I knew well, a good source, a friend even, very, very proper in the sense that he was 100 percent for his own government, but he was able to put things in perspective for me at times. He was a good friend who was personally involved. He proposed to go to the States for a tour on narcotics issues. Narcotics was one of the few issues that we were still able to engage the government with at that point. The military government had drastically reduced the narcotics traffic coming out of Chile very simply. As I mentioned earlier, in one incident they simply shot the traffickers, and that was that. But there were still concerns, and we were working with them. This officer, the *Carabinero* was in a senior position able to help influence this, and we thought it would be useful to have him come here and do a tour in cooperation. And you could set it aside from the political side. He was not personally in any way considered hated. He'd never been associated with the repressions and the things that were done wrong. He spoke better English than I do, one of the few cases I've ever seen of a foreign military officer, a cop, in his house standing there proudly declaiming Shakespeare verse after verse in English. "Send him up. He's not tainted, he's not controversial. We need their help in the narcotics work. Let's do a tour, a two-week tour or something like that." And the HA Bureau fought to assist him. "No, this is Chile." I said, "It's not Chile. This is a specific noncontroversial officer who should be allowed to come." And they killed it, simply on these mindless sanctions against Chile. I think if they had their way, they would have broken off diplomatic relations - not a sensible attitude at all.

There were commercial aspects, but they didn't involve us a great deal. Chile's economy was recovering very, very beautifully under the military. They had the Chicago boys, young economists educated here, who were turning it into a good free-market economy. The critique would be, of course, if it had the prices that these things always have in developing countries, and a lot of people got rich and a lot of people got poor. Certainly the impact on the lower classes in Chile, on the working people, was horrendous, but there were those who claim, and I have a hard time challenging them, that that's one of the necessary steps that has to be taken to build a new economy. In Chile today, yes, there are people who are very poor and the rich get richer, but that might describe our own country. That was not a major part of my activity, frankly.

The economic situation sort of took care of itself. We didn't have any difficulty there. I did have a considerable issue on negotiating an extradition treaty. That was while I was still in Chile and then it came up again when I was back on the desk. The Department was trying to redo outdated and obsolete extradition treaties universally all over the world, and they had a team running around down in Latin America from country to country negotiating this new extradition treaty. And we brought our text and said in effect, "This is what we want you to sign to match all the other countries in the area." And they were rather dumbfounded when the Chileans weren't quite prepared. There was a civilian I worked with in the Foreign Ministry, who was very professional, who looked at this thing and said, "Bob, this problem, this problem, this problem," and they were legitimate questions. In the treaty that they presented the text was essentially pro our side. It just made it much easier for us to get what we wanted, but at the same time it really didn't commit us to a great deal. He pointed out there were legitimate objections to it. So the team left unhappily, not having concluded a text. They left the text with me; I was the political officer who had to handle it. And I sat for hours with this fellow at the Foreign Ministry going over this thing, working out compromises, and sending telegrams back to Washington. And the delegation, these people in the ministry would come back frustrated. "Why isn't it signed? We want a standing treaty with everybody." I said, "Well, conditions vary in each country, and you are not going to get a standing treaty there." As I recall, I was still working on that when I got back on the desk two years later. Much of my effort also of course was dealing with American groups who were pro or anti Chile who wanted to talk to somebody at the Department, and who do you always talk to? You end up at the lowest level possible, which was the desk. So there were delegations of people coming in that I had to talk with. It was a very, very busy time. I'd never worked that hard in any other job in the Foreign Service.

ROBERT E. SERVICE

Political Counselor

Santiago (1977-1980)

Robert E. Service was born in 1937 in China to American parents. He received a B.A. from Oberlin College and an M.P.A. from Princeton University. His postings abroad have included Managua, Salvador Bahia, Mexico City, Santiago, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Brasilia, and Montevideo. Mr. Service was interviewed in 1998 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: *You went to Chile from 1977 to when?*

SERVICE: 1980.

Q: *What was your job?*

SERVICE: I was the political counselor.

Q: *Who was the Ambassador at that time?*

SERVICE: When I got there, there was no Ambassador. David Popper had left a few months before. Tom Boyatt was the Chargé. I suspect he has a long history here somewhere.

Q: *Tom and I were in the senior seminar together. I have done an oral history with Tom.*

SERVICE: He is a character in some ways.

Q: *Yes.*

SERVICE: Anyway, he was the chargé for the first six months I was there. Then George Landau came as Ambassador. He was there the rest of the time I was in Chile.

Q: *Chile had been the focus of much of our attention, probably as much as Cuba was during the 1960s. How did you view the situation in Chile, when you arrived in 1977?*

SERVICE: Well, a number of things strike me. One is a sort of siege mentality. This was well after the worst of the repression. There was very little overt repression going on when we got there, and I think probably very few political prisoners still. Many of them had gone into exile. On the other hand, there was a continuing polarization of feelings about the Allende period, and particularly on the right, which we tended to see more of. The left was either out of the country or very quiet. The attitude by the more conservative sectors was if you weren't here during the Allende period, then you can't understand. If you raised any sort of query or question mark about why this or that took place or had to happen, or was necessary, they would almost always end up saying that you can't understand if you weren't here. There may be a grain of truth in that, but it was made to carry too much weight.

Q: *How did we view Pinochet?*

SERVICE: We viewed him basically in negative terms, although we thought that some of the changes he was trying to bring about were potentially positive for the country. He had the sense to listen to some of the U.S. – trained economists. He was trying to implement their ideas. Certain sectors of our government thought that was very positive.

Q: *You were there during, essentially, the Carter years, weren't you?*

SERVICE: Yes. I got there in the summer of 1977. Carter had been in office six months. The big issue in bilateral relations while I was there was the assassination of Orlando Letelier which took place in Washington in 1976.

Q: *In Sheridan Circle.*

SERVICE: Yes, in Sheridan Circle. Letelier and a woman, an American woman, an assistant named Ronni Moffitt were killed. Fairly early on the investigation started leading back to the Chilean government. The Chilean government said, "Oh, it must be Cubans, or whoever." We spent most of the time I was there trying to get those who were believed to be responsible extradited into our custody. The only we got at that time was an American named Michael Townley who had been the one who actually made and placed the bomb. We were able to get the Pinochet government to turn him over to us. We got him back here. He provided a lot of the information through plea bargaining that allowed us to solidify our case against some of the others. Manuel Contreras, who was head of something called DINA, the intelligence agency, is now serving time in jail, as is one of the three others involved. I think a third one did also. He is now living in the U.S. All of them, to some extent, were eventually punished.

Q: How did this play out for you in your political dealings with the Pinochet government?

SERVICE: It was almost never mentioned in our dealings on other matters. In fact, we did not have that much contact with the Pinochet government, other than the Foreign Ministry. Landau once said to me, "This is a very unusual situation. I've had no contact with Pinochet and I don't really think I should." I didn't disagree with him. But, it was not the situation that occurs in most places and times in Latin America, where the U.S. Ambassador has frequent presidential meetings. Our dealings were primarily with the Foreign Ministry, which understood that we were under instructions to do x, y or z. We did it. There were not a lot of animosities that I could detect. They may not have liked us. Some probably saw us as sympathetic to the left. Others may have secretly sympathized with our position on the Letelier matter. But it didn't really affect how we did our jobs.

Q: Did you have any problems with junior officers in the Political Section? I can see, especially with the temper of the times, human rights, junior officers wanting to change the world and all. Chile was the focus of an awful lot of attention.

SERVICE: It is interesting that you should mention that. As I recall, before I got there in 1977, there had been at least one occasion when there were two versions of the annual policy plan that posts had to prepare, the Country Program Plan or whatever it was then called. As I recall, either the year before, or the year before that, there had been a sharp division of opinion in the report, with dissent messages going into Washington. That was not true while I was there. I don't know if it was because personnel had changed or because the situation had improved somewhat, but as I said, the worst of the repression was over before I got there. There were very few, if any, reported disappearances, as they called them, people being picked up and not being seen again. Let me mention another interesting point. You mentioned that there was an attitude toward Pinochet. At some point, I've forgotten whether it was 1977 or 1978, there was the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty. The Carter people wanted to make it a hemispheric thing and invite all heads of government up to Washington. There was a real issue of whether Pinochet should be invited or not. They decided that if it was hemispheric, and he would be invited, too. So Pinochet

went to Washington. I think there were probably a few demonstrators around the OAS, or wherever it was done, but no more than that.

Q: Landau had come from Paraguay. He was our expert on dealing with difficult people. I think he had been the desk officer for the Iberian Peninsula when Franco and Salazar had still been in power.

SERVICE: He had a good reputation in the Human Rights Bureau.

Q: Were you feeling any, if not heat, any problems with Congress and the human rights activists over Chile? There was the book and then a movie called Missing. I don't know if that came out at the time you were there.

SERVICE: I think it did. We had some problems, which were more about accuracy than anything else. Each year, we did a Human Rights report on Chile and then we pressed for a rapporteur in the Human Rights Commission. It seemed to me and to others of us at the Embassy that sometimes the U.S. positions on Chile as drafted by our U.N. people or in Washington went beyond strict accuracy. They were exaggerated and overly zealous, undoubtedly encouraged by the human rights lobby. They were to some degree political statements rather than careful analyses. There were some disagreements. We would go back and forth saying, "Hey, look, it would be more accurate to say x." But basically they said what they wanted to say.

Q: Where did you get your information about human rights violations?

SERVICE: We kept in touch with the opposition, a variety of opposition groups – the political parties, of course, but also youth and labor. And the Catholic Church had something called the Vicaría de la Solidaridad which did a great deal to compile information on abuses and help those affected. By and large they were all eager to talk because we were a sounding board to the outside world. We would filter out the less reliable of those contacts. We spent a lot of time with the ones we trusted. It was personally rewarding because these were people who were in pretty tough straights. We felt in some small way that we were helping them.

JOHN A. BUSHNELL

State Department, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (ARA)

Washington, DC (1977-1982)

Mr. Bushnell was born in New York State and educated at Yale University and McMurray College. An Economic Specialist, he served primarily in senior level positions at Latin American posts, including Bogota, Santo Domingo, San Jose

and Buenos Aires, dealing primarily with Economic and International Trade issues. An assignment to the Staff of the National Security Council was followed by tours as Deputy Chief of Mission at Buenos Aires, Chargé d'Affaires at Panama City, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Mr. Bushnell was the recipient of several awards for outstanding service. Mr. Bushnell was interviewed by John Harter in 1997.

BUSHNELL: There were a lot of economic issues. There were those things I spent a lot of time on because they were important to ARA policies such as aid levels, and there were those things where I wound up doing more than I might because they seemed the right thing to do. Among the things I pushed, although it was not a high priority interest, was economic integration and cooperation among Latin American countries, among the Andean countries in particular. The Andean Common Market had a bad reputation as political and ineffective everywhere in the government outside of ARA [Bureau of American Republic Affairs], and even with most economists in ARA. But I saw a positive thrust on the Andean Common Market as a way for the U.S. to have a positive dimension to our policy toward these five countries to which we were not providing much economic assistance.

Q: This group consisted of Peru, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Venezuela?

BUSHNELL: And Bolivia. Chile opted out at a fairly early stage. These are not countries which historically had a lot of trade with each other. Although they have several common borders, they each mainly exported raw materials. Thus their free trade area was mostly political with some bilaterally negotiated reduction in tariffs for each others' manufactures. They did not yet have a common external tariff. The main thrust of the Andean Market was the development of common or joint institutions and approaches. These were relatively small countries, and it made sense to develop common health standards, packaging rules, rules of origin, some specialized advanced education and research, and other things that didn't necessarily have much to do with trade. Institutions to deal with many of these things on a regional instead of country basis offered major economies of scale and efficiency in the use of highly skilled personnel who were in short supply in all the countries. There was also an Andean Bank for Development; although AID was not willing to provide it with any money, it was able to raise some funds from the private markets.

All the Andean countries were interested in improving access to our market for raw materials and particularly for some of their new expanding exports such as flowers, textiles, and fresh fruits. They generally wanted investment. Thus trade and investment consultations with the U.S. as a group had considerable appeal to them. It was also convenient for us; we could put together a higher level delegation to deal with the five countries together than we could for bilateral talks with each. Such consultations also gave us an opportunity to relate to some of the regional institutions, which, although weak, had potential as particularly good ways to promote our long term trade and investment interests. Through these consultations we were able to address quite a few technical things, but overall they were probably not worth the time and energy which ARA

had to expend to get other agencies to the table. When we decided in ARA to promote a dialogue with the Andean Market as an institution, we didn't get resonance from most other agencies. I had to get this going with my own telephone, begging other agencies to place responsible people on the delegation.

Q: How about Chile? This was the period when Pinochet was consolidating his power after his successful coup against Allende? Were you concerned with Chile?

BUSHNELL: Yes, I spent a lot of time on Chile. Chile was a main target of the human rights activists. There had been terrible human rights violations at the time of the coup and for a year or two thereafter. But the current situation was clearly improved by 1978 or 1979. The Pinochet government wasn't disappearing people or killing people anymore and hadn't for some time. There were few political prisoners, although many had been sent or had gone into exile. There was still a military authoritarian government, but the military wanted to return to democracy provided they could protect themselves and the military institutions under civilian rule. If you look at the current situation in say 1979, individual human rights in Chile were probably about average for Latin America. If US policy was going to be to reduce sanctions as individual human rights improve, Chile seemed to be a prime candidate for some relaxation.

However, Chile was the prime enemy of human rights activists such as Mark Schneider and Dick Feinberg, as well as of several Congressional members and staffers. These activists, who had been campaigning against Pinochet since 1973, had not yet been able to apply all the sanctions they wanted against Chile. They were not prepared to consider moving in the opposite direction. Moreover, the Chilean situation was complicated by the killing of the former foreign minister and his American aide on the streets of Washington. Chile was perhaps the clearest conflict between the ARA position of trying to encourage a government to continue improving the current human rights situation by rewarding progress and the HA position of maximum sanctions on governments that had horrible human rights histories even if they improve, with the objective of setting an example for the future.

Q: And Chile had a tradition of very democratic behavior.

BUSHNELL: That's right, and sometimes HA argued that the Pinochet break in this good human rights record was all the more reason for the strongest sanctions. On the other hand I argued that the Chilean military did not have a history of ruling, unlike some other Latin militaries, and a return to democracy was a feasible short-term objective; what could not be done in the short-run was to get a return to democracy with the senior military put in jail or executed. In general Deputy Secretary Christopher sided with HA on Chile. I had no argument that the U.S. had any major national interests in Chile, so it became one of the places where the human rights activists dominated policy under President Carter. I thought this situation was unfortunate because Chile valued its traditionally good relations with the United States. Also Pinochet allowed a group of

largely Chicago-trained economists to straighten out economic policies and launch Chile on a free market route to being a developed country. Perhaps we should leave the specific issues on Chile until we discuss human rights more generally, because it's by comparison with measures taken against other countries that the contradictions in our position on Chile come into focus.

Q: The Letelier assassination, that's separate...

BUSHNELL: In some ways it's separate from the human rights situation in Chile; killings arranged by part of a foreign government on Washington's streets are pretty unique. Those wishing to increase sanctions on Chile certainly mentioned these murders as well as the many that occurred in Chile. Of course, everyone in the Justice Department and in the State Department wanted to catch and punish the people who were responsible for this killing in Washington. We got lucky. Our intelligence got a pretty good idea of who the murders in Washington were, at least those who actually set and activated the bomb. Then we had what I think was really a stroke of luck. George Landau, who became our Ambassador to Chile in 1977, had been our Ambassador to Paraguay immediately before that. When George learned that our intelligence indicated some of the people associated with these Washington murders had not gotten their US visas in Chile, he remembered an incident when he was in Paraguay. At some point the head of the consular section in Paraguay had brought him two official Chilean passports and indicated that these two officials said they were in Paraguay on business and now needed to go to the United States. They wanted to get US visas in Asuncion. George, being a careful Germanic American, took the passports and made copies of the first pages and stuck them in his desk. When he heard years later that Chilean murderers might have gotten visas elsewhere, he dug out these two passport pictures. Bingo. Justice thought these men were involved. One of these was Townley who was, although he had a Chilean official passport, actually an American citizen.

Q: Townley was the son of the Ford Motor Company representative in Chile.

BUSHNELL: That's right. I don't think his father was still there, but Townley went back.

Q: Townley had been there many years.

BUSHNELL: Young Townley was there most of his life. Once Townley was identified as one of the people involved in the Letelier bombing, the Justice Department said we should ask the Chileans to extradite him. Chile, like most Latin American countries, won't extradite their own citizens, but this fellow was an American. Americans they ought to extradite. I said that it would be fine to request his extradition but I thought the matter would just drag on without resolution. We were applying close to our maximum human rights sanctions to Chile, and it did not seem likely to me that Chile would give us someone who would implicate senior officials in a murder, assuming he had been involved. Instead I supported informal efforts to get Townley to the States. Contacts were made by the FBI, much of which I wasn't involved in, and finally it was agreed that Townley would make a trip to the States. We had to handle this matter very carefully

because we believed senior people in the Chilean Intelligence Service had been involved and might disappear Townley if they learned he might leave Chile.

Q: Before we start going country by country now, is there anything else you should say about either the overall institutional situation or the principal cast of characters?

BUSHNELL: I might emphasize the deficiency of the Christopher Committee with a Chilean example because it began in the Committee and illustrates the problem of a loan by loan approach to human rights and US signals. At one point when we were discussing a loan to Chile, I decided to put it in the overall perspective of our relationship. In part I wanted to activate Defense to support ARA instead of just protecting its turf. We were debating making Chile an exception where we would vote against a basic human needs loan, unlike in almost all the rest of the world.

There was no reasonable analysis that would show that the Chilean human rights situation in 1979 was among the worst in the world. The problem was that Chile was the prime target of the human rights activists. Chile didn't have a democratic government, but there were few political prisoners, at least nonviolent ones [I did not consider those that tried to kill Pinochet or that helped import a ship load of arms from Cuba as political prisoners]. The military and police were not killing anybody, disappearing anybody, although Patt could point to a couple of cases where policemen did abuse people. Pinochet and the military were laying out a program to move slowly toward free elections. The press was largely free. It was not a bad situation in 1979, especially for a military dictatorship, but remember we did not oppose loans for most dictators and certainly not basic human needs loans. Of course, President Allende had been killed, and there were a couple thousand people killed at the time of the revolution in 1973. It was a revolution, a war, and people get killed in wars; always happens. But in addition to the people killed in the war, there were another few hundred people that were rounded up and killed, sort of the young leftist leadership. Two people had later been killed on the streets of Washington for which the Chilean intelligence service seemed to be responsible. But a lot of time had gone by since these abuses. There was no way to see Chile in 1979 as nearly as brutal and tough a regime as we were facing in El Salvador or Guatemala or, for that matter, even in Peru at the time.

I then looked at the signals we were sending Chile. We were voting against sound economic loans despite its good economic policies because of its military government. But we had a large presence of US military working with this very military government in quite a few programs. We had stopped most military assistance, but the military has lots of ways to build relationships. Thus in the Christopher Committee I said we had to vote for the basic human needs loan or our signals to the Chileans would be completely wrong given our military programs in Chile. We still had a large military assistance group working with the Chilean military even though there was no material assistance. We were doing military exercises with the Chilean military several times a year including some fairly large exercises very visible to everyday Chileans. In several

ways such as financing mapping we were even providing budget assistance to the Chilean military.

I said it doesn't make any sense that, because we don't review military presence or military exercises in the Christopher Committee, we should be taking quite extreme action against a government because it is a military government, while the U.S. goes willy-nilly doing naval exercises and giving military technical assistance and maintaining the same number of military assistance personnel living with the Chilean military. Any reasonable Chilean would think we are against the civilian government and for the military. It's absurd that in the Chilean government you had a group of economists who hadn't ever killed anybody or imprisoned anybody and who favor what we favor and they are having great success in following modern economic policies and we tell them they can't get a loan to help the poor because of the human rights violations of the military, whereas with the military people, who have done the human rights damage, we do joint exercises. Well, my presentation was a bombshell. Christopher agreed completely that this was an absurd situation. Patt was appalled. HA couldn't believe that I was doing this. HA knew about some of the military programs, but they hadn't focused on them.

So much to the chagrin of DOD, we then, outside the Christopher Committee, did an exercise in order to curtail this military interface and adjust our military posture with Chile, which was clearly something that we should have done long before, five years before, or at least at the very beginning of the Carter Administration. I was made the main action officer and found myself in a strange position because I had usually been able to work harmoniously with DOD. I was surprised that Defense was extremely strongly opposed to each and every change. I thought that taking out the dozen underemployed officials in the military assistance group would be just wise use of resources; Defense would still have their attaché officers. I found it amazing that nobody took those people out when military assistance was stopped. But this and every issue of military presence in Chile was appealed to President Carter.

Small military programs were unusually difficult. There was a 30 year old program of the Defense Mapping Agency in which they gave financial and technical assistance to their Chilean military counterparts to do mapping from the air, with copies provided to us. They had two US military in Chile to coordinate and give assistance. I put this program on the cut list, suggesting the entire program be terminated until the human rights situation improved with democratic elections. DOD was up in arms over this. The military officers on loan to ARA reported that their phones were ringing off the hook with senior officers trying to figure out how to stop my proposal. Finally, Defense asked to send a delegation to see me and explain why this program was so important to national security. A tremendous delegation of senior military officers from the Defense Mapping Agency, the Navy, and other Defense offices filled my office. One of my people, after they left, said he counted the number of stars in the room, stars as in rank, and he said there were more than 40. The delegation was headed by a four-star with several three-stars, and the bag carriers were one or two stars. They argued there would be a tremendous loss to the U.S. if we stopped this map-making program because we then would not have current maps if

our forces needed to operate in Chile. I said, "I frankly can't envision any situation where we would need maps of Chile. Anyway in 30 years I would think we would have the whole country." They said some areas were several years old. I asked, "What do you guys have satellites for anyway?" They explained that it was hard to get satellite time in that part of the world. I said the obvious - that if we had US military operations that needed current maps, they would get the satellite time. I was surprised their arguments were so weak. Eventually they removed the people, but I agreed that modest financing of the Chilean military mapping program could continue with occasional TDY technical reviews.

Even more traumatic and a bigger issue was stopping joint exercises with the Chilean Navy. Every year for decades the Navy has had a small flotilla of ships sail around South America doing exercises with the navy of each country along the way. This is good training for our Navy and very good training for the small navies these countries have. They can actually get out to sea and learn something working with the US Navy. They build relationships, especially during the planning phase when numerous officers travel back and forth. It's basically a good program. But if you have a military government which you think is very bad, should you be doing navy maneuvers with them? It seems to me the answer is no; there are lots of opportunities in the world for the Navy to do exercises. You should not block the good projects of the good economic officials while you exercise with the Navy, some of whose officers committed the very human rights abuses you see as the problem. Some of the Navy's arguments seemed strained. How are the ships going to get from Peru to Argentina? Chile is a long country, but certainly the Navy needs experience making some long sailing legs. Of course HA soon objected to exercises with Argentina and others. The Navy mainly fought this issue with the 7th floor principals and eventually appealed to the President, who turned them down.

But Chile is just one case of the imbalances that plagued our human rights policy in many countries, not to mention in comparisons among countries, which Christopher said we should not make but officials and even the public in various countries and in their embassies in Washington certainly did make. Of course so much emphasis on human rights was something new. One has to begin somewhere, and the Carter Administration began with economic assistance and the bully pulpit following the example of the Congress a few years before. It took a lot of effort over time in country after country to try to get some balance in terms of what we were doing in one field versus what we were doing in another field which was not immediately in HA's sights. That took a lot of my time, because I was at the vortex where one saw the more total picture of our relationships and the glaring inconsistencies that we had in some countries.

Q: Is there anything more you should say about Chile in this context?

BUSHNELL: Chile is a prime example of the tension between improving the current human rights situation, which I call accomplishment orientation, and punishing the human rights abusers in part to set an example for the future. In Chile the military turned over the running of the country to civilians fairly quickly. However, they were generally conservative civilians who

were not believed to represent the majority of the people. The normal Chilean historical process - they had two or three military coups in their history, the last one in 1925 – was for the military to return to the barracks and return the government to those elected in a democratic process. Pinochet and the military began this process by 1978. However, they faced a big problem – how to protect the many in the military institution who had been involved in what were called human rights abuses around the world. They decided to reform the Chilean constitution to build in provisions that would protect the military officers against reprisals once there was a democratic government. This new Constitution made it possible for Pinochet to continue as head of the military for a very long time, till now practically, and gave ex-presidents a seat in the senate. There were several other protective devices such as some appointed senators. The military government then submitted the proposed new Constitution to a popular secret vote, up or down.

The Chilean government badly wanted some US endorsement of this process, some recognition that conditions in Chile had been changed basically and that power would be given back to the civilians and the political parties gradually. Various Chileans came to Washington to explain to us how serious and democratic they were in this process. I was volunteered for one long Sunday afternoon listening to a couple of lawyers' explanations. I found their arguments that the military had to be offered protection to get them to hand over power quite convincing. It also appeared that the vote on the Constitution would be free and open. Some Chileans saw a yes vote as a vote for a return to democracy, albeit in a few years. Others saw it as a vote for Pinochet to retain substantial power for a long time. Views were divided in ARA, but everybody in ARA felt that modifying the constitution to establish a specific scenario to get back to democracy was good and something that we should encourage, not something that we should be denouncing as a fraud for not putting Pinochet in jail. HA argued that the new constitution was just a trick of Pinochet to retain power and it should be condemned because it would not have him face any punishment. I pointed out to HA it wasn't so unusual for some people to be head of militaries for a long time; that even happens in democracies; Pinochet was promising to step down as president and to allow an open and honest election, moreover, he was putting this return to democracy plan, however flawed it might be, to the people to decide. The 7th floor basically split the difference, and we said nothing before the vote, neither approving the process nor condemning it. I think Patt managed to condemn it in some of her public statements, but the official department guidance was convoluted but neutral. HA was convinced the constitution would be voted down if the election was free.

Well, popular votes are popular votes. People don't always vote the way you think they might. Chileans approved the constitution, and there was no evidence of significant fraud. HA was up in arms that Pinochet had pulled this off. HA tended too often to simplify and personify. In Chile you had a Pinochet, a killer. He's the one you wanted in jail. I saw our principal objective as a return to a democratic government without human rights abuses. I wasn't concerned where Pinochet was, whether he was the head of the army or was in jail. As long as you had a democratic government, that was the big good you were after. There were great struggles on

what the U.S. would say about the new constitution and the free vote. The result was basically negative comments with only a few ARA phases indicating that a return to democracy would be good.

Until the end of the Carter Administration we continued opposing financing for Chile. It was ironic that as the human rights abuses stopped and a program to return to democracy was set up and approved by the Chilean voters, the U.S. continued tightening our sanctions. Chile was one country where I regularly lost the battle for accomplishment over the bully pulpit, and my initiative to bring the military side into line only put military sanctions in place but did not, as I had hoped and expected, yield any relaxation on the economic side. The two killings on the streets of Washington were a factor, but my sense is that the hatred of Pinochet among the NGO's, which included many Chilean exiles, and in a few Congressional offices, was too great for Christopher to moderate our policies without creating a problem on the Democratic Left. I rationalized that every Administration is entitled to a couple foreign political enemies, and, so long as US interests in the country are not great, there is no major loss. I think by mid-1980 Christopher saw that we would soon have to adjust our policy on Chile if Carter were reelected and that is why he chose me to be the next Ambassador in Santiago.

Q: This was kind of an awkward time to be in a very prominent position as Acting Assistant Secretary in ARA, which was very controversial and there were all kinds of emotional feelings about it. On the other hand, you had a long relationship with Al Haig. How did you feel about all that?

USHNELL: I looked at this busy period as a job I had a professional duty to do regardless of the implications for my future career. I believe it is an important part of the professional Foreign Service to provide background and balance through the transition between political administrations. I have observed that administrations tend to make their biggest foreign policy mistakes in the first few months because they haven't learned the territory. I saw my job in the transition after January 20th as avoiding the new people doing anything too rash and making sure that we moved forward in a sensible, next-step fashion in ways that made sense. This approach fitted well with Haig's and with the general mind set of the new administration. As always happens for the last six months, particularly the nearly three month lame-duck period, of an administration, it leaves many issues pending as it focuses on the election and then the transition.

There had been major human rights improvements in Chile, and it was time to modify our Chilean policy, but this was not something to raise just before the election or in the interregnum. It was obvious to leave this until a new administration came in. We then did a policy paper and recommended changing our Chilean policy. Haig approved. I testified on the Hill and said what we were going to do and how the Chileans had improved the current human rights situation.

Q: And the Caribbean nation initiative?

BUSHNELL: The Caribbean Development Group activities continued apace. By this time there were regular meetings; the aid levels, particularly from the World Bank and IDB, were going up fast. I had an easier time in the Reagan Administration, despite the fact that aid was being cut overall, getting increased aid, not just for Jamaica, but for the entire Caribbean initiative. Elsewhere we made major changes in policy. These did not require a Presidential or Secretary's press conference. We changed our policy significantly on Chile, reducing sanctions to reflect the improved human rights situation. I testified on the Hill, making our revised Chile policy public. These changes got a fair amount of press coverage, the normal press coverage. Haig met very early on with General Viola, who was taking over as president of Argentina and was up just before he was to take over. I also arranged for Viola to see the President privately. There was little press play here for the Viola visit. It was normal attention, not a major thing. For Argentina it was a very big thing. It wouldn't have happened under Carter. Carter wouldn't have seen him because Viola was another military general taking over a military government which had abused human rights in previous years. The Reagan Administration view was human rights are improving in Argentina, and, now they're changing the face running the government, human rights can improve even faster, and that's what we want, that's encouraging. I didn't attend the President's meeting. Years later Viola told me when I was living in Argentina that it wasn't a very satisfactory meeting but he was very glad to have it. Just having the meeting was what really mattered.

GEORGE W. LANDAU

Ambassador

Chile (1977-1982)

Ambassador George W. Landau was born in 1920. He graduated from Pace College 1941 and from New York University in 1942. Ambassador Landau served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1947 and joined the State Department in 1957. His posts included Uruguay, Spain, Paraguay, Chile, and Venezuela. He was interviewed March 11, 1991 by Arthur Day.

LANDAU: Yes. So I went from Paraguay to Chile.

Q: For the record that was 1977.

LANDAU: I got there November 16th. The Panama Canal signing was around Labor Day and at the time they had already requested *agrément* for me and I had met Pinochet for the first time in

Washington. I had a short chat with him. He was very eager to see me come because he was worried they would not send another ambassador. Ambassador Popper, my predecessor, had left in May and nothing had happened and he took this as a sign of disapproval -- not understanding that the normal snafus which befall our personnel system played a trick on him. The man the White House wanted for some reason either did not want to go or could not go because he had some problems. Anyway I finally went.

I had a totally different relationship with Pinochet than with Stroessner...with Stroessner I had a superficial, cordial relationship. I did not play up to him or tell him he was a great guy, but he was interested in military history. He was a very unhappy man because he looked like a German, he looked like a braumeister and he acted like a German. He was on time, he was methodical, punctual and punctilious, all virtues that the rest of Paraguayans do not have. So he was always annoyed. He was always calling, while you had a meeting with him, this fellow and that minister, "Why didn't you come to the meeting? How come you were late again? What is the matter?" He picked up the phone whenever it rang. Once it rang in his office while I was talking to him on a rather sensitive problem, and he picked up the receiver and listened for awhile and said, "Sorry, this is the wrong number, you are talking to the president." He was obviously unhappy. The rest of the Paraguayans were very happy-go-lucky and he was not. He demanded action, he wanted to get things done while the others believed, you know, *mañana*. But I saw him all the time.

Pinochet I saw, I think, four or five times alone. I saw him occasionally with a lot of people in larger groups. But really a heart to heart talk with him, which usually was disagreeable, took place at the most four or five times.

Q: Could I ask you the same kind of question about Chile as I asked you about going to Paraguay, what kind of instructions did you get in Washington? You found a greater interest, I suppose?

LANDAU: With Chile I had very clear instructions, and they were to keep a distance from Pinochet, which was self-understood, and to do what I did in Paraguay, get things done. That was the stock in trade, that I could "get things done." And in a way it started to work out OK but it did not last very long. By the time I got to Santiago in November 1977 Pinochet was very, very worried about the Carter administration. He thought they were out to get him, which in fact they were. He had a totally correct appreciation. Now, it was not the president who was out to get him. The president, President Carter, was a very decent man and he believed in human rights. That was his platform and he believed in it honestly, but he did not realize that he had a number of appointees who really used the human rights question only to get down regimes they did not like.

Q: Was this the human rights staff in the Department of State?

LANDAU: That was the human rights staff in the Department, Patt Derian and Mark Schneider and lots of people on the Hill. They could not care less what Pinochet did; they were out to get him. This of course, worked against human rights. That was the unfortunate thing that I found

out. Ambassador Popper had left in May 1977, no one came, Tom Boyatt was the chargé for a long time. There were no high level visits until the Assistant Secretary, Terry Todman, came in August 1977. The Chileans were so worried that the day before Todman came they abolished DINA, the secret police, and retired General Contreras, who was the chief of DINA, the main trouble maker.

Q: He was later involved in the Letelier case? [A former Chilean ambassador who was assassinated in Washington D.C. September 26, 1976.]

LANDAU: He was involved even before in the Letelier case. He was probably the most evil spirit in Chile who existed and for that matter still exists. He is alive and running security companies, which I am sure he can do very well. He bumped off enough people. So when Todman came, Pinochet did away with DINA. When I came they did away with the foreign minister because they figured that they needed a new broom and they wanted to show the United States, out of fright of the Carter administration, that they were going to behave. Of course the week I arrived we just passed one terrible resolution after another against Chile both in the UN in New York and in the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. One guy whose name I mercifully forget, got up in the U.S. delegation, and said he wanted to publicly apologize for the U.S. role in doing away with Allende. This gives us a lot more credit than is due because competence is not our hall mark. What the Department of Commerce can't achieve the CIA can't achieve either. They both are real good bureaucratic organizations. The Church Commission [Senatorial commission looking into the CIA operations] went into this at length and found out that in fact the CIA did a number of things which were helpful to the opposition. They gave them money and newsprint and all that, but the Chilean people got rid of Allende because they were sick and tired of the totally idiotic economic ideas he had; he ruined the country. So we got much more credit than we deserved; we did not have much to do with it. We helped the opposition but that was all. What people don't understand is what we really tried to do was to avoid Allende from taking office with all kinds of machinations which Kissinger and Nixon worked out through the two track system. Once that failed -- it was, of course, totally mishandled -- it resulted in the killing of General Schneider, the chief of staff. We had already withdrawn our support, but some hotheads did it anyway, some Chilean officers. After that we were minor operators, it was the Chilean people who got rid of Allende. Where was I?

Q: You mentioned that just before you went there had been a change.

LANDAU: Right. So what happened, Hernan Cubillos had run *Mercurio* the main newspaper during the tough days of the Allende regime. Hernan Cubillos had made a lot of money in legitimate export dealings and he convinced Pinochet that he was a friend of the United States, which he was. Not only through his ties to the Agency but he spoke English well, he traveled extensively in the United States and he was very well disposed to the U.S. So Pinochet sacked the Navy admiral who was foreign minister and made Cubillos the foreign minister. Cubillos sold the line to Pinochet that he had to improve his relations with the United States. Everything I

asked was done. We had the Letelier case which was just budding; we had an American involved, by the name of Townley. We wanted Townley and we wanted him the worst way. Well we got Townley; it was not a matter of extradition, he was just turned over to us. It was done through Cubillos and it was sold to Pinochet "to improve relations".

Q: Excuse me, that was a fairly important step at that time – is there anything more you can say about how you managed that? Did you work through Cubillos?

LANDAU: I am not now going into the Letelier case but I am just using it as an example of the Cubillos policy. He sold Pinochet on it and we got Townley. At the same time already the U.S. and the UN had tried for two or three years to allow special rapporteurs to go to Chile but it had been denied. I talked to Cubillos about it, Cubillos talked to Pinochet and the group came. It was headed by an Austrian and they had freedom to go around and talk to people and it was very successful from their point of view; it was not very good from the point of view of the Chileans but they allowed it anyway. We had some labor leaders coming; Teddy Gleason and Sol Chaikin and again they wanted to see Pinochet. He had never seen any U.S. labor leaders before and they were pretty rough with him, but he saw them. I reported all this and said these are positive things and I think if we continued on this line we would be able to make real strides in the human rights field to get people released. The answer from Washington was to be harsher than ever. There was no recognition and in fact it was even just about that time there was an OAS meeting and somebody stuck in Carter's speech the line about "Bolivia's just demands for an outlet to the sea." Now if there is one thing we should not get involved in is Bolivia's outlet to the sea. It is none of our business and it would be just as unwelcome now to the present government as it was to Pinochet.

Q: This outlet would go through Chile?

LANDAU: Of course, as it happened Bolivia and Peru lost the War of the Pacific in 1889 and Bolivia lost the outlet to the sea.

Pinochet had thought that with all these gestures he would get a gesture from Washington that there was hope. But he realized that regardless of what he did he would get only the fist in the face. Somehow the president's speech to the OAS on the outlet to the sea was the last straw for him. In short order he got rid of Cubillos, whom he blamed for the wrong policy, he fired him and from then on if I wanted to get somebody released or found out there was a human rights violation and wanted them to look into it I got to see the minister of interior or his deputy, but Pinochet did not give me the time of day.

In fact later on Pinochet was advised to clean up his image to be more debonair and diplomatic and so he decided, which he had never done before, to get the diplomatic corps by groups of twenty for dinner at his residence. As it happened it went in alphabetical order and we came quite early because in Spanish we are "E" so we were in the first group. He had a drink too many, probably, at the time. He came and shook hands and after dinner he talked to each one for a

moment. I used this occasion to say, "Mr. President, I want to let you know I am leaving tomorrow, I have been recalled on account of the Letelier case." He said, "Well, why?" I said, "To show unhappiness with the recent ruling of the Supreme Court on the extradition case." He said, "You know something, we really don't need you, I can go and get all I want over there," -- there was the ambassador of China. Interestingly enough this great anti-communist never cut his relations with Red China, they were there from day one. So he said, "Here is the ambassador of China, he gives me everything I want, I don't need the United States."

This little episode I recounted to Taylor Branch, when he was writing together with Gene Propper the book *Labyrinth* about the Letelier case. I gave them a lot of details about this case. Years later when I was in Venezuela the Chilean ambassador came to see me, a personal friend of mine. He said, "You know I have a rather awkward thing to ask you. On page such and such of this book you recount an anecdote about Pinochet and you kind of insinuate that he was in his cups. Did this come from you or didn't it come from you?" I said, "Why do you ask?" He said, "Because I got an inquiry from the Presidency about this." I said, "If you had asked me personally it would be different, but I do not owe them any accounting, so I am not going to answer your question." This episode bothered Pinochet years later.

My relations with Pinochet were very cool afterwards and as a result of another problem the White House decided to cancel the 1980 UNITAS operation, which is the joint fleet maneuvers with the Latin American countries. I am not sure that this was a good idea because we did not do UNITAS maneuvers to please Chile or to please Argentina but we did it to get our navy into better shape to coordinate with other navies.

Q: Excuse me George, about your recall, was that in 1979?

LANDAU: I was recalled four times, in 1979, 1980 but I think this was the first or second recall. The cancellation was the last one after the Supreme Court decided not to pursue the Letelier case locally, which we had offered them. I was recalled and we canceled the UNITAS. As a reprisal Pinochet gave orders that no cabinet officers, no general officers would come to our Fourth of July reception at the residence. So that was the type of relations that we had. Not very good. But of course the Carter administration had thought I had done a good job in carrying out their policy. It would have been better had they responded to the overtures from Chile, but they did not want to do that.

Q: Did you feel that it was part of your role to attempt to persuade Washington to be more responsive?

LANDAU: I simply made it very clear that you can't have it both ways. You can't give me instructions to go in and get this and that done if at the same time you don't show any recognition for the things they have done unilaterally to please us. That was really the problem, it was up to

Washington to decide. But you cannot have it both ways. They decided not to accept any of the unilateral offerings so to speak and hit him over the head whenever they could. At the same time they were sending me instructions to do a great number of things, but, of course, I was rebuffed.

Q: You think this was the work of the Human Rights Bureau? Was it at odds with the Latin American Bureau?

LANDAU: Very much, and you could see that Terry Todman resigned over the problem. He said "You can't have two assistant secretaries for Latin America" and he quit and went to Spain. His successors, Pete Vaky and others, all had their problems. It was obviously difficult times. You had foreign policy gains and objectives and you have domestic objectives and you have political objectives. They were very much interested in political objectives. I don't say they were right or wrong, but I am just stating how it was done. You can't have it both ways – that was the main thing that Washington does not seem to understand.

I still knocked myself out and tried to do all the things I was asked to do, whether I failed or did not fail, it made no difference. I was in sufficiently good favor, I guess, with the administration and in 1980, about Easter time, I got a call from Secretary Vance and he said, "You have done such a good job in Paraguay and in Chile and you have been in the military and you know how to handle those fellows. We would like you to go to Guatemala. They have a military government and we do not talk to them sufficiently and maybe relations could be improved." So in other words Washington realized that it made no sense to mete out punishment to anybody, but as the Secretary said relations could be improved. It was interesting because they had just canned Frank Ortiz.

What do you do when the Secretary calls you? I said, "Sure I would be glad to go." My wife was standing in the background saying "no, don't do it." It was about Easter- time. Shortly thereafter Vance resigned after the question of the helicopter attempt to rescue the hostages in Iran. I never heard anything further and I thought they had forgotten and I was perfectly happy to stay on in Chile. About September or October all of a sudden I got a call from Personnel that they would ask for the agrément. I said sure, but I had not realized it was still active. They said it just took us that long. They asked for the agrément but they never got it. They sent someone who had very good relations; he was DCM in Guatemala at one time, to tell them that I was really an all right guy and that I was sent to improve relations. But somehow they knew that I was in Paraguay and Chile and into human rights and they dragged their feet. They dragged their feet until a week before the elections when their ambassador came in to see Deputy Secretary Christopher and said to Chris, "We have thought about it and would be pleased to accept Ambassador Landau." To which Chris said, "Look, you waited that many months, let's wait a week until the elections and we shall see where we stand." Of course that was the end of that. Not to my displeasure I did not go to Guatemala and never heard about it again.

As it happened I stayed under the Reagan administration for another year in Chile, but after the elections were lost by Carter there were some articles in the *New York Times*. There was a group of two or three people, the transition team, which was appointed -- I don't know by whom -- and this team leaked to the *New York Times* that they had a hit list, starting with Bob White, to no one's surprise [Robert E. White, Ambassador to El Salvador] and the former Ambassador in Uruguay, Larry Pezzulo, Ed Masters and myself and a number of others, we would all be removed. This was fine, it was time to do something else anyway.

The new administration came in and I would say that the first -- if my memory does not betray me -- the first member of the cabinet to be sworn in was Alexander Haig because they needed the continuation of foreign policy. He was, I think, confirmed on a Wednesday, sworn in on a Thursday and on Friday I had a call that I should report to the Department to see the Secretary on Monday morning. I went, not knowing what was in store. If they wanted to fire me there was no need to see the Secretary, he could do that by a little telegram. Already Pezzulo [in Nicaragua] had lost his job. Saw the Secretary Monday morning. I had known Secretary Haig when I was handling Spanish base negotiations for Alex Johnson; he was the contact man on my level, for Kissinger. He was a colonel in the White House. He was very nice, very competent. I did not know him well, but we knew each other. I came in on Monday morning, he said, "George, I'm glad you came for as you know my first chore is not to worry about who is going to be ambassador in Great Britain or in France, my chore is to worry about who is going to be ambassador in Salvador because the first thing I did was fire Bob White. You know you have such a good record, bipartisan record, and Walter Stoessel, who is going to come as my deputy, Phil Habib, and a number of others from both administrations, both Carter and Nixon, say you are the right man to go to Salvador." I was very surprised. I said, "Yes Mr. Secretary, I would be very glad to go to Salvador. Are you aware that I have a strike against me?" He said, "No, what is your strike?" I said, "I was proposed by the Carter administration to go to Guatemala but I was rejected there so if you send me to Salvador you will look bad domestically because you are using a Carter retread, and don't you want to have a fresh face there? The Salvadorans knowing that the Guatemalans rejected me would not be very pleased with this assignment." He said, "Gee, I did not know about this, do you think it would make a difference?" I said, "Yes but I will leave it up to you." He thought for a while and said, "Well, maybe it is better we don't send you." I said, "I would like to know what you have in mind for me for I have a very interesting offer from Mr. Rockefeller to run the Americas Society and the Council of Americas and I have to give him an answer." He said, "Could you ask him to wait until the 15th of April and I can assure you that by the first of April I will have an answer. Joan Clark is coming in to be Director General and she will call you by the first of April to tell you where you are going as we want to keep you."

So again I am telling you this because the strands had gone back saying that I could handle the military, I could handle dictators. And in fact I dealt with Franco, with Stroessner, with Pinochet and was supposed to deal with the Guatemalans. Joan Clark called me on April 1 and said, "Well, we have a job for you. We are going to send you to Panama." She laughed. It was a very

unpleasant military government. It must have been Torrijos' at the time. Well, as it turned out, it is a different story which has no bearing on this, I never went to Panama because the Department had to change personnel and I wound up in Venezuela with no regrets.

WADE MATTHEWS

Deputy Chief of Mission

Santiago (1982-1985)

Wade Matthews was born in North Carolina in 1933. He attended the University of North Carolina and received a bachelor's degree in zoology in 1954. After graduation he joined the army and then went into Law school before joining the Foreign Service in 1957. He has served in Trinidad and Tobago, Peru, Brazil, Germany, Mozambique, Guyana, Ecuador and Chile during his service career. He was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Well, let's move off now you are talking about going to Chile, from when to when?

MATTHEWS: I was in Chile from June of 1982 to August of 1985, a little over three years.

Q: What were you doing in Chile?

MATTHEWS: I was Deputy Chief of Mission. For the first couple of months I was there I was chargé d'affaires because we were between Ambassadors and I turned the post over to another chargé d'affaires when I left.

Q: Who?

MATTHEWS: That is an interesting story in itself. I received a list of vacancies at my appropriate grade. At the time I had been promoted sometime when I was on the Central American desk job, a fairly rapid promotion after a very slow promotion from 0-4 to 0-3. It was from 0-3 to 0-2 which is counselor of embassy rank at the present time. I think the position became that rank about a year or so later when they made the switch. Among the post that were opening that summer in which I thought I would have some interest was Deputy Chief of Mission in Santiago, Chile. At that time, I had no idea. I knew the current ambassador, George Landau who at that time was leaving, and at that time, I didn't know who was going to take his place. I don't think the decision had been made at that time who was taking his place. I put that on my list of a very small number, about three posts that I was interested in. Shortly after I mailed that in, I got a call from Charles Grover, Chuck Grover who I had replaced many years before many years ago in my first assignment in the National Education Exchange Service. He

said, "I know the consul general at Guayaquil is open. Tell me about it; I am considering applying for it." I told him about it and said, "Chuck, oddly enough I am considering applying for Deputy Chief of Mission in Santiago, tell me about it." And he did. He still did not know at the time who was going to replace George Landau. Shortly thereafter I heard that James Theberge, a political appointee who had served as Ambassador to Nicaragua up until just about the time I took over the Central America desk. He left really a week or two after I took it over in '77, was going to be Ambassador. I had met him and talked with him, of course, when he returned to the United States. I had just to keep each other informed, he was the Republican national committee man concerned with foreign affairs in the Carter administration when the Republicans of course, were in the opposition. We found it useful to keep each other somewhat informed about what was going on in our respective areas of expertise and he was quite interested in Nicaragua having just completed two years as Ambassador there. I found out he was going; I did nothing further at that time. I got a call from him a week or two after I found that out. He said, "Wade, would you be interested in going to Chile as my Deputy Chief of Mission?" I said, "Well, Jim, oddly enough, that is one of the three posts I put on my reference sheet. Bottom line, I suggest if you are interested in having me, tactically it would be a bad idea to say so at this time. Yes I'd like to go. I'd be interested in going, but tactically why don't you wait until you find out if I am among the choices that they give you because logically I should be, but there are a lot of people applying for this. If I am, you can say "gee" you're elected. I'll accept this character, Matthews. You guys owe me one instead of asking for me and they say, okay, you owe us one." He said, "Good tactic," and I understand he did that.

Anyway, I went to Chile as Deputy Chief of Mission. Chuck Grover came to replace me as consul general at Guayaquil. We changed jobs where we didn't have anything to do with direct negotiations for changing jobs. It was through the system.

Q: OK, let's talk about the situation in 1982 in Chile.

MATTHEWS: In 1982 in Chile, we had the Allende years terminating with his overthrow in 1973, about nine years prior to that time following which with the military government there were some serious human rights violations and almost a civil war in Chile, but it was put down by the military in Chile, in some cases rather brutally. Not a massive number of people killed. As well as we could determine, in the immediate military takeover and shortly thereafter and over the years there were very few, a total of about 700 people lost their lives in Chile. Mostly through elimination by the military or through guerrilla attacks and warfare. In some cases it was provoked by the individuals; in other cases they were simply eliminated because they were simply too dangerous or the interrogation was more harsh than it should have been and they lost their lives in that way. Not a huge number, but nonetheless there had been some problems. After that there were a couple of years of sort of bumbling around. Pinochet, though he had not been known as a non-statist, seemed to have a rather statist viewpoint took the advice of the so called Chicago boys, people who had been trained under the University of Chicago in free market ideas

and improvement, that sort of thing. They came to him with an idea, this is how you should reconstruct Chile.

Their idea was a rip roaring success but there was one major problem. They pegged their exchange rate too closely to the dollar. Things got outrageously expensive in Chile. Exports plummeted because of this artificially high exchange rate and the economy went into a recession. There were a lot of vacant stores. The unemployment had risen by the time I got there to at least 15% up to 20%. It probably got as high as 25%. We are not talking about a subsistence economy where 25% is ho hum. This is Chile, which is accustomed to a rather high rate of employment, low unemployment, so there was a significant crisis in the government when I got there. The questions were, had the free market experiment failed; were the policies not going to be successful, or was this aberration largely caused by an artificially high exchange rate. It turned out the latter was the case. The economy remained in sort of a crisis state the first year I was there. They stuck to their guns about the free market principles. They freed the exchange rate or allowed it to float essentially. The peso was devalued substantially and the economy by the time I left was improving rather nicely, and the public dissatisfaction which was really threatening to the government at one time with demonstrations against it and bombs being set off on the subways and elsewhere seemed to be ameliorating. That is what we ran into when we got there.

Q: Did you have a problem with Americans visiting Chile who were supporters of Allende from or still smarting under what was considered Nixon's overthrow of Chile who wanted to come, either Congressmen or public figures and all who sort of wanted to raise holy hell and that?

MATTHEWS: Oh, minor problems. It was not a big problem. We had a number of Congressmen who came down, CODELs. I shepherded some around; other people shepherded some around. Control officers were assigned, too. Some were very helpful to us. Some were counterproductive. The type that I had very little respect for were those who came who said sort of mealy mouthed right things while they were there, didn't really do their homework, didn't check into things thoroughly, said basically unobjectionable things while they were there, went back home and blasted Chile in the process. They wouldn't attack us, well they would attack the U.S. government for not being forceful enough at pushing Pinochet out, and why can't we get rid of this guy and why can't we have nirvana tomorrow.

Some were extremely helpful. Bill Richardson was one who was extremely helpful. I went down and either I was his control officer or I was Chargé at the time, I don't remember which. Richardson spoke Spanish fluently. He came down there. We read his briefing paper thoroughly.

Q: This is now the present ambassador to the United Nations.

MATTHEWS: That's right. He was very helpful. The Congressman from Massachusetts who just resigned for health reasons. He was very liberal, very helpful to us. Tribble from Virginia, very

helpful. He listened to us. He came and talked with us first. This is what we are trying to do. We believe you can be of great assistance to us if you will do A, B, and C. We did emphasize it with the government and the opposition along the lines I was mentioning earlier, and they helped us.

By and large, contrary to what I understand is oftentimes the case and contrary to my experience, most of the CODELS we had either were helpful or a watch. A few were quite negative and caused us problems. They were not insurmountable problems or big problems.

Other people, sure human rights delegations were a dime a dozen in Chile. Some would call on us; some wouldn't. Some we would run into in places where they didn't call on us, some wouldn't. Some wanted to talk with us, some didn't. They were if I had to put it on balance slightly unfavorably, not entirely. Some though they disagreed with policy and felt, they almost always take the short term view, unfortunately, the human rights types, and we tend to stand in the way. The world is black and white to put it into standard terms. I am not implying any racism here. Unless you put it in the white column, you get your signals mixed up. You don't discourage practices you should discourage in time. The other side is going to do a much better job. I don't want to put it in black and white terms. Some human rights groups that came down, delegations or individuals were somewhat helpful, others weren't. No more than 50 on a zero to 100 scale.

HARRY G. BARNES, JR.

Ambassador

Chile (1985-1988)

Ambassador Barnes was born in Minnesota and raised in Minnesota and New York. He was educated at Amherst College and Columbia University. After service in the US Army in World War II, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted in 1950 to Bombay, India. His other foreign posts include Prague, Moscow, Kathmandu and Bucharest. He served as United States Ambassador to Romania (1974-1977; India (1981-1985) and Chile (1985-1996) in addition to having several senior level assignments at the State Department in Washington. Ambassador Barnes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: So you went to Chile from November 1985 and left in December 1988. Do you have any explanation why you were only offered South American postings?

BARNES: Well, there is a chartable explanation which I prefer to accept, namely that I had done, or been perceived to have done, a good job in India, and maybe I could serve equally well somewhere else. That is the first part of the equation. The second, why Latin America? Other

than what I was told on the phone namely that there weren't any places in areas where I had background that were then open or would be open. My son-in-law had some Latin American background so I took advantage of being with him for discussion of the opportunities in Latin America. Of the several posts that I was told were open at that point, Chile seemed to be the most interesting. So, it's as simple or as complicated as that.

Q: Who did you replace? What was the situation in Chile when you arrived?

BARNES: My predecessor was a political appointee, Jim Theberge, who had earlier experience as ambassador to Nicaragua during the Ford Administration from August 1975 to June 1977.

Going back a little bit the military had taken over in 1973 under Pinochet's command in a coup that had overthrown Salvador Allende. The military government had remained very much in charge and had loosened up on some of the restrictions, but there was no question as to who was dominant and what the policies would be which were essentially autarchic, collaboration and early sympathy with by then fairly numerous dictatorial regimes in Latin America - in Bolivia, in Paraguay, in Argentina and Peru.

The policy of the Reagan Administration during the first term toward Pinochet was essentially one of understanding and tolerance that this was an anti-communist government, which the United States needed to support and if there were human rights violations, well the United States had to be understanding, quote, unquote, if it was required in order to handle the consequences of the socialist regime of Salvador Allende. That's about it.

The point that I was going to make here, was that just before he left - this was roughly September-October '85 - my predecessor gave a public talk in which he said a couple of things about the importance of human rights. This had not been his emphasis up to that point, so it was something of a departure, but I think it reflected his own realization that the regime was not anywhere near living up to some of the promises it had made about paying attention to human rights questions. Yet, there was no formal change in policy by the Administration, but that was perhaps one signal.

Q: How would you describe the human rights side of things and what happened while you were there?

BARNES: The regime had let up slightly on restrictions, for example, the press was able to raise an occasional question in the human rights context. There was some tolerance, I guess is the word I would use, for human rights related activities particularly those carried out by the Catholic Church. The then Cardinal in Santiago was someone who, should I say, sort of patronized human rights related activities using a church umbrella or church context. Partly

because of the cardinal's encouragement, but partly also because of the work of people from the traditional political, non-communist parties, there began to be almost a movement or at least an effort to develop within Chile itself a popular focus on human rights concerns. A group of the traditional political parties, plus one or two which were new, but were adherents of the regime but not uncritical adherents of the regime, so it was a fairly diverse group. They came up with a declaration which they called the National Accord, which set out principles of human rights for the Chilean situation.

The Cardinal volunteered to take this Declaration to Pinochet, in the hopes that Pinochet would be understanding that something like this was possible or desirable in current Chilean history. Pinochet received the Cardinal and so many words told him, "You are nuts. This is not relevant. This has nothing to do with the needs of the country." And the conversation ended. So, that is one anecdote. A little before this I arrived at post. The Declaration came out, and the Cardinal's meeting happened a little after I got there.

Second point, from my standpoint in terms of my own activities, I had decided that I needed to say something in the traditional Ambassadorial address at the time of the presentation of credentials. I decided I needed to say something on the human rights questions. On the importance of human rights and made sure before I left Washington that the relevant people knew this is what I was planning to do so they would not be caught by surprise. What I did say was to quote Winston Churchill to the effect that nothing is more important than human rights except more human rights. Pinochet did not like that, as I found out in the succeeding weeks. I tried to pay the traditional ambassadorial calls on various government ministers; I could not get any appointments. The message was fairly clear that obviously somebody was unhappy with me. So I then decided to go see the leaders of the opposition. Which I did, and that seemed to be enough to break the logjam. I got to see the members of the government after that.

Q: Were other embassies also raising the human rights side of things?

BARNES: Yes, there was a group of us which got together periodically. The French ambassador, the Costa Rican ambassador, the Argentine ambassador, for example, compared notes on what was going on and what things we ought to be anticipating. In general it was a fairly cohesive diplomatic corps and for the most part countries were not that sympathetic to the regime. There were exemptions, such as the Paraguayan, for example, depending on who was in charge of the government.

Q: Did we have an officer or officers who were essentially building up human rights violation files and reporting back to Washington?

BARNES: This is primarily the work of our political section, but when it came to the media, USIS people were particularly involved. Our economic officer worked with representatives of

some of the trade associations to try to sensitive them to the implications of Chile's being a pariah state and the non-willingness to invest, for example.

Q: What sort of human rights violations were we seeing when you were there?

BARNES: There were imprisonments, but that tended to be somewhat less and people who had been in prison were allowed to leave the country. The influence on the censorship of the media, for example.

There were occasions of what I would call egregious incidents of human rights violations. Roughly 1986, I think I have the year right, there were some demonstrations. They did not take place that often in Chile when I first got there. Street demonstrations are what I am talking about. Somewhat more later on though, as the system began to open up a little bit you got less in the way of demonstrations. On any event, on this particular day there were demonstrations the police used tear gas but toward the end of the day we got word that two young people who were demonstrators had been doused in gasoline and set afire. We were asked for help and we tried to find a hospital which would take the young people. The young man died of his injuries; the young woman survived and acquired a lot of plastic surgery which was done in Canada. Do you know Spanish? (No.) Well, the Spanish word for burn is "quemadura." So we talked about these two are the "quemaduros," the people who had been burned.

We were in touch with the mother of the young man and also in touch with the young woman who survived. A couple of days later there was a funeral mass at the cathedral for the young man, and my wife and I went to that. The police charged the gathering as it spilled out of the building out into the square in front of the church. So we got a little bit of the feeling of what tear gas is like. The building we were in actually at that point near to the cathedral was the human rights commission which answers in some way your earlier question. There such a thing as a human rights commission. It was able to worked, but not without restrictions. The fact that the U.S. ambassador and his wife and a couple of other diplomats showed up at the service at least outside the cathedral attracted a certain amount of attention.

Among the people who heard about it was then the senior U.S. senator from the South Carolina, Jessie Helms. Within four or five days he decided he would come to Chile and investigate for himself why it was that the, as he put it, "the American flag had been displayed at the funeral service for a terrorist." One of the worse interviews I ever had was with Jessie Helms and his staff. Essentially I got a grilling from him and his staff and I know my responses did not satisfy him. But what it did was to produce even more than what I already had in the way of support in the Congress, and the Administration was very good about supporting me.

Q: Did you have any sense of where Senator Helms and his staff were coming from?

BARNES: Pinochet was a friend. He was anti-communist. He had overthrown a communist regime, the Allende regime. He was a good guy; somebody that needed to be supported.

Q: What about the economy? The U.S. supported free trade and all, but tell us about the influence of the Chicago boys.

BARNES: The leading Chicago boy had become, by the time I got there, minister of finance, a man by the name of Hernán Büchi who was responsible for the further development of the private enterprise nature of the Chilean government as well as getting loans from a number of international sources. The fact that the country under Pinochet, but I think in good part, thanks to Büchi, had moved in the direction of promoting private enterprise, reducing government controls. This was both to our advantage and to theirs. The exception there was on the human rights side, where there were pieces of American legislation, like export import and so on, which had human rights requirements. And you had to provide certification, sometimes we couldn't do that.

Q: Were you under pressure from economic sources in the States or something to certify the uncertifiable as far as human rights was concerned?

BARNES: No, except for that one occasion legislatively where there were some restrictions, but that didn't keep us from making public statements from time to time about Chilean behavior. For example, roughly six months after I arrived, so that was early 1986, there were meetings of the UN Human Rights Commission where Chile was criticized and the U.S. voted – this is a change from the first Reagan term – and the U.S. would vote in favor of the complaints on Chile's behavior.

GEORGE F. JONES

Deputy Chief of Mission

Santiago (1985-1989)

George F. Jones was born in Texas in 1935. He graduated from Wabash College in 1955 and received a Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Stanford University. His postings abroad have included Quito, Accra, Caracas, Vienna, Guatemala City, San Jose and Santiago, with an ambassadorship to Guyana. Mr. Jones was interviewed in 1996 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

JONES: I went to Santiago, Chile as DCM. As it turned out, I was chargé there until November. I spent most of 1985 as chargé at one embassy or another.

Q: Today is October 29, 1996. George, with "DCM-ships" usually the Ambassador has to pass on you--was there any of that? How did you get the job?

JONES: Actually around the end of 1984, I got a phone call from someone in personnel asking me if I would be the Department's candidate for Ambassador to Belize. I thought it over and turned it down, and subsequently, I'm very glad that I did. One of the problems was that this was the Reagan administration and the Reagan administration had this system of having the Department put up a foreign service officer candidate for every Ambassadorship and then there would be what I would call a battle, I suppose the White House would have called it an evaluation of merits, between the FSO and the political appointee whom the White House had tapped for that particular post. Surprise, surprise, the FSO usually lost, and I knew lots of cases where people sat around waiting for months doing nothing, while the decision was fought out as to whether they or the political appointee were going to go. I didn't know it at the time, but some instinct had warned me, that the guy that the White House had tapped for this post was an assistant secretary named Jim Malone, he was the assistant secretary for oceans, environment and science.

Q: How did Harry Barnes when he came there, how did he take command of the situation?

JONES: His view was that you had to, the American Ambassador had to demonstrate publicly where our sympathies lay. He didn't do this by public statements. He didn't talk much to the press; he held very few press conferences. He talked to the American press, but he didn't do much talking in Chile. He left that to me. I did a lot more of that than he did. By doing it publicly, I mean by his public actions. He went to call on Gabriel Valdes, the leader of the Christian Democrats, shortly after he had arrived. He had of course presented his credentials to Pinochet and met with the Foreign Minister and other major government officials. The Valdes visit greatly irritated the government. We hadn't realized that it was going to irritate the government so greatly that he would do this before he had called on every single one of the ministers in the government. We were showing lack of respect for the people in power. Not long after, there was a human rights ceremony. I think it was on Human Rights Day, December 10. There was a ceremony in the cathedral. The Church had established a body called the Vicariate of Solidarity, which meant solidarity with those who were imprisoned and exiled and oppressed, and the Vicariate had organized the ceremony. There was a procession leaving the church, people left the church carrying candles. Harry went and left the church carrying a candle. Outrage! Fury! Incomprehension! That the American Ambassador would associate himself with these communists in the Catholic Church.

There were a series of things like that. Occasions when we visited people in prison, usually

people who had some connection with the United States in one way or another. Neither the Ambassador nor I went, but we sent an Embassy officer to visit them, and this was noticed and reported. Of course the most notorious thing he did which brought him -- grief is too strong a word, but it certainly brought him enormous controversy, was in July of '86. There were some demonstrations in the streets of Santiago. Two Chilean teenagers, a boy and a girl, were intercepted by a Chilean army patrol. The patrol obviously suspected them of participating in the demonstrations. The girl may in fact have participated. But it's clear that the boy was simply there as a photographer. He was carrying a camera; he was an amateur photographer. At any rate, this patrol decided they had caught a couple of these communists who were causing all this disturbance, and they poured gasoline on them and set fire to them. The girl was badly burned; the boy was killed. Unfortunately for the Chilean army, the boy was a legal permanent resident of the United States and had been attending a high school in Maryland, I think, with the son of Charlie Hill who was George Shultz's personal assistant. This was the Rodrigo Rojas case. The army took them and dumped them into a ditch in some remote spot on the outskirts of town. The girl eventually managed to flag down a vehicle and got taken to a hospital. The Ambassador went to the boy's funeral. I almost went myself. The Ambassador was taking one of his rare breaks at the seaside when the funeral was scheduled. It was not clear if he was going to be able to get back to Santiago in time. It was not easy to communicate anywhere outside Santiago. The telecommunication system had not yet been privatized. I decided it was important for the United States to be represented, and I was getting ready to go, and then I got word that the Ambassador was on his way back to town and would go. As usual, Pinochet was determined to manipulate the occasion. A photographer got a picture of Harry in a room in which there was a big floral wreath from the Communist Party. The right wing's version of this was that the Ambassador clearly had declared his allegiance to the extreme left of Chile by going to this radical's funeral. Both of these young people had leftist connections. That's why they had been watching the street demonstration, which had been organized by the extreme and near-extreme left. The moderate parties had largely given up on street demonstrations by this point because they had not led to anything and had not produced anything.

The funeral led to Senator Helms' visit to Chile shortly thereafter. A visit which he made totally unannounced. We learned from the Chilean Government that he was there; even the State Department didn't know. Harry sent a note over to his hotel and welcomed him to Chile and said he was at his service and asked if there was anything he could do. No response for several days. Finally on Saturday morning, he received a phone call from one of the Senator's aides saying the Senator would like him to come to the hotel and meet with him. So he went off to see him. Harry is one of the more unflappable people I know. This was one of the two or three occasions when I can remember his being visibly angry and visibly upset when he came back from that meeting. He was clearly treated in the most contemptuous manner. Helms and his aides had made up their minds that this was a left wing ambassador who had allied himself with left wing causes and was trying to undermine this noble government which was doing so much good for Chile. It must

have been a very unpleasant interview.

Q: Actually Pinochet was something of a second choice wasn't he? The first choice was killed in an automobile accident or something.

JONES: The commander of the army was assassinated. Pinochet had just recently been sworn in by Allende as commander in chief of the Army. But the other military leaders were pressuring him very hard to join the coup. It was only at the very last minute, I think it was the day before, that he told them he would go along. If they thought he was going to remain the tail of the dog, they were mistaken. The story that was told was they first realized how far they had let their power slip when Pinochet began to make exclusive use of the Presidential box at the Santiago Opera House, and if the other junta members wanted to use it they had to go to him.

I think the question of whether Pinochet would have left power if it had not been for the United States is a much more difficult question. I have gone back and forth on it in my own mind. I think that it would have been very difficult without US support. Certainly US support alone would not have done the job if you had not had many other elements present. Because the Carter Administration had opposed Pinochet. We had imposed sanctions on him of various kinds, all of which were totally ineffectual because the other circumstances were not there to permit them to be effective. As I said last time, the absolutely key element to Pinochet's departure was the insistence by his own closest supporters that there be a plebiscite. Not only their insistence that there be one, but as the time came closer, their insistence that it be a free and fair plebiscite. Now part of the reason that they insisted on it, I'm not sure any of them would admit this, but part of the reason was international pressure. I think if the United States had been following the policy of the first Reagan term and was being buddy-buddy with Pinochet and not complaining about the human rights situation at all, certainly the question arises whether the right wing would have been so sensitive to the question of whether there was going to be a free vote in October 1988. Moreover, had the eyes of the world not been on Chile and had there not been international observers in Chile for the plebiscite, then I think that Pinochet in any of numerous ways would have gotten away with it. He would have manipulated the situation or stolen it. The United States has very hard evidence that he was trying to do that right up to the very last moment. My conclusion is that although certainly a lot of Chilean effort was essential in getting rid of Pinochet, another essential element was strong pressure by the United States. We said, OKAY it is your decision to hold this plebiscite. It wasn't our idea; it didn't come from us, but your constitution provides for this plebiscite, then let's see you hold it and respect the decision that comes out. I never held a conversation with a Chilean who suggested... about the only Chilean who suggested, not to us of course, that it might not be a free and fair plebiscite was Pinochet himself. The left feared that it might not be, but the right wing was absolutely determined to

convince us that it was going to be free and fair. Mainly their worry was Pinochet is going to win this of course, and if he wins it, will the United States respect his victory? That was the question we got over and over again from the right.

Q: George, at the time, and the fires were kept burning through a book and a movie called Missing about an American student who was somewhat involved with the left wing and the Allende people and all and who was "missing". He really was.

JONES: Missing and dead.

Q: Could you say was any of that still hanging around when you were there and could you explain why it became a force in American-Chilean relations.

JONES: Well the movie was part of a whole series of movies by a leftist film-maker named Costa Gravas.

Q: "Z" had an impact on our relations with a couple of dictatorships.

JONES: I remember hearing at the time that "Z" came out that the foreign service entrance examination boards were using it as a question, to find out whether the candidates would recognize that "Z," whatever its merits artistically, was in fact political propaganda in the broadest sense of the term. That it was designed to advance a particular political cause. You can say the same thing about "Missing." It was designed to paint the worst possible picture of the Chilean coup leaders, and it was done by depriving people totally of the context that at the time of the coup it was supported by a great majority of Chileans. In fact during the '88 plebiscite campaign the Pinochet forces dug up and used an old black and white film of an interview with Patricio Aylwin, who was the leader of the Christian Democratic Party and therefore the leader of the opposition forces and later, 1990-1994, became the President of Chile. Patricio Aylwin was being interviewed right after the coup by some European newspaper and he was trying to put it into context. Why did this happen? Well it happened because Allende led the country into political and economic disaster. You may recall that the housewives were putting chickens outside the homes of military officers to get across the message that they had to do something.

Having said all of that, the core story in "Missing" is there really was an American who was killed by security forces at the time of the overthrow. His father, Jack Lemmon in the movie, came down to Chile and actually found his body. The picture of the US Ambassador who was Nathaniel Davis was more than unflattering; it left a clear implication that Davis was a party to this, that he was aware of the boy's being killed and saw nothing wrong with it in effect. Davis sued the movie company. He had every reason to sue. The movie told lies. The US embassy was doing everything it could do to protect US citizens. It was a bloody overthrow. I think

somebody's count was 1200 or so people killed, not only at the immediate time of the overthrow, but in the years immediately afterwards. By, I guess '76-'78, the killings had stopped. The fervor to just stamp out anybody who was allied with Allende had ceased. For one thing many of them had fled into exile or been expelled. A number were in prison of course. In that sense, Pinochet's human rights record improved after that point. There were no more documented case of people being executed on government orders; the Rojas murder was clearly the work of an overzealous lieutenant. This is not to say that Pinochet's human rights record was good by any means. Certainly there were imprisonments of people who had no reason to be imprisoned. Internal exile was a tactic they were particularly fond of. Chile is a country with many bleak places and they would send somebody off to a tiny island in the middle of a lake or to some extremely cold part of Chile or some extreme desert part of Chile and hold them with the most minimal contact with the outside world, one phone call a month or something like that. Of course demonstrations were broken up; people were beaten over the head with clubs, all that kind of thing, but at least the urge to exterminate had calmed down after the first wave of fervor.

But of course one of the things that had taken place in that period of "revolutionary fervor" was what was then the only act of foreign political terrorism ever to be committed on American soil. I guess it is still the only such act to be committed in the nation's capital. That was the assassination of Orlando Letelier, who had been Allende's Foreign Minister and was in exile in the United States and was working for a Washington think tank called The Institute for Policy Studies. He and an associate, Ronnie Moffat, and her husband, were in a car driving to work when a car bomb that had been placed under Letelier's seat, went off as they were going around Sheridan Circle.

CHARLOTTE ROE

Political Officer

Santiago (1985-1989)

Ms. Roe was born and raised in New York State and educated at the University of Colorado, the Sorbonne and Ohio State University. During and after her university training she was involved in political and labor activities. In 1983 she joined the Foreign Service. In the course of her career with the State Department, Ms. Roe served in La Paz, Santiago, Tel Aviv, Budapest and Bogotá, primarily in the political and labor fields. In Washington, she served on the US Mission to the OAS and in the International Organizations and Environmental and Scientific Affairs Bureaus. Ms. Roe was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

ROE: In July 1985, I took an assignment as political officer in Chile. When my human rights contacts heard I was considering Santiago, they said, "Oh you don't want to do that. It's very dark there." I said, "There must be some rays of light or else people couldn't cope." Ambassador Corr asked me to go to El Salvador with him. I couldn't see myself in a place where I'd be restricted in my movements and where the U.S. presence was so disproportionate. Fortunately Corr understood. He helped me land the political officer position in Santiago. As I got ready to depart post, the USAID director asked me to adopt a beautiful blue and gold macaw bird that he had raised with his hunting dog. He had been assigned to Indonesia and found that he couldn't bring the macaw with him. So I acquired a large parrot, whom I called Rosita the Loqui. Getting her a passport to enter Chile was a complicated transaction.

Q: Who was the Ambassador in Santiago?

ROE: The Ambassador, James Theberge, was finishing up his term. Harry Barnes arrived two or three months into my tour.

Q: What was the situation in Chile when you got there in '85?

ROE: It was gloomy, conflicted. Though Bolivia was also in turmoil, by comparison this felt like stepping into a cauldron. Augusto Pinochet had been in power since the coup he led as army commander on September 11, 1973. President Salvador Allende committed suicide that day in La Moneda palace. Pinochet ruled with an iron fist. He outlawed the political parties. Tens of thousands were tortured, disappeared, killed or exiled during his campaign against the pro-Allende communists and socialists. The military government planned to implement a provision of the 1976 constitution to recognize certain political parties in a formal process, but few Chileans believed this would take place or lead to positive change. The 1980 constitution imposed by Pinochet further concentrated his powers. It promised an eventual return to electoral "democracy," beginning with a plebiscite in 1988 in which voters could say "yes" or "no" to the junta's sole candidate.

The opposition to Pinochet made itself felt through massive street demonstrations. Some mainstream political parties joined in, but those in charge were mostly the trade union vanguard, students and the radical left. The police would douse the protesters with water cannons, spray tear gas, and start shooting with little provocation. The middle class was unhappy about the repression but also weary of these futile confrontations. Chileans felt frustrated and depressed. Beggars held out their hands at every street corner. The crisis over foreign exchange triggered a sharp recession.

Q: Well, we were deep into the Reagan period. Jean Kirkpatrick as our Ambassador to the UN also sat in on the cabinet and was stating that we should work closely with the military leaders in Latin America, because they were closer to our ideals and all. How stood our policy towards Chile when you went there?

ROE: Kirkpatrick's 1979 article in *Commentary* magazine argued that the U.S. should work with authoritarian governments like those of Chile, Argentina and South Africa because they were more likely to lead to democracy than were revolutionary regimes of the left. This was debatable, but it tagged her as pro-dictator. She also fervently criticized President Carter's human rights policies. Outgoing Ambassador James Theberge was in the Kirkpatrick mode. He maintained a pretty friendly relationship with the military government. Theberge kept his distance from the leading opposition figure, Gabriel Valdez, the President of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). In the early 1980s the U.S. frequently bashed the PDC and other center left opposition parties for not banning the communists from taking part in the protest demonstrations. But the U.S. Congress kept a close eye on human rights violations, and the Embassy raised its voice on those issues. The human rights officer...

Q: Who was that?

ROE: Don Knight, who also arrived in the summer of '85, was the labor and human rights officer. He covered all the demonstrations, worked closely with *Solidaridad*, the Catholic human rights agency, and visited imprisoned trade union leaders. When I arrived, John Keane was political counselor. George Jones soon became the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). Connie Poli was office manager, a quiet, steadfast spirit in the political section. The political officer whom I replaced had formed relationships with most democratic political parties except the socialists. This changed after Ambassador Harry Barnes's arrival.

The front office tapped me to draft Barnes' credentials speech. I was stumped at first -- how do you say to Pinochet that we're here to undermine you and assist the rebirth of democracy? So I brainstormed with Jorge Castillo, the senior FSN and a stalwart in the political section. The message we crafted was: "We have deep, long-standing ties and common interests with Chile and its people. We support the goal of a transition to democracy. We'll be watching closely to see how this process evolves..."

During Ambassador Barnes' first few weeks, he went to visit Gabriel Valdez in his office. His gesture sent shockwaves throughout the Pinochet government. The pro-Pinochet hawks disseminated a rumor that when Barnes left Chile, it would be in a six-foot box. (Actually they would have needed a six-foot-five box because the Ambassador is a tall man.) The new U.S. approach emboldened the opposition. Even the pro-democracy conservatives began finding their voices. The Europeans had been supporting the opposition financially, in a patchwork approach. Barnes met daily with key civic, political and intellectual leaders one on one at his residence. I often sat in on these. Barnes had a photographic memory. When he went to meet with Pinochet or the members of his junta, he would report every word that was said. A huge audience in Washington followed these conversations.

Q: Well, when Barnes came, did he come out and say we are going to be more supportive of the opposition?

ROE: His actions spoke that message. The Embassy no longer echoed the right's criticism of the opposition. That's why the first Barnes-Valdez meeting was such a profound shift. We opened up close channels with the democratic socialist wing of the opposition, which the U.S. had previously tended to equate with the Allende left.

The outgoing cultural attaché, Peter DeShazo, opened his house to democratic socialists as well as to Christian Democrats and other opposition leaders, but Ambassador Theberge strongly discouraged these ties. I made contact with a myriad of political groups. These included socialists, the Radical party, and the Humanists, a left-of-center international organization founded in Argentina that advocates non-violence and the development of human potential; the National party, an older conservative grouping; and Renovación Nacional, a new moderate conservative party with an engaging leader, Andres Allemand, a former national soccer hero of Chile.

CHARLES ANTHONY GILLESPIE, JR.

Ambassador

Chile (1988-1991)

Charles Anthony Gillespie Jr., was born in Long Beach, California in March, 1935. He graduated from UCLA in 1958 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Following a six year term with the U.S. Army, he entered the Foreign Service in 1965 and was nominated by President Reagan as Ambassador to Colombia in 1985. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to the Philippines, Indonesia, Belgium, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Chile.

GILLESPIE: When Malcolm Wilkey asked me what I thought about Chile, at this point in 1987 I simply knew that there was supposed to be a plebiscite, to be held the following year, in 1988. In this plebiscite the Chilean people, under a design which Pinochet had agreed to and which he thought he could control - and we'll get into that later on - were to express themselves on how they would go in the future. U.S. policy was that it was up to the Chilean people to make that decision. However, we made clear that we supported democracy. Even then Ambassador Barnes, Assistant Secretary Abrams, and those around them were organizing and planning what action the U.S. would take in support of our policy, as the plebiscite approached. There were debates as to how far we ought to go and what we ought to do. Ambassador Harry Barnes was an activist and a liberal. He tried to make sure, whatever his personal feelings and whatever motivated him

most deeply, that his actions would ensure that whatever the Chilean people decided should be done in as open and democratic a fashion as possible.

Harry may have favored the immediate termination of the Pinochet Government, and I suspect that he did. Although I was not an expert on Chilean affairs in 1987, I had been an Ambassador in Colombia for over two years at this point, in a country where the civilians had called in the military to help them straighten out the situation. It was not a right versus left situation. There had been political violence and civil war. The Colombian people basically said that they wanted the military to come in and help to clean up the situation. The Colombian military had done just that, left the government, and didn't want to come back.

I felt that these long-standing, military controlled governments were not good. I had seen this in Nicaragua under the Somoza regime and all of that. I was comfortable saying to Ambassador Wilkey, "Look, in my view this is our policy, as I understand it. I think that we have to find ways to implement that policy. The job of the U.S. in Chile is to make sure that we do this right. In my personal view I do not think that military people are necessarily very good governors. They may be capable and efficient people, but there is something lacking in an authoritarian or totalitarian regime. We all consider that democracy is essential for the continuing health of the political system."

I let it be known that I was not in any way a supporter of the continuation of the Pinochet Government. However, I made it clear that I would follow Washington's instructions.

...If I remember correctly, we arrived in Santiago on December 1. On about December 5 or 6 - I don't remember exactly - I presented copies of my Letters of Credence to the Foreign Minister. On December 15, 1988, I went over and presented my credentials to Pinochet.

The ceremony was very interesting. The Chileans are very traditional in the way they handle this. La Moneda, the Presidential Palace, used to be the Mint - hence the name - in the old, colonial days. It was the building which was blasted by bombs in 1973, during the military takeover which overthrew President Allende. It had been fully repaired. It's a large, imposing building about two or three blocks square, right in downtown Santiago. It's not at all ugly. Right in front of it is a huge plaza, fairly open, without a lot of tall trees. There is a cobblestone street along the front side of the Palace. For many years the Office of the Presidency occupied one wing, and the Foreign Ministry had another wing. The Ministry of the Interior occupied still another wing. In Chile the Ministry of the Interior is the chief political ministry and also the ministry which controls the police and law enforcement activity. In nearby buildings the Ministries of Finance, Justice, and other departments are located. It's very compact - a little like Washington, DC, in that sense.

The presentation of credentials was like many others. They do it all very formally, although in business suits. You don't have to dress up in white tie and tails or anything like that. There is an escort, a military guard of honor, when you arrive at the Palace. A band plays the national

anthems of the two countries. The new Ambassador takes with him his "suite" - in this case, the DCM, the principal Counselors of Embassy, and the Defense Attaché. You go through a very carefully choreographed presentation. I had never seen President Pinochet in person. I hadn't the slightest idea of what really to expect. George Jones, still the DCM, had given me a detailed briefing and was very helpful in every way.

The Chief of Protocol turned out to be a delightful person - very traditional and very European in orientation. He sort of walked us through it and told us how the ceremony would develop.

For the ceremony itself I had written my remarks which had been cleared with Washington. I had gone over them with my staff in Santiago to make sure that they were right - and they hit all of the points in my instructions: human rights, democracy, and a desire to build a strong relationship, especially during a time of transition. The U.S. wanted to be of assistance, and so forth. When I referred to human rights, I looked directly into the eyes of President Pinochet. He is a man of medium height - not heavy set at all but sturdy. He was dressed in his white Army uniform, so I addressed him as "General" throughout the ceremony. I did not call him "Mr. President."

My Letters of Credence had been drafted in Washington and were addressed to "Mr. President." However, I was careful to say, "General Pinochet." I thought that that was the most appropriate form of address to use, since he was in uniform. I probably would have done the same if he had been dressed in civilian clothes. The Chilean Army has a uniform patterned after that of late 19th Century Prussian Army.

When I looked him in the eye in referring to human rights, he looked me right back. When I referred to democracy, I made sure that I was looking him right in the eye. He looked right back. He then made some observations, responding in a prepared set of remarks which had obviously been drafted for him. He didn't seem to ad lib much at all. We didn't know how this was going to work out. Pinochet had refused to allow Ambassador Harry Barnes to come and say goodbye. He asked me to join him to talk for a few minutes. In fact, we talked for about 20 minutes. We talked a little about everything. We did not dwell on the political situation. I asked him how the plebiscite had gone and so on. I wasn't trying to rub in his defeat but I wanted to make sure that I covered that and heard whatever he had to say.

Pinochet knew that I had served in the U.S. Army. I guess that that impressed him, even though it had been some years before. In that context he raised a point which he also came back to later, saying, "You Americans pride yourself on your military prowess. Chile's Army has never lost a war. You have. You lost in Vietnam. Your Army has become a corps of managers. I'm not sure if you're fighters." He didn't say this in a mean or nasty way, but these were stated in carefully measured terms, coming at these subjects obliquely. He said that and repeated this point in any meetings he had with senior American military people whom he met. We had a couple of visits from the Commanding General from our Southern Command and some senior U.S. Air Force

people. Pinochet didn't hesitate to make those points: first, you lost a war, but Chile has never lost a war. Secondly, you are managers, and we are fighters. It was a very interesting comparison which he made.

Q: I'd like to go back now to the period before you went to Santiago. How did you see the situation in Chile? This was a very interesting time. What impression did you get from the Chilean Desk in the State Department, from the Embassy in Santiago, and as a result of your own reflections? Also, what were your specific instructions for Chile, beyond the general ones?

GILLESPIE: First of all, we knew that Pinochet had not intended to lose the plebiscite. His polling, his opinion testing, and his own judgment led him to conclude that he would win the plebiscite - that the "Si" or "Yes" vote would prevail over the "No" vote. However, we learned through clandestine intelligence, he had planned to make sure that the release of the results of the plebiscite would be tightly managed. If there were any reason to engage in any hanky panky, he would be able to do that. He thought that he could remain in control.

We knew that and knew that he was not prepared to leave power. That conclusion predated my arrival in Santiago and really affected some of my relationships in Chile. There were several reasons why Pinochet's plot didn't work. Ambassador Harry Barnes, Bob Gelbard, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South American Affairs, and other people in Washington made sure that the Pinochet people knew that we knew that Pinochet was planning something. As we learned, that didn't stop Pinochet from making his preparations. However, the Pinochet people at least knew that we knew that if they implemented a plan to jigger the results of the plebiscite, for example, by delaying the announcement of the results, we were going to blow the whistle.

Furthermore, Harry Barnes did something which perhaps few people have ever focused on. Harry had developed a relationship with General Fernando Matthei, the commander of the Chilean Air Force and a member of the governing junta. Remember, this was a Presidential system with basically a four-man "legislature." This legislature was the junta consisting of Pinochet as President and commander of the Chilean Army. His deputy, General Sinclair, often sat in and did the work of the junta on the Army's behalf. Another member of the junta was Admiral Merino, the commander of the Chilean Navy. Merino was, perhaps, more of a key actor in both the move to overthrow President Allende- and in the conduct of the Chilean government over the years - than public opinion was aware of, at least in the years immediately following 1973. Another member of the junta was General Stange, the commander of the *Carabineros*, the semi-militarized, national police force. It included both uniformed and plain clothes police. The plain clothes police were called the Investigations Police. Most of the other Carabineros were uniformed. They are something of a combination of the Texas Rangers, the California Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Forest Service. The other member of the junta was the Air Force commander, General Fernando Matthei. He was the second Air Force commander since the 1973 *coup d'etat*.

Pinochet had obviously stayed on in office since 1973. Admiral Merino was from the same period. General Stange was a relatively recent appointment as chief of the Carabineros. General Matthei had replaced his predecessor, an Air Force general, who had concluded in the mid-1970s that it was time for the military to relinquish power. He felt that they had done what they needed to do and that, therefore, it was time to go. He was basically eased out and replaced as Air Force commander. General Matthei was an Air Force officer who, although a hot shot fighter pilot and truly dedicated to his service, had proven himself to be very efficient and effective as the Minister of Health in the military government. He had also held other, political posts, which we can discuss later.

General Matthei just treasured - and still does - his relationship with the United States and the United States Air Force. He was a committed supporter of the move to displace President Allende and was an effective and committed political actor in the junta. He never hung back. As I said, he was selected to replace another junta member who had said that it was time for the military to leave power. The clear implication was that General Matthei didn't necessarily think that it was time for the military to leave power. As I had been briefed before I went to Chile, General Matthei had been a voice in the junta in favor of giving the people more options, more choice. He had really incited the anger and enmity of General Augusto Pinochet, to the point where some sources were saying that General Matthei had a mistress, that he had accepted bribes, that he was corrupt, and a number of other things. However, these allegations did not go so far as to suggest that General Pinochet had decided to ease General Matthei out of the junta, as he had eased out his predecessor in a very tricky little political game.

Harry Barnes had gotten to know General Matthei on a cordial and friendly basis. Harry told me that if there were anybody in uniform that I needed to talk to in Chile, it was General Fernando Matthei. The key to Matthei was that he had learned how to fly in Chile but, I believe, had had advanced training with the U.S. Navy, I believe, at Pensacola, Florida. He was as closely associated with the U.S. Air Force as a person could be. Interestingly enough, Admiral Merino had a similar relationship with the U.S. Navy, dating from World War II. During World War II he had served as a young Lieutenant and gunnery officer in the Pacific, in combat, aboard a U.S. Navy cruiser. He never forgot that.

I have mentioned that we obtained from clandestine intelligence reporting information on an alleged Pinochet plan to upset plebiscite results which would be unfavorable to him. I don't know if the ultimate source of these reports was General Matthei. Harry Barnes may also have obtained information of this kind from Matthei. Certainly, Harry discussed this possibility with Matthei, prior to the plebiscite. Matthei knew that we knew from various sources that something was going on.

The following events occurred prior to my arrival in Chile. However, in my view, and putting it very briefly, General Fernando Matthei saved democracy in Chile because of his actions on the night of October 4, 1988. The plebiscite had been held, the polls had closed, and Pinochet called

the junta to meet at La Moneda Palace. General Matthei drove up to the Palace. The Palace has an underground garage. The junta members, more often than not, would drive up to La Moneda Palace and then down the ramp into the underground garage, where they parked their cars for security reasons. Remember that there was some anti-government violence occurring in Chile from time to time.

However, on this occasion Matthei drove up to the front door of the Palace, walked through the front door. As he did so, the press surrounded him and clamored for him to say something. There is a press corps assigned to La Moneda, equivalent to our White House press corps. The press was all around the entrance to the Palace, which was guarded by Carabineros - not by the Army, interestingly enough. The press asked him, "What's going on? Why the meeting?" and so forth. General Matthei replied, "Well, I guess we've lost it." The results were in and General Matthei did the one thing which General Pinochet could not stand to have happen, under his alleged scheme. General Matthei, a member of the governing junta, announced the results, which were negative.

Q: This was deliberate on General Matthei's part?

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. He went into the Palace through the front door and made his statement. He had probably prepared in advance what he was going to say. He basically pulled the rug out from under General Pinochet and the gang around him, who had set up an elaborate scheme to postpone the publication of the results, alleging that the returns were not in from this or that part of the country. Meanwhile, they were going to stuff the ballot boxes or whatever they were going to do. So General Matthei pulled the rug out from under the junta, and the press went out with the story.

From that moment on, during the remainder of the period of the Pinochet Government, this animosity toward General Matthei on Pinochet's part grew steadily. To the point that my CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) chief of station told me that General Fernando Matthei had better watch out, from the physical and personal point of view.

I arrived in Santiago in December. One of the first people whom I met was General Fernando Matthei. You wanted to know about the Washington end of this story, but that set the scene that I was walking into. We knew that Pinochet had lost the plebiscite. We knew that Pinochet really did not want to leave power. In my view the Chilean military at the time fell into three categories. There were those who were the core of Chile's military establishment. By and large, they were professional military officers and probably not terribly politically oriented. However, because of the way that they had been raised and trained, they tended to think in very conservative terms.

There was a second set of military personnel, mainly officers, who had all of the characteristics of the first group but who believed that it was time for the Chilean military to get out of the government and somehow turn it back to the civilians. They needed to protect their military institutions and themselves, and there had been human rights violations to be concerned about.

There was tremendous tension, anxiety, and animosity toward the military among the general public.

The third group was composed of the political-military actors. These included generals, colonels, captains, and a few NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) - but mainly officers. They had basically made their careers in politics, whatever their professional qualifications as members of the military. They had a vested interest in sustaining the military in political life. If the military left power, they had to protect their butts, because they had been so closely wrapped up in policies, the implementation of these policies, and perhaps other actions which were not particularly good. They wanted to preserve and protect themselves and these policies.

Then there was a civilian, political structure. Some 17 political parties had gathered together for the plebiscite campaign in something called *la Concertacion para la Democracia*, the Concertation for Democracy. They ranged from everybody to the right of the Communist Party of Chile almost far as you can go. That really amounted to the center right. In addition, there were two parties which wanted to sustain the military government. One was relatively new, the Independent Democratic Union. The other, traditional party of the right was called *Renovacion Nacional*, or the National Renewal Party. Some of the members of *Renovacion Nacional* felt that it was not yet time to return to civilian rule, while other members actively supported it. So the 17 groups to the left of *Renovacion Nacional* and to the right of the Communists joined together to support the "No" vote in the plebiscite and the transition back to democracy.

During my first days and weeks in Chile, in meetings in the "tank," we developed the approach which I thought would work best. Perhaps this was because I had served in the military. From everything that I had read, heard, and seen so far - and I'd gotten this also from civilian Chileans, even in the opposition - there was a high level of respect for individual military officers in Chile. The Chilean military, by any standard, is not particularly corrupt as an institution, although there are individual cases of corruption. There was respect for the Chilean military as a whole, even though, in many instances, some people also felt a terrible animosity toward the military for what it had done. What struck me and what I emphasized was the word honor.

I talked to my USIS people - Information Officer, Stan Shepherd and the Public Affairs Counselor, Marilyn McAfee - about this concept. She had worked closely with Ambassador Harry Barnes. Stan Shepherd, the Information Officer, was a man of long experience who turned out to be a really good skiing buddy for me. Ron Goddard, the Counselor for Consular Affairs, had an excellent Consul General and a very good staff. I brought him and the Consul General into these country team discussions. I very much appreciated his views. I proposed that we basically take the line that where Chile was today was a function of the Constitution of 1980, which had been promulgated by Pinochet and the military government as men of honor. We expected them to live up to their commitment. That was my basic line. Every chance I got I was

going to use it. I would say that this was a situation where the honor of the Chilean armed forces was at stake. They made the commitment to do things this way. I referred to the Chilean Army, Navy, and Air Force and I used the term honor, repeatedly. I kept on saying that. I thought that that was the best way to do it. It didn't make this a U.S. term. That was my line.

When the Vicariate of Solidarity was in trouble, I said, "I do not understand how men of honor - meaning the military - could permit things like this to happen. It's not an appropriate thing to do." This seemed to work pretty well.

As far as the democratic transition was concerned, that first year I was in Chile seemed to be crucial. It seemed to be going along all right, except that the 17-party *concertacion* group which supported the "No" vote was becoming the *concertacion* for democracy. It increasingly looked like the coalition that was going to run the Presidency, in some fashion. The 17-party *concertacion* did not like certain provisions in the Constitution of 1980 as they affected the upcoming elections in December, 1988, and what was going to happen after that. They basically came up with a set of desires, demands, or whatever you might want to call them. They proposed to the military government that these changes be made.

Well, the initial reaction of Pinochet and the junta was that they were not going to make these changes. They said, "No." Well, a lot of pressure was generated, and we added whatever we could to that, though we had to be careful not to appear to be interfering in anything. So it had to be subtle. However, in the final analysis the Minister of the Interior in the Pinochet Government, a civilian named Carlos Caceres, working through the internal processes of the government, convinced Pinochet that they ought to negotiate with the *Concertacion*. The Minister of the Interior felt that this would be okay. He could manage the negotiations, and they wouldn't have to give up more than they had to. This would be an appropriate thing for them to do.

Well, Minister of the Interior Caceres began these negotiations in February, 1989, and continued through March and April, 1989. A crucial event occurred on the afternoon of May 10, 1989. I forget where I was, but that afternoon I received a phone call - maybe it was from the CIA or maybe from Ron Goddard - reporting to me that Pinochet had pulled the plug on the negotiations. He was not going to let Minister of the Interior Caceres go any further, since he felt that he was going to have to give up too much.

Then an amazing thing happened. Carlos Caceres said, "If you do that, Mr. President, I resign." Pinochet had never had people talk to him that way before. He wasn't used to that. Two other cabinet ministers, including Hernan Felipe Errasuritz, the Foreign Minister, said, "If Carlos Caceres leaves the cabinet, the three of us go also." So there were three, key ministers who told Pinochet that they would resign if the negotiations with *Concertacion* were ended. The third minister was the Minister of Mines and Energy. The three of them were all civilians and Pinochet loyalists to the core. So when they said this, Pinochet backed down. I received a phone call at 5:00 or 6:00 AM the next morning saying, "Pinochet has backed down." Meanwhile, we

didn't say or do anything. We acted as if it hadn't happened. We just let things ride and kept our mouths shut and our hands out of it. The fact is that Carlos Caceres probably is the reason that the democratic transition proceeded. He then went forward and negotiated. He was a tough negotiator.

Another plebiscite was held in July, 1989, in which the various changes proposed in the Constitution were validated and legitimized. A constitutional amendment was also approved, and that set the stage for what was to follow. Those are the kinds of things we observed.

I had begun a process of introducing myself to Chile and Chile to me, as I indicated. One of the trips that I needed to take was to a city called Temuco, about 350 miles South of Santiago. There was a university there and a lot of activities. It was really a sort of environmental hodgepodge. There were some bad things going on with timber cutting, and other things were happening. I visited there on March 13, 1989, if I remember correctly. I had by now been in Chile for about three months. My wife was with me. We had been having meetings of various kinds.

On the night before we were to fly back to Santiago I received a phone call from George Jones, the DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission, in the Embassy, to the effect that the U.S. Customs Service had just stopped all fruit shipments into the United States from Chile. The reason given was that cyanide-poisoned grapes had been discovered in a shipment of fruit from Chile. This was described as a terrorist plot of some kind to kill Americans. George told me that the Chilean Foreign Minister wanted me back up in Santiago right away. Well, there were no flights until the next morning. I discussed this with George, and we agreed that I had better call the Foreign Minister.

George told me what he knew, which was that a few days earlier we had received a phone call through the Embassy switchboard. Because the call had to do with agricultural products, the call had been passed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. A young Chilean receptionist/secretary had taken the call. The caller was some man who was ranting and raving about how he was going to cause all kinds of problems for us. He wasn't very specific. The Inspection Service had made note of the call. The receptionist, quite appropriately, reported the call to her boss, who reported it to the Embassy Security Officer. The Security Officer considered that this was not a direct threat to the Embassy's safety, but he had told everybody to be alert to the fact that we were getting threatening phone calls. He had done everything by the book. In fact, because of bomb threats received in the past, he had a taping device attached to the phone. He had said, "If anyone calls again, make sure that we get this kind of call on tape."

A few days later, another call came in. This one was probably from the same person, and the Embassy taped it. On the basis of this, the Embassy had prepared a reporting cable. I was traveling on this trip to Temuco, so I didn't see the every-day reporting. George Jones had

approved the cable and sent it on to the Department of State, saying that we had received this report about Chilean grapes and other fruit that might be poisoned.

You have to put this kind of incident in context, which was very hard for the Chileans to do. A couple of years earlier we had had the Tylenol case, involving poisoning Tylenol pills with cyanide. More recently, there had been an incident in New England of cyanide- poisoned yogurt, on the shelves of grocery stores. Only a few weeks before the phone call to the Embassy there had been testimony, if I remember correctly, by Meryl Streep, or someone like that, about Alar, the chemical used to treat apples in northwestern United States and keep them from spoiling. The allegation was that chemicals like these were going to kill American children - cause cancer and do all sorts of things like that.

RONALD D. GODARD

Political Counselor

Santiago (1988-1991)

Ambassador Ronal Godard was born in Oklahoma and raised in Oklahoma and Texas. He was educated at Odessa College and the University of Texas. After a tour with the Peace Corps in Ecuador, he joined the State Department in 1967 and was posted to Panama, the first of his assignments in Central and South America. These include Costa Rica, Chile, Nicaragua, Argentina and Guyana, where he served as Ambassador from 2000 to 2003. His Washington assignments also concerned Latin American Affairs. During his career the Ambassador served with the Organization of American States, was diplomat in residence at the University of Illinois in Chicago and was Political Officer in Istanbul. Ambassador Godard was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Today is the 30th of November, 2004. Ron, you were in Chile from when to when?

GODARD: Let's see, I began my tour there in 1988, somewhere I guess in 1988 and I was there until summer of '91.

Q: What was your job?

GODARD: I was political counselor in Chile.

Q: Let's talk about again when you arrived 1988, what was the political situation, the economic situation, and then relations between the United States and Chile.

GODARD: Well, the economy was going great guns. Chile under Pinochet, after some disastrous efforts at state-managed economies and so forth, he had latched onto a brilliant economist. Hernán Büchi created the Chilean economic miracle.

Q: These are the so-called Chicago boys?

GODARD: That's right, the Chicago boys. It worked in Chile. It was not without great cost. There was a lot of tightening their belts and so-forth, but it's an economy that reacted very well to that model. There's lots of enterprising people, highly educated. Chileans are interesting in Latin America. They are a people who save money, so there was accumulated capital in the country as well. So economically they were quite well-off, but they'd been under the Pinochet dictatorship by that time for about 17 years. When I arrived in the country there was already a campaign underway, or preparation for a plebiscite that was supposed to either extend Pinochet's presidency for another, I forget how much it was but I think it was something like seven years I think. Or no, that there would be free elections. So the status of our relations at that point were correct I guess you'd call it because our attitude toward the Pinochet government as it hung on longer and longer had gotten more and more frosty, but still correct. We certainly had regular contact with ministers at all levels. At the same time, we had initiated a policy of helping those that were working toward the democratic transition in Chile. We had put some money where our mouth was in that country and were financing NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that were working to prepare people for the elections. There were a number of human rights groups that were quite active in protecting people from the oppression of the Chilean government. By that time, most of the atrocities that we read about now, torture and whatever, were behind the Pinochet regime. It was now a pretty peaceful period. He was sort of lauded, especially in conservative circles, because of the economic progress that they'd made, as a model for Latin America at that point. There were some who felt like the kind of economic reforms that had happened in Chile couldn't happen in a democracy, just too chaotic in Latin America, and you need an iron hand to impose a kind of economic discipline. But there was a plebiscite scheduled for October of 1988 as a matter of fact, and I arrived there. Harry Barnes was our ambassador. Very accomplished diplomat who had contacts across the political spectrum, and it was a pretty broad political spectrum in Chile, ranging from Maoist to Pinochet crypto-fascists in some places. My job as the political counselor was one of developing particular contacts with the opposition. It was the DCM and the ambassador who remained high level contact with the ministers and the presidency. We had at that time, limited contact with Pinochet himself. It was limited. He wasn't too happy about the work we were doing with human rights groups and those who were supporting.

Q: Was this a two sided thing? Were we trying to not have too much contact with him too?

GODARD: With Pinochet? Well, I think the embassy's job is to maintain contact with all the sectors and we were certainly trying to do that. There had been a tremendous expansion in our trade with Chile, so there were economic factors there. There were issues in business that we had

to conduct with the government, in addition to maintaining contact with the opposition and supporting those NGOs that were working toward the democratic transition.

So we came to the day of the plebiscite and there were moments of crisis and so forth, and I sort of threw myself into learning as much as I could about the electoral process. I traveled quite a bit, went to a number of places. Once you got away from the capital, you found the same thing. There was an upswell of opposition sentiment. But a great deal of uneasiness about whether it would be a really fair election, and whether people were safe to vote in the election, because it was a yes or no plebiscite. They weren't voting on anybody else. They were just voting on Pinochet, whether he would continue in office or not. The long and short of it is Pinochet lost in that plebiscite, much to his utter surprise. Up to the very end, I think he believed that he would win.

Q: This happens a surprising number of times, when especially a dictatorship or a totalitarian government decides, let's turn it over to the people, we'll still get it. Obviously they were reading the tea leaves wrong. Do you have any idea what...

[Begin Tape 4, Side 2]

GODARD: ...nature of the government. They're not going to spill their guts about how they really feel when this stranger comes up and takes down the data on their opinions. So the polls, because of who the pollsters were in some cases, and they were recognized as sympathetic to Pinochet, were getting the wrong kinds of information because they were feeding that back. And too, I think they had confidence in the intimidation factor, that people weren't going to have the guts to turn him out. Working for him too, the business community had done well under Pinochet, and they were saying that we're behind you and so he was hearing all these warm and encouraging sounds around him. Dictators don't normally have a really good ear of what the opinions of the man on the street is. And he was wrong.

Q: What were you getting?

GODARD: We were talking to the opposition, and the opposition was telling us the opposite. They were doing their polling and they were talking to people in the villages. You also had good contacts with the church that were financing a group that did human rights work that was sponsored by one of the bishops. So we had very good contacts, and we always visited the bishops in the various provinces, and they would tell us where the wind was blowing. So for my travels around, and from what I was hearing in Santiago from the mainline politicians, we felt like there was preponderant opinion against continuation of this government. But we were not confident in the honesty of the process, and so we were encouraging as many observers as we could get in the country to come in. Internationals, they would come in. Of course Pinochet's government was restrictive on that. Who they were, where they'd been. But because he had received international accolades for all of this economic progress, he really was looking for

international acceptance as well. So he was willing to allow some international participation. So for that election we had observers from any number of groups.

Q: Did Jimmy Carter come?

GODARD: No, Jimmy Carter I don't think would have been allowed in. But there were people there from the National Endowment for Democracy. They had a sizeable group coming in for the plebiscite. There were groups in Chile that they had been working with over the years. And they weren't the only ones. There were European groups and whatever, observing.

Q: What about how you operated the political section? I've heard both things mentioned about when you've got an election coming up, particularly one which is kind of important. There's a tendency to say, oh we got it right, and be able to go in and say we think so-and-so's going to win. You know, pat on your back, but in many ways the more professional one is, you figure out if A wins you do this, if B wins it means this for American foreign policy. And the prediction in a way is kind of the icing on the cake.

GODARD: Well, we did that sort of analysis. We knew pretty much what to expect from Pinochet. He'd been in the government for 17 years, and we knew what that relationship was going to look like. We didn't see necessarily, if he had won, a deterioration in the human rights situation. It could have gotten worse, but not necessarily. But the main point we were making was that if the other side won, the coalition of parties ranging from social democrats, socialists, Christian democrats, that range. As I recall, there wasn't a conservative party as such that was part of the coalition. But in our analysis we were predicting also good relations with those people, because I knew the kinds of views they held in economy and government. They'd been out of government of course, for a long time. They were very careful in their campaigning and in their conversations with others, emphasized that actually, of course, we had made some economic progress under Pinochet, and we're quite anxious to preserve and build on that. We want to open the society up more. So we were pretty confident that we could live with the opposition. But at this election of course, it wasn't really Pinochet or the opposition. It was whether or not Pinochet, in this particular election. Later on, there was a clear choice. Pinochet didn't run after that. This was about a year later, there was an election, and Hernán Büchi, actually the man who was the Chicago boy who designed this economic miracle in Chile, was the candidate of the right. And there was Pinochet groups and other conservative right wing groups in the country which supported him. There were a couple of them, Renovación Nacional and then there was a more conservative group. Both of which are still very prominent in the political scene, very active. The opposition put up a Christian democrat leader, Patricio Aylwin, and Aylwin won the election. Aylwin was the choice between the right and the left.

Q: We've come to the election or the referendum. When you arrived there, at one point, Chile had attracted the events there and become quite a cause from many sorts of people including, I

like the term, the glitterati, the movie stars, rock stars, and others, for good reason. And then you have the movie Missing, about a young man who was American who was apparently killed during the initial coup, and then a little later, or maybe before, the Letelier case.

GODARD: The Letelier case was before.

Q: Maybe so, but that was simmering. How about all these movements that were going on, how were they by the time you got there?

GODARD: Well of course, the Letelier case was very much alive and we were pursuing it with Pinochet in our day. There were investigations still going on, and just keep hammering away at it. There were limits as to how much you could find out so long as Pinochet was in power. But that had cast a shadow over the relationship in addition to his human rights record. The fact that he had murdered somebody on the streets of Washington was not taken too well in the halls of government in the United States or by the public. I guess I had been aware way back about the number of exiles of Chilean origin coming out of this period. They were all over the hemisphere and they were always sort of intelligentsia, the academics in particular. In almost any country I served there were Chileans who had gone into exile who were at the universities in the countries, in America, they were all over the world. It was an attractive cause, the plebiscite of the no, and they attracted a lot of attention. Ted Kennedy came down after the plebiscite. He had come down during the Pinochet period at one time to make a point, and his movements were restricted and so forth. It was not a pleasant visit. This was before I came on the scene. We had a good number of congress people who came down during this period. Senator Leahy and Senator Lugar came down.

Q: When you were down to the embassy did you find there was any sort of division, sort of economic section was saying, gee we have a good thing going here, great economy; and the political section was saying, this government is violating human rights. Did you find that or was it pretty much a united..

GODARD: There was some of that, in degrees. All of us admired the economic progress. That's been borne out. Chile's now become sort of a model, the opposition has taken up those, just as they said they were going to do back then, and then build on what Pinochet had accomplished. I don't remember anyone in the embassy being particularly sympathetic to Pinochet himself. He'd just been around too long. There were too many horrible stories that we had heard, what had happened during the bad days of the dictatorship, and then every once in a while these sort of things flared up again. The ambassador followed a very correct course in encouraging a free and fair election, and trying to push for democracy there. I think we were all behind him. We all wanted to see a return to democracy, and that meant Pinochet stepping aside.

Q: After the election, what happened?

GODARD: As provided for, there were elections called. They were a year later. The candidate of the opposition was Patricio Aylwin, and the candidate of the right wing, there was a lot of conjecture that Pinochet would run himself, but he didn't put himself up for reelection again, and instead backed Hernán Büchi and those forces around him. Büchi being the guy who'd been his minister of economy, brilliant economist, and a very young man. Not exactly who you would expect to be the candidate of the right wing. He had a kind of Beatles haircut that cut his head like this, blondish hair, handsome fellow, but he lost in the election. It was a hard fought election, it was close, and the thing that was very interesting for me as a political officer to watch and trying to analyze what was going to happen in that election was how the congress would turn out. The constitution had been written by Pinochet. Among other things, it gave him a position as senator for life. It had a number of other senators who were named by the presidency who were installed in the senate. I did the numbers and I also did the calculations in each province of how we expected the vote to turn out. So I was able to predict that the opposition in that election would win. We expected Aylwin to win and we expected the opposition to win the majority probably in the chamber of deputies, the lower chamber, but it would be very close in the senate and the right would have a safe majority in the senate. So it wasn't going to be a radical change in legislative activity or anything like that. We had such good contacts during the plebiscite period. These were built up by people who were, as you can imagine, when you worry about whether or not the election is going to be stolen, the folks you want to inform are the foreign embassies. Keep them informed. So we had excellent contacts in the country going into the election. We did a pretty good job of calling that election. It was gratifying for me, because as political counselor I was the primary contact of opposition forces. Now suddenly I saw coming into cabinet positions, the guys who had been my contacts before. The foreign minister I knew quite well, the minister of the interior, all of the major ministries I had a relationship dating back to from when I had arrived. In all, it was a wonderful night, the night that the plebiscite of the no. To see that happening, to see the joy you had shortly after it came about, and then watching many of those exiles we were talking about. Chileans coming home from Sweden, or coming home from Costa Rica, or coming home from South Africa, wherever they were. Heading back to Chile. Very gratifying.

Q: Were we pressing to clean up some of the human rights cases?

GODARD: The Chileans were. We didn't have to press because that was a huge issue for the new government. They sort of pioneered the for-South Africa approach. Having this truth and forgiveness kind of, exposing what had happened, there was a commission that had hearings and they had depositions from all of the victims who had suffered during the Pinochet times. These were published and then, where it was appropriate, compensation was paid. Lagos is now talking about compensating torture victims. We didn't really have to push that process. Initially there was an amnesty issued, but now the courts are overturning that in Chile. The Chileans have their own human rights situation very much in hand I think. They're still, as you can imagine, haunted

by it, and still trying to resolve some of the shadows that were cast over the future. That's a long term process, but it wasn't a bilateral issue.

DAVID N. GREENLEE

Deputy Chief of Mission

Santiago (1989-1992)

Ambassador Greenlee was born and raised in New York and educated at Yale University. After service in the Peace Corps in Bolivia and the US Army in Vietnam, he joined the Foreign Service in 1974. In the course of his career the ambassador served in Peru, Bolivia (three tours), Israel, Spain and Chile, as well as in the Department of State, where he was involved in Haitian and Egyptian affairs, and at the Pentagon, where he was Political Advisor. Three of his foreign tours were as Deputy Chief of Mission. He served as United States Ambassador to Paraguay and Bolivia. Ambassador Greenlee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: You were in Chile from when to when?

GREENLEE: I was in Chile from the end of July of 1989 until about June of 1992. It was a direct transfer. In those days it was very difficult to drive from La Paz to Arica, the northern most city in Chile. That leg was a dirt road with deep ruts. But from Arica there is a very good highway to Santiago. It's quite far, well over 1200 miles.

So we sent our car on a flatbed truck to Arica. Then we flew from La Paz—only about a 25 minute flight—to Arica, picked up the car, spent the night at a seaside hotel, and then drove south. It took about three days to reach Santiago. We arrived just before the second of two referendums near the end of the Pinochet period. This one was on a constitutional point needed to clear the way for a general democratic election. It was very organized and orderly and the “yes” votes carried overwhelmingly.

Q: It's a fascinating story, and I'd like to get your view of that. First, could you describe the situation in Chile before you arrived?

GREENLEE: The military government of Chile was losing legitimacy. It had never had legitimacy with the left, but it had a lot of support from the right. The economy had improved a lot and that was welcomed by the right and center right, especially. But the time of the military had run out. Democratization was reaching Chile. There was a sense that a more open system was needed to modernize the economy, to spur greater growth.

The military organized its retreat from government, and it did it through allowing public consultations and the two referendums that opened the way for elections. The referendum that I arrived for was one that really determined that there would be elections. It was very orderly. There was a large majority for elections, I think over 90 percent. Of that something like 56 percent supported what became the Concertacion, the center-left bloc that in December of that year elected Patricio Aylwin to be president.

The military in Chile and the military government tried to protect itself as it retreated from power through quasi-legal devices like amnesties, which much later were overturned. It was an interesting time because there was the sense that Chile was really on the cusp of very significant change. Then elections were held. Aylwin and his *Concertacion* slate prevailed over a right-wing slate headed by a former finance minister named Hernan Buche. The inauguration was several months later, on March 11, 1990, as I recall.

Q: Did you watch the pre-election referendum take place? What was our attitude prior to this crucial referendum? What did we think was going to happen?

GREENLEE: I had just arrived, and I visited some of the polling places with the political counselor, Ron Godard. There were a lot of international observers and the voting was very clean. I think there had been concern that the military would try to fix the vote, but that clearly didn't happen. Maybe it was because of Chile's strong institutional base.

Compared to other Latin American countries I have had experience with, Chile has always had a strong degree of institutional integrity. Even during the worst times of the Pinochet regime, for example, the national police, the *carabineros*, were respected as being honest. The court system was generally respected as well, although there were horrendous human rights abuses and repression of dissidents during the Pinochet dictatorship.

COLOMBIA

Between the late 1940's and the early 1950's, Colombia went through a period of time called "La Violencia" (The Violence) in which riots killed at least 180,000 people. It was caused by increasing tension between two parties, and was worsened by the assassination of the Liberal presidential candidate, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan. Violence decreased between the two parties from 1953 to 1964 when Gustavo Rojas deposed the President of Colombia in a coup d'état and negotiated with the Guerrillas, and under the military junta of General Gabriel Paris Gordillo. After Roajs' deposition, the Colombian Conservatism Party and Colombian Liberal Party agreed to make the "National Front", which is a coalition which would govern the country jointly. Though there was progress in certain sectors, many social and political problems continued, and guerrilla groups were formally created (like the infamous FARC) to fight the government and political apparatus. In the late 1970's we'd see a rise in powerful and violent cartels that further developed during the 1980's and 1990's.

SAMUEL D. EATON

Economic Officer

Bogota (1959-1965)

Samuel D. Eaton attended Drew University in 1940 and served in the Army Air Corps in 1943. He entered the Foreign Service in 1947. His first post was La Paz, Bolivia. He also served in Brazil, Thailand, Peru, Spain, and Ecuador as Deputy Chief of Mission. In 1979 he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in October 1990.

Q: After a good, solid four-year assignment in Washington, you went to Bogotá, where you served from '59 to '65. Could you explain what were you doing?

EATON: Well, yes. Actually, how I went to Bogotá is of some interest. I was assigned, in the normal processes, as consul in Pôrto Alegre, Brazil. But the Economic Bureau personnel people objected to the assignment. They had an economic officer that they wanted assigned an economic job. So they entered the picture and succeeded in changing my assignment from consul in Pôrto Alegre to head of the economic section (we were not called consuls at that point) in Bogotá, which was fine with me. So the Economic Bureau did have some clout at that stage.

Q: Yes, it did.

EATON: Initially, in Bogotá, I was head of the economic section. And we had a fairly sizable technical assistance program. But then along came Kennedy. President Kennedy came in, and the Alliance for Progress, and it was clear that we were going to do more in Colombia, and that we were going to move from technical assistance to a loan program.

A team came through, headed by Ted Moscoso, with Bill Bentser on it. It went around Latin America looking at our AID missions, and they stopped in Colombia and they interviewed a lot of us, asked us to give our comments on Colombia and how we were doing. I gave them a briefing on the Colombian economic situation, and at the end, I told them I thought they were on the wrong track if they felt that bringing in people from business to head AID missions was going to do the job. I said they'd get second-rate people from business, whose career was on a plateau or at a dead end, who didn't know anything about aid, and they'd be in trouble.

Q: Well, you came back for a tour in Latin American Affairs again. What were you doing?

EATON: I was deputy assistant secretary for Latin American Affairs and my responsibilities were the South American countries. And since most of the focus was on Central America in that period, I had more of a free hand.

There are two things in that period of time that I think are of particular interest, that stand out in my mind. And then comes the end of my career.

One was the hostage-taking in Bogotá, Diego Agencio and the other ambassadors taken hostage by the M-19 terrorist group at the Dominican Republic Embassy.

I think the handling of that case should be studied as an example of how hostage issues should be dealt with. Every one is a bit different, I guess, but I think, generally speaking, time is on the side of the hostages, not the people who take them hostage, unless they're an irrational, violent group. And this is perhaps not appreciated. We're an impatient people and we want to do things right away, but it's difficult to do.

In this case, well, Diego, of course, was the greatest possible hostage.

Q: Yes, you couldn't pick a better person.

EATON: He handled himself marvelously.

Q: He, by the way, wrote a book called Our Man Inside.

EATON: Yes, I know. I haven't read it, but I know he did that.

In Washington, the people who had the responsibility for our day-to-day response to this were myself and Tony Quainton. Tony Quainton was director of the office of anti-terrorism at that

time, and I was deputy assistant secretary. Tony ran the task force that responded, and Tony and I were in contact all the time on their actions.

And the man who handled the response in Colombia was the president of Colombia, Turbay, who handled it personally. We had contact with Turbay through two methods. One was through a chargé, Frank Crigler, who was very, very good. And the other was through the Colombian ambassador here in Washington, Virgil Barco, who later, of course, became president of Colombia and has just left the presidency, and who was also a liberal politician whom I had known since my AID times in Colombia when he had been minister of agriculture. But I could call Barco at any time, and Barco would call Turbay if the contact through our chargé, Crigler, was for one reason or another not appropriate or... So we had instant contact, almost, with the president of the Colombian government on this.

The Colombian government correctly took the point of view that, while they surrounded the Dominican Embassy residence with police and troops, they were not going to move in unless they felt the hostages were in physical danger. And they told the guerrilla group that was the policy.

And we approved that policy, we agreed with that. We took the position, of course, that we were not going to try to negotiate with those who had taken the hostages, that our basic policy was that you don't do that, that you're not going to pay them off, because that merely encourages future such incidents.

Some of the other countries were less than firm on that; they were prepared to pay off.

The Colombian government took that position also. However, they established a negotiating process. They appointed negotiators who met, in a van outside the residence, with the representative of the guerilla group, a young woman whom Diego and the Mexican ambassador became friends with and whom they would sort of counsel, actually.

In any event, all of this went like that, with established policy, and good contacts with the Colombian government, and daily reporting to the top on what was going on, to the secretary and to the president.

Everything was going fine, but time passed. And as time passed, the families got more and more upset, and the pressures grew on the top to do something. And so the president decided he should have a review of the situation, and there was a National Security Council staff meeting. Brzezinski was out of town, his deputy was out of town, so Dave Newsom, curiously, chaired them, and Tony Quainton and I wound up as the staff people.

At that meeting, a military aide in the White House presented the case for the use of a SWAT team. He described how it was done and he said, "We can do this in a few minutes, with no casualties." He said, "We know we can do it. We've studied it and we know we can do it."

Graham Crater, who was deputy secretary of defense, said, "Let's go. Let's do it. This is what we should do. We should have done it a long time ago." The Latin Americanist on the National Security staff argued for it. I don't know whether he was doing this just to be a devil's advocate or whether he really believed it. Tony Quainton was equivocal, and I think he crippled his position. But I argued as strongly as I could against it. I said, "There's no guarantee that you won't have any casualties. The first casualty will be our ambassador. Moreover, I think our policy will work. Give it time."

And I was supported by the head of CIA, Admiral [Turner?]. He, of course, was much more effective than I was, because he was in a much higher position, and told them, "You don't know whether this will work or not, and it's a big risk."

Well, we left that meeting and drove back to the department with Dave Newsom. And I said, "Dave, I'm really uncomfortable about this. It would be an absolute disaster if the president checks the wrong box of his night reading. I want to be assured that we'll have the right of appeal if he makes the wrong decision."

So Dave said, "Well, we're going to have a chance to look at the recommendations that go to him."

And so we did and put in what we could. Fortunately, he made the right decision and came back saying we should have a SWAT team in readiness but we should not act.

Later I told Diego about this and Diego said, "You were absolutely right. I would have been the first to go. I would have been dead."

And the Colombians handled it beautifully. There were three issues. One was release of the so-called political prisoners, the M-19 terrorist prisoners, from jail. The second was free passage of the terrorist group who had done the hostage-taking, out of the country. And the third was to give them some money.

Well, the Colombians finessed the principal issue in a very brilliant way. They invited the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to send observers to the trials of the M-19 prisoners. Prior to that, somebody from the Inter-American Human Rights Commission had had contact with the M-19 and gained their confidence. So the M-19 eventually agreed that, rather than having a release of their colleagues from prison, they would have trials observed by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.

Then the Colombians, without our saying yea or nay, agreed to safe passage of both the hostage-takers and the hostages out of the country.

I don't know who paid the money. We did not. We did not agree to that. But somebody paid some money. I think it was the Venezuelans.

So, I don't know how long it was after it happened, but it was resolved and Diego and the rest of them came out all right.

Q: It was at least a month, I think, wasn't it?

EATON: It was at least a month and it probably was longer. But it could have ended in disaster . . . at that time?

Q: This often is the case, where the military assures things that they can't assure. It's part of their training.

EATON: Some military. Some military are very conservative, and I would guess that if this issue had been debated further within the military, this young man might have...well, I don't know -- Graham Crater, after all, was the under secretary of defense.

Q: You were mentioning one other thing that you were dealing with.

EATON: Well, the other thing is one of the basic issues of the Carter administration, and that was support for democracy, which became a basic tenet of the Reagan administration later, and also the Carter administration, greater emphasis on human rights.

ALEXANDER F. WATSON

Deputy Chief of Mission

Bogota (1981-1984)

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.

Q: You left Bolivia when?

WATSON: September, I think it was the 4th, 1981.

Q: Where did you go?

WATSON: Directly to Bogota as DCM.

Q: You were there from '81 to?

WATSON: '84.

Q: Okay. What was the situation? This is a rather difficult period again, too.

WATSON: Yes, I had several difficult, but fascinating assignments. Colombia is in more trouble now than even it was then, although then we thought it was pretty troubled.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

WATSON: Tom Boyatt, a Foreign Service Officer, was the ambassador when I arrived there. Tom Enders was the assistant secretary of State at that time. I had suggested to Tom Enders that it might be good for me to go to Brazil as DCM rather than Colombia. He listened to me very nicely and he said, "No, you're going to Colombia." I had nothing against Colombia, but Brazil was a bigger place and all. It turned out to be, once again, a fascinating assignment. Tom was there for a while. I don't remember exactly when he left, but he was replaced by Lewis Tambs, a professor from Arizona State University who had been a member of the conservative group called the Santa Fe, which drafted some policy prescriptions for Latin America should... because of Reagan winning the presidency. Once again, all those guys received appointments or positions.

Q: Let's talk about... when you arrived in '81, what was the situation in Colombia?

WATSON: Remember that, not too long before it would have to be '80, Ambassador Diego Asencio, my good friend, is among those that were kidnapped in the Dominican Republic embassy there by M-19 guerrillas. He subsequently has written a book about it called Our Man is Inside. So there was that kind of attention. There was a lot of violence in Colombia, as there is today, perpetrated by the guerrillas on the left. There was a lot of violence perpetrated at that point by the narcotics traffickers who were just starting to feel their oats and to put together the huge national cocaine cartel that the Colombians ran and still run. It was also a time where a lot of marijuana had been shipped to the north coast of Colombia and onto the United States and elsewhere. Many people think that the marijuana phenomenon was even more important than the cocaine phenomenon at that time. There was virtually no poppy cultivation, so virtually no heroin coming out of Colombia at that time as there is today. You had sort of a lot of kidnapping for ransom for money being done by a variety of groups and some of them affiliated with one or the other of the cartels, the active narcotics criminals. Some of them were just gangs who needed money. There you have this beautiful country, spectacular beautiful geography with great variety and sophisticated and nice people, embroiled in a country whose economy, up until the last two or three years, has always been one of the best in Latin America—the only country in Latin America that didn't have to reschedule its debt, etc. Fiscal management and steady growth and a wealth of natural resources in a difficult situation caused by the guerrillas and by the drug

traffickers. The embassy was an active place, sort of in the center of things— particularly as we were trying to work with interested Colombians who deal with the narcotics issue. That meant a lot of things. It meant, first and foremost, raising the Colombians' awareness of the seriousness of drugs. They had to view it as a real problem, to stop the demand. Failing to understand the maxim that any country that is a drug producer or a drug transit country is becoming drug consumed. To a considerable extent they just didn't want to admit it. I must say the faults of Colombians for all their virtues is the incapacity in probably some of the most intelligent people to understand the gravity in the situation you're in and to perceive sort of minor problems to their profound illnesses and therefore not deal with them as they should.

Another dimension of the embassy work that was very important was the consular work. Bogota was one of the so-called visa mills. Hundreds and hundreds of people every day were in lines for visas at that point. Of course, everything was complicated by security conditions that I talked about, but the reaction in the embassy is complicated, too. You're trying to give people as much security as possible without totally paralyzing them. So those are among the things that I had to deal with. As the deputy chief of mission, I was the narcotics coordinator. I was also the security coordinator who had to deal with this all the time.

Q: What was your impression of the Colombian government? You've been in a number of countries, how it operated and how we dealt with it at that time?

WATSON: We had lots of dealings with it on a variety of issues. At the same time we also had, the three years I was there, I think, two visits by Vice President Bush and one visit by President Reagan. We had a lot of those kinds of activities and each one of those is a story that is either extremely depressing or extremely humorous, depending on how you hear it and how our own folks behave sometimes in getting these things done. When I came there, the government of Colombia had been governed by two parties, the liberals and the conservatives, who are ancient parties in Colombia. They go way back to the 19th Century. You're almost born to one or the other. It's almost ethnic. Not quite, but almost, and there were lots of civil wars in the 19th Century and a huge civil war that broke out in 1948— *La Violencia*, where a major political figure was assassinated. An inevitable war broke out between the conservative and liberal parties and the allies, which was finally patched together in the '50s. The agreement included the system whereby the two parties would rotate the presidency and each one would have cabinet ministries in the government led by somebody from the other party. This wasn't very civilized and sophisticated, but what it tended to do was monopolize power in the hands of a few people. All the state governors were appointed and the mayors... some mayors were elected, some were even appointed, so you had a system that was democratic superficially, but not very functionally. During this time you had these guerrilla groups which were never quite taken into consideration at the time that this great deal was put together. They were marginal players out in the countryside and they were problematical, but they were not the same ones who came on later. Life sort of went on smoothly. Now when we got there, the president was President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, a fellow of Lebanese Maronite Christian extraction who ran a rather conservative

government over some of the liberals' party. Then there was an election in '82 when former President Lopez got there, the liberal party nomination, and wanted to come back as president. Turbay's predecessor once— and this was at the end of this period where you had alternating presidents in a wide open election. New parties split when a young fellow named _____, or something like that, was assassinated much later on. He was a more liberal faction than of a liberal party. It was exactly what _____ had done the first time around and he ended up taking the liberal party and became elected, so it's a tradition, but by splitting it, it allowed Belisario Betancur, who was from the conservative party but was more a liberal in attitude on a lot of things in the Latin American sense of the word than Lopez was, to become the president.

Our relationship with the _____ government was quite a productive one; straightforward. We got along with his people well, a lot of very intelligent and highly educated and sophisticated Colombians to deal with. We worked closely with them on quite a number of issues, including the narcotics questions. Basically, that was sort of the driving issue. Our relationship with the _____ administration was a little more problematic because he had in him a streak, which included tweaking Uncle Sam's nose from time to time; being sort of perversely provocative. It gave him political mileage.

Q: He took lessons from Pierre Trudeau in Canada.

WATSON: Yes. That sort of gratuitous thing. It got to be so bad that when President Reagan was coming, some people on his staff were _____ to Colombia because remember that _____ was sort of giving a speech at a luncheon and sort of _____ Reagan and tell the Americans how badly he was in a variety of ways. Reagan was a good judge and he decided to come anyhow and behaved himself perfectly and, I think, wowed the Colombians. Colombia was a place where... our son was in high school there and he still has a lot of friends there. It was a place where we... remember when Tom Boyatt left and he was still working on whether or not the Colombians could actually spray chemicals on marijuana plants and it would kill them. When Boyatt left he said, "Now, you'll never get this done, but we did." It was a very complicated issue. People probably don't recall this very well. The best chemical to spray on marijuana to kill it and do no damage to anything else and not spread around in the soil is something called paraquat. Paraquat was used in Mexico for spraying marijuana. Then only in America could this happen, then the idea gained force and Joe Califano was one of the leading people in this.

Q: The former secretary of health, education and welfare.

WATSON: Education and welfare; and was very close to Lyndon Johnson. The idea was that paraquat might be harmful, it might be a carcinogen, it might be harmful to people's health if they inhaled it in any way, including by smoking. So, if you used it to kill marijuana then somehow, though completely illegal, it is brought into the United States and then was smoked. Once again an illegal act by people in the United States, those people might be negatively affected by this and the U.S. government had the right to protect them from the falling of these

two illegal acts that they're engaged. Therefore, we could not be party to any program which would put paraquat on marijuana that might come into the United States.

I mean, I think most countries around the world are scratching their heads at this. So, you couldn't use paraquat and it became all of a sudden a devil word in the phrase that they use now. Of course, the narcotics traffickers were all over this, the headlines and all this stuff, and they paid journalists to write stories; you know all the things they do. So paraquat became politically impossible to use although it was by far the best product; remember in the health standard we couldn't use it. Then we had to work to find substitutes in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We did all kinds of experiments up in Beltsville and elsewhere and found that _____ was really the next best thing, and it was fixed in the soil, and it wouldn't go into the streams. We had to persuade the Colombians. It filtered in some certain kinds of plants and doesn't get everywhere and it's not toxic to humans and all that stuff. But still, getting them to... once it is universally accepted as true that spraying something on marijuana is bad, it's kind of hard to overcome all that. That was what Tom was betting— that we wouldn't be able to, but we eventually did, and we even started to make one of the arguments the narcotics people would use. And their allies, some of them witty and some of them unwitty, said that the spraying was environmentally catastrophic and we started to make the argument that, wait a second, what is really environmentally catastrophic is chopping down all of the natural growth on the very steep hills in northern Colombia and planting them with rows of marijuana and the rains come and erosion comes and you have bare hillsides in a very short number of years. We also were talking about coca; we talk about all the chemicals dumped into the streams by the cocaine stills, the laboratories, were far more damaging than spraying the stuff on coca plants. In any case, this was really different.

We did some very interesting things here that probably have disappeared in the midst of time, but in order to bring to Colombians' awareness the dangers of all this, the narcotics stuff to their own people, we sponsored a conference here at USIA, who organized it; they're good at that stuff. We brought experts from all around the world, not too many from the U.S. and other Latin American countries. We had, at that time, a justice minister who is a good friend of mine and who understood this and gave the keynote address at this... this conference which got a lot of hoopla in the press and on TV and people talking about the dangers of these things and about the inevitability of a producing country, becoming a consuming country. Even the people in Colombia who actually did know about this, and quite a few really courageous, were these people talking about how much drug use there already was in Colombia. All this was a bombshell to the Colombian society. It really opened their eyes. It really got them to say wow, maybe we have been turning our backs and planting our heads in the sand like ostriches instead of dealing with this in some way that we should.

Meanwhile you had... marijuana was scandalous, a guy who ended up being complicit in running marijuana through Cuba at the time into Cuban waters and, of course, the Cubans denied it and the Cuban allies among the guerrillas denied it, but this guy was nailed in Mexico and

there was no doubt about it and it was a long complicated story, but a lot of stuff on marijuana. Meanwhile, the real serious problem was developing, and that was the cocaine traffic. In those days, the CIA could not be involved with anything to do with this at all.

Q: Was this by congressional order or was this they just wanted to keep away from it?

WATSON: Yes, no, well, the argument was at the time that the way the Central Intelligence Agency works is that it pays people to give them information. You could not retain anyone who was involved in narcotics; then you'd be seen as complicit in the narcotics trade and therefore you couldn't be involved. That was the argument, now that may have been a sensible argument, and more have been that this is not realistic and all this stuff.

Q: It's kind of messy.

WATSON: Messy, and it's just for the law enforcement creeps, not for us super sleuths and all that sort of thing. But in any case, they overcame that in a matter of years. I remember that was one of the real things. We had people who were frustrated in their own organization because they saw it, how important this was.

Q: Well, the DEA was paying like mad.

WATSON: Well, but they don't have the same restrictions.

Q: Yes.

WATSON: Of course, the ones with the most money in some ways in the State Department. You always forget DEA helicopters, they're all State Department. In any case – and this was getting violent – _____ was walking around holding up this passport saying "I've got an American visa," and he was the noisiest of all. He got himself to be a called _____, which is sort of a deputy member of congress. If a member of congress leaves for some reason, he would fill his place. He would hold this passport out with a U.S. visa in it and say, "I can go to the States."

Another guy who eventually was director and was still in the United States now built a huge statue of John Lennon in the town square in _____, where he was from, and the _____ brothers. My son told me the other night, something that horrified me and _____ fight these guys got into it, the _____ brothers in a nightclub, high school kids. The _____ pulled a gun on them and everything else. I didn't know anything about this at the time. It was a wild, wild place. But one of the things I wanted to mention was _____, the justice minister, was really a close ally of _____, who was the dissident presidential candidate. These guys were really sort of the future of the country in a way. He really took courageous positions on this and it cost him his life. We knew that he was under heavy threat and we had arranged for him and his wife and his kids to come to the United States in protected status until things cooled off. We had this all set to go and I remember at the national day reception the Dutch Embassy, I was talking to him and I said, "We're all set to go, we're expecting to go this week or so. When do you want to do this?" He

said, “I can’t go yet, I’ve got so many things to do. I can’t go right now. In a few weeks we’ll go.” On that night, on the way home, he was blown away by cocaine cowboys, as they call them— the guys on motorcycles. He was killed. It was a tragic but explosive demonstration by the Colombia public about what was going on in their country.

Q: I remember sometime later there was a lot of talk about how the justice system really wasn’t designed to deal with this. I mean, was this basically true of any justice system in the area or did it just happen with anyone with a gun or were we seeing any problem?

WATSON: I would say that any justice system faced with the kinds of threats that this one was faced with would collapse, even in this country. I have my own little two-bit theory about which, I haven’t thought about this a lot, so it gets down to bare bones. It was more sophisticated once, but what I see as what was happening in Colombia was it goes all the way back to that agreement in the ‘50s and the civil war issue, conservatives and its consolidation problem in the hands of a few and ignoring everything else. Things ran along well, the economy ran along well, upper classes were doing well. Colombia is not a country of as much abject poverty as a lot of other places. It’s a country with a series of large cities, it’s not all concentrated in one city. A lot of the agriculture was coffee, which produced quite a lot of income for small farmers. It was a reasonably successful, reasonably middle class economy and of course there were exceptions to that. Compared to everybody else down there, it looked pretty darn good. It just sort of rolled along. They didn’t pay any attention, attention to the guerrillas. Whenever something really bad would happen, the army would chase them down. They didn’t try to wipe them out; they didn’t seem to want to. Meanwhile, the narcotics thing began and, way back when I was a undergraduate, I read a book by a guy named Hagen, a professor at Harvard, who wrote books about entrepreneurialism and case studies of certain places. One of the places – why I remember this I don’t know – one of the cases was Colombia, a place that was just more successful than any other place in the general area. Singapore might have been another; places like that all over the world. Places where some combination of factors, where the people are more entrepreneurial, they are more successful, they take more risks, they overcome those risks and make more money and create more business and they do more things and Colombia was one of them. That’s what happened with cocaine. These guys put together a very impressive operation. Society essentially ignored them as I said before. It was sort of a gringo problem until it was too late. The country’s institutions were not ready to handle this. The institutions, they were really brittle rather than flexible. They were designed for this kind of static situation that they had and all of a sudden you have this powerful force with unlimited resources, billions of dollars, unlimited greed, unlimited thirst for power and influence and they couldn’t handle it. Then it’s even more complicated when the guerrillas, some element of the guerrilla forces, end up cohabiting with the narcotics people. When we discovered a cocaine laboratory in southeast/south central Colombia that was discovered, we were tracing the chemicals. That was an eye opener. That was the first really clear evidence. Marijuana, there was some M-19 being involved in the marijuana stuff. This was really serious stuff and a huge laboratory, bigger than any laboratory that has ever been found

and guarded by soldiers of the revolution, the revolutionary armed forces. The biggest guerilla and one that is still, the one that has been negotiating with president _____. Then the idea is that the narco guerrillas and narco terrorists and all that stuff. Then you had all of a sudden income from the narcotics thing flowing into the hands of the guerillas. All of a sudden an overnight a threat that was probably more serious than people saw it, but probably not life threatening to the regime.

Q: Were we seeing this?

WATSON: Oh, yes.

Q: We were.

WATSON: We saw this, but it didn't matter. The Colombians had to see it, the final analysis. Americans have this fault of always somehow thinking that what we decide here in this wonderful capital city is somehow going to determine things and we even talked about that with a sort of, "we won the war in El Salvador" and stuff like that. Give me a break; sort of naive. In the final analysis, the local folks do it and we provide sometimes resolve, guidance, support, resources, etc.

Q: Yes, it depends on the people who live there.

WATSON: We always look at it through our own way and see ourselves as sort of big on the stage and the local people as small, where it is completely the reverse.

Q: We lost track.

WATSON: Yes, it's ridiculous. This was transforming this discovery, really endangering, we could see it was giving even more power to the narcotics guys who were becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Q: One of the things I've heard about the Colombians— even the Colombians in Miami or something are more prone to reach for their machine guns or something. Could you talk a little bit about the violence in the Colombian psyche? Was it really different, or was this opportunity or what?

WATSON: I have never figured this out and I've always tried to avoid leaping at the superficial explanations because I don't do that and because I don't really know. I don't have any true understanding. There is no doubt that Colombia is more violent than other places. It's absolutely relevant and the facts are there. My wife saw people getting in a fight at a traffic accident and pull out guns and killing each other, right in the middle of the street. I mean she was right there. This stuff happens there. It happens other places too, but it happens more often in Colombia. Exactly why that is, I don't pretend to know.

I read books on this when I lived in Colombia. I can't remember them anymore, but it's something the Colombians themselves try to analyze. Although some Colombians still deny it's the case. It's no doubt that more violence occurs there. I had experiences that I don't want to go into here, but I had experiences. This conversation was information I had not, from any sources in the embassy, my own Colombian sources, about how these kidnapping rings worked and who they were and exactly how they negotiated that would make your hair stand on end. The kidnapping rings knew virtually everyone who had kidnapping insurance. They knew how much that insurance was, so they know that the negotiations begin at that point. They don't end, they begin there. We know you have \$10 million in kidnapping insurance, so we want all of that now. We want another \$20 million. They had people in the most sophisticated, they moved them out of the country, they had them on the ground, unbelievably sophisticated stuff. They had ways. A friend of mine was kidnapped and held in a house for a long time, but finally he persuaded them. He is still there, a businessman, in carpet, a Colombian businessman. He managed to persuade one of his kidnapers that he should be released. The kidnapper went out and went to a pay phone and called in the police, said where he was. The police came disguised as telephone repairman and went outside the house and cut the wires with the boom on a crane and had people stationed other places, all workers, street cleaners, something out of a movie. At a pointed moment they swung that crane over, burst through the window, subdued the guard, protected him, ran down the stairs, caught the rest of the guys, pulled my friend back out the window and got him away. It's hard to believe whatever goes right. Some guys are good at that stuff. That was just, that was one that turned out where a person was not killed.

Society, everybody lived within their means with lots of security. In the embassy we had our people go in different routes to work every day, picked up in armored vans, all that stuff. I had to do all that. One of the most difficult things – maybe I mentioned this when I was talking about Bolivia, but – I always found dealing with security issues difficult. At one point, the four most dangerous places in the world were considered to be Bogota, Lima, El Salvador and Beirut and I was in both Lima and Bogota. I also had been in La Paz back when it was dangerous. It was never as dangerous before or after, not even close, not even 10%, but it was dangerous. We had bullets flying over our heads, chipping off the cement in La Paz when the military coups were taking place. It was a wild time, but the trouble is when you have a large mission and you're dealing with security issues, you have to take every threat seriously. There are all kinds of threats and some of them are bogus and some of them are just misinformation. As soon as you decide that a threat has to be dealt with, you have... I always figure you have about 20 minutes with which to come up with a solution. Around the embassy the word will run that a threat had come in that we're going to be bombed or someone's house is going to be hit or one of our vehicles is going to be mortared on the way home or someone's going to be kidnapped or whatever it is. If you don't get your team together and you don't have a solution in about 20 minutes, you lose everyone, the panic sets in and you lose the confidence, the leadership, you've got to move. I had a five person group, it didn't matter where they were from in the mission and whose judgment I thought was good, smart and cool, level headed and think about this. We would sit down and

within 15 minutes come up with some way to deal with this. Then we would call a meeting of the country team, security watch committee as it is now called to discuss this. We went into that room. We were all ready it looked like. We were in most cases dealing pretty confidently before the panic can set in. You've already got the action you're taking to do it. Then sometimes the discussion in that meeting would actually be good and some really good ideas better than the ideas than we had and we'd work it out. The whole point is rather than going in there and saying, Jesus Christ we have this threat, now what do we do? We'd go in there and say, we've gotten this threat, this is how we analyze it and what we're doing, at least we'd get some structure to the conversation. That never gets easy.

Q: What happened when Ambassador Tambs came in because, I mean, Tambs has a reputation. He was a professor with all sorts of very strong conservative ideas. Later he went elsewhere, but you caught him first hand. How did this work and what was... can you talk about this?

WATSON: I'll talk about it. It's obviously a pretty tricky subject. There were some amusing aspects to it. After the Reagan visit, Tom Boyatt left and Lew Tambs was coming down. I'd heard all sorts of stories about Lew Tambs. I've always considered myself to be sort of at the liberal end of the political spectrum and he was obviously ultra conservative. I was trying to behave in a way in which I would be perceived as being pragmatic and respectful of ideology. Lo and behold I heard from Washington that Tambs was thinking seriously of getting rid of that guy Watson down there, because he had heard he was too pragmatic. I went up and met with Lew Tambs at the army and navy club somewhere in Virginia where we lived; we had lunch together. He was the Indian affairs director at the time. We got along okay. Lew Tambs had just gotten remarried to a young woman who was extremely nice. If I remember correctly, she had never been out of Louisiana, never been overseas, never been out of Louisiana, never even out of the state. My recollection, maybe it's an exaggeration, but this put her in a very difficult circumstance with this guy who was about twice her age; it was a difficult situation. My wife and she talked; we were in Colombia and they were in the U.S. My wife and Phyllis talked on the phone and when they hung up neither one understood a word the other one had said. My wife was from outside Boston and Phyllis was from Louisiana. They both now joke about it. Neither one understood what the other one was saying. They were just being polite. Tambs came down and I don't want to sound boastful, but I think it's fairly described, you know, I just decided that my job no matter what I thought, ideology, he might not even know. That was not my job. My job was to run that embassy and to deliver it to him as ambassadors do with it as you want. I was the guy and the mechanic running the machine—the engineer in the bowels of the ship keeping the engine going so he could steer it where he wanted it to go. Another part of my job was to give him my advice. He didn't know anything about embassies and to give him my advice and be helpful to him, steer him between the swords and the daggers, but always in private; always be the dutiful lieutenant. Well, after his first few weeks he was still suspicious of me, and you need

to remember when the Reagan administration came in after the Carter administration; it was the most violent transition I think everyone has ever seen.

Q: Particularly on the Latin American scene.

WATSON: Bill Bowdler was assistant secretary – mild mannered, absolutely decent career officer, the assistant secretary of State for InterAmerican affairs – and was called up by somebody saying you have until noon to get out of your office. It was that kind of thing. Jim Cheek was thrown out. He was handling Central America. He left the whole Foreign Service.

Q: I tried to interview him.

WATSON: It was the most violent transition you can imagine. So these guys came in thinking basically whatever the Carter administration was doing was wrong by definition. So, we don't know what we're doing, but whatever is the opposite of what they were doing is right. That's how they became. That sounds simplistic, but that's exactly how they were thinking. I have a million examples of that. Finally they got their heads screwed on right. They started to realize that human rights were something actually developed in the congress. The whole human rights reporting required by the State Department was placed on it by the House of Representatives during the Ford administration and Carter was smart enough to embrace this. Carter also believed in this strongly. The Reagan people quickly realized that defending human rights is a major way to defend democracy and, after all, we do stand for democracy and all that kind of stuff. They rather quickly got their bearings in most ways, but at the beginning it was pretty wild. When Lew came in, I'm sure he was suspicious of all this. Very quickly it became clear, first of all, that I was loyal and I was going to do what I said; I wasn't running around his back and saying anything to anybody. I had to be very careful in that regard. Secondly, the issues we were dealing with didn't really fall into any particular spot, on the left or to the right of the American political spectrum. Lew had a way of producing things and he would talk and he'd say, marijuana and Marxists, coonies and cocaine. He had another one, too: democracy and drugs. Those are our issues here. Once you get to that level then your discussions are about tactics, but not about fundamental direction of what you've been doing in the country and all that stuff. So, the found this, we didn't spend any time on political differences and discussions and those kinds of things. We were trying to find ways to work with the economy and authorities and a list to achieve our objectives.

Q: Did you see the effects of narco corruption moving in at that time into the society? Well, I take it now it's practically epidemic.

WATSON: Yes, you touched on this earlier. Even in those days the reports were already intimidating. The technique that people talk about now, then the traffickers would go to the judge and put \$1,000 on his table and say, either take this or I'll kill your wife. Once he takes that and

they photograph that, the ball game is over, he's in their pocket and that's it. The military didn't want to get in their anti-drug party, because the general who was the minister of defense feared correctly that once the military started to get into that, they would be corrupted; performance of duty of fighting guerrillas or defending Venezuelans or anyone else.

JAMES L. TULL

Deputy Chief of Mission

Colombia (1984-1985)

James L. Tull was born in Iowa. After serving in the US Navy from 1951-1955 he received his bachelor's degree and his master's degree at the University of Colorado. His career included positions in Colombia, England, Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Cyprus, and Costa Rica. Mr. Tull was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in May 2001.

TULL: To Bogota, back to Colombia but this time as DCM. Our ambassador there was Lewis Tambs, a professor of Latin American history at Arizona State University in Phoenix who had been active in the Republican party and appointed by President Reagan about two years earlier. His deputy was Alec Watson, who had just been named ambassador to Brazil. We did not know each other, but Tambs selected me and we arrived in Bogota in July, 1984. In the twenty years since we left Colombia, two major new issues had arisen: the first was the rise of the leftist guerrilla groups from a scattering of ex-bandits and disaffected university youths to well-organized and armed rural militia of several thousand whose skilled leadership usually enabled them to emerge the winner in any of their frequent firefights with the police or Colombian army units; the second was the even more spectacular rise of the major drug lords such as Pablo Escobar and Carlos Lederer and their international narcotics cartels. Worse still, about the time we arrived, a symbiotic relationship was developing between the two, with the guerrillas providing protection for drug laboratories while Escobar and his like paid huge sums of money which bought them arms and equipment.

In Washington, too, the "War on Drugs" was in full bloom and focused on Colombia as the main supplier of illegal narcotics to this country. For his part, Ambassador Tambs was determined not to fall prey to the intimidation the drug dealers had used so successfully against their foes- rather, on every available public and private occasion, he attacked them head on and personally. In speeches and the media, he condemned their ruthless and bloodthirsty ways, he ridiculed their attempts to appear "friends of the poor" by sponsoring

youth clubs and building soccer fields, and he demanded their extradition to the U.S. to face persecution and “hard time” federal imprisonment.

Q: Were there threats against Ambassador Tambs?

TULL: Yes, from DEA, police, and military sources we received almost daily warnings of attempts against him. Terrorists- “narco-guerrillas” was the term he coined for them- set one bomb off near his residence and a large car bomb next to the embassy, fortunately without injuries to embassy personnel, but as all too usual in these cases, with the death of one lady waiting outside the embassy for a visa.

Q: Were we giving the Colombian government a lot of support and help then?

TULL: By that time we were doing a lot of intelligence coordination and cooperation; material support especially for the police and Army was on the rise. Years earlier, the government had decided it really did not need an assistance program of any kind, so this had to be rebuilt from zero. But, in addition, I personally believe that the ambassador’s strong, “outfront” approach helped a great deal. Until then, the narcos had the upper hand in the sense of appearing unbeatable. He took them on fearlessly and even over the short time I was there, I could see a stiffening of spine in the police, the ministry of justice, parts of the media, and in the presidency. Certainly President Belisario Betanour, who became a good friend of Tambs, changed from a fairly wishy-washy figure on this issue to one who led the fight for the first successful extradition of one of Escobar’s top lieutenants in the Medellin cartel. But it was a dangerous tactic and ultimately his security situation became so difficult that Washington ordered him and his family back to the States in December, 1984.

Q: You were in charge of the embassy from that point until you left the following summer. Were there a lot of threats against you? You had less visibility.

TULL: I can’t say that I was ever targeted personally in the way the ambassador was. But as we learned in Montevideo with soils specialist Claude Fly, the kidnapping or murder of one American can cause about as much difficulty as another, so we took very careful precautions. Still today, when I’m driving and hear a motorcycle pulling up behind me, I take a pretty close look. That was a standard assassination method in Colombia- a masked shooter on the back of a motorbike.

Q: Were your wives and families able to stay on there?

TULL: Only those without dependent children. Shortly after the ambassador left, DEA picked up some intelligence to the effect that the narcos, frustrated by our security measures and armed personnel convoys, were beginning to discuss plans to attack the Abraham Lincoln International school, which most of our children attended, and take hostages. I knew we must head off any possibility of that, so over the 1984-85 Christmas break, we very

quietly moved the kids back to the U.S. as well as any parents who wanted to accompany them. At the same time, I was glad some wives and “babes-in-arms” mothers decided to stay on. I remembered from our time in Cyprus that a wholesale Beirut style evacuation of dependents can result in a lot of morale problems. I thought if we could keep at least a semblance of community life, it would be easier on all; it seemed to have turned out that way.

Q: The DEA was an important part of the embassy staff. Were they kind of off on their own?

TULL: When I arrived, they had offices across the street from the chancery. But after the car bomb, others in their building grew so nervous about them being there that we decided it best to move them into our spaces, so we reconfigured the vacant garage into offices. And you’re 100% right, they were a vital part of the embassy and it was a very dangerous assignment for the dozen or so agents stationed there.

J. PHILLIP MCLEAN

Director, Office of Andean Affairs

Washington, DC (1984-1987)

Mr. McLean was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and was educated at Seattle University and the University of Indiana. He entered the Foreign Service in 1962. A Latin American specialist, his service in the State Department in Washington and abroad, primarily concerned Latin American Affairs. His foreign posts were Brasilia, Edinburgh, Panama City, La Paz, Milan and Bogota, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In Washington Mr. McLean held positions dealing with Latin American Affairs, including that of Deputy Assistant Secretary for South America. Mr. McLean was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: You had been dealing with sort of the major issue of east-west and all that. Coming back to ARA, was there a feeling of this is a side show or not?

MCLEAN: Well, in my mind as I came back, I probably had that idea in my mind, because Latin America had come to focus on Central America, and here I was going back to Latin America but to the Andean countries, which were not at the center of things at that particular moment. I wasn’t even going back to Brazil, which in my own mind I thought Brazil or Argentina, which I thought were great countries. But humankind is that way. As soon as I got to where I was, I discovered it was highly important.

Q: It was the center of the universe.

McLEAN: In effect it turned out to be. None of us at that time would think that the President, as he has recently in the last few weeks, talked about world policy as one of the most important things that you do in the world is fight narcotics trafficking. In fact, the story I think, part of the story, is how we went from narcotics trafficking being very much of a side issue to being something of a much more concern of American policy.

Q: Andean Affairs at that time covered what countries?

McLEAN: It covered Venezuela to Bolivia, so it was Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

Q: Chile?

McLEAN: Chile did not. Chile was part of the southern cone. Chile, Argentina and the two small states were a separate office. And then there was an Office of Brazilian Affairs. So our major activity of the office was a theme that I had mentioned before when I was in the Latin American Bureau, and that was development. When I hear stories of what this Cold War was all about, I say, well, that's interesting that people think that, but in fact a very large part of our Latin American policy was developing the area, was trying to improve the way of life of Latin Americans. Certainly there was a Cold War motive in it, but it certainly wasn't the only one, and at times it wasn't the primary one. Most of the reason we were giving aid to that region, the Andean region, at that time, specifically to Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, was to help people. The program was justified mostly on the fact we had an El Niño in the previous years that had been devastating, and as a consequence you had medium-sized aid programs going on in those countries, very traditional aid activities for economic development.

In fact, in those days when we did planning papers, we said that the ranking of interest was democracy, development, and then this third thing which was called anti-narcotics objective, and it was very much the third activity. Early on when I first got to the office, that began to change, because there was a crisis going on in one of the larger and more important countries, Colombia. The narcotics traffickers had just assassinated the minister of justice, which was an incredible event. It was an event that we could not believe that these criminals would have the guts, the sanity, to go out and do this thing, killing, and so suddenly there was a focus on narcotics which was quite different.

Q: How did this manifest itself within the bureau?

McLEAN: Well, at first there was a little reluctance, and I cite an example very early on. I think this must have been June. I had made a trip as soon as I got to the office to Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela, just a get-acquainted trip, and the embassy in Colombia was the main focus of that trip. I spent a week there, and there were great security concerns, and that became one of my subjects of specialty in the subsequent period. How do you protect this mission? How do you compose the mission? But soon after I came back, the Justice Department, Steve Trott, who was

then the Assistant Attorney General for Criminal Affairs in the Department, called what he called a Colombia Opportunities Group, which was a meeting getting all the agencies of the U.S. government together to talk about what we could do, following this assassination of this justice minister, to take advantage of what seemed to be some change in the Colombian body politic and some willingness to go beyond the very small things that they'd been doing up to that point to take on the narcotics traffickers. So he called this meeting. Well, that was a great affront to the State Department and the Bureau, that you would actually have another agency call a country-specific meeting, inter-agency meeting. That was totally against everything that we had done. So as a consequence the lowest level person that you could find to attend such a distinguished meeting was me. So the Deputy Director of Andean Affairs goes to this meeting, and there I began to establish my reputation for whatever it is. I got in arguments with William Von Robb, the head of the Customs Service at that time, a very well known, colorful figure, and others. I was pushing a certain agenda. And I came back from that meeting and began to say, "Hold it just a second. Narcotics is not just one of our issues and it certainly is not a subsidiary issue; it is a major issue and it is a foreign policy issue, because unless we do something with these countries on narcotics, the foreign policy towards these countries is going to go totally out of control. In fact, then we did something about the narcotics, and one could argue that the problems did go out of control, but that's part of the story of what went on, and so I became one of the advocates, in fact one of the few advocates in the early days, of trying to push the narcotics agenda and working with the other agencies to change the tenor of our relationships with these countries.

Q: On the narcotics side, in the first place, was it difficult doing business there because of the perceived and probably real threat from the drug people?

McLEAN: Yes, there was. Our ambassador at the time was Lou Tambs, who was a very colorful and a very warm person in many ways. He was an academic founder of what was called the Santa Fe Group, which was a group of conservative scholars on Latin America that provided much of the meat for the first policy of the Reagan Administration on Latin America. Lou invented the term narco-guerrilla, which was very insulting to Colombia. Colombians always thought of the guerrillas as romantic figures, Robin Hoods, and to hear someone say that they were involved with narcotics was a real heresy and stirred up a lot of hatred. He also made other statements right in the face of the narcotics traffickers, so, yes, he did attract a lot of hostility. He did understand. It was actually when I was making my first trip there that he was beginning to understand that what he was stirring up wasn't just against him but it was hurting the embassy as well. But, I must say, his approach to it was very nervous. One day--I was staying with him at that time--he not only had his Uzi in a holster right in front of him, but he had his hand on a .45, and I must say it made me a little bit nervous. The embassy had begun this practice of driving very aggressively through the town with front and back cars and cutting off traffic and the rest of it. Eventually after some months, when the threats got very personal and very real, we pulled him out, and he stayed out and eventually was given Costa Rica as an ambassadorship. Lou told me

in that period, somewhat contrary to what he later testified in Congress, he said, “I listen to you guys at the State Department. You’re my source of instructions, but I really get what I do from my friends over at the White House,” and he made a big wink, most of which I think was quite accurate, that he was taking a lot of his cue. But I again in retrospect don’t condemn what he was trying to do. He was trying to move this agenda of narcotics to be something of more important concern to the United States, though because of his ideological bent, he put a lot of emphasis on the fact it was communism that was driving this.

Q: Was there a communist movement there that was significant, or was this money?

McLEAN: I think communism, not just there but almost everywhere, had died as an ideological movement. There was one of the groups that was still driven by something almost a Christian communist activity of the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), but the major movement, the FARC, was a way of life--the *Force Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas* (Armed Revolutionary Forces of Columbia). It’s sort of a place where people go to drop out, in Colombian terms--at least it was at that time. And though there was a lot of skepticism--and even today there are arguments about it--people forget that we did... Shortly after Lou began this argument talking about narco-guerrillas, we sent people in who were qualified to look at the information, and we came back convinced that in fact he was right, that the FARC was receiving some of its income--at that time we would not have said the majority of its income, but some of its income--from guarding narcotics plantations or laboratories, and, in some cases, from actually providing it. Eventually we also found that they were involved in arms traffic and there was an international side to it. They were becoming a significant force in the narcotics, they were a factor, they were another cartel in the narcotics activities by the time I left there, by the time I left my time in working on these questions. Today there is no question that a major portion of the FARC is supported by narcotics, its narcotics activities.

CHARLES ANTHONY GILLESPIE JR.

Ambassador

Colombia (1985-1988)

Charles Anthony Gillespie Jr., was born in Long Beach, California in March, 1935. He graduated from UCLA in 1958 with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. Following a six year term with the U.S. Army, he entered the Foreign Service in 1965 and was nominated by President Reagan as Ambassador to Colombia in 1985. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to the Philippines, Indonesia,

Belgium, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Chile. Ambassador Gillespie was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

GILLESPIE: Back to going to Bogota. We'd gone through all of the security briefings. Vivian had to work out the tail end of leaving the Bureau of Public Affairs, doing the paper work, renting the house, all of those things, and generally getting ready to go. I wasn't confirmed by the Senate as Ambassador to Colombia until July, 1985. We decided to go in August.

Before getting into our relations with Colombia, let me just say that, over the next several weeks, Mike Skol, Satcher, Don Schoeb the Administrative Counselor, and I got together and set up a system that we hoped would work. Walt Sargent, the Security Officer, was very concerned because the access to the residence came down to a bottleneck, as things always do. Eventually, there's only one way that you can go. There had previously been a major bomb exploded on the corner, just a block away. People weren't sure, but this might have been directed at the American Ambassador. In any event Sargent was convinced that the best security was uncertainty in the eye of the beholder - in other words, unpredictability. So we looked for ways to make my schedule unpredictable. I had to know what I was doing but I had to do it in a way which could not be predicted in advance.

My security detail initially consisted of one American Security Officer with me at all times, in addition to a Colombian security agent. Both of these arrangements changed during the course of our tour, after about one year. The security situation began really to get hot and very serious, and there were reports that certain groups intended to get the American Ambassador. Reports of this kind were received sporadically, off and on by my successors. Sometimes, we would get a report that was very serious. The State Department DS people decided that they needed to augment my security protection. They decided first to assign to me a special team from the U.S. Army. These men were superb marksmen, specially trained to deal with terrorist situations. So they were brought in.

The Ambassador's residence is on a six-acre piece of land, up on the side of a hill in a suburban residential area in the northern part of Bogota. It is on a rather steep slope. There is a main road that goes along the eastern edge of the property. Then you come down from that road to the residence itself. On the southern side the front is walled, but then right outside it is a very tall, apartment building, looking right down onto the residence. All of our neighbors had been vetted very carefully with the police. They were constantly checked as to who they were and what was going on. However, we knew that a relative of one of the narcotics traffickers lived in one of the apartments facing the residence.

When this special team from the U.S. Army came down to Bogota, we arranged to rent an apartment on what I think was the eighth floor, the top floor of this apartment building. We put the Army team up there - and that's where they lived. They also used that apartment to cover the Embassy residence. They had a lot of technical equipment in that apartment to make sure that the people down below, the relatives of a narcotics trafficker, weren't doing something that would be dangerous.

Then, soon after the arrival of the Army detachment, DS decided that they needed even more people in Bogota, so they assigned additional American personnel from DS to me and to my wife Vivian. We ended up having an American security presence in the residence 24 hours a day. This security detachment had an office downstairs, which was occupied at all times. Vivian had a full-time American Security Officer assigned to her, as well as her Colombian security guards. When the situation got more serious, I had either two or three American Security Officers with me at all times, and this situation continued throughout my tour of duty.

I guess that there were two particularly telling incidents. I arrived in Bogota at the end of August, 1985. Mike Skol, the DCM, had arrived earlier. We can go into more detail on these incidents, because they are fascinating. Two, particularly horrendous things occurred in November, 1985, in Colombia.

In the first week of November 1985 a group later identified as guerrillas from the M-19 Group (April 19th Movement) took over the Palace of Justice in Bogota. We later learned that they were operating at the direction of, and certainly with the encouragement of, Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel. As a result, about 120 people were killed - mainly innocent bystanders. Some or nearly all of the guerrillas were also killed. That was a trauma that hit Colombia dramatically. It had political, criminal, legal, and law enforcement overtones. The Colombian military reacted, and we got very much involved, because of the terrorist nature of the event. My contacts with the President and his team of advisers were not suited to crisis management.

A week later, because this sort of set up the situation which developed on the narcotics and criminal side, there occurred what in Colombia is called the Armero disaster. The volcano, Nevado del Ruiz, in central Colombia, a few hundred miles from Bogota, erupted. There was a tremendous mud eruption at about 18,000 feet above sea level, and mud slid down to the bottom of the adjoining valley of the Magdalena River. Armero was the name of the town built right in the middle of the plain below the volcano. The mud slide wiped out the town, killing about 23,000 people. That was a week after the Palace of Justice incident. That led to a major, international response, and we were in the middle of that. That was in 1985.

In 1986 Colombia was involved in elections. There was a March election for Congress and a May election for the presidency. In May a new President, Virgilio Barco, was elected, who was to take office in August, 1986. In June, 1986 - after the presidential election but before the new

President was inaugurated - there was a major assassination attempt against the Minister of the Interior, who was driving along a road not too far from the American Embassy Chancery building. According to our intelligence people, it turned out that, although the Minister was not himself killed, two of his security people were. This was really an effort to kill the U.S. Ambassador. The Minister of the Interior rode in a car very similar to mine. Somehow, the terrorists had seen us using that road two or three times and thought that we would use it again. So, when his motorcade came down that way, the terrorists hit it. My intelligence and security people said that they were pretty sure that the terrorists thought that they were going to kill the American Ambassador when they did that. So that sort of tightened everything up. When this incident occurred, we reviewed all of our arrangements.

I mentioned that our daughter came down to Bogota for Christmas, 1986. She was there for a week. She had been studying at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). She had begun to race bicycles. Colombians are crazy about bicycle racing. They love it. It turned out that the chief Colombian security official at the Embassy, Major Reyes, was himself a real bicycle racer, though he was 50 years old at this time. In his view he continued to be a bicyclist. Our daughter wanted to go and look at bicycle equipment, so she went out with Major Reyes in a car, two or three times, just the two of them. There were no other security people with them, because he was a security official himself. So our daughter stayed in Bogota through Christmas. The day after Christmas, as I mentioned before, we got on a plane and flew up to St. Lucia, got a boat, and went sailing. She went back to California.

We did not go back to Colombia right away. We went to Washington, where we spent much of the month of January, 1987. We returned to Bogota in February, 1987. In early March, 1987, an agent of the FBI of Colombia, the equivalent of our CIA, shot and killed three members of the M-19 group, whom they had been tailing for some time in Bogota. It appeared as if these M-19 members had discovered that they were being tailed and were either going to try to get away or attack the people who were following them - I'm not sure which. The Colombian police shot and killed these three people, a woman and two men. In the heel of the shoe of one of the men were some documents. One of those documents included a report on the surveillance of our daughter, Kristin, in December, 1986. This was now March, 1987. A paragraph in this report contained some conclusions which were quite explicit. It said, "Since the U.S. Ambassador and his wife are so well protected, we are not sure how successful an effort to kidnap or kill them will be. However, the Ambassador's daughter travels with only one security person. She is much more accessible, and probably we should concentrate our efforts on her." Well, they were concluding that she would be around more or less indefinitely.

You can imagine how chilling that was when the CIA Chief of Station brought me that document. He said, "I think that you had better look at this. This is the situation." That really drove home the fact that this situation was real and that things were happening out there. That report caused us all to heighten our security and to be concerned about it. I still get kind of chilly when I think about this. It caused us to become, not paranoid, but certainly concerned. I didn't tell our

daughter about this until well after we had left Colombia. However, just a few months later, after seeing this - I guess that it was during the spring of 1987 in Los Angeles, where she was living with a roommate in an apartment at UCLA - she said that she was a little concerned about a prowler near her apartment. I didn't hesitate. I told Walt Sargent, the Security Officer in the Embassy in Bogota, "Listen, our daughter Kristin just called and said that there was a prowler who's been hanging around her apartment." He said, "Don't worry about this." He called State Department security, and they called their office in Los Angeles which got in touch with the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) and the FBI. They went out and talked to Kristin. They took all of this very seriously, because there were Colombian connections in Los Angeles.

There were other incidents later that year. For example, in 1987 we learned of a meeting of the narcotics traffickers with representatives of the three or four guerrilla groups in Colombia. There was some discussion of how much they wanted to kill the American Ambassador and the head of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) office in the Embassy in Bogota. They were talking about spending millions of dollars to do this. They talked about being ready to pay that much money. But nothing drove it home so much as seeing this reference, in cold print, to killing or kidnapping our daughter. This was totally unrelated to anything else. This was not an intelligence report. For me this implied threat characterized what all of us were facing in Bogota.

I've dwelt on the security aspects of living in Bogota for some time now, but this occupied everybody's attention at the time, from the most junior Foreign Service Officer to the Colombian employees of the Embassy. In other words, all of us. It was a very real threat.

Q: Today is October 28, 1996. Tony, where do you want to start?

GILLESPIE: Having dealt with the security aspects of the situation, let me try to set the scene when I arrived in Bogota in August, 1985. As I mentioned before, the President of Colombia was Belisario Betancur. He had been elected in 1982 for a four-year term. Colombian Presidents cannot be re-elected.

Belisario Betancur was an interesting man. There are two large parties in Colombia: the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, in the classic liberal sense. Conservative in this case means pro-Catholic Church, with the role of the state somewhat circumscribed. It was mainly the party of some of the more established oligarchs, although that may have changed more recently. There are oligarchs everywhere, now. The Liberal Party is somewhat anti-clerical or, certainly, not as strongly clerical as the Conservative Party. It regards the role of the state as helping to manage the affairs of the nation. During the past 50 years or so, the Liberals have been, by far, the largest party. They have the greatest number of members. In Colombia political party membership is a family affair. You are born a Liberal and you die a Liberal. It's like being born into the Catholic faith and remaining in it, no matter what your own thoughts might be.

That circumstance had begun to change. In 1982 Belisario Betancur somewhat surprised people. Against all expectations, he was elected President. It had been the traditional view in Colombia that, if the Liberals stuck together, the Conservatives never really had a chance to win the presidential elections. The country had been under constitutional law since the 1880s. When I was in Colombia, the country was about to celebrate its constitutional centennial. Colombia achieved its independence from Spain in 1810 - during the whole rash of independence movements in Latin America which sought independence from Spain.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s Colombia had gone through what was known as *La Violencia* (The period of violence), which was, in effect, a political, civil war during which the Conservatives and Liberals did atrocious things to each other, each trying to get rid of the other physically. Then there had been a period of military dictatorship under General Rojas Pinilla. In response to this dictatorship the civilian political party leaders went to other figures in the Colombian military establishment and asked them to take over the country, but "just for a time." I'm abbreviating this whole process, but out of that emerged what was called the National Front Government, a scheme by which the Liberal and Conservative Parties agreed first to alternate and then to share power after a certain period.

Belisario Betancur had a bipartisan cabinet. He had both Conservative and Liberal ministers in his cabinet. I think I mentioned before that President Betancur considered himself capable of involving himself in the Central American situation. That was his foray into the international limelight. Other than that, Colombian foreign policy had basically concerned itself with border problems with Venezuela, involving longstanding issues where Colombian and Venezuelan territory seems to intersect in the Guajira Peninsula and in the Gulf of Maracaibo. Colombia fancied itself as being somewhat internationalist in its outlook. It had always tried to be visibly active in the United Nations since World War II. Colombia was a founding member of the OAS (Organization of American States). Colombia had an internationalist tradition, but this was not accompanied by a particularly coherent foreign policy as such.

In any event, in 1984 the Colombian Government was faced with the first indications that the drug traffickers were really on the rise. Colombia had been the source of much of the marijuana that was coming into the U.S. and going to Europe. It was part of the international market for marijuana. Growing conditions for marijuana in Colombia are about right. The areas where marijuana was grown weren't really under anybody's control, so it was easy to plant and harvest it. The ports were open for its export by sea or by plane. The drug situation in Colombia, I think that you could say, was evolving or deteriorating, depending on your point of view. In roughly 1983 or 1984 Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel began to appear on the scene and became visible.

In 1984 President Betancur agreed to the extradition of Colombian citizens to the United States to stand trial for narcotics offenses. This created a tremendous, negative reaction in Medellin from Escobar and those around him and led to a wave of violence. The Colombian Minister of

Justice was assassinated. There were all kinds of problems which I have mentioned in connection with the security situation in Bogota. I think I mentioned that a bomb was exploded near the American Embassy in 1984. Threats were made against the American School, which had all of the consequences that we've described. This really set Colombia on edge.

In 1985 the situation continued to deteriorate. I arrived in Bogota in August, 1985, and spent the month of September getting my feet on the ground and learning a little bit about the lay of the land.

Then, as I mentioned before, in early November, 1985, the first major development occurred. We learned that some group attacked, apparently took over, and occupied the Palace of Justice in downtown Bogota. The Palace of Justice is the site of the Colombian Supreme Court. It is a large building, facing on a large courtyard perhaps two blocks across or 500 meters wide, of open space. At the other end of this open space is the Presidential Palace. The Presidential Palace is called the *Casa Narino*. An unknown number of people were reportedly being held hostage in the Palace of Justice. Among the hostages were several members of the Colombian Supreme Court. Initially, it wasn't clear who was doing this or why it was being done. As the facts began to emerge, the group occupying the Palace of Justice appeared to be one of the four most active, revolutionary groups, the M-19 Movement, which we mentioned previously.

Q: Is this the same group that had taken our Ambassador, Diego Asencio, prisoner?

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Remember, this was the mid-1980s. The term, "hostage situation," was then very current. In this case it meant the takeover of a Colombian Government building by armed people. There was shooting going on. Nobody knew exactly what was happening. However, this was a true crisis.

Under those circumstances, of course, the U.S. had a very definite, policy position of its own on terrorism, kidnapping, and hostage situations. So we reported this situation to Washington. The Department asked us to stay on top of the developing situation. I was authorized to offer the Colombian Government any assistance that they might need, obviously within reason, to help to deal with the situation. We wanted to know how the Colombian Government was going to handle it, what they were going to do, and then see how we could help them.

I asked for an appointment with President Betancur, who had received me rather well when I presented my credentials. I had met him here in the U.S. several months previously before my departure for Colombia. I met with him and offered him any facilities that we could provide. On instructions, I offered in particular communications or other technical equipment - not armed troops or anything like that, although I did say that we could make available experts in both terrorism and hostage situations - should he desire such help. We were in contact with SOUTHCOM, the Southern Command of the U.S. Army in Panama, which had some people in

its headquarters who were quite adept or supposed to be adept at dealing with situations of this kind or training to deal with them.

We entered into a dialogue with the President, which I handled directly. We also dealt with his chief of staff, who was acting as the day to day crisis manager. This was a very nasty situation. Demands and threats were made by the M-19 terrorists within the Palace of Justice. Reports came out that, first, this or that Justice of the Supreme Court had been killed, that another Justice had been shot, and that terrible things were happening. The upshot was that over 100 people lost their lives during the takeover and continuing occupation of the Palace of Justice. This covered a period of three or four days, if I remember correctly. I haven't gone back to look at the files, but it was an extended occupation. It was finally ended when the Colombian military attacked the Palace of Justice through the roofs, the front door, and any available openings in the building. They even used tanks. As I said, over 100 people lost their lives.

It was pretty clear, from communications that were coming out during the takeover and during the crisis and occupation of the Palace of Justice itself that whoever was in the building was, indeed, executing people. This was in a country that was already known for its violence. This seemed to be a further affront to any standards of decency that you could think of. Colombian public sentiment was very strong about this.

In any event the crisis was eventually resolved. As I said, we offered to provide, and we may have provided, if I remember correctly, some kinds of technical devices. However, my recollection is that they were never used.

Q: It was a very short time.

GILLESPIE: It was a relatively short time. The Colombian Government felt that they could deal with it. This incident indicated, though, this very traditional gap between the civilian and the military leadership. The Colombian military's position was, "Look, this is our problem. Turn it over to us, and we'll deal with it. Don't even watch." In this instance President Belisario Betancur and the civilian, political leadership were saying, "Wait a minute, the world's eyes are on us. This situation can't be dealt with by the unrestrained use of force." All kinds of stories were coming out - almost hourly, in fact - about who was in charge, who was going to do what, and was the Minister of Defense or the President making decisions about what was to be done. It reflected a very serious disconnect, if you will, between the civilian political leadership and the military. It also reflected badly on the Colombian Government's ability to manage a crisis which in fact had Colombia very much in the headlines around the world. One could see this very clearly.

In any event, the military stormed the Palace of Justice and brought this incident to a close. While the country was still reeling from this shock, a few days later the terrible natural disaster which I have already mentioned took place in the next valley to the West from Bogota. Overlooking that valley, there is a volcano called the Nevado del Ruiz, a snow-covered mountain, as its name suggests. It erupted and caused major mud slides, without much warning. The

eruption sent hundreds of thousands of tons of mud down its flanks to the Magdalena River valley below it. The mud slides went right through a town called Armero, which had been built in the delta area below this volcano. This was a town with a population of some 24,000, 23,000 of whom were killed.

The reaction in Colombia to this natural disaster was interesting. There was almost an unwillingness to believe that it had happened and that its dimensions were as great as they seemed. The Colombian Government fell back into a stance that we'd seen over a number of years. Government officials said, "We don't need a lot of help. We can deal with this." Then the dimensions of the disaster became evident, and that attitude changed. The disaster elicited a tremendous outpouring of offers of assistance and concrete aid from all over the world - from Europe, North America, and Asia.

We were then very much in the thick of that. This disaster took place in an area that is not easily reached by road from Bogota, which is the main entry area into the country, or Barranquilla, the main port on the coast. It turned out that there was a military air base at Palanquero, not too far from the site of the disaster. I must say that the U.S. military really showed its capacity for getting into this area and helping to organize parts of the rescue effort.

We were by no means alone in providing assistance. Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, and all of the neighboring countries in the region sent transport aircraft, field hospitals, and military units to help with the organization of the relief effort. They sent various kinds of rescue units. The U.S. sent in a large number of helicopters. Due to the way the system evolved and partly with our help, we were able to bring a complete air traffic control into the region where this tragedy had happened. The Colombian Air Force, with its base at Palanquero near the site of the disaster, did not have the capacity to control the substantial air traffic bringing help. So I got to see a lot of this, first hand, through the eyes of our officers who were down there and who were keeping me informed about it. Supplies were coming in to take care of the survivors, of whom there were several thousand from the region. I forget the exact number of people affected by this disaster, but it was at least 50,000 or so, about twice the number of those who died.

In any event planes would come in to Bogota International Airport. Then the supplies would be transferred, usually from commercial aircraft, to C-130s, which could fly in to Palanquero. Then they had to be transported, usually by helicopter, out to where they were needed. We had sent several helicopter units from Panama, and the British had sent helicopters from Belize. It was quite an international effort, which went on at least for a couple of months after the event.

Q: Tony, I'd like to ask you something. I've been involved in two, significant earthquakes - one in Yugoslavia and one in Italy. Could you talk about your role as the Ambassador in the context of such a disaster? There was a horrendous, security problem in Colombia, and, all of a sudden, there was a major, natural disaster. What went through your mind and how did you approach this? How did you organize the Embassy to do it?

GILLESPIE: Well, as it may be somewhat evident now, since I joined the Foreign Service, I had been in, near, or around a lot of different, crisis situations. I guess that I had picked up a lot of ideas from watching others. I learned a lot from the evacuation of dependents for political or terrorism reasons and from dealing with kidnapping or other, major problems. I think that I learned a lot from what the Foreign Service had to offer. I had talked to people about these kinds of things.

The first thing that I did was to try to get some information. In other words, take stock of the situation. An embassy is a gold mine of information, if the people are doing their job. So, to bring it down to the micro level, the first thing was to get the Defense Attaché, the Central Intelligence Agency representative, the chiefs of the Political, Economic, and Consular Sections of the Embassy all together and say, "All right let's try to work out, if we can, the dimensions of this problem." As I mentioned, in Bogota we had a special AID office, called the Advanced Developing Country Office, with a very savvy, experienced, and entrepreneurial AID professional. He was the only American AID employee in that office. He knew which buttons to push. The Defense Attaché and our Military Group commander had their connections. They knew whom to talk to. The first thing to do is to try to define the situation, including what has happened, what are the likely requirements going to be, and what is the country's capacity for dealing with this problem. The situation was developing very quickly, of course.

We were in touch with the President of Colombia and the people around him. They were setting up a crisis management organization of their own which, in terms of numbers of people involved, went far beyond and was more open than what had been done in the case of the occupation by terrorists of the Palace of Justice. Then we asked the Colombians what we could do that would help the most. In doing this you learn that you have to advise, counsel, educate, instruct, and, sometimes, fend off people in Washington who think that they know exactly what is required.

There is a lot of potential help available in Washington in connection with a situation like this, and a lot of people who are willing to help. However, their knowledge of what's going on isn't complete, so they sort of fall back on formulas. This is true not only in Washington, DC, but is also true in Paris, London, Tokyo, and everywhere. We had people, not only in the U.S. but in Europe, who said, "These people have been devastated. They're without their homes and they're going to need clothing." Within a short period of time we learned that some of these people were providing ski parkas, blankets, warm clothing, and those kinds of things for an area where, I think, the mean, low temperature is probably 70 degrees Fahrenheit, with the highs up in the 90s.

What that means is that I think that it is incumbent on the field element, in this case the embassy, the Ambassador, and his staff, quickly to make sure that the folks in Washington have a sense of the situation. And we did this. We said, "Here's an inventory or catalogue - maybe incomplete, but here's what we know the local authorities have to deal with something like this. Here's what the food supply situation might look like. This looks like what the requirements will be." Fortunately, we had some very quick responses. The Air Section chief of our Military Group in

Colombia, Lt Col David Mason, had been a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force. David had grown up in Chile and spoke fluent Spanish. David had wonderful connections, both in the Colombian Air Force and Ministry of Defense, as well as in our own military establishment. He was very quickly able to get some quick reaction resources down to us. We had some helicopters very rapidly. They flew down - it was not easy to make the long, overland flight from Panama to Colombia. They had to make sure that they could get fuel on the way. The pilots hadn't flown to this destination before, and they weren't sure of the route. However, they did it. We were able to make quick surveys and go out and look at the situation to find out what was going on. Lt Col Dave Mason went out in a Colombian Air Force aircraft and looked at the area. He came back to Bogota and said, "Okay, this is the lay of the land." Other people, particularly the AID representative in Bogota, were finding out what stocks of supplies were on hand, what would be taken care of by local donations, what wouldn't be, and what was going to be hard to get.

Through the combined efforts of Washington agencies and of our own Embassy, we were able to establish some priorities. In this connection the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the Agency for International Development was of material assistance. I think that it still exists, more or less by that same name. They have a cadre of professionals in this area. All they do is handle disaster relief, dealing with crises around the world - natural, man-made, or whatever. They have money available and know where resources are, even if they don't have them on hand. They have experience. They said, "Look out for problems of shelter. One of the worst things that happens in a situation like this is that people tend to worry about food, medicine, and all of these other, terribly important things. But people often forget that there is no place for the people most affected to lay their heads at night."

It turned out that in Panama there were reserve stocks of tenting materials, tarpaulins, and the kinds of things you need which can very quickly be turned into shelter. These materials were "palletized" - they were all packed, ready to be loaded on aircraft, and sent to where they were needed. So, within a really short time, we were able to get that kind of material into Colombia and turn it over to this developing, transportation chain and start getting it out to where the victims of the disaster were.

Yes, we had visitors. There were a lot of relief people coming in. Eventually, within three weeks or so, this situation became something of a routine. I designated a spouse, in this case our Public Affairs Officer's husband, who was himself a Latin American, to handle the visitors. He had been a professor at American University in Washington, D.C. He is a very Americanized Peruvian. I made him the head of the continuing Armero Task Force, because our AID office was small. The people from outside the region, the people who were in Colombia on TDY (Temporary Duty), stayed on, but their numbers slowly dwindled. After a time we had a number of contractors and others who were helping. Finally, after a while, our relief effort managed itself out of existence.

Going back to your original point, this showed that you need to have information and some sense of what might work under the circumstances. I think that you need to have a "translator" who can take the principles of crisis management or disaster relief, whatever they are, as they are known, on a universal level, and bring them down to the local scene. Such a "translator" might say, "Wait a minute, that's a great idea, but let's look at it from this angle. That's not likely to work here in the same way."

We were able to do that. In a tight security situation nothing broke down. We had volunteers: our Consular, Political, and Economic Officers from the State Department. We had CIA officers and people from the U.S. Department of Defense. When there was a job to be done, they basically jumped in and did it, asking, "How can we be of help?" There were also the Colombians from the Embassy staff. Remember, this was a Colombian crisis. The Colombian employees of the U.S. Government were first and foremost - right out there, making sure that the various jobs got done and volunteering to do various things, when needed.

As of this point, it was mid-November, 1986. I had been there for all of September and October. In other words, I had been in Bogota for a little more than two months. It was a hell of an introduction to a job! However, in a sense it was extremely useful. You can never say that it was fortuitous. It was a real tragedy. First, it was murder and assassinations on the political front, and then there was a natural disaster.

As time went on, the events at the Palace of Justice began to become clearer, and there were explanations for what had happened. However, we were not quite sure, at least not initially, what the motivations for the takeover of the Palace of Justice were. Over time it seemed to become pretty clear that this action may have had a revolutionary or rebellious content contributed by the M-19 group.

Nevertheless, there seemed to be very strong evidence that Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel, as well as those who were trying to resist any further extradition to the U.S., had their fingers in that pot. We learned almost immediately from people who were inside the Palace of Justice, and who survived this event, that documents concerning certain people, certain crimes, and certain cases had been taken out of the Ministry of Justice archives and destroyed or burned, before a lot of other things happened. Certain Justices of the Colombian Supreme Court, who were known to favor the extradition of Colombians wanted on narcotics charges in the United States, were summarily executed, within a short period of time.

We saw much of this later on. However, as recently as 1996, 10 or 11 years after the fact, the Colombian Government and other, Colombian authorities, are still trying to deal with the question of how to allocate responsibility and accountability for what happened in connection with the Palace of Justice occupation and the decisions that were taken at that time. In the course of that process you could never be sure of how much revisionism of history was going on. This was a consideration, particularly as we couldn't follow these events too closely, since we never

had enough time to do so. We couldn't be sure of how the Colombian military acted and whether Colombian civilians controlled the situation or not - or wanted to do so.

So this incident was never really over. However, it does appear that the Palace of Justice takeover was probably - at least in part and maybe in large part - orchestrated to serve the ends of the narcotics trafficking cartel in Medellin.

The Armero Disaster did not have any such origins. It was a natural disaster. It was managed by the Colombians reasonably well. Certainly, people would give them a C+ or a B rating on their overall performance - maybe even higher, say, a B+. It was a devastating event. In my view the Colombians did well. I didn't see a lot of pettiness or other problems. I saw people trying to help. The administration of President Betancur was winding down, as the country was preparing for presidential elections in the spring of 1986. As Peter McPherson, the Director of AID, had suggested, this combination of events gave us an opportunity to begin to work with President Betancur and to give priority to issues related to the management of crises, whether of political or natural origin. We could also develop close, personal ties with people in the Government of Colombia. Perhaps we could hope to influence government organizational and decision making structures and institutional approaches to these issues. This could be done in a way which, quite frankly, could help us to deal with narcotics trafficking and with what seemed to be a growing incidence of terrorism, both worldwide and hemispheric. We could hope to learn how to deal with matters of that kind.

These two crises might help us better to define how we ought to relate to the Colombian Government, under whatever administration might be in power, regarding these very sensitive areas. These matters were going to be with us for a while. That is more or less how we came out of these events.

Q: Two questions come to mind. First, during this time, and even later, was there ever concern that Colombia might be taken over by the Colombian military? You have mentioned a tendency by the Colombian military to say, "We'll take over handling these events."

GILLESPIE: The answer to that is, "No."

Q: Then you weren't drawing the conclusion that these events showed that this was the first step by the Colombian military to brush aside the civilian government?

GILLESPIE: No. The Colombian military was in an interesting position. First of all, the Colombian military do not vote. They don't go to the polls. Secondly, if the military votes in the Colombian context, it's done very subtly. By that, I mean that it might try to influence political events indirectly.

You may remember that the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship represented an individual military officer's takeover of the government. General Rojas basically overstayed his welcome as President. I'm

abbreviating this process, but basically it was civilians who went to the Colombian military and said, "Please help us get rid of Rojas Pinilla." In effect, the Colombian military said, "Okay, we'll do it but we're only going to do it for a little while. You civilians have to bear the responsibility for this." That worked.

As much as I could, I tried to use the military-civilian test and I tried to get all of the Embassy officers to apply the same test. This involved considering whether what many people considered an aversion by the Colombian military to military rule of the country was real or not. By and large, this thesis seemed to be correct, although there were always some military officers who reportedly might, under certain circumstances, try to use their military authority to take over the civilian government.

However, first of all, the Colombian military had its hands full. There were four separate guerrilla movements going on in the country. A lot of things were happening. The Colombian military wasn't doing a particularly good or effective job of dealing with these guerrilla movements. The civilian leadership wasn't willing to back the Colombian military 100 percent. There were no indications that the military were saying, "Well, in that case, we'll take over until this crisis is dealt with." As I say, there were a few exceptions, involving a few, middle grade officers, who might have been considering a military takeover.

In a sense, Colombia's military is a very comfortable establishment. They had been living in a state of siege for God knows how long. Basically, what this meant was that there were pay bonuses for all of the professional military. There were very substantial, retirement benefits, as a result of this state of siege. So I always thought that there may have been a view among the Colombian military that having this guerrilla crisis going on was useful to them.

Q: What were the social origins of the Colombian military?

GILLESPIE: First of all, the Colombian military is a self-perpetuating group. A lot of them are traditional members of the military. Many Colombian officers are sons and grandsons of officers. Secondly, they have been subject to Chilean and German influences over the years, so they fancy themselves a professional, military class. They have military academies and they take young men into the military service at a very young age. Then they put them through high school or, perhaps, give them a little more than a high school education, following which they commission them as officers. Over the past 20 or 30 years nearly all of the officers have been given an opportunity for some higher education, particularly those who are deemed to be comers. For example, they may take university courses. They are and have been very much middle class in outlook. They are separated from the rest of society.

During the Colombian government which succeeded the Betancur administration, the Minister of Communications, a brilliant academic figure who is a political scientist more than anything else, set out to try to help the military improve its image in the eyes of Colombian society. Thereby, he sought to give the military the public support for actions which it might need to take in

dealing with the various problems of the country. He started a campaign to do that. Prior to that the Colombian military was relatively out of sight, out in the countryside. Often, it was relatively out of mind.

There is corruption in the Colombian military, involving the acquisition or purchase of defense items. It is not rampant. There were, and there continue to be, actions by the Colombian military which violate the basic human rights of a lot of citizens. As the situation continued to deteriorate in the countryside- (end of tape)

Many landowners in the countryside saw their interests being threatened by guerrilla movements. They were able, in effect, to co-opt some of the military - though by no means all, and not necessarily at higher rank levels - to serve their interests, to become enforcers for them, and to drive guerrillas and maybe just peasants off the land. Over the past 10 to 15 years this has been the source of many reports, quite a few of them well substantiated, of human rights violations and atrocities of various kinds. Usually these involved simple killings. Those who carried out these killings didn't necessarily torture people. These were done in the sense of extrajudicial actions to clear land, get rid of trouble makers, and, occasionally, to assassinate leftist political leaders.

Back in the 1970s the Colombian military had consciously been used, to some extent, in an anti-narcotics role, mainly in the eradication of marijuana crops. This involved pulling out marijuana plants by hand. Then it became very evident that some of the Colombian military were being corrupted by the narcotics traffickers. So the military pulled out of this kind of activity and really tried to stay as far away from the narcotics traffic as they could.

You might remember that the Colombian military and Colombia as a country had been closely involved in the international area. There were Colombians who fought in World War II. The Colombians are very proud of their service in Korea in the 1950s. A Colombian battalion went to South Korea which fought alongside U.S. forces. At the office of the Colombian Ministry of Defense there is a large, interior courtyard with a replica of Pork Chop Hill, a well-known battle during the Korean conflict. So the Colombian military are aware and proud of their involvement in Korea.

When I got to Colombia, I certainly didn't have that fear about the Government of Colombia. However, I could see - and it was certainly evident - what was involved in the takeover of the Colombian Palace of Justice by terrorists. Afterwards, the President of the Supreme Court came to me privately and almost secretly to say, "You've got to get my family out of here. You in the United States must help me. I have nowhere else to go." He brought with him an audio cassette mailed to him by the drug traffickers which included the voices of his wife and daughter, talking on their telephone. The message was implicit, "You see, we know exactly where your family is. If you do not act in our favor, you will not see your wife and your daughter again. We'll deal

with them." This was quite different from asking him to step back from issues of interest to them or to be neutral where they were concerned. He said that if he did things for the narcotics traffickers, he would receive fantastic amounts of money. He said that if he refused to do this, and tried to be either neutral or negative toward the narcotics traffickers, then they would kill his family.

So he asked us to help him get his family out of the country. We did. We eventually got him out of the country as well. We helped him to get a post in an international organization. That was apparently enough to move him out of the sights of the narcotics traffickers. So he and his family are still alive.

Others with whom we worked closely and who had come to us for help did not survive. One of these people was the chief of the Colombian Special Anti-Narcotics Unit (SANU), an officer whom I had met in Washington in 1985 before I went to Colombia. I met frequently with him and with the chief of our DEA office in the Embassy, which was called at the time, NAU, the Narcotics Assistance Unit. The chief of SANU was assassinated one Sunday on the highway while returning from his country home. I went to his funeral with the President of Colombia and held his widow in my arms to comfort her. We were providing armored cars and other help to people in the police and, in the government, to Ministry of Justice officials, and to the Minister of Justice himself.

While the possibility of Colombia's being taken over by the drug traffickers was certainly not imminent in Colombia, I thought that I saw the possibility of the nightmare scenario, to which I referred previously, taking place in Colombia. When I first thought about it, I had assumed that this scenario might affect a small government in the Caribbean. I could begin to see that this narcotics trafficker group made "ruthless" a real word. They just simply were not willing to stop short of anything. The fictional creations of Tom Clancy and others and the way those traffickers have been portrayed in the movies, while ostensibly exaggerated and overdrawn in some respects, basically were not far off from the reality we saw in Colombia. These traffickers were men and women who think nothing of exterminating or snuffing out lives, if it seems to serve their purpose.

A class of assassins has developed in Colombia. They are called *sicarios* (hired assassins) in Spanish. These are kids, often street kids who were basically brought up in small gangs, where they learned how to kill people. They were tested by being given a gun. They would go out and get on a motorcycle, ride up behind somebody, put their gun as near as they could to the back of someone's head or the rear window of the car, and blast away. Or they would do that when the car was stopped at a light. If the car is not armored or does not have some armor plate, that's goodbye to the victim. That's the end of it.

Colombia had democratic institutions and was apparently not under imminent threat of being taken over by the narcotics traffickers. However, you could see the beginnings of such a takeover,

if you let yourself think about it, as I did then. I remember talking to my DCM, Mike Skol, about this. I wondered how long the Colombian Government could resist this kind of activity, first on the individual and then on the societal level. One of the big things about Colombia and drugs is the money involved. The narcotics traffic produces tremendous amounts of money.

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The city of Cali is an interesting case. Cali is a city South of Medellin, in the Cauca River valley. It is heavily oriented toward agriculture but it also has some industry. Unlike a lot of other under developed and Latin American countries, Colombia has several large, population centers. Cali has a population of about 1.0 million. Some of the most modern printing and publishing companies in Colombia are in Cali, not in Bogota, which is the administrative capital and a business center. Medellin is a business center, and so is Barranquilla. There are other, large cities in Colombia.

There were narcotics traffickers and producers who were based in Cali. They formed the Cali cartel. In the mid-1980s one didn't hear very much about the Cali cartel. First of all, the violence level in and around Cali was relatively low. The problem there was terrible behavior, which people attributed to the police, more than anyone else. There were drive by shootings and getting homeless kids off the streets by killing them. There were transvestites and homosexuals in Cali. Every so often it was as if somebody said, "Let's go clean up the town," and a lot of these people would end up dead - murdered or shot. However, gang warfare, corruption, and clearly drug-related murder were not nearly as evident in Cali as in the other cities of Colombia.

I remember my first trip to Cali. I spoke to the local Chamber of Commerce and met with a lot of its members. I played a round of golf at the Cali Country Club and stayed overnight. I was told, "Look, we're going to keep Cali 'clean.' We're not going to let these drug traffickers into the country club. We're not going to let them become members of our luncheon clubs, our private groups, and so forth. They will not be able to have their children married in the major churches of Cali. We know who they are and we will keep them out." People I talked to said that, when they put land or houses up for sale, they vetted the people who wanted to buy them. They could tell whether a lawyer was acting on behalf of a narcotics trafficker. They wouldn't sell to that person. This was in the mid-1980s.

Medellin had basically gone over to the narcotics traffickers. Ambassador Tom Boyatt had closed our Consulates in Medellin and Cali. One of the arguments was that it was no longer safe to have U.S. Consulates in Medellin or Cali because the drug traffickers were so strong there. During the three years that I was in Colombia, I made two trips to Medellin but did not spend the night there. It wasn't considered safe. In Medellin there was a large amount of construction of houses and buildings. Cars were being bought and sold all over the place. Television sets were easily available in the stores. There was very little doubt that this was drug money at work. The

citizens of Medellin and of the Department of Antioquia around the city were benefiting substantially from the narcotics traffic. They were making lots of money.

This gets back to this idea that people in Colombia were beginning to benefit from the narcotics traffic. Even then, although we talked about this nightmare scenario I mentioned previously, we didn't really think that it was likely to spread and take over the country, because the level of violence was so bad. We thought that, somehow, people would wake up to this situation and resist a narcotics takeover.

Ambassador Lewis Tambs was my immediate predecessor, to whom I previously referred. He had really focused on the narcotics issue. He was a political appointee of the Reagan administration. I think that he came out of the University of New Mexico and had a long history as a petroleum engineer in Venezuela, next door to Colombia. He spoke Spanish well and was a very interesting man. He had some of the characteristics of an oil field roustabout but also had a very refined approach which went along with that. During the 1983-1984 time frame he had really focused attention on the narcotics issue. He went full bore at narcotics trafficking in the press, in public, and with the Colombian Government. He never missed a chance of shaking his finger at the Colombians for not doing enough. He was perceived to be pretty much a single issue Ambassador. Interestingly enough, as recently as 1996, *El Tiempo*, one of the most prestigious newspapers in Bogota, had a columnist who was a member of the family that runs the paper. He said in one of his columns, "We should have listened to Lou Tambs back in the 1980s, because what he predicted has basically happened." He said, in effect, "Look, narcotics are going to get you. It may be getting us in the U.S. now, but they are going to get you in the future." And he said, "It's already on the way to doing it."

So, in any event, Ambassador Tambs had pushed very, very hard on these issues and on THE issue of narcotics. Then, during this 1983-1984 time period - and even earlier - the Medellin cartel had shown a viciously, violent streak. First, in terms of their internal discipline. I guess that if you messed up, you were dead. If people on the outside seemed to be interfering with the cartel's business, whether they were police, law enforcement officials, or just about anybody else, the easiest way to take care of them was literally to get rid of them by killing them. So there was a tremendous surge of violence from the people who were running the Medellin cartel.

President Belisario Betancourt was elected in 1982. By this time the United States was very concerned about the whole cocaine business. We had identified people who were running the cocaine game, both the key players and some of the second tier people, one of whom was a man named Carlos Lehder. In any event, back in 1983, I guess, we sought the extradition of several Colombians to the United States. Extradition has always been an extremely touchy point in Latin America, along with nationalism, sovereignty, and all of those subjects, although we have a number of extradition treaties with countries in Latin America.

Q: Extradition is not a problem, particularly if you're getting somebody from your country who is fleeing justice in another country.

GILLESPIE: That's right. When this involves a national of the country whose extradition you are seeking, then it becomes difficult. The treaties which outline the extradition of nationals of one country or another often put limits on it. That is, you can't extradite for what are perceived to be political crimes. The crime has to be a crime in both countries. There are a lot of technical, legal points in these treaties which are terribly important.

In any event, after a lot of agonizing over it, President Betancourt overcame whatever resistance there was to the extradition of Colombian nationals and agreed to extradite several Colombian citizens. He said, "Yes," in a number of cases. These people were extradited to the U.S., where we put them on trial.

That triggered a very strong reaction from the Medellin cartel. There were bombings, killings, and pressures on the Colombian justice system of all kinds. That included the murder or assassination of the Minister of Justice. This murder seemed to ignite Colombian public opinion and stiffened everybody's spine. Everybody seemed to be very tough about this issue. However, the bombings continued into 1984. In my comments on the security situation I mentioned that in 1984 there had been a bomb exploded near our Embassy in Bogota. There were threats to the American School. In effect, Ambassador Tambs had to leave Colombia, and that's why I ended up going to Colombia in 1985.

In any event, there were reports that the Medellin cartel was in touch with this *Coordinadora*. In fact, we had one report that the Medellin cartel had met with representatives of the major guerrilla groups and had said, "We want your help in dealing with some of the threats to our enterprise." That is, the narcotics traffic. Specifically, the narcotics traffickers were interested in three issues. There was the head of the Department of Administrative Security, the DAS, which I mentioned before and which was like the FBI in Colombia. This was a domestic, federal intelligence and counterintelligence body composed of plain clothes police. The other people in whom the Medellin cartel was interested were the head of the DEA group in the Embassy and the American Ambassador. In other words, me. The cartel representatives said, "We want to get rid of them. We want to threaten them" and things like that.

One report quoted the cartel representatives as saying, "What would it take and how much money would be required to go after these people? Would you all go after these people, or would one or two of you do it?" I was never quite clear on the gory details, but we knew that there had been discussions of that kind. The first word that we had was that nobody in the various groups was very much interested in that. We knew already, and later had it confirmed, that some of these guerrilla groups were interested in each one of these targets - each for its own reasons. If they were interested in these targets, they were planning to kill the American Ambassador and

members of his family, the head of DEA, and the head of the Department of Administrative Security. These three people were always a target, I think. This had nothing to do with the people holding these jobs. It sort of went with the job description.

Later, as time went on, we began to see what seemed to be a closer linkage between some of these guerrilla groups and narcotics traffickers. The FARC was the largest and best organized guerrilla group. Our own estimates, which were derived from figures obtained from the Colombians, primarily through the CIA and our Defense Intelligence Agency people, the military attaches, and other sources, suggested that the FARC had a core strength of 5,000 to 8,000 guerrillas. That was a big guerrilla organization. It covered most of the country, although it was concentrated primarily in the central part of Colombia. The leadership was the same as it had been in the early 1960s, when the FARC was formed. This organization had linkages to Cuba and Fidel Castro, to Libya, and to other parts of the world. It had always maintained a high degree of national independence. They had not become part of the international revolutionary movement.

We had this fellow I mentioned before, Jim Michael, a lawyer who had become the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the ARA Bureau. He had really worked on what became the administration of justice program in AID (Agency for International Development). This was an effort to get our Justice Department, the United Nations in Costa Rica, the Canadians, and the different bar groups to come together and cooperate. We would say, "Democracy is a value for all of us. It cannot really function if you don't have a way to settle grievances. You need a system of justice to settle grievances. It has to work to be effective. So how do you get it to work?"

Jim Michael had come up with a programmatic approach for this kind of problem. We wanted to help to initiate that approach in Colombia. My predecessor, Ambassador Tambs, didn't want AID in Colombia at all, because AID supported, as I think I mentioned, the Tropical Research Center where, in the view of Ambassador Tambs, the commie Sandinistas were allowed to be part of the group, because Nicaragua under the Sandinistas was still a member of the UN. So he didn't want to have any AID office in Colombia. I brought AID back in. We mentioned Peter McPherson, the AID Director.

So that's how we dealt with the narcoguerrilla question. We sought to get support when we needed it. This term was a good way to encapsulate things, it was a good, sound bite for the press, if we needed that. However, it also had an increasing amount of reality to it. What was happening was that there was terrorism - out and out bombings and assassinations. These things were happening in Colombia. They were frightening. They were directed, in part, at the U.S. However, they were being increasingly directed at Colombian institutions and other Colombians.

The M-19 movement was engaging in what we now call terrorism. The Libyans were supporting some of this activity. Fidel Castro, in Cuba, was not at all quiet, even in the late 1980s. He was

still involved in the Central American situation. The U.S. Ambassador to Colombia was still being identified in internal guerrilla documents as imperialist, anti-democratic, counterrevolutionary, and all of those terms of abuse.

DAVID L. HOBBS

Consular Officer

Colombia (1986-1989)

Political Counselor

Columbia (1989-1990)

Deputy Chief of Mission

Bogota (1990-1992)

David L. Hobbs was born in Iowa in 1940. After serving in the US Army from 1960-1963 he received his bachelor's degree from University of California at Berkeley. His career included positions in Germany, Brazil, England, Japan, Colombia, and an ambassadorship to Guyana. Ambassador Hobbs was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 1997.

Q: What was the situation in Colombia when you went down, politically?

HOBBS: The post has a reputation of being a very, very dangerous post and I suppose it was in a way. The drug war had been going on for a while and we were trying to work with the Colombian government to put a little crimp in the narcotic traffic out of that country. First marijuana and later on cocaine became a major export item from that country. The famous Medellin and Cali cartels, criminal elements, were going full blast. A few months before I got there a bomb had gone off in front of the embassy and a woman who was waiting outside to get a visa was killed. There was a tremendous amount of tension. We had hundreds of jeeps, bodyguards, machine guns, etc. The place was an armed camp.

The president of Colombia, Barco at the time, did some very helpful and I suppose you would say brave things. He, for a while, opened up the window for extradition, although it was stopped after a few months by a parliamentary bill. We had a chance to extradite

narcotic offenders to the United States. I got pretty much involved in that. We extradited quite a number. One of the first was Carlos Lader, who was the famous leader of the drug business of Colombia. He was prosecuted and is still serving time.

Q: David, what about the other side of citizenship and welfare work, like with missionaries. You had a guerilla war going on and you had Americans out there. Was this a problem for you at the time?

HOBBS: Yes, it was. Colombia has a lot of kidnappings, over 15,000 in one year. A few of those are Americans. You are right, the people who get caught are usually those Americans who are out in the interior, the oil business or missionaries. I think we had around 15 Americans kidnapped during my time in Colombia. They were difficult cases because they would hold them a long time.

It was usually guerilla, not narcotic kidnappings. When the guerilla movement of Colombia lost their financial support they used to get from Cuba, they needed to find an alternative source of income and turned to bank robberies, kidnappings and criminal activities like that. They became basically bands of criminals more than they were ideologues trying to change the world. I think they forgot they were supposed to be some kind of crusaders for a new world order. So, we had a number of Americans kidnapped.

I remember one case where two young men 21 years old disappeared. Their parents said they were on a voyage by small boats all through Colombia and down through South America. The idea was to travel through South America from river to river. They got kidnapped and held for months. We heard nothing and assumed they were dead. About the tenth month into the kidnapping a letter came to the embassy one day addressed to Bogota. The letter was supposedly written by these two young men with a note attached to it from the guerillas, said they were fine, doing well and moving around with the guerillas. The note from the guerillas said we should put an ad in the newspaper using a specific series of words and then we would hear further. So, we did. A few weeks later we got a contact. But, then we couldn't get any actual contact.

I then got in contact with a bishop who was said to be a leftist bishop and somebody who probably had contact with the guerillas. He said he thought he could be helpful. In the meantime the family had hired one of those companies that takes care of these sort of things, does the negotiating and such in kidnapping cases. A few weeks later the bishop arranged for a delivery of the boys. They showed up at a house where we had arranged to meet with them. We talked with them for a long time.

I talked to the bishop later and he described how the actual turnover took place. He took his jeep, along with a card table, table cloth and a bottle of wine, and drove to a clearing in the

jungle. He made a little noise to make sure they knew he was there and after a while he heard some rustling in the bushes and somebody sticks his head out and comes over and talks to him to make sure he is the right guy. Then the boys walk out of the bushes. Somebody else brings a chicken, which they kill, cook and eat with the wine. The bishop drives off with the boys and the guerillas take off with his card table and table cloth. It was kind of an interesting story.

Q: Presumably somebody paid money.

HOBBS: Well, the funny thing is in this case they didn't. The company that had been hired to deal with this said initially the guerillas had been convinced that they were CIA agents, these two young men. They thought they had some real prizes there and were going to make a lot of money off of them. But, eventually the bishop convinced them they were just kids on a lark. I was told later by the man from the company that they didn't pay anything. It was the only case he ever had where they didn't pay anything.

Q: Could you talk a bit about these companies?

HOBBS: There are a number of them and more are being formed all the time as the kidnapping and terrorism business expands around the world. Often they are people who have former intelligence or law enforcement background.

Q: These are Americans?

HOBBS: Well, Americans, and there are some British companies that I am aware of, too.

Q: But these are not Colombian groups?

HOBBS: No. American groups that we were dealing with there. Usually the relatives of the Americans kidnapped would contact these companies, or they contact the relatives to let them know they deal in this world and have contacts. The US government is not allowed to negotiate for the release of prisoners by offering money. We might negotiate in the sense that we will discuss with them what they want, but we don't give in to their demands. It is a good policy because it is pretty well known now that you don't talk with the American government and get political concessions or money, or whatever you want when you kidnap an American. But, these companies do negotiate ransoms.

My policy was that I really didn't want to know what was going on. I knew what they were up to but didn't want them to tell me because I didn't want to be involved in any way. I would be concerned about the welfare of those kidnapped, try to make contact to find out how they were doing, insist that they let them go, but never really wanted to know what they were offering. But, you generally did know, and the price went up quite a bit. It used to be about \$200,000 and during my time it went over a million. The Japanese had an executive kidnapped and he was out very quickly. I know they paid the million. I went to see the

Japanese ambassador once and was nice to him but let him know that we were disappointed that they had paid so much so quickly because now his citizens were the best prize in town. It also raised the price for foreigners in general. I told him we had this policy of never paying, etc. But, the Japanese usually paid.

Q: Were we taking active steps to keep Americans out of the country?

HOBBS: We tried. We put out a travel warning against coming to Colombia. The Colombians didn't like that very much because they felt it would ruin tourism, which was partly true. But, my experience in these countries where we put out travel warnings, I think what ruins travel to these countries is not the warning so much as just the reputation the country has in general. I don't think our warnings have that much effect.

The way Americans find out about travel warnings is through airline reservation systems which pick up on that. The travel agencies want to know because they feel there is a liability that they might suffer if they send clients to countries which the State Department has warned people not to go to and their client hasn't been informed. So, we give our warnings to the travel agency associations who would disseminate it in various ways. Newspapers pick up on warnings and you see notices printed in travel sections. But, of course, we can't stop anybody from traveling to those places, we just tell them they shouldn't. Tourism was almost nonexistent in Colombia.

Q: When there was a kidnapping of an American, what would be the role of the embassy and the consular section?

HOBBS: We had a pretty good drill down because we were so used to it. It started with Tony Gillespie and continued with all the other ambassadors during my time. I was there with three ambassadors. We had a kidnap committee, which included the DCM, the consul general, who always dealt with the families; the legal attaché, because they had good contacts with the police in Colombia; the military attaché because they had contacts with the military; and the intelligence person, who picked up stuff here and there. We met all the time and discussed what we knew and any new information that came up.

Q: How did you deal with the families?

HOBBS: If the families were in the United States they dealt mostly with the State Department. We would then deal with the families through the emergency center in the State Department. If the family was in the country, then we had direct contact with them. It was a difficult situation because if you are picking up some intelligence you can't tell them how you got something or everything we knew. You could say we have received some indication that we think is credible that your relative is alive and well in good health, or maybe not in

good health. I remember one person who had terrible foot problems. The guerillas moved around constantly so there was a lot of walking. So, it goes on and on and often a family gets antsy for more specific information and we just don't have it. We tell them it takes a long time and a long time doesn't necessarily mean bad. In Colombia we had things going on for months before we got contacts. At that time we could say that there was never anybody killed by their captives. There were two cases where one died of a heart attack while captive, and another died of a heart attack while being released. Since then, there have been people killed in captivity.

Q: What about American businesses in Colombia, did they sort of take care of their own?

HOBBS: They had quite an elaborate security network because there was a big threat. Occidental Petroleum was blown up once. Coca Cola was constantly getting threats. Occasionally they would lose a bottling plant or something. Things that were symbols of America or companies that were known to be American companies were often picked on by the guerillas to further their image of protecting the country from exploitation by capitalists. So, they had very, very rigorous security requirements for their employees.

One time the guerillas kidnapped a man who they thought was a Filipino and actually he was an American. We guarded that information very carefully because we didn't want them to know they had an American, which would have made the man a bigger prize. He got out without them ever knowing he was an American.

But, once in a while the security net doesn't work and they get somebody caught. We never wanted the Colombian government to rescue them. They weren't well trained and lost a couple people. The daughter of one of the presidents was kidnapped once and in the rescue attempt they killed her. That is not a very good outcome.

There was one lucky person, a friend of Estrada, who was the son of a president, who was mayor of Bogota at the time he was kidnapped. There was an operation of some kind going on and inadvertently they rescued him. He sort of walked away from the situation while shooting was going on.

We tried to keep the Colombians relaxed and not to rush things. Don't try to rescue anybody, try to talk them out.

Q: Did you find Colombia a violent society with a lot of guns and problems?

HOBBS: Yes and no. There are a lot of guns and far too much violence. I was in a hotel for the first three months I was in Colombia waiting for an apartment. After moving into an apartment I went back to the hotel for a meal. I left around 9:30 at night and two cars almost collided at the intersection. It was a small hotel in a very nice residential area in the northern part of Bogota. There wasn't a lot of traffic there then. Both drivers jumped out of their cars and

start screaming at each other—a man in his forties and a woman probably in her thirties. They were face to face when suddenly the woman reached in her purse, pulled out a gun and shot the guy. I was only about 15 yards away. I stood there like a dummy and watched. She waived the pistol in the air and looked around, then shot the man in the stomach again. He sinks to the ground and I finally get enough sense to sink behind a car. An elderly private guard appears and walks over to her and takes the gun from her hand. Then there was yelling and screaming and she walked over to the guy on the ground and spit on him. It was probably over an hour before the police finally came. When they did come there were about 15 motorcycles pulling up. Then a Volkswagen police car pulled up and they threw the man into the back seat and headed off to the hospital. I thought he might be dead for awhile, but he did move when they picked him up.

I never knew what happened to him because that same night there had been a shoot out in an Italian restaurant where a man, who, the papers pointed out over and over, was a veteran of the United States army and fought in Vietnam, although a Colombian citizen, had freaked out and gone to this restaurant and shot and killed 20 some people. He just cleaned out the restaurant. It was amazing because just everybody in the restaurant was armed but nobody had the nerve to take on this guy. It was incredible.

I saw another guy killed on a street. It was common, really. And, yet, I found that sometimes Colombians would go a long way to avoid confrontation and violence. If you get in a traffic jam and are able to catch a person's eye and look him straight in the eye, you win, they will give. You can almost always get them to back off if you get eye contact.

Q: What about as a consular officer dealing with the judiciary and policy force?

HOBBS: The prisons were lousy but we could usually get the few prisoners we had into better conditions than anyone else in the country had. They would treat them okay. So, we got good cooperation from the jails. To help with our anti-fraud efforts, there was a lot of visa fraud in Colombia, we had a Colombian policeman and a representative from the Colombian FBI equivalent organization, working out of the embassy. They assisted us in fraud investigations. You always wondered how much they made on the side doing this. I made sure we had new people every year to prevent them from getting too entrenched.

When we had a fraud to which a person would confess, the police would say they were going to take them away and arrest them. However, I knew what happened. They took them down the street about three blocks, out of sight of the embassy and then they would come to some sort of agreement. There was never any prosecution that we could point to. They were cooperative, but on the other hand their system took over and they would take the pay offs. But, at least it hassled the fraud people a bit and the perpetrator didn't get the visa and had to pay off the cops.

With the military we had not too much to do on the consular side other than the kidnappings. The military attaché when I first got there felt it was imperative that every military person in the country get a visa, so he had an incredible number of referrals. I spent a good bit of time making sure these referrals were legitimate and referring to people they actually knew.

Basically the cooperation with the Colombian authorities was very good. I enjoyed the Colombian people, liked their culture and atmosphere.

Q: What about the cities, Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla? Were we able to do much coverage in those places?

HOBBS: Medellin was a place that was put off limits before I got there and never put back on limits during the time I was there because Escobar and his gang were running that place. I did get their twice myself. McNamara went down there once and occasionally the DEA went there. We had some ways of getting their occasionally but very little normal contact. It was always very highly structured.

Cali was more normal. We could get down there until the end of my time when it was put off limits as well. This was a shame as it is a wonderful city. You could go in there and make your contacts and do business. We started getting word that the narcos were watching very carefully our movements, they knew when we were there, where we stayed, who we contacted, etc. We got a little nervous about having people go to a place where they were so well observed. Again there was the question of whether they would actually do something. I kind of doubt it. But, having our people in a city controlled by the narcos, we couldn't trust the police for protection, we put that city off limits too.

Barranquilla was never put off limits but it was a city that was full of narcotic traffic, basically the jumping off point, transporting headquarters of the mafia. We kept the consulate open long enough until we wanted to close it for State Department reasons as a concession to DEA because they wanted to have a group of agents working out of that consulate. I never understood why they had to have a consulate as a cover because it was a very thin cover. There were only a couple consular people there and lots of DEA agents and again the way they moved about and the atmosphere in which they worked it was pretty obvious to everybody who they were. So, I don't think the cover was very good anyway.

J. PHILLIP MCLEAN

Deputy Chief of Mission

1987-1990

Mr. McLean was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and was educated at Seattle University and the University of Indiana. He entered the Foreign Service in 1962. A Latin American specialist, his service in the State Department in Washington and abroad, primarily concerned Latin American Affairs. His foreign posts were Brasilia, Edinburgh, Panama City, La Paz, Milan and Bogota, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In Washington Mr. McLean held positions dealing with Latin American Affairs, including that of Deputy Assistant Secretary for South America. Mr. McLean was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: Well, then in 1987 you moved to...?

McLEAN: In 1987 I become the DCM in Colombia.

Q: Did you go there with some trepidation because of the danger and the situation?

McLEAN: No, I was really excited about it. In fact, let me mention one thing that I did that caused me to receive some favorable attention, and that was early on when I was still Deputy Director of the Office of Andean Affairs and Lou Tambs was having his problems and the threats were coming on very hard, we knew that there was going to be some discussion of this thing, and on a Sunday the Executive Director of the Bureau said something I was always grateful to him for, he said, "You know, Phil, nobody has got to the assistant secretary a note that would allow him to answer these questions at the staff meeting on Monday morning, and shouldn't you get something for you?" So on a Sunday I went into the Department, Sunday evening, and wrote a four-page memo that really laid out everything with regard to what were the threats and what were our options and then a recommendation of what we should do. And I turned the machine off with the plan that I would come in on Monday morning, print it out, and hand it to him before he went to the meeting. I was just learning to type and just learning to run computers, and I turned the machine off in the wrong way and wiped out the message. So I started again at twelve o'clock that night. This time I wrote a two-page memo. Well, of course, a two-page memo is far better than a four-page memo, and since I had written it before, it was very compact, and it became the basis for the planning that we did on security for Colombia. The Assistant Secretary was wildly happy, because he could present it, and he gave a copy of it directly to the Secretary and sat down with the Secretary and told him what he was going to do. For all my implied criticism of George Shultz, he certainly was very concerned about security and wanted nobody to die in this process. So when I went to Colombia, I felt very prepared. I had just separated from my spouse, and so I was very excited to go off on a new challenge and get myself totally involved in something that was different, and security was a constant of theme of my activities from then on.

Q: You were in Bogota from 1987 to...?

McLEAN: From 1987 to 1990.

Q: Why don't we talk about the security problem first? How did you live, and how did it work out?

McLEAN: As I say, the security problem had already been building up in previous years. By the time I got there, the DCM himself was already much more highly protected than most ambassadors were. It's something that bothered me as a newly single person a little bit, but after a while I got used to it, and it was part of our life. I had bodyguards with me at all times. My apartment had bodyguards. We trained continuously so I would make sure I knew how to use the guns that I had at the apartment, and we trained also on the road and how we would handle ourselves. I had an armored car. When I first got there, my armored car was painted yellow, and I said, "That's very strange. Why is it painted yellow? That would draw a lot of attention." They said, "Oh, we repainted it. It used to be painted red." I had it painted sort of cream color. We were very interested in everyone in the embassy's security and very sensitive to the fact that it wasn't good for the ambassador and myself to be seen protecting ourselves but everyone else was...

Q: Who was the ambassador?

McLEAN: When I got there, it was Tony Gillespie, Charles A. Gillespie, who himself was a very security-conscious individual.

Q: Within the President's staff, entourage or ministry, were there people who were trying to find a way?

McLEAN: There were people, and luckily they were. Barco himself was known to be very pro-American. In fact, that wasn't quite accurate. He was also supposed to speak good English, and that also was not accurate. He was married to a woman who had American citizenship when they were married, and he'd lived in the States for a good time, but his English was not really good. I think he basically wanted to be friendly to the United States. As I say, his closest intellectual aide was a man very close to the American embassy, and the Secretary General of the Presidency was a former head of Ford Motor's subsidiary there and a very pragmatic, practical man, and he and I developed a close relationship when I discovered I could go and see him late at night and sometimes Barco would stop in and we would talk. In fact, I understand later Barco thought pretty well of me, but not in his early days. But the problem was the public as a whole was quite convinced, and many are still convinced, that this narcotics was a U.S. problem, not a Colombian problem, and that any political leader had to battle that particular problem. Then they also were terribly threatened individually by all of these things, there's no question.

Q: It's easy for us to talk.

McLEAN: Sure. The crisis that I just described took place against a number of things that were also happening. Their attorney general, who was an independent position, had been one of those opposing extradition. I got to know him at a couple conferences and discovered that maybe his argument wasn't absolutely solid, and then he and I began to talk. Finally he had me to come to his office one day for a long session, and as we exited I discovered he had not only informed the world of this, he brought the press in, because he was trying to show the press that in fact he was having contact with us. This was just before Christmas that year 1987. What happened then was that within weeks he was going home to his hometown of Medellin and he was kidnapped and eventually assassinated. Again, you feel like you're very much in the middle of things. Here you'd been part of this man's effort to change his position, and he gets killed. At the same time, the candidate for the mayor of the city of Bogota, Andrés Pastrana, now the president of the country, at that time was kidnapped, again by an effort to threaten the political system. In that period I tried to bring in American resources from outside to be helpful in the kidnapping. In that at one point people came in and were able to identify where the attorney general was being held, and I went to the government and did that. The government sent out forces, but they were not able to locate the Attorney General, who was killed that day, but in the process they found the Mayor and released him and he was freed. So this period, late 1987, early 1988, January of 1988, was a period of enormous pressure and confrontation and death, and the country was totally on the edge, and the United States was in a very hostile position towards Colombia because of the perception that Colombia was not taking the drug problem seriously.

Q: When did the confrontation between the United States and Noriega in Panama take place?

McLEAN: That took place the next year. Some of that problem did spill into Colombia, because it was perceived that drug traffickers had been working with Noriega in that time and they tried to get Colombian figures, personalities, to testify in the trial. In fact, I can remember the night that we were supposed to have this Special Operations man from the Joint Chiefs was supposed to come down. I had known that a young Marine had been killed in Panama, and then in the middle of the night I got a call saying that the Special Ops guy would not be coming the next morning, and I thought to myself, oops, I think I know why. The young man who had been killed in Panama was an American, but his family lived in Colombia, so we had been involved in informing the family of the death. I could see that the United States wasn't going to stand for this.

Q: If I recall, during the period there was all that stuff in the newspapers and all about the Colombians in Miami and elsewhere, that these were particularly violent people and they were prone not to take our law too seriously and to sort of walk into wherever they had to and kill people in drug battles. It was all said, "These are the Colombians, and these are violent people." It was sort of like madmen with guns. Did you back off there?

McLEAN: Well, this, as I say, was going on at this particular time. Of course, I don't want to say too much about the Colombian violence. Now I'm married to a Colombian, so I wouldn't want to exaggerate that. Colombians are, in fact, enormously elegant and very polite people, but there is

a level of violence that goes back into the last century, and there are people that come out of it that are just almost unbelievably violent. One of them was a man by the name of Rodriguez Gacha, and he was one of the three cartels. There was a Cali cartel, a Medellin cartel, and a Bogota cartel. He was related to the Bogota cartel, and he just keeps killing people in just massive numbers. You'd have big slaughters that would take place. Ten and 20 people being wiped out at parties and different events was part of his game. We helped track him down, and in fact we paid a reward to the man that provided the information to allow the police to follow him. It is not true that we were involved directly in his capture, although they did use helicopters, the police used helicopters that we provided, and we did provide information from an informant and through our reward systems paid that person. It is very likely that that person also was working for the Cali cartel, but again this is part of the confused and difficult area. And this man, Pablo Escobar, was enormously violent, such that he would kill his friends if they were threatening him or not doing the right thing. There was one case that is an example, that shows the confusion of how things were in those days. After the Palace of Justice incident, one of our pieces of analysis was that the incident had happened because the police and military didn't have an intervention force a la the United States swat teams, and therefore we trained a joint task force of theirs that was attached to the army but was made up of different units of the government. We were also very close to a man named Massa, who was the head of the police, the secret police, the FBI of the country. I had also been trying to keep control of what we were doing. Sometimes, with Massa for instance, various agencies were working with him, and one agency might intimate that he was tainted and dealing with the wrong people and he wasn't quite on our side, and he would get word of this, and back and forth. Sometimes the ambassador and I would have to play peacemakers. Massa himself is a pretty violent guy. He himself sent out swat teams at various points. Perhaps, and I believe that it's true, in one instance he went in and tried to blow up Pablo Escobar's apartment, and in another instance he probably went in and shot up Pablo Escobar's office, killing many people. If we had perfect knowledge about these things, it would be one thing, but at the time you had a feeling that this was going on. In the incidents that I'm talking about, it took place in an apartment house, and that makes me nervous because it was right across from my apartment. My apartment was just up the street from the ambassador's, so the people who had done this chose to do it right among where we lived. They had an apartment, and they were representatives of the emerald dealers, who were another criminal force in the country. They obviously had contact with Massa and they were working with Massa. It is my belief--this again is a belief that I cannot be sure of--that they also had contact with the U.S. Marshal Service and with the plain clothes part of the Florida police, or so Massa has indicated to me, that they in effect were trying to develop some sort of team that would work against Gacha and Pablo Escobar. This is significant in the sense I had kept the head of operations for the Marshal Service out of the country on two occasions. On one occasion he actually threatened me with obstruction of justice because I was keeping them out because they were trying to mount a team to kidnap some of these major drug traffickers. The man, of course, is now the head of the New York City Police, but that's a different story. But you felt very much on the line. Then we had this incident

in an apartment where the swat team that we had been helping goes in and attacks the team that had relations with Massa and probably with the Florida State and Marshal Service, and it shows somewhat the chaotic and almost irrational situation we were in. All the people in this apartment were killed except one, and he managed to hide himself behind the shower curtain and was not found and therefore was able to tell the story. After the police and others showed up on the thing, the man shouted out the window and was then taken into custody, and we brought him into the United States to keep him out of harm's way. Again, it's how difficult it is to find out what's going on. One of our DS agents very bravely went into the building very shortly after the shootout and brought me back the truth. I must say, I believed in the beginning that in fact it was a legitimate operation, but the more that I have known through time of this thing, I recognized that it was bad guys shooting bad guys, and the U.S. role, thank God, was never made more clear than it is. But it again is a question of, when you do things, they don't always turn out quite as you want them to be.

I may mention just a couple other small things. As a part of this thing, we were beginning to have concerns about human rights. I know that I was given a medal on my last days in Colombia by the police in a very dignified ceremony, but as I stepped to the side with the ambassador and the three generals of the police, we unleashed a lecture to them about human rights and about how this whole thing was going to collapse unless they got their human rights effort together. Obviously there was a whole part of this in the time about their peace program which we began to show the Colombians and they began to understand and accept that narcotics was part of this phenomenon of strengthening the guerrillas. We also began a program of trying to deny visas to people who we had reason to believe were in some ways associated with the narcotics traffickers.

Q: I would have thought that, Colombia being so oriented towards Miami and all this, putting the families of the Escobars and other cartel people--I mean the kids couldn't go to school. If we just keep them out of the United States, it would be far more effective than, say, if you would do it to the French or something like that.

McLEAN: And it's surprising that that really wasn't done. One, there had been on the books for several years a law which said that visas could be refused if you had reason to believe that someone was abetting. It was a very low standard that you could use, and in fact we weren't using it. We were the first ones, in Bogota, to do this. I will say that we tried to do it very carefully. We tried to lay down... David Hobbs was the consul general when we first did it, and we made sure that we had both sides of the law covered, that we had reason to believe and that we had indication that there had been an exchange made between something the person did and the narcotics traffickers. It was very hard to go the next step, which you mentioned, and it disturbed me at the time, that many of these narcotics traffickers had their children in school in the United States, in one case in Harvard. And yet it was very difficult. We had two consular officers in Barranquilla, and the people in Barranquilla, because they just would know the

community so well, were able to put together files that did just what you're suggesting. They began to refuse visas to family members as well as to known traffickers, and they were able to do it by way of showing that the flow of money was in fact benefiting these people for their education or their shopping trips or whatever it was, but it took very careful work. The young lady that did this, that led this program, vice consul, she was threatened. They began to identify that she was in fact the problem. I tried to get similar programs going out of the consulate in Bogota, but it was much more difficult because people didn't have the knowledge of the community in the same way that they did in Barranquilla, where you had local people indicating to the consul general information that was helping them make these justifications. My own sense is that probably the visa system went on beyond us, that the things that we began then they began to do much more after we were there.

Q: It's not going to change real things, but it serves... It hurts, because what do you make this money for unless you're passing it on to your kids and all that, and you're stigmatized. This is a real stigma, I'm sure, in Colombian society if you can't go to Miami.

McLEAN: These techniques that we used--and again, I truly say that this is something that we did, and I would give credit to the consul general, but I think we all, the two ambassadors and myself, had a lot to do with taking these steps, using all parts of the embassy including the consular section to do the job. One of the things we had there, by the way, on the consular side was kidnappings. They probably had more kidnappings than any other country in the world at that time, and again I got the consul general in a position so he became the coordinator to get an inter-agency approach to play a positive role in getting the release of people. When I first got there I discovered that there was somewhat of a passive attitude towards this, that the United States, the U.S. government, shouldn't get involved, didn't want us involved, because if we were involved, there'd be difficulty about paying the ransoms, which were important. But I still thought there were things we could do, and in some few cases I think we did have a...

Q: Who was kidnapping whom, and what was the motive?

McLEAN: The motivation was money in most cases, all the cases that I can think of right now, but they often were the guerrillas. In fact, the thing that set me off was I discovered we had two young men kidnapped in the far Amazon region by the guerrillas, and in the end I discovered that a private agency went and freed them without paying ransom, but it did so by getting into the area and making local contacts. That just said to me we in fact could have a more positive effect, and I think in some cases we did, by then getting to church people, getting to private organizations, seeing if you couldn't find some way to get at freeing these people and doing so in a way that you didn't endanger lives, but doing so.

JAMES F. MACK

Director, Office of Andean Affairs

Washington, DC 1989-1991

Ambassador James F. Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin America, where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Where to?

MACK: Well I went back to Washington. And I became the Director of the Office of Andean Affairs.

Q: Andean Affairs consisted of what?

MACK: Of five Andean countries. Which were Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. There were five. Chile was handled by South Cone Affairs.

Q: You did that from '89 until?

MACK: Until '91. The Office of Andean Affairs was a very busy place. Remember Colombia was not in the best of shape. The drug cartels were very strong. Shortly after I arrived, the Liberal candidate for president, Gaitan, was assassinated at the behest of Pablo Escobar, one of the notorious Medellin drug cartel king-pins. Colombia was in very, very bad. The Government of President Virgilio Barco was really shaken by the drug cartels which were enormously powerful to the point where they were electing people to Congress. In fact at one point, a quarter or a third of the Colombian Congress were ineligible for US visas because their links in some way to narcotics trafficking or money laundering. Their power went up to the Supreme Court. It was a pretty serious situation.

As a result of the Gaitan assassination, President Bush (the father) and his National Security Council decided we needed to take a hard look at Colombia and come up with a proposal to provide a massive amount of assistance for Colombia. This was almost 10 years before "Plan Colombia". This was a reaction to the assassination of Gaitan and the power of the drug cartels.

Over one weekend we in the Office in Andean Affairs were asked to come up with a proposal to spend several hundred million dollars in support of Colombia. And in addition, we were asked to come up with something that would grab their attention to show that the U.S. really supported the government of Colombia and the other Andean countries in their war against drugs.

At this point I can't recall who actually came up with the idea for all of this, but the Bush Administration agreed that they would propose an Andean drug summit involving President Bush, Jaime Paz Zamora of Bolivia, Alan Garcia of Peru and Virgilio Barco from Colombia. It was to take place in February, 1990. I had come on board in the fall of '89 and my office had been given the lead in preparing for a summit. That's what we did for my first four months on the job. Anybody who has been involved with this kind of thing knows that Heads of States don't just show up. A huge amount of prior planning and inter-agency coordination is involved.

It also involved advanced negotiations with the other countries involved in the summit. It involved the negotiation in advance of six different Agreements of Cooperation with each of the four countries. And that occupied my first four months as Director of Andean Affairs.

And actually we had finished negotiating these agreements in Cartagena itself the evening before the summit. So we had very little time to put them in final form for signature by the respective Foreign Ministers and Secretary of State. Unfortunately, when we tried to enter the changes and print them out, we realized that the computer disc on which we had brought the draft agreements was not compatible with the computers we had available at the hotel. As a result, a heroic US Embassy secretary, I think the wife of a MILGRP officer, stayed up all night retyping them into the computer. This was a huge job. She didn't finish until after the official caravan taking the staffers had left the hotel for the summit site, which was the Colombian president's equivalent of a summer white house. This was a highly secure location at the tip of a peninsula. You first had to go through a naval base just to get to the outside walls of the presidential villa. I am telling you with the presence of 4 presidents including George Bush, and with worries about missile threats from Pablo Escobar, security was tight!!

Anyway, I missed the caravan by a half hour. By the time I got from the hotel through the Naval Base, the gate through the wall to the presidential retreat was closed tight, with the guards under strict orders not to allow nobody to pass.

I had the six agreements that were supposed to be signed the three foreign ministers and secretary of state James Baker. What to do. I was able to make telephonic contact with a colleague on the other side who came to his side of the wall. So I threw my brief case containing the agreements over the wall to him. Eventually I did get in. The agreements were signed. It was kind of funny how it took place. Because security was very, very tight.

Q: So how did the Summit turn out?.

MACK: Well it actual came off quite well. The Summit launched substantially increased U.S. support for the Andean countries. It was quite a show. US Chinook helicopters from the US Naval ships off the horizon, a huge protective detail for Bush.

Q: Well, when you were charged with this, doing something about this, what were you looking at?

MACK: Well we were looking at the protection of Colombian judges. That was one thing. Judges were being assassinated by the dozens by the cartel. They were afraid to hear cases involving drug trafficking and to render verdicts. So one of the first things we focused on was physical protection for the judges. Armored cars, secured court buildings, secure communications. The Colombians also borrowed a concept of “faceless judges” from Italy by the way from Sicily to protect their judges. The judges heard cases behind a screen so their faces could not be seen by the defendants. That was a major area that we looked into. There were other kinds of systems as well.

CHARLOTTE ROE

Deputy Political Counselor

Bogotá, Colombia (1991-1992)

Ms. Roe was born and raised in New York State and educated at the University of Colorado, the Sorbonne and Ohio State University. During and after her university training she was involved in political and labor activities. In 1983 she joined the Foreign Service. In the course of her career with the State Department, Ms. Roe served in La Paz, Santiago, Tel Aviv, Budapest and Bogotá, primarily in the political and labor fields. In Washington, she served on the US Mission to the OAS and in the International Organizations and Environmental and Scientific Affairs Bureaus. Ms. Roe was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Then you went to Colombia. You were there from when to when?

ROE: I was there from July 1990 to August 1992.

Q: Who was our ambassador in Colombia at the time?

ROE: Ted McNamara. He was succeeded by Morris Busby. The DCM was David Hodges. Janet Crist was the political counselor. Phil French and I served as deputy counselors. Matt Kaplan and Phil Goldberg were junior political officers.

Q: What was the situation in Colombia when you got there in 1990?

ROE: The climate was a bit spooky. Embassy staff left for work in an armored vehicle with an armed follow car in a shifting schedule that would range from five to eight in the morning. The guards got out at every stop and flaunted their machine guns. Ironically, if we went home late, we were on our own. So more often than not I took public transportation home. Go figure! Colombia had its share of upheavals. Luis Carlos Galán, a beloved reformer and the leading

candidate for President, had just been assassinated on the campaign trail. He was a Robert Kennedy type figure. Cesar Gaviria, Galán's campaign manager, was elected President the summer I arrived. Pablo Escobar had not yet been taken prisoner—

Q: The drug lord.

ROE: Himself. The drug cartels of Medellin and Cali had tremendous power. The guerilla movements – the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) and the ELN (Ejercito de Liberación Nacional) – controlled significant parts of the countryside. The M-19 (Movimiento 19 de Abril) and the EPL (Ejercito Popular de Liberación) responded to the peace overture of the previous government to lay down their arms and become part of the political process. They were a both small movements. The M-19 achieved dark fame with its bloody seizure of the Palace of Justice in 1985. They moderated their actions after 1987 and eventually became seriously engaged in the political process. I'd been exposed to little positive about Colombia before moving there, but the country grew on me. Colombians, like Chileans, are highly educated. Their intelligentsia has strong ties with Western Europe, particularly Spain. The government's common cause with the U.S. in battling the drug lords created new connections.

President Gaviria's boldest initiative was a participatory movement to rewrite Colombia's constitution for the first time in 105 years. This was a risky venture with major implications for U.S. extradition policy as well as for Colombia's chances for political stability and a whole subset of social equity issues. The U.S. was worried the drug lords would seize control of the process.

Elections to the Constituent Assembly took place in the fall of 1990. The delegates were everyone from poets to housewives to people to new political party activists, ex-guerrillas, magistrates, peasants, journalists, trade unionists, indigenous tribal leaders -- a potpourri of Colombian society. The process was wide open. Alvaro Uribe, then an independent Liberal Party Senator who chaired the Labor and Social Welfare committee, was in the thick of things. Uribe, who later was twice elected President of Colombia, was relatively unknown to Washington. But he was a strategic player and astute observer of the Constituent Assembly and became my closest contact. Fernando Carillo, who later became Colombia's youngest justice minister, was another key delegate. Others included young reformers like liberal Senator Fernando Botero and Eduardo Verano de la Rosa and ex-guerrillas like Angelino Garzón of the M-19 (later a Labor Minister under Uribe). I worked closely with Ana Maria Salazar, a gifted Mexican-American attorney and AID contractor who steered the Agency's justice reform project. Following this stint, she became Deputy Assistance Secretary in the Defense Department, and is now teaching in Mexico. During the AC we compared notes on a daily basis.

Once elected, the *Constituyentes* (delegates) got right to work. January '91 began eight months of intense negotiations. The new constitution prohibited discrimination against women workers, child labor, indigenous peoples and other minorities. It incorporated the ratified ILO conventions

and recognized the right to strike for non-essential public employees. A fairly comprehensive labor code reform passed in 1990 increased the fines for interference with trade union activity --

Q: How open were the delegates to this convention to you?

ROE: Many were glad to talk. We were up front about U.S. concerns. We weren't trying to twist arms. We kept our distance when sensitive issues were on the table. But we could follow what was happening. Colombians love to debate. They will open up to someone who grasps something of their history and appreciates the risks they confront. A lot of people who don't understand Colombia wonder why they don't—

Q: Stand up to the drug lords?

ROE: Well, they do. After the most egregious assassinations, Colombians turned out in huge demonstrations demanding peace. They were saying "stop the violence." Many would take risks we couldn't imagine. A prosecutor, judge, journalist, mayor or independent political figure realized that any point he or she could be kidnapped or knocked off, and that happened with grim frequency. They saw colleagues gunned down doing their work, some right in the halls of the university. Business people pooled their resources for rescue funds because they were kidnapped so frequently.

Q: Was our policy towards Colombia completely dominated by the drug problem?

ROE: The drug issue was not the only focus, just the elephant in the room. The criminality fueled by the drug trade is like an occupying power. It undermines the rule of law and fragile democratic structures. It replaces local harvests with cash crops that cause addiction and death. It threatens the extinction of Indian tribes. Indigenous leaders that resist the drug gangs that cut down their forest are killed. In other areas the narcos corrupt members of the tribe by giving the young men motorcycles and guns. This totally undermines the authority of the elders. Rural villagers get caught in the crossfire between the guerrillas and the paramilitary thugs, two forces that finance themselves with drug money. Many drug processing places operate a form of slave labor. They recruit young people telling them they'll earn big money and will be free to go home on weekends. When they try to contact their families, their overseers kill them and dump their bodies in the river. Many who operate the homemade cocaine processing labs die in explosions caused by the chemical reactions.

Human rights issues constituted the other major U.S. government focus involving close, day to day scrutiny by our Congress and by international NGOs. AID and the Justice Department were cooperating in a long term effort to strengthen the antiquated judiciary and promote reforms. The 1991 constitution created a series of new judicial institutions – a Constitutional Court, an independent judiciary, specialized public order courts, and a government watchdog office, the

“fiscal general.” Gustavo de Greiff, the highly respected jurist who became the first fiscal general (attorney general), said the reforms must work because “impunity keeps us from living a civilized life.” During 1992 I monitored the implementation of these reforms by the newly elected Congress and Constitutional Court.

Q: Well, something affecting both human rights and labor – I saw a film some time ago about the cut flower business. Cut flowers are beautiful, but they have a lot of chemicals. Young women go out and work in those areas with all those chemicals around. Is that a problem? Did you get involved in these worker health issues?

ROE: Not during that assignment. These issues emerged more recently, with Ecuador as a major focus for those concerned about conditions in the cut flower industry. Edmundo Esquinazi, the former Colombian ambassador to Israel, was one of those involved in the flower business. He had a strong social conscience. Hector knew Esquinazi well from the time they worked together in Israel. He visited the farm and reported that there were around 40 adult men and women working the flower plantations; they used protective gear and kept pesticide applications to a minimum.

Colombia has its share of child labor. Children work in street vending, family farming, rural mining operations. Quite a few are involved in coca picking and flower production. The ILO (International Labor Organization) estimates about six percent of Colombian children aged 10 to 14 are in the labor force. Colombia has worked with the ILO on projects to prevent child labor, especially in small-scale mining. It was the first government in the region to acknowledge the scope of this problem.

Q: And the violence in the labor sector -

ROE: Starting in the late 1980's, Colombia experienced a renewed wave of violence directed against trade unionists and other political targets. A decade later, hundreds of worker representatives were being assassinated or disappeared. The victims were campesino leaders, teachers, banana workers, factory advocates. Hundreds of peasants also lost their lives, just for being caught between warring sides. Trade unionists were often targeted by paramilitary forces that were linked to rogue army and police elements. Others were killed by drug and guerrilla mafias that don't tolerate anyone getting in their way. For example in 1991, FARC militia executed leaders of the palm workers union following mock trials accusing them of helping the peace process. In the mid-'90's, the AFL-CIO began sponsoring a small program through the George Meany Studies Center to get high-risk trade union leaders out of Colombia for a year at a time.

Q: How did you find social life there?

ROE: We had good friends in Bogota. The Embassy was a fairly convivial place to work. The violence was a low background noise that made you more alert to your surroundings but didn't isolate you. We had an interesting experience when Hector's sons Alvaro and Gabriel were

visiting from Chile one summer. A Colombian friend, Daniel Quintero, was studying for his Masters while helping his father run a cattle ranch several hours south of Bogota near Villeta. The ranch was located in an area of sporadic guerilla activity. Daniel invited us to visit the farm and a cane-extracting plant between Bogota and Villeta. I checked with our security people, who considered the area safe at that time. It was quite a long trip. We stayed overnight near the cane sugar plant at a hostería with a garden chock full of monkeys and parrots and lush vegetation. Alvaro and Gabriel had a blast with the pool all to themselves, and our dogs Golda and Navarro splashing around with them.

The next morning we left early. At 8:30 we were snaking around a mountain road headed for the farm. Suddenly we came across five burned out buses. We learned that guerillas from the FARC had come down from the hills, taken all the passengers out, robbed them, sent them on their way and then set fire to the buses. The buses were still smoldering. They were purportedly guarded by Colombian policemen holding Uzis and makeshift weapons. Some were barefoot; others had what looked like homemade boots, ragtag uniforms or T-shirts and jeans. Hector said quietly, "They look like guerrillas." We never found out for sure. When we returned on the same mountain pass the next day, the armed "guards" were still there. They stopped us from taking a video. We photographed the still-smoldering buses on the way back. We'd been saved by the clock. An hour earlier that first morning and we'd have been in a heap of trouble.

WARD BARMON

Deputy Director, Narcotics Affairs Section

Bogota (1992-1994)

Ward Barmon was born in Huntington, Long Island in 1943. He graduated with a double major in American and Chinese history from Yale University and then studied at the University of Madrid for a year before coming into the Foreign Service in 1967. In 1992 he served as Director of the Narcotics Affairs section in Bogota, Colombia. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to Belize, Taiwan, Thailand, El Salvador, and Honduras. Mr. Barmon was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: You were in Colombia from when to when?

BARMON: 1992 to 1994.

Q: Then we return to Colombia, 1992. What was the job and situation at that time?

BARMON: As for the job, again being a tandem couple, we had to look for a place we could both go together. The possibility of going to Colombia in the Political Section came up for my wife. The position was Labor attaché, but also covered the Liberal Party, the party in power, as well as the Congress. Then, I was able to get a job as the deputy director of the Narcotics Affairs section. This sounded like an interesting thing to do in Colombia.

Q: What was the situation in 1992 when you got there? Politically and drug wise?

BARMON: Well, President Gaviria had been in power for a couple of years. He had a good reputation and was fighting the drug war vigorously, or at least gave the impression of doing so. I think he did within certain constraints. The situation in Colombia, particularly in Medellin and Cali, was a bit dicey because there was a great deal of violence, more than normal. Colombia had always had, in the last 40 years, a high level of violence per capita, just as El Salvador has had a very high level of violence per capita. That was intensified and augmented by the drug-related violence, particularly by Pablo Escobar. He was taking out his frustrations against the government by sending randomly detonated bombs into Bogota, and having them set off around the city. He was trying to intimidate the Colombian government. He did not succeed in doing this. It made life interesting in Bogota, because you never knew when or where the next bomb would go off. This was compounded by the fact that there was a very serious energy shortage. For our first year in Bogota, our electricity was rationed. We would only have electricity for a few hours in the morning, and a few hours at night. It was a strange experience being driven home in the dark with the streetlights being out. Some people had generators, but basically, the city was blacked out at 6 or 7 o'clock at night. It was an eerie feeling.

Q: Who was the ambassador and how was the drug side of things?

BARMON: The ambassador was Morris Busby. He was totally focused on the drug problem. That is why he was sent there. Unfortunately, but perhaps understandably, he paid very little attention to the rest of our bilateral relationship, such as cultural, economic, etc. But I think it was forced upon him. He spent 98 percent of his time fighting the drug war, leading our efforts, and working with the Colombians. I think he did a good job.

Q: The way I understand it, in Colombia, the big people, Escobar, and others were making so much money off of the American market. They could buy almost anything they wanted and if they wanted. If they did not want to buy it, they could kill. They probably had more sophisticated arms than the Colombian Army. Colombia was in jeopardy in those days, and maybe still today of losing to this corruption.

BARMON: That is right. The other factor was the guerrillas who began to feed off of the drug war as well. They expanded into cultivation to a certain extent, protecting fields and labs out in the countryside. So, they began to feed off of these huge profits. You had a terrible combination

of guerrillas and druggies, and the right wing militias. The politicians, police, military, and other people were either bought off or intimidated, or both. That combination was very difficult to fight. You did have some honest, legitimate, and honorable people in the government who either would not be intimidated, or would not be bought off. Many of them were killed or had to leave the country. I am convinced there were some who were not corrupt or intimidated. Some of the people in the embassy, particularly the head of the DEA felt that everyone in the government was corrupt. I think that was a vast exaggeration. Although there certainly were corrupt politicians and people in the Armed Forces and Police who had been corrupted, I think we were fortunate in the Anti-Narcotics Police that good people were selected. If anybody was found to have been corrupted or intimidated, or gotten to in any way by the guerrillas, they were immediately cashiered or returned to the regular police. They were prosecuted if there was any evidence. I think the Anti-Narcotics Police was basically pretty clean and excellent to deal with. They were very committed people.

Q: Did you get a feel for Colombian society having these drug lords and these guerrillas. I mean, sounds like a society that is not typical of almost anywhere.

BARMON: Many Colombians were somehow able to grow a bit inured to the problem if it did not effect them directly. For example, if they did not have close friends, or relatives killed or kidnapped. I think the people in the cities were able to isolate themselves a bit more than the ones in the countryside. In Medellin, and also Cali, there was a lot of violence, bombs, police being killed, gang murders. Innocent people were caught in cross fires or injured and killed by the bombings. Somehow the Colombians had developed this hard shell. If it did not affect them personally, they were seemingly able to ignore it and carry on. The problem was, while I was there, more and more people were being affected, either by the violence, by their children taking drugs, or by this campaign of intimidation of Escobar. I think it turned the Colombian people against the drug lords, many of whom were quite popular in their hometowns. Escobar did a great deal to help the poor people of Medellin. He financed housing, health services, and education. He even owned a soccer team. So, he was revered in Medellin by the poor. However, most Colombians were relieved when he was finally hunted down and killed. Certainly, the bombings stopped in Bogota.

Q: What were the guerrillas after?

BARMON: There was a debate going on in the embassy whether the guerrillas were still ideological or not. The guerrillas had been around 20 or 30 years by then. The embassy felt that they no longer were fighting an ideological war of liberation. They were more interested in money and/or power. They seemed to be less and less distinguishable from the druggies. Washington at that point had not acknowledged that we need to fight the guerrillas as well as the druggies. Washington believed the two were distinct and separable. Perhaps they were earlier, but as they became less and less distinguishable, you had to fight both. Now, we are doing that. When we were there, there were a lot of constraints to giving aid to the military in particular, if

that aid was going to be used fighting the guerrillas because of allegations of corruption as well as human rights abuses. Some of both existed. If U.S. assistance was going to be used to fight the druggies, fine. But how do you make that distinction? I am sure a lot of our assistance was used for both purposes, as we felt it should be in the embassy. We had to justify our assistance to the Executive Branch, and it to the Congress that the money was not being used to fight the guerrillas. This was rather silly.

Q: How was life at the embassy during this time?

BARMON: We all felt beleaguered to a certain extent. There was tight security. We were provided with armored vehicles. The embassy was pretty much a garrison. There were a lot of security measures and rumors of possible assassination attempts against the Ambassador Busby and other officers. There were also threats of possible bombings against the embassy. Nothing came of that, perhaps, because we were so alert and worked well with the Colombian security people. It was a pretty beleaguered life. A lot of people were extremely nervous about living there. Before going outside of the city we always had to check with the security office to see where we could drive or fly on the weekends, and what the latest rumor was about bombs. My wife and I were less nervous than most because we had spent two years in El Salvador, which I think was a lot worse. Most people were very nervous there during their tour, especially when Escobar was setting off these random bombings around Bogota in 1992 and 1993. One large bomb exploded in front of a restaurant only several blocks from our apartment building. An embassy couple had been in that same restaurant a half hour earlier.

Q: Could the embassy send officers to Medellin or to Cali?

BARMON: No. They were off limits for most of my tour. After Pablo was killed, it eased up a little. But, no, you did not do normal business in Medellin and Cali. We had closed our consulates there years ago. We had no Peace Corps, they had left the country. So, the only people that went to Medellin were undercover DEA agents, or occasionally the ambassador or some other drug related trip would sneak in with the Colombian military or police, and sneak out. They would covertly inspect some anti-drug operation. No, it was not life as usual.

Q: Were you hit at all by people saying, "who are you to do this? We are just supplying, you're the demand?"

BARMON: Yes, and that was a legitimate argument. One of the ways we tried to turn it around was say "look at your own problem." You have a growing problem with consumption and a problem with all the violence resulting from the trafficking. Yes, we were a lot of the problem because we were the demand. There was also a growing demand in Europe for drugs and it was an uphill battle. I think the Colombians finally recognized it as their own problem as well. For a long time, they preferred to say, "It is not our problem; it is yours."

COSTA RICA

THOMAS J. DODD

Ambassador

Costa Rica (1997-2001)

Ambassador Dodd was born in 1931. He served in the US Army, Military Intelligence Detachment with the 49th Armored Division. He received his B.S. from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. His M.A. and Ph.D. are from George Washington University. He was a professor at Georgetown University and a lecturer at several institutions, including the Foreign Service Institute, the Defense Intelligence College, the National Defense University, and the Instituto Tecnológico de los Estudios Superiores in Guadalajara, Mexico. He served as ambassador to Uruguay and Costa Rica. Ambassador Dodd was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: I've never served in Latin America but I've heard many people say, particularly dealing with Mexico but some of the other places, that the foreign affairs side usually is sort of the reserved playground of the left within the political spectrum in a country, particularly Mexico and all, because in a way it doesn't make that much difference to the powers that be, so they can kind of beat up on the Yankees there.

DODD: I think that it's true to some extent. Foreign affairs and foreign affairs ministries in the last few years, during my tenure, since 1992 and '93, have become more professionalized. In Costa Rica an effort has been made to create a cadre of career professionals. Many new Foreign Service officers going into the ministries, foreign ministries - in Uruguay and Costa Rica - had studied in the United States, so they had a more measured and, I think, a better understanding of what we're about up here. So the era of simply bashing the Yankee to gain some political stature doesn't really hold anymore, at least certainly in the two countries I was accredited to.

Q: It's a natural extension, but had you had any experience, either as an expert of consultant or anything like that, in the foreign affairs field other than being a teacher prior to your appointment as ambassador?

DODD: It did. Back in the '70s, Stu, I worked on a contract basis with the Policy and Coordinating staff in the Department of State reviewing, reading and sometimes writing papers dealing with Latin America.

Q: Is there anything we haven't covered?

DODD: I mentioned the environmental issues because I wanted to get that up-front for you, because not to talk about 25 percent of my work there would be a gross omission on my part. But I would say really the area of foreign policy that was of great interest to us was the issue of human rights. Costa Rica was always the mediator, the arbiter of international disputes. With no armed forces it's posed some problems, as I mentioned, in the ship rider agreement. But the biggest challenge really for me and the embassy was to help Costa Rica redefine the word 'security' and to help Costa Rica modernize its security forces. Sixty percent of the police consisted of political appointees. You have to professionalize this institution with better pay and training. We were trying to work with them in modernizing their state structure. I'm not saying we're pushing them to overturn policies dealing with the role of the state in the society but trying to help bring them up to the 21st century on security issues, redefining security issues. It's not the Soviet Union anymore; it's drug consumption and it's street crime. These are the things that are of concern to them and to us. Domestic issues in Costa Rica and the U.S., like so much in the Western Hemisphere, are converging. We all have the same problems.

Q: Then you left, as ambassadors do, after four years.

DODD: Yes.

Q: A good four years?

DODD: They were truly, I think, the best years of my life. As I mentioned several weeks ago in my interview with you, when one of my students said, "Why doesn't he put his money where his mouth is?" I felt that I had done something that I was somewhat hesitant to do eight years ago, but I found that I could do it. I worked with some wonderful career people, and we got some things done. I put teaching Latin American history to the test!

Q: Great. Well, I think we'll stop at this point.

CUBA

JOHN J. (JAY) TAYLOR

Chief - US Interests Section

Havana (1987-1990)

John J. Taylor was born in Arkansas and attended Vanderbilt University before joining the US Marine Corps and eventually the Foreign Service. Overseas Taylor served in Ghana, Taiwan, Malaysia, China, South Africa and Cuba. He also served in INR, the NSC, as the deputy assistant secretary for intelligence coordination and as the chief of mission in Cuba. Taylor was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: What were you told before your departure about the Cuban-American community in Miami because that is a powerful lobby in the U.S.?

TAYLOR: The Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) headed by Jorge Mas Canosa dominated the Miami Cuban community. Like many exile cultures, CANF was of course interested in bringing down the hated regime, but it was even more concerned about its position as the major political force in the exile community and in the U.S. CANF opposed any activity that undercut its goal of weakening and eventually overthrowing the Castro regime. A belief in the imminent collapse of the hated regime was a key tenet in the group's outlook. Thus it had opposed the setting up of the two "interest sections," and continued to argue against bilateral agreements between the two governments. As happens in such political environments, the leadership of the exile group fell to the more militant elements - i.e. those who made the most inflammatory comments about the need to oust the hated regime.

Q: You went at the end of the Reagan administration. Were you told to be concerned about domestic U.S. politics because particularly the Republicans seem to pay considerable homage to the Cuban-American community in Miami?

TAYLOR: I didn't get any specific instructions about this matter. The Cuban community and the Foundation were of course in very good standing with people in the Administration - particularly Elliot Abrams. A prominent Cuban-American named Sorzano, who had been a member of the Foundation and close to Mas, was the NSC staffer for Latin America. This was a pretty clear signal as to the priorities of the Administration regarding Latin America. I asked whether I should stop in Miami to pay a call on Mas but was told that would not be necessary. I said I

would stop and have lunch with him during a later trip, which I did. I called at the Foundation's office in Washington before I left.

Q: How did you see Cuba in 1987?

TAYLOR: As I mentioned, the key bilateral issue of the moment was resumption of the Mariel agreement. We wanted: 1) to avoid another chaotic inflow of undocumented Cubans arriving by boat in Florida; 2) to resume the program returning convicted felons to Cuba; and 3) to restart the refugee program for Cuban political prisoners. On external matters, Cuba was a key actor on two important U.S. interests, Central America and Angola. On the former, I thought we should explore how if at all Cuba might change its policies in a way that would encourage the Sandinistas to go along with the Esquipulas peace process and hold internationally monitored elections. More intriguing because it seemed more possible was getting Cuban troops out of Angola. There were of course other matters of concern regarding Cuba. It was: a vital cog in the Soviet Bloc throughout the world; a serious violator of human rights; and a major player in the Third World or the illogically-named Non-Aligned Movement. Finally, we had a strong interest in promoting human rights in Cuba and providing the Cuban people access to objective information about what was happening in the world and in Cuba. Eliminating the jamming of Radio Marti was thus an important objective.

I took my job to be one of trying to figure out how we could best deal with the Cuban government so as to achieve these objectives in whole or part. This meant first of all trying to analyze the dynamics and interests that lay behind Castro's position on these various issues. I thought it was an elementary principle that we would treat the regime as a serious government if we hoped to achieve serious results. This meant that their side would have to see benefit in any important changes they made. Whenever the Cubans professed a willingness to cooperate, I thought, we should test them but be prepared for failure.

Critical to achieving some success, I believed, was having the flexibility to hold out to Castro the prospect that significant advances on key issues could open the door to an improvement of bilateral relations. As mentioned, I had asked for and received the maximum encouragement about future relations that Elliot Abrams was willing to offer - "only after renewal of the migration agreement could there be any discussions about broader issues." I thought this was a fairly good position. The implication of the statement was that discussion of issues like Angola and even improved bilateral relations were possible if Cuba cooperated on certain matters. In fact, the only condition mentioned in the approved statement was resumption of the migration accord. The implication it seemed to me was that once this condition was met, the bilateral atmosphere would clear and then we could address the more difficult "broader differences" including Angola, Central America, and ultimately bilateral relations.

The Cubans and we approached all of these questions in the context of the important changes taking place in world politics. By 1987, Gorbachev had been in power a couple of years.

Perestroika and Glasnost were actually being implemented, and contrary to the neocon view were real, far-reaching reforms. Freedom of speech was making astounding gains in the Soviet Union. A powerful process of change seemed underway. At the same time, relations between the U.S. and the USSR appeared to be on a brand new course. It was possible that Soviets could soon decide to withdraw from Afghanistan. In October 1986 at Reykjavik, Iceland, Reagan and Gorbachev - to the dismay of some of their respective staffs (i.e., Richard Pearle) - had almost agreed to eliminate ALL nuclear weapons! Gorbachev and Raisa were now expected in New York in December. They would receive a stirring embrace by the American people enthralled by the prospect of not just peace with the mighty Soviet Union but actual friendship.

Castro was very astute - perhaps the most astute and clever of all the communist dictators. He understood the dynamics of what was happening in world affairs. The changing circumstances, I thought, could possibly give him a new perspective and new interests and priorities regarding Central America, Angola, relations with the U.S., and possibly even human rights. If the Soviet Union and the United States were to continue down the path of détente, Castro would be isolated and in a difficult situation regarding Angola and Central America. After all, he probably could not keep his army more than a few weeks in Angola without Soviet support. Apparently influenced by people like Carlos Aldana, the Politburo's chief ideologist, Castro, I believed, had decided he must try to get on board the détente boat. In other words, Castro most likely did not want to destroy the existing ties with the United States, as the Cuban desk in ARA and Elliot Abrams thought, but rather he felt compelled by a changing world to seek his own improvement of relations with the United States. I said all this in a series of cables to ARA, mostly OI, exdis, or nodis. This would have been in September, October, and November 1987.

Re-establishment of the Mariel agreement would be the key first step. Soon after I arrived in Havana, I met with the Cubans who would be my counterparts in the Foreign Ministry and in the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. These were: Vice Minister Ricardo Alarcon and German Blanco, head of the United States Desk at the Ministry; and at the Central Committee, Jose Arbesu and his assistant named Alcibaidés. The Cubans, in answer to my inquiries, said that the Cuban Government was willing to discuss restoration of the Mariel agreement and that its resumption was basically in their interests. On Radio Marti they said that if the US would concede that Cuba had the right to broadcast on medium wave into the United States, it was possible that the jamming of Radio Marti would end. They wanted to know how agreement on these issues would affect the bilateral relationship and broader questions such as Angola. I emphasized that discussions about "improved relations" and broader issues could come after such an agreement. I also made a point of calling on the Latin Ambassadors as well as all the NATO envoys in Havana and stressed the same point to them. They all said they would urge the Cubans to resume the Mariel Accord and lift the jamming of Radio Marti.

I reported to Washington that Cuban officials, including Alarcon, seemed interested in finding a solution to current bilateral problems, but had sought a linkage between Cuba's right to broadcast in the US as the US did into Cuba. Alarcon had also stressed that the Cubans wanted to

discuss Angola, noting that in Luanda the US side was trying to persuade the Angolans not to include the Cubans in the on-going negotiations. In addition, the Cubans wanted to raise the issue of the Cuban plane being held in Florida. I suggested to ARA that we could find a face-saving way to accommodate the Cubans on their “broadcast rights” without surrendering anything, that we could hear them out on Angola, and that perhaps we should consider returning the plane. I got back a sharp and negative response. The desk warned that we would be falling into a “Cuban trap” if we agreed to talk about radio rights (other than the subject of Havana stopping its jamming of Radio Marti) and other issues (Angola). In the mind of ARA, Castro was simply looking for an opportunity to play a trick and provoke us.

In reply, I said I did not think Castro was setting “a trap” and that we could easily deal with the issue of radio rights by simply saying that Cuba could broadcast into the United States as long as it met all international standards and regulations. This was giving away nothing at all. Castro, I thought, probably wanted a fig leave to abandon the jamming of Radio Marti. On Angola, I said Castro’s objectives might not be to disrupt the talks. I suggested that the Cuban ruler was aware that fundamental improvement in relations with the United States depended upon changes relating to both Nicaragua and Angola, as well as to the migration accord, and if we played our hand skillfully with Castro we might promote our objectives in these two areas. We should proceed cautiously, I said, but the possibility could provide a strategic framework for our relations with Castro and how we dealt with the issues in the upcoming meeting.

Prior to my arrival in Havana, Castro had told Nelson Rockefeller’s daughter that Cuba would be interested in participating in the negotiations that were on going between South Africa and Angola brokered by the United States. Rockefeller’s daughter took the message back to George Shultz who relayed it to Elliot Abrams. The African Bureau was never informed. In early October, I sent in a long cable assessing the key issue of Angola. In my report, I suggested that Castro had important incentives to try to settle the Angolan crisis. Pressures existed as well. For one, the Soviets were not interested in having one of their client states interfere with their rapprochement with the U.S. Gorbachev wanted to solve the Angolan issue for financial as well as political reasons. Castro was dependent on Soviet support to retain his forces there. The Cuban people were also becoming unhappy with the long deployment of Cuban men and women to that far away country. The troops had been there for more than ten years and they suffered a low level but steady rate of casualties.

I concluded that Castro probably did want or more likely needed an honorable way out of Angola. If so, this position could also be seen as part of his apparent recognition of the changing dynamics of world affairs and his now increased need to improve relations with the United States. Every senior diplomat in Havana, I reported, as well as the Catholic Bishop and other clergy in Cuba agreed with this assessment. I said that of course Castro might use the talks simply to further the existing fissures among the various parties in Angola. But it was very unlikely the Cubans would withdraw their troops or be told to withdraw by the MPLA until Havana was a

participant in the negotiations. I thought that we should test Castro and see what happened. I sent this message NODIS for Elliot Abrams, but not “Eyes Only.”

Q: What about the human rights situation?

TAYLOR: Human rights, of course, were a major concern. Castro knew full well that his record in this area was a real obstacle to any possibility of a true relaxation of relations with the United States. Thus, he began to initiate small but important changes. For one thing, following entreaties by such visitors as Cardinal O’Conner, he began to release the political prisoners who had been held since the early days of the new regime. These old timers were called, *plantados historicos*. More important for the situation inside Cuba, he began to allow some dissident voices to be heard. Before 1987, Cuban dissidents were either in Miami or in a Cuban jail – this was a situation very much akin to the fate of Russian dissidents under Stalin. But in 1987, the situation became similar to that in the post-Stalin era in the USSR when Refuseniks were in and out of jail but sometimes back in their homes speaking against the regime with any one who came to visit.

A few Cuban political prisoners were released from prison and if they chose not to go to the United States were allowed to live at home and even create little informal bands of dissidents. While they could not publish or print written material nor hold meetings, they collected adherents one by one, word of mouth. In addition, for diplomats, foreign journalists, and eventually visiting foreign dignitaries, they became the principal source of comment on human rights in Cuba. Their treatment varied. Sometimes they were given unusual leeway and then sometimes for little reason they would be put back in jail. Some of these dissidents were probably government provocateurs, at least one proved to be so, a lady named Tania Diaz. But most of these refuseniks literally were dedicating their lives to peacefully challenging the regime.

Dissidents who elect to stay behind rather than flee are often not trusted and in fact resented by activist exiles who live abroad in comfort and freedom and who profess to speak for the people of their oppressed homeland. This is often true even if the stay-behinds have spent time in jail. The Miami community and under Abrams even ARA tended to be suspicious of the first such dissidents of this sort in Cuba. This was because, their existence suggested Castro was willing to tolerate some level of dissent and that Cuba might not be completely a Stalinist-type regime. The exiles and the old ARA did not want to believe that Castro could make even a tactical relaxation of his draconian controls. No doubt, a few were government plants. Others, the Government tried to paint as collaborators, thus distorting their credibility. In the 1990s, Havana claimed that Elizardo Sanchez, the most prominent dissident when I was there, had cooperated with the Ministry of the Interior (MININT). Elizardo denied this, saying that like others, he had, when pressed, simply talked with MININT agents. If Elizardo was and is a “double,” it was a costly counter-intelligence ploy. For years he denounced in scathing terms the abuses of the regime, including alleged of torture. Some exiles were also suspicious of the Catholic clergy in Cuba

because they continued their mission on the island, thus allowing Castro to argue that freedom of religion existed on the island.

At USINT, I organized a system for maintaining contact with the former prisoners and human rights activists who remained behind in Cuba. Our goal was to provide them moral support but not to posture for the sake of posturing. We did not want to put the dissidents in any more danger than they were. Castro, in an apparent further effort to improve the climate with the U.S., began to give the refuseniks a bit more leeway in what they could do or say without necessarily ending up back in jail. I asked our chief consular officer, Bill Brencik, to serve as USINT's human rights officer charged with following and reporting on the informal movement that was slowly growing.

Our PAO was also very much involved in making these contacts. The PAO and the chief consular officer would visit refuseniks like Elizardo Sanchez. I myself avoided inviting them to the residence or going to their homes. I thought that would be pushing the envelope to no good purpose, possibly putting the dissidents in more danger than they were already, and lending credence to Castro's charges that they were stooges of the USA. We encouraged other embassies also to keep in contact with the dissidents. The Cuban government noticed our activities. German Blanco and on another occasion the Foreign Minister called me in to warn against these activities. I explained that the persons in question were free citizens of Cuba whose opposition to the government was stoutly non-violent and as far as we knew they had no organization, much less one that had been declared illegal. Thus our contact with them did not violate our diplomatic status.

In several cables, I examined what strategies we might adopt at the 1988 UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva. In previous years, the United States had lobbied for a resolution strongly condemning Cuba for its human rights record. I suggested that we try something else; namely a resolution that might earn the support of a large majority of the Commission. Such a resolution would call for an investigation of the human rights situation in Cuba by an UNHCR delegation. I also thought the charges we made should be those that could clearly be substantiated, of which kind many existed. But to gain credibility we should avoid charges that were particularly shocking but evidence of which was scanty. Ricardo Bofill, the political refugee referred to earlier, once in the United States, released statements charging murder and disappearances in Cuba of other activists. We suggested that rather than simply repeating these charges and seeking a resolution condemning Cuba, the US delegation should ask the UN Commission to investigate these and other allegations and report back the next year. ARA did not like our approach. But the Human Rights Bureau did and that became our strategy in Geneva. The Human Rights Commission did vote to initiate an investigation in Cuba and Castro, to everyone's surprise, agreed to cooperate.

In expectation of the UNHCR investigation, Castro made several positive moves. He permitted a UN Human Rights delegation to come to Cuba to investigate the situation there and to listen to the testimony of anyone they wished. Again to everyone's surprise, this commitment was carried

out. He also allowed the ICRC to visit all political prisoners in Cuba; he permitted our consular officers to interview potential political refugees in prison; and he began to relax some controls on the Catholic Church, allowing the assignment, for example, of foreign priests where needed. Sometime later, as Castro sought to arrange a visit by the Pope, he changed the constitution of the Cuban Communist Party removing its commitment to atheism and permitting believers to join. At that time at least, the Cuban Party was the only communist party that had taken such a step. Catholic priests could supposedly join the Party, but few if any believers rushed to sign up. Meanwhile, the strict ban on organized or public political activity, including publications and meetings continued. Cuba remained a card-carrying police state, but it was a quasi- rather than a full totalitarian regime. In my view, the limited progress was another aspect of Castro's reaction to the tectonic shift in world politics.

Q. Did the change from Reagan to Bush make a change in our Cuban policy?

TAYLOR: Yes, it made a big change. As I mentioned, the country director Bob Morley was a true professional, a problem solver, not an ideologue. The next year, Elliot Abrams departed to face criminal charges that he lied to Congress. Abrams was the figure in the Iran-Contra scandal who obtained a ten million dollar secret donation from the Sultan of Brunei for the Nicaraguan *Contras*. Typical in this Keystone Cops caper, Oliver North, provided the wrong secret bank account number in Switzerland, and the Sultan's ten million were lost never to be recovered. My businessman friend who knew North at Annapolis has other ideas where the money probably went. Like the current neocons, in the early and mid-1980s, this hard-line group sometime acted as the gang that couldn't shoot straight. Remember the cake and the Bible delivered to the Ayatollahs along with the missiles?

Before Abrams left the Department he gave me an unsatisfactory Evaluation Report - the annual assessment that is the principal element in an officer's promotion and future assignment. In what may have been a first in the foreign service, the then country director, Bob Morley, who of course worked for Abrams, sent to Personnel a two page memo praising my performance as the chief of mission at Havana. Morley had declined to perform the usual practice and draft Abrams report on my performance. Instead, he wrote his own. It was a courageous thing to do. Quite unprecedented. The letter was put in my file along with Abrams evaluation, but also with a memo from Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, Richard Schifter, commending my "outstanding work on human rights in Cuba under trying circumstances." Following is a brief quote from Schifter's letter:

"The constant flow of information and analysis which you provided and your highly skilled efforts to nurture and encourage the fledgling human rights movement in Cuba, while avoiding actions that would give the Castro regime a pretext for claiming

U.S. interference in domestic affairs, contributed immensely to the success of our efforts...”

Earlier, Secretary Shultz wrote a personal note commending me for my “contribution to our foreign policy... particularly in the area of human rights... in an especially challenging environment.” Little did the Secretary know how challenging it was. That note was also in my file. These letters all related to my period in Cuba when Abrams was my boss. After I departed post in 1990, the Promotion Board awarded me a “performance pay award” of several thousand dollars - probably the first such award given a chief of mission who had received a failing grade from his assistant secretary. Abrams was found guilty of perjury but pardoned by President George H.W. Bush. The second Bush put him in the National Security Council in charge of Middle Eastern Affairs, a position he held during all the misrepresentations, exaggerations, cooked intelligence, and gross mis-calculations leading up to the invasion of Iraq and the occupation. Surprisingly, his name has hardly been mentioned as among those responsible for the adventure that will probably prove to be the greatest debacle in American history.

DENNIS HAYS

Coordinator for Cuban Affairs

Washington, DC (1990-1993)

Ambassador 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 in 1975, 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: When I came in, which was probably in mid-June when I graduated from the War College, and I started the next day in Cuban Affairs in June 1993 so it was just as the Clinton administration was getting its people into place. With Cuban policy there were a lot of cross currents as there always are. There were a lot of people, I think, who assumed that when a Democratic administration came in after twelve years of a Republican administration there would be a change, a rather radical change, to a policy of engagement and normalization as there had been several steps during the Carter time. Something that happened on the campaign trail changed that equation a bit. The then chairman Jorge Mas of the organization that I now work for,

the Cuban-American National Foundation – whether it was reading the winds or what – had seen that Clinton was going to win, and so they had a meeting with Clinton at the Tampa Airport where they had a big bear hug, which was certainly publicized quite a lot around south Florida and his constituency. And he came away from that meeting with a Margaret Thatcher-esque "Here's a man we can do business with." Whether it had a bearing on the election or not, it had a clear bearing on Cuban policy. Because Clinton felt there was a political debt or obligation or maybe an opportunity would be a better way to put it to pair off the one Hispanic American group which was traditionally, and still predominantly, Republican as opposed to Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Guatemalans, what have you. So seeing that opportunity, he was a not of a mind – and I'm reading in here – to do anything that would unduly upset that constituency, especially in the absence of any other constituency getting a benefit which then might be to his political advantage. In other words, if you change Cuban policy, particularly in the early 1990's, you would have a million and a half people very angry at you, and you would have almost nobody or a few thousand leftist intellectuals who would be happy with you.

Q: Why don't you say a few words about the support or the relationship you had with the U.S. Interests' Section in Havana?

HAYS: It was pretty good. Joe Sullivan went down to Havana just about the time I came into the office. In fact, we did some of our introductory courtesy calls at the Pentagon and other places together. Joe, as you remember, was one of these guys who got caught up and couldn't get confirmed because he had various holds on him in the Senate at that point, and the Havana position was a chief of mission equivalent, although it didn't require a Senate confirmation. So he went there, and the other guy, Mike Kozak who was in the same boat for a while, went there after him.

Q: And Sullivan subsequently has been confirmed, maybe a couple of times.

HAYS: Yes, at least once and maybe twice, and Kozak also. The Interest Section at that point was beginning a complete renovation of the building which was the original embassy building. They had a fairly tough time. The Cubans were still pretty rough on them; the human rights officer was always being harassed, his car would be bumped into in traffic, and dogs would be killed, just nasty, petty stuff. Just letting people know that they, the Cuban security guys, are there. I went to Havana four times in two years. A couple of those were tied to the migration talks. The first time was the basic orientation visit for any new country director. The other thing that I think I did a little differently than some of my predecessors was to try to deal with the Miami community. I had gotten advice from one of my predecessors to never leave the transit lounge in the Miami Airport. You just don't want to do it. My sense was you couldn't really deal with the Cuban issue unless you dealt with both sides of the strait, or at least were aware of what was going on. I made an effort to go to Miami fairly frequently. I would accept invitations to

speak at the University of Miami seminar or a Miami Herald journalist workshop or stuff like that. I would look for ways to go down there and then go out and try to establish some form of contact with all the different Cuban-American groups, of which there are a lot in South Florida.

Q: We were talking about your assignment as Coordinator of Cuban Affairs in the early 1990's in the early Clinton administration, particularly the rafter crisis. You had described it in quite a bit of detail. Maybe we ought to turn to the resolution, particularly how the policy issues were dealt with at that time.

HAYS: As August 1994 went on, the number of rafters kept increasing more and more and more each day. It is important to note we, the U.S. government, had a plan to deal with the rafter crisis. Primarily it was a plan that was written in the wake of Mariel. If you remember what happened with Mariel, people from South Florida got in boats and they went to Cuba and picked people up and brought them back. There was a way to deal with this which was basically the Coast Guard would shut down the ports in South Florida which would then prevent people from getting to Cuba. The thought was that would minimize the outflow. We actually thought about people who would get on boats in Cuba, and as I remember the Agency had done a survey and had looked from one end of the coast to the other and there was a feeling that if every boat in Cuba was used, about 25,000 people could get out. This was working on the assumption that the boats would not be returned to Cuba. The people would get out, and they would either capture the boat or it would sink.

Q: Not much attention was given to the possibility of building new rafts?

HAYS: That's correct, and because the Coast Guard and Navy knew that people were drowning, they moved in closer right up to the twelve mile mark and therefore you didn't have to build a boat that would go 90 miles, you only needed to build a build a boat that could go twelve miles. So the numbers were increasing and pressure was building, building, building. South Florida had a system in place to process the level of people that were coming out so we were in a crisis but it was not an overwhelming crisis. Two side issues impacted on this; the first one was that there also was also an outflow of the boat people from Haiti at this time and there were the questions of distinction between Haiti and Cuba. The short answer to that, of course, was we had used military force to restore "democracy" to Haiti whereas that was not an option that anyone was considering with respect to Cuba. The second thing that was happening was there was a gubernatorial race with Lawton Chiles running for reelection again against Jeb Bush. These were factors.

When the various options were looked at, as to where we could put people, one of the problems was that there weren't any real good places. We could do third country placement up to a certain point. We looked around, including at Surinam, interestingly. That was an option, and they went so far as to put down concrete slabs to prepare for that. But it came back again and again, just

like it has with the current immigration, to the fact that in Guantanamo Base we have an area outside the U.S. jurisdiction and it's a military closed area with nowhere to go.

The decision to turn people back to Cuba or rather to send them to Guantanamo was never fully vetted in the interagency system. In fact, the decision was made, and I'm pretty confident about this, by Mort Halperin who was at the NSC at this point basically typing up a resolution and taking it to Tony Lake. The two of them then took it to the President, who I understand asked, "Is everyone OK with this?" He was told, yes, this will work. I can tell you for an absolute fact that no one else in the U.S. government knew this was going to happen. I was called by Senator Graham who was asking me because he had heard rumors, and of course, I said, "No, nothing like that is going on." I was in the room with Janet Reno who had no idea that this was going to happen, the Agency didn't know and certainly, the State Department didn't know. There was a fait accompli that basically went out from the White House that changed 40 years of U.S. policy. Then it was a question of scrambling to implement what the president had decided. Needless to say, there were a lot of loose ends. There were a lot of Cuban refugees who were in Miami in the final stages of processing; there were some who were just coming off the boats; some that were on boats who had not yet come ashore and there were some that were ten or twenty miles out. Where did each of these groups fit? And there were some executive decisions. The county administrator in Miami at one point just told the bus drivers to keep moving, and he got people out of the detention centers – probably about five hundred people – that otherwise would have been locked up in these containment facilities.

So as we were scrambling, of course, there was political fallout from that too. There was a delegation that came up the following night from Miami including Jorge Mas Canosa, members of the Miami City Council and some prominent Cuban democrats who met with the President. They basically provided their blessing in return for certain actions of tightening up on some travel remittances and some other areas. The sub-note on this is that the community in South Florida did have a slightly different view in 1994 than it did in 1980. Again, in 1980 it was people who themselves at risk to go back to Cuba to pick up immediate relatives: their mother, a grandmother, a brother, a cousin, the guy they went to school with, somebody. They had a purpose for going. In 1994 it was more random of people just coming out so there were not the same family ties there. So although the community very much was opposed to the idea of sending people to Guantanamo or, Heaven forbid, sending them back to Cuba, there wasn't the same sort of familial tie to this crisis as there had been to the earlier one.

Now we were sending people to Guantanamo and in return for this, of course, Castro was going to tighten up on the exits, but there was still a fair number of people coming out and Guantanamo was getting more and more full. I remember there were a lot of conversations about how many people could be in Guantanamo at any one time. The Turks and Caicos had about an 80% chance it was going to get hit by a hurricane, and so nobody wanted to put people in the Turks and Caicos even though they were prepared to talk to us. In Guantanamo the figure was always about 25,000 and that included the Haitians of which there were about 10,000 or 12,000 at that point

already there plus the Cubans. They said, “Oh, my God, we can’t take anymore, we can’t take anymore. There’s no room, there’s no space.” Finally, after the fifth or sixth meeting one guy asked, “What if we use the golf course?” And without missing a beat, the DOD (Department of Defense) guy said, “Then I think 150,000.” So they weren’t prepared to volunteer to give up their golf course, but it was there if somebody asked the right question which they finally did, and we never did have any more discussions about space.

As all the people were pouring into Guantanamo there was a realization early on that this was not sustainable over time. The question was what can we do with all these people? And again, remember this was imposed on the Federal bureaucracy against our judgment and will, but there it was. So there was a discussion of different options, one was the Hong Kong option where you turned Guantanamo into a free market colony which would be an example of what Cuba could be as opposed to what it was. Someone added up how many billion dollars that would take and that was dismissed. So instead, it was well, what we can do to help keep this operation self-sustaining, and the military had some very legitimate concerns about what would happen when you kept all these people locked up. The population was predominantly young males, although there were little kids, young girls, pregnant women, old folks, there was the whole mix. What we were doing was for a humanitarian purpose. I don’t know that we ever articulated this as a policy, but everybody knew that we would try to get the most vulnerable people in Guantanamo out on parole on a humanitarian basis. Pregnant women, there’s an easy one. Elderly people who had medical problems, there’s another easy one. Then you get into kids, particularly the kids who had immediate relatives in the States already, and then you got to young girls, who I don’t want to say became prostituted, but who suddenly became subject to a lot of stress and strain. What you’re doing is that you’re taking the people out who to some degree are the calming, stabilizing part of the population, and you are left with young males who can only play so much volleyball before they really get tired. A few people voluntarily went back to Cuba, but not that many.

In my trips to Gitmo (Guantanamo Bay Naval Base) I was struck that the Cubans did a pretty good job of organizing themselves by camps. They had camp leaders, if somebody was a doctor, he took over that role, if somebody was an architect, he started designing and building new latrine systems. Whatever it was, they were doing a pretty good job of it. Every time we took a new group out, we tried not to advertise it, although the areas of South Florida wanted to hear that the pregnant women were coming out. Castro, of course, didn’t want to hear it, because his point, with some legitimacy, was that if you make it look like it’s just a weigh station – you go to Gitmo and play volleyball for four months and then you go to Miami – that will increase the outflow. So every time we lowered the population of the camp we would worry about rising numbers of rafters coming out. We were faced with how to resolve this problem. The best option we had, which wasn’t much, was to tell the Cubans, “Look, this is not sustainable.” We wanted to get the message across that this time we mean it. We would basically grandfather in everybody who was in Guantanamo, except the hardcore criminals and the insane, but in the

future we were going to be really tough and would only do third-country placement if people were caught.

We were now up to April 1995, and it was time for another of the semiannual migration talks. The Cubans had bumped up their representation from a year ago, and had gone from basically my counterpart which is where the talks had been up to that point to Ricardo Alarcon, who was arguably the number three guy in the hierarchy there and President of the National Assembly. Originally, they had scheduled these talks on the seventeenth of April which, of course, is the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs, not a good day to have this. So I suggested we push it back a day to have it on the eighteenth. When we got to the talks in New York at the Cuban mission, my instructions were to find a way to get the Cubans to agree to our continuing to draw down numbers at Guantanamo without having them threaten to open the floodgates again.

Unbeknownst to me, there were secret negotiations going on between Alarcon and Tarnoff, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. They were meeting in Toronto. On the seventeenth, the day we didn't meet, they had a meeting, and then we met and then had a break, and they met a second time.

Q: Unbeknownst to you?

HAYS: Unbeknownst to me. Why was it unbeknownst to me? I suspect it was because what was proposed, I felt, was not very well thought out. We took a deal that wasn't in our best interests and wasn't what we could have gotten. In fact, we didn't ask for anything and so we didn't get anything. If I had been asked earlier, I would have bureaucratically, like a good Foreign Service Officer, written a memo and sent it around to everybody and said, "Here are some things, and here are some other things, and we can ask for this, this and this. At a minimum for this particular deal to go through, we need to have this, this and that." So it didn't happen. I think the White House was interested in resolving this issue. This gets back to something I'm sure I said earlier; it was a nice doggy, don't bother me type of approach rather than a more pro-active one. In any event, as I was going back and forth with Alarcon, and I had my team including INS (the Immigration and Naturalization Service) and other people all sitting around with none of them having a clue what's going on either, the other discussion was taking place. Curiously, Alarcon pulled me aside during the second day, and he gave me a hypothetical which was in fact the deal that was offered. As I remember I said something like, "Oh, that's very interesting. We'd like to look at that." And I sent it back in cable form. Here's a proposal. However, he's asking for this, without giving that and what have you. I didn't think much more about it other than it was an interesting kind of idea. The talks concluded inconclusively, other than an agreement that we would meet more frequently like in three months rather than in six months.

Q: These talks were alternating between Cuba and New York?

HAYS: Before the crisis, we had a good deal. We would take the Cubans to some place in the United States, like Atlanta which had been the previous one, and we would go to a Braves game

and see Stone Mountain and that sort of thing and they would take us to someplace in Cuba. The one I went on was to Santiago and we already had it planned out; we were going to go to New Orleans and they were going to take us to Trinidad. It was very collegial and we did some serious business, but we could also see something of each other's country. Once Alarcon came in he insisted that it either be Washington or New York because they had missions there and he had to be at his mission. And Washington was out for us, and so we ended up with the Cubans always going to New York and in return they always sent us to Havana.

As an aside, after I finished these talks, I had a scheduled speech that I was giving in New Jersey which has the second largest concentration of Cuban Americans. Although I'm generally perceived as a hardliner on the issue, I was attacked as some form of "communist" by this particular group. In particular, they said, "We know there are secret negotiations going on, and you're not telling us about them". I stood up there and said, "Look, I'm telling you, if there were secret negotiations going on, I would know about them. So I can assure you there are no secret negotiations going on at this time." I went back to Washington, and I had the flu, and so I took a day off and then I started getting phone calls, "Something's happening, something's happening" from a friend in DOD. The Agency said, "Hey, what's going on? What's happening? Something's happening." And again, I didn't know there was anything in particular, but there were enough phone calls that it was clear that something was going on.

Let me very briefly talk about my specific concern with the decision, which was to forcibly return people to Cuba. In the agreement that was signed, it specifically said that the government of the United States and the government of the Republic of Cuba jointly guarantee that no adverse action will be taken against people who are returned to Cuba. That's interesting because if you see what is told to migrants now by the Coast Guard, the little form that they read, it says the Republic of Cuba guarantees. Somehow the United States was taken out of the guarantee in the things that we tell people. In theory, an inspection is supposed to monitor and travel around to do that. The reality is that they were totally incapable of doing that other than on a very cursory and spot check basis. Furthermore, the very first guy who was sent back under this program, Professor Zamora, was fired from his job, booted out of his house and his wife was discriminated against. We protested, and the Cubans said, "Well, we're going to continue to pay his salary but obviously, this man can no longer have anything to do with impressionable youth." He was a university professor, and he can still get his eight dollars a month to live on, but nevertheless, it was clear that adverse action took place. The very first guy that went back!

If I had been asked before all this happened or even while it was happening what we could do, I would have said my moral objection is that we have to be sure, in fact, that the Cubans live up to this. In order to do that, we should use this opportunity to try to get the Red Cross or Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch or any internationally recognized human rights group to have full access to these individuals when they go back in to Cuba. And I'm absolutely convinced, as much today as I was in those days, that we could've gotten that because the Cubans had a problem and they had to solve it. As I talked about earlier, I don't think we took

that into account. We just saw our problem, and we had to solve it. If we had, we could have said, "We want you to change the law that makes it a criminal offense to try to leave your country." This is what a lot of these guys are hit with now, they're imprisoned because they tried to escape, they got caught and so now they're doing three, five or seven years in prison. I'm absolutely convinced that if we had said this law violates every international standard there is and you need to repeal it, they would have done it. We were not asking Castro to commit suicide or whatever. We were asking about something specifically related to the action at hand. If we had just had the balls or the guts to request it, we would've gotten it, but we didn't. So I finally got called in by my boss, Alec Watson, Assistant Secretary for American Affairs, who said, "Dennis, look, here it is. Here's what happened."

SARAH HORSEY-BARR

Deputy Chief of Mission, Organization of American States

Washington, DC (1992-1995)

Mrs. Horsey-Barr was born in Maryland into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in the Washington DC area and abroad and was educated at Georgetown University; and Loyola University in Rome, Italy. Her service with the State Department took her to several posts in Latin America dealing with both consular and political/management affairs. Her last assignments were with the Organization of American States, where she served in various senior capacities with the U.S. Mission. Mrs. Horsey-Barr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

HORSEY-BARR: Well, Cuba, of course, since Castro has been a member but nonparticipating member of the OAS. It was suspended technically not because of its government but because of its export of revolution and that situation has continued to the present day. It's rather tenuous legally at this point, since, of course, Cuba didn't export any of its revolution anymore since the end of the Cold War. But nonetheless that's still a situation that's really active. From the United States' perspective, one of our great concerns was how to ward off any sort of concerted attack by significant players in terms of bringing Cuba back. That has been the whole U.S. approach.

Q: Our basic policy was just keep Cuba out, not looking at conduct or anything like that.

HORSEY-BARR: Well, it's kind of hard - you're right - it's kind of hard to look at conduct now, at least in terms of the conduct that led to its suspension, certainly doesn't apply anymore, because it's not exporting revolution anymore. So what the United States looked at is the same

sort of issues that we talked about bilaterally with Cuba, the sort of structured economy, the human rights question, the totalitarian, if you will, form of government, but those are tenuous in terms of a defense in the OAS inter-American system, because while certainly the charter of the OAS talks about respect of human rights and participative democracy, in fact other governments have been members who have flouted these aspects.

Just go through the Latin and Central American states and you can subdivide the rest of the continent in different ways and come up with countries that fall into just about every one of the objections we have against Cuba today. So that was a great concern, because legally it's rather tenuous and politically, of course, the Western Hemisphere with Canada in the forefront believe as do Americans that the best way to effect change is wrap them in a shroud of isolation. During the time I was there, and I think the case is still true today, there certainly was no wavering in terms of what to do, what the position should be, on Cuba, and we had a number of difficult moments, mainly caused not by Cuba, who seems to be quite happy with the situation, but caused by accomplishing other issues that made countries sort of coalesce together in opposition to the United States, and so Cuba was sort of a handy other issue for them to get started on. But the day will come, probably before we have changed our policy the way things are going, where it will be a more serious threat for the OAS from the perspective of bilateral policy.

JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN

Principal Officer, US Interests Section

Havana (1993-1996)

Ambassador Sullivan was born and raised in Massachusetts and educated at Tufts, Georgetown and Yale Universities. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, he served in the Department of State in Washington, DC as well as in posts abroad. His foreign posts include Mexico City, Lisbon, Tel Aviv and Havana. Mr. Sullivan served as US Ambassador to Angola from 1998 to 2001 and as Ambassador to Zimbabwe from 2001 to 2004. Ambassador Sullivan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Today is the 16th of November 2010 with Joe Sullivan. We are going to move to when you were off to Cuba. You were in Cuba from when to when?

SULLIVAN: From July 1993 until, I believe, July 1996.

Q: Well now, how political was this appointment, particularly the Miami Cubans and all this. Are you familiar or were you involved in sort of the maneuverings before you went out there?

SULLIVAN: Well I had not had direct responsibility for Cuba. My then boss, the Assistant Secretary Bernie Aronson, had been dealing with the Cuban-American community on a number of issues and had basically a good relationship with them so I imagine he would have told them that I was a good guy, I trust him and so on. But, I never felt any resistance from the Cuban-American community prior to my departure. As I said, that was an appointment that, even though I had the title of chief of mission, because it didn't have the title of ambassador, it did not require Senate confirmation. So I didn't have to jump through the hoops that might have been more complicated with some members of Congress extremely close to the Cuban-American community. That said remind me of this point a couple of times as we go through on Cuba in case I've forgotten anything on the impact of the Cuban-American community. I, for instance, chose deliberately on my way into Havana to stop in Miami; that was almost obligatory in order to catch the charter flights to Havana at that point in any case. I visited with several different elements of the Cuban-American community. I chose to do that at the beginning so that I could be in a listening mode, I could hear them and yet I would not need to respond to them. I eventually decided that I wasn't going to make such meetings a regular occurrence on my trips back and forth. I wasn't going to be reporting to them, I was going to be hearing their views early on but then leaving the subsequent interaction to Washington and there was certainly plenty of that particularly, between the Cuba desk in the State Department and the Cuban-American community.

I guess one of those early encounters that was memorable in that the Cuban-American National Foundation, CANF, as it was called was run at that time by Jorge Mas Canosa, since deceased. But he was very hard-line and very assertive. He himself was not present, he was reportedly traveling but I was left with several members of the board. I would say that they basically sought to give me my marching orders, whom I should meet with, whom I should not meet with, which members of the opposition community they trusted and, therefore, that I should meet with, which ones they did not trust and, therefore, I should not meet with. Indeed, as it turned out several of the people that were on their trusted list proved to be double agents in effect reporting to Cuban state security. That said it was a listening exercise and sort of confirmed my view that I simply didn't want to be in regular contact with that community otherwise I would be in a position of being asked how I had obeyed their instructions.

In Cuba at the time I arrived it was a very interesting time.

Q: Today is December 2, 2010.

SULLIVAN: I thought I should elaborate on the people-to-people exchanges that I mentioned earlier and which were part of Clinton Administration policy toward Cuba, as they are part of Obama Administration policy today. I believed in these exchanges strongly, not because I thought they would change the Cuban regime, but because the Cuban and American people are

destined to live 90 miles apart and it was and is important to have our two people know each other and each other's cultures. This is an enduring reality long after the Castro regime is a footnote in history. The other part of my belief in the value of people-to-people exchanges is my skepticism of the argument that the relatively small proceeds which the Cuban government gains from such exchanges will somehow be the difference in preventing the Castro regime from falling.

One area in which we were more open was in allowing Cuban and American musicians to travel more freely. Chucho Valdes, a famous Cuban jazz pianist, who had not been able to travel to the US since the 1970's, received a visa to visit the US, and I remember him saying that he did not sleep in New York because he did not want to miss one minute of opportunity to listen to and absorb American jazz. I'll give some detail on how obstacles on both sides complicated even cultural exchanges. Upon his return, Chucho came to my house and asked if we could bring American jazz pianist Billy Taylor, a Kennedy Center institution, to give jazz instruction and participate in the Havana Jazz Festival. Because of the resistance from Cuban-Americans in Congress to spending any US government funds on such an exchange, the US had to secure private funding to sponsor the cultural exchange, but we did so and Billy Taylor agreed to come and participate. In the meantime, Chucho Valdes, while he was in the U.S. had recruited two very good musicians Roy Hargrove and Steve Coleman to come with their groups and play and they did come. Billy Taylor's wife had a fall and he was not able to come but the cultural exchange went well, notwithstanding, and Roy Hargrove wound up recording a Cuban-themed album together with Chucho Valdes. The other side of complications with cultural exchanges was demonstrated by the Cuban government, probably because Valdez had gotten out in front of them in coming to my house asking for our assistance in bringing Billy Taylor to the Havana Jazz Festival. The Cuban government punished Chucho by removing him as the director of the Havana Jazz Festival, even though he continued to be the leading Cuban musician at the festival. Valdez was sort of banished for awhile. When he was invited to our July 4 reception, my last in country, Chucho waited until all the Cuban government watchers had left and came by about 10:30 at night just to say goodbye. It was difficult for both sides, with constraints and hardliners who resisted even cultural exchanges.

Q: Did you sometimes feel you were a shuttle cock caught between literally both sides on this?

SULLIVAN: Sure, absolutely. The most troubling incident of my whole tour in Cuba is even a better example of that. I remember the date of February 24, 1996. The group called itself Brothers to the Rescue, small aircraft pilots, typically using Cessna's. They had initially founded themselves to find Cuban rafters out in the sea who could then be picked by the Coast Guard and brought to the United States. Well after the migration agreement of 1994, that mission had largely evaporated and yet this group wished to continue being active. It became public later that the organization had been infiltrated by one Cuban who had come to the U.S. as a refugee but was still working for the Cuban government. In any case, one day in late January or early February, rather than just patrolling the island around the seas to see if there were any Cubans

possibly out there that needed to be rescued, since there were very few these days, as the Cuban government was enforcing its borders again, one or two Cessna pilots flew over Havana and dropped leaflets on Havana. This was considered a terrific act and a great act of heroism on the part of these people by some circles in Miami.

Well, in the following weeks the Cuban government got itself increasingly exercised about this. They went to the State Department to indicate how irate and concerned they were about it and they called me in to tell me the same thing. Now I think there were talks held with this organization and with Miami activists to try to persuade these people not to take chances and not to provoke. We also urged the Cuban government in Havana and in Washington not to overreact. That withstanding, I think the U.S. message was probably tempered on both sides because the US was in the middle and seeking to not alienate the Miami community. When Brothers to the Rescue flew again February 24 the Cuban air force was prepared with information from their infiltrator and they followed the Cessna's and shot down two of those Cessna planes, killing several of the individuals involved. This caused great uproar in the US and internationally and led to the then US representative to the UN Madeline Albright quoting from the Cuban pilot who had been monitored by us to have yelled out "cojones", balls, that he was going to shoot this guy down. She used that tape, in effect, to dismiss the Cuban claim at the United Nations that they either had no responsibility or that the act had occurred inside Cuba, but we had documentation that they had deliberately shot down unarmed small planes.

Q: Well in a way somebody would try that over Washington today they sure as hell would get shot down.

SULLIVAN: True, true. These were Cessna's but they were still provocations and yet because the United States was sort of being equally careful about Miami in ways that we were anxious that no clash occur, but were not willing to act in strong ways to prevent these people from flying. Simultaneously with that and on the same day, the Cuban government conducted a major sweep on human rights activists and dissidents on the island rounding up many of them and putting them in jail. There were many such arrests over the years, but this was the first large-scale crackdown in a number of years. So I think it coincided with a Cuban decision to crack down in general on internal and external threats as they saw them.

I guess one of the interesting side lights of this was a conversation on that Saturday with the individual in the Foreign Ministry charged with U.S. affairs. There was an interesting dialogue, at first, as the Cubans were trying to measure how we were going to deal with this. Were we going to deal with it as an unfortunate incident, but not seek to hold the Cuban government totally responsible? I, of course, acting on instructions from Washington, made it clear that we knew they were totally responsible and we would make it clear to everybody that the Cuban government had made a deliberate decision to use its air force jets to shoot down unarmed small aircraft. At a certain point, the Cuban tone changed radically and I could feel basically Fidel Castro assuming full control again of the U.S. desk, as he did whenever a crisis arose and the

Cuban message sharpened greatly. Basically it was saying the hell with you, you are not getting any apologies, we are not going to be expressing regrets, they had it coming, you should have known better and that was it.

At that point relations took a nose dive and the Clinton administration was looking at means to retaliate. It wound up dropping its opposition to the Helms-Burton legislation, suspending all charter flights into Cuba for at least a number of months, and then, disastrously, in my view, limiting the travel of Cuban diplomats in Washington, notwithstanding our advice that this will just give the Cuban government a great excuse to do the same things to the US Interests Section. And that indeed was what happened. I would say from that point on, this led to a progressive spiral downward in relations.

Q: Were you getting good reports on what is almost a foreign power and that is the Miami Cubans. One, they were clearly violating international law by what they were doing. Were they trying to provoke this? It doesn't sound like they were coming out ahead on it.

SULLIVAN: I don't think that they planned their own deaths. That is certainly more than they wished, but certainly to be provocative and aggressive in the face of the Cuban authorities, was certainly an attractive position in Miami. As I mentioned before, Cuban intelligence had, in fact, infiltrated a pilot within that group who I'm sure was able to tell them precisely when they would be traveling and that infiltrator departed Miami on that Saturday for the Bahamas and subsequently for Cuba. He abandoned the "temporary" wife that he had taken in Florida, came back to Cuba and reintegrated with the regime. So the Cubans knew what was coming, perhaps even more than American authorities..

As far as the Miami-Cubans, I think Washington, the Department did have direct contact with them. Washington was in very frequent contact with several elements within the community, and I believe there was a prior contact with his Brothers to the Rescue operation to seek to dissuade them, but I don't think the message was as strong as it might have been.

Q: What happened now? Was the Coast Guard still at this point intercepting people and bringing them back?

SULLIVAN: Yes and they continued to. I think there may have been a stall for some weeks or even a month but eventually those returns continued. We continued to be able to travel out to visit the people who were returned. The travel of our own interest section staff throughout the island was constrained, made more difficult; we had to provide advance notification although at that point it was only to provide advance notification and didn't require us to wait for approval. Subsequently, I think some years after I left, the Cubans imposed the requirement that people wait until that approval came through, and as used to happen in Moscow, that approval never came through. So typically Interests Section staff could not travel any longer around the island. Eventually that restriction became to confine American staff to the city limits of Havana, which was extremely restrictive.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

JOSEPH S. FARLAND

Ambassador

Dominican Republic (1957-1960)

Ambassador Farland was born in West Virginia on August 11, 1914. He attended the University of West Virginia, where he received his JD in 1938. He served in the US Army as a Liaison Officer from 1944 to 1947. His career has included positions in the Dominican Republic, Panama, Pakistan, and Iran. Ambassador Farland was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 31, 2000.

Q: Were you able to work with Under Secretary Hoover to get any control over this?

FARLAND: No, my job again was to get the facts and get an understanding of what was going on and get as much information as I could.

Q: How did he receive that?

FARLAND: He was delighted to get it. I did that for the better part of a year. I was in the Department. He called me in one day and said, "Joe, you and one other man came down here out of the 100-some people who approached me and offered to do a [job for me] that was necessary. Now I want you to be an ambassador. I want you to go, if you're interested, to Paraguay." I said, "I will talk to my wife. She is my partner." He called me in about a week later and said, "Joe, I want to be very careful in saying this because there is no hyperbole in it whatsoever. We've assigned you to Paraguay if you want it. We have another post that is exploding on us. It's extremely dangerous. As a matter of fact, it might cost you your life. I want you to know that before you go any further. This is the Dominican Republic and the era of Trujillo. We are terribly concerned about what's been going on. There's been a kidnapping in New York. From the reports we're getting, there is further activity that we should be concerned about. Would you be interested?" I said, "I had better again talk to my wife." She said, "If that's what you want to do, that's what we will do." So, that is what I did.

Q: You were in the Dominican Republic from when to when?

FARLAND: I went there in August of 1957. I left in 1960.

Q: What were you told before you went out to the Dominican Republic?

FARLAND: This was one reason why I stopped that other interview. I didn't want to get into this. I was told "You are to go down to the Dominican Republic. You are to be friendly with Trujillo, outwardly a close associate of Trujillo, as another ambassador has been, but I want you to get into the underground and find out what is going on and what is going to happen at this time and in the future. It's a delicate operation, but your background and training makes you the best possible selection we have in the Department. We do not want to eliminate Trujillo. In other words, assassinate him. But we want him to take his loot and go off to Estoril or some other place and leave those people alone, let them be free." We've been accused of wanting to assassinate Trujillo. That was not my assignment. That would have been easy. What I had to do was try to convince them to get the hell out of there.

Q: Why were we so concerned in 1957 about the situation?

FARLAND: Well, human rights for one reason, definitely. There was an American citizen, a man by the name of Galinda, kidnapped on the streets of New York, flown to Miami, flown to the Dominican Republic, and killed. Part of my job was to find out the truth of that story. It was true. I found that out definitely. He was murdered in the Dominican Republic.

Q: Who was he?

FARLAND: He was a Spaniard who had been a tutor for Ramphas and Rademus, Trujillo's two sons. He left, went to Columbia University and was teaching at Columbia, was picked up off the street by Arturas Beyat's organization (He was then consul general in New York.) and flown to Miami and subsequently killed. One of the pilots on that plane was a man by the name of Adel Masa, who presumably hanged himself in a jail cell, but the fact was he was murdered by Trujillo.

Q: What was Galinda doing?

FARLAND: He wrote a biography of Trujillo. I've never seen it. There supposedly is a copy. Trujillo did everything in his power to eliminate every copy. I have been told (I can't verify this for a fact, but I have a pretty good idea it's true.) that Ramphas came in the seat of a cabana when Trujillo's mistress in a period of spite departs for Cuba and shacks up with Galinda. If that is in there, he would certainly kill anyone. That is what I heard was in that book.

HENRY DEARBORN

Deputy Chief of Mission

Ciudad Trujillo (1959-1961)

As a member of the Foreign Service, Mr. Dearborn served in countries including the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Mexico. Mr. Dearborn was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 8, 1991.

Q: How did your assignment to the Dominican Republic come about and what were you doing?

DEARBORN: I suppose from the spectacular point of view it was probably the most, because relations were fast deteriorating with the Trujillo dictatorship with which we had been playing along for about 30 years. Things had more or less suddenly started to go into a tail spin. I was sent there as Deputy Chief of Mission. The Ambassador had had my predecessor recalled.

Q: What were you doing with the opposition?

DEARBORN: They were asking us for advice at times. They were asking us for help at times. We didn't always give them what they wanted, but they knew that if they got into power that we would be supporting them. They also kept being hopeful that we might help them in more ways than we might be willing to. For instance, they told us that they wanted to do this by themselves, but they wanted our help.

As time went on and Trujillo didn't collapse, they began to have more violent ideas as to what they might do to him. Eventually they developed an assassination plot which because of my close relationship with them I was fully aware of. He was assassinated on May 30, 1961. I knew they were planning to do it, I knew how they were planning to do it, I knew, more or less, who was involved. Although I was always able to say that I personally did not know any of the assassins, I knew those who were pulling the strings. I knew everything except when. The only reason I didn't know when was because they didn't know either.

There had to be a certain set of circumstances when they could put their plan into action. The last few days were rather hairy because I had told the Department via CIA communications (I had a different typewriter on which I typed out my messages to the opposition so that it wouldn't be traced to Embassy typewriters) all about the plan. I recall a frantic message from the Department, I guess signed off on by President Kennedy, saying, in effect, "Look, we have all this trouble with Castro; we don't want any more trouble in the Caribbean. Tell these people to knock it off." So I communicated to the opposition people that Washington was very much against any attempt at assassination. The answer I got back from them was, "Just tell Washington it is none of their business. This is our business. We have planned it and we are going to do it and there is nothing you can do about it." I relayed this to Washington. I am sure there were some in Washington who were skeptical; that there was an alarmist down there in the consulate.

The night of May 30, 1961, the Chinese Ambassador was giving some kind of a money raising thing at the country club for charity to which I went. We started back around 11:00 and ran into a roadblock along the ocean highway. They were stopping all cars and making everybody get out. They looked in trunks, pulled up rugs, etc. I had a CIA fellow in the car (along about January the CIA had sent a couple of people in to the consulate) and I said, "Bob, this is it. I am sure this is it." They wouldn't let us continue on that road, they sent us back along another road into town. We got to the Embassy, where I had been living for about a year, and the telephone rang and one of my main contacts of the opposition said, "It is over, he is dead." I knew immediately what happened and went down to the office and sent off a message to Washington.

A little later, maybe an hour or so, I had gone to bed, the phone rang and it was a call from a girls school there run by American nuns. An American bishop (there were six bishops in the Dominican Republic and one was an American), had gotten in trouble with Trujillo who had threatened him in his bishopric up in San Juan de la Haguana and for safety sake he was living in the girls school for a time.

Well the nuns called and said, "You know, Bishop Reilly has been kidnapped from the school and we don't know where he is. We want you to come over right away." So I called the British Ambassador. I couldn't get through to him but got his number two man, Bill Harding, and said, "Bill, will you please meet me over at the school for girls."

I got over to the girls school and it was a mess. The nuns wore white cassocks and there were little blood specks on them. I said, "What happen?" They said, "About 15 of these thugs came in and started firing guns. We didn't get hit but little specks of brick came off the wall and nicked our faces." Then they took us to the Bishop's room where the pet dog that the invaders had killed was lying across the threshold. They had kidnapped the Bishop and taken him off to who knows where.

Then Bill Harding arrived and shortly after him British Ambassador McVittie. Then one of the Dominican generals came. I described what had happened and explained we didn't know where the Bishop was and we were concerned for his safety since he was an American citizen. The General said he would go back and talk to the President. We decided to look for further assistance.

There wasn't a Papal Nuncio at the time, but there was a chargé d'affaires. I said, "Let's go over to the Nuncioatura. Bishop Reilly is an American citizen, but the Vatican should have an interest in this." We roused the chargé Monsenor del Guidici. He was no help. He was obviously scared. He was afraid of doing anything that might get him in wrong with his bosses. The British Ambassador wanted him to go over with him to the Foreign Minister--get him out of bed and raise a ruckus. But Monsenor del Guidici said, "I don't think they will hurt the Bishop, do you?" I said, "I think they would hurt the Bishop.

They threw rocks at him and threw him out of his rectory. It was just luck that one of those rocks didn't kill him. I don't agree with you." The British Ambassador rose to the occasion and said , "If you don't want to go I will go by myself."

He went off to see the Foreign Minister. Bill Harding and I, probably about 4:00 by now, went back to the girls school and who should be sitting on the sofa in the front hall but Bishop Reilly. He was the first one to tell me, after I had gotten my initial message, that Trujillo had been assassinated. What had happened to him was that his captors took him to the air force base outside the city, San Isidro.

Somehow President Balaguer, who was Trujillo's figurehead president, heard about it and sent word out to the base to bring the Bishop to see him. When he arrived, Balaguer said, "I'm terribly sorry about what happened to you but you know the Generalissimo has been assassinated tonight and these fellows through an excess of zeal thought that you might be involved in it because the relations between you had been bad." So I sent out a message about Bishop Reilly. It was a wild night.

It wasn't for another day or two that the general public knew that Trujillo had been assassinated.

They didn't give out the information right away.

Q: Well the aftermath of the thing was terribly disorganized wasn't it? In other words the opposition group didn't take advantage of this.

DEARBORN: What happened was; Ramfis was in Europe. The minute he heard about it he chartered a plane and flew back to the Dominican Republic. Balaguer was the civil leader, but Ramfis was still head of the air force. The family was definitely a group to be reckoned with. Balaguer wasn't completely independent even now that Trujillo was dead.

The assassins picked the time they did it because the circumstances were right. They knew on some nights he went to visit his mother and after visiting her he would get into a nondescript car and drive along the coastal highway to see his mistress. He would do that completely unscheduled and didn't worry too much about it because nobody knew in advance. But the opposition had a spy in the garage who reported to them that this was the night. So they had two cars mobilized. One got in front of his car and one got in back and they forced him off the road. He had a gun but they overpowered him and killed him. That is how it happened.

Then they didn't know if at the time of the funeral whether the family or the opposition might cause some problems. So I didn't dare go to the funeral because I was afraid I would have to call in the Navy which was just over the horizon--the biggest naval force since World War II was sitting just over the horizon-- and didn't want to go away from my communications. I sent the number two man to the funeral. So there were all sorts of speculation as to why I hadn't gone to the funeral.

About a week later, I received a phone call one morning at 7:00 a.m. from Ted Achilles who was with the Task Force in the Department. He said, "Henry, we want you, your wife, and the children out of there on the noon plane. We think you are in danger," the concern being that Ramfis and his group had killed all the assassins except for two and was unpredictable. So I said, "There is no noon plane but there is a plane to Puerto Rico at 2:00 and I could get on that, I guess." We were living in the Embassy and our pictures were on the wall and our clothes were in the closets and drawers. I said to my wife, "Look, you take the house and I will take the office and we will do the best we can." So my wife went through the house with another wife who was still at the post. She went from room to room and put everything that belonged to us in the middle of the floor. I went to the office where we were pretty streamlined by that time. We even had our secret files in a burn barrel ready to burn up because we didn't know what was going to happen. About a month before that we had gone through everything and shipped back to Washington everything that we didn't absolutely need, because we just didn't know what might happen--we didn't have diplomatic immunity anymore. Trujillo was good at staging things and could have staged a raid on the Consulate General and disclaimed any knowledge of it.

I called the British Ambassador and said, "You know I wouldn't ask you to do this unless it was extremely urgent, but could you come over to the house." He came over and I told him everything that was happening and that I was leaving at 2:00.

The Admin officer, who was still there was going...(we had already loose packed most of our furniture when we moved into the Embassy because we didn't need it and stored it in the garage)...to pack up the other things lying in the middle of the floors and send them to Bogota, our next post. It was the best move we ever had. We didn't miss a single thing. The only mistake was that I got an Embassy lamp.

A funny incident, Evelyn Cotterman who was the Admin. Officer's wife, was helping us around the bedrooms. I had my shirt, tie, shoes and socks on but couldn't find my pants. I said, "Evelyn where are my pants?" She said, "Oh, my god, I packed them." They had to go back down to the car outside and unpack my pants so that I could leave the country with dignity.

DEARBORN: We had a very good group. John Barfield was chief of the political section and he was excellent. Then we had Charlie Hodge as economic counselor and he had a couple under him. Then we had a naval mission that was very good. Then we had an attaché who represented the Defense Department, Ed Simmons, a Marine Colonel who later became a General and is now in charge of the Marine Library here in Washington. A very nice fellow. We had a very small AID program. I think there was only one person, maybe two. There was an American school. We had, of course, USIA. One of our USIA officers was declared persona non grata because they said he was going around saying things against the Generalissimo. In fact, I, myself, almost got

caught because I was talking at the hotel to a newspaperman whose name you would recognize if I could say it, who came through...

Q: Was it Tad Schultz by any chance?

DEARBORN: No, he was more in the ownership class. Tad Schultz is another story. I kept him out of jail. (The man was Roy Howard, now I remember.)

Anyway, they saw me talking to this newspaperman in the hotel and then they said I had been telling him bad things about the Dominican Republic. I could see what was coming and went right to the British Ambassador. I said, "Look this is what they are saying and I don't know what game they are playing, but I absolutely deny the whole thing. It is not true. It is true that I was talking with him, but I didn't say anything to cause the Dominicans any embarrassment." The Ambassador picked up the ball right away and went over to the Foreign Office and told them this. With the British Ambassador having taken this position they decided not to follow through on it. I think by that time maybe they thought they would like to get rid of me and were looking for a way to do it. I don't know.

I would like to mention one more thing on the Dominican Republic. One day a student came into my office scared to death. He said they were after him, they were going to kill him, they were going to torture him. A great big fellow who belonged to one of the best families. He was just scared out of his wits. I knew what was going to happen. There was a secret movement among the students and Trujillo was dying to get the names of all these people. If he could catch one of them he could torture him and make him give the names of the others.

So when I heard this, what I saw happening was this kid being taken out to the torture chambers, being abused and maybe even killed and a whole bunch of kids having the same thing happening to them. All I could think of was that this just cannot happen. So I said, "Well, you can stay here." I had a little bathroom off the office and stuck him in there. It was terribly cramped and it was a hot box; there was no air conditioning in the whole Embassy at that time. I said, "You just stay in there until I think of what to do." I think he was in there two days. Nobody in the rest of the Embassy knew this, except John Barfield whose office was on the other side of the bathroom from mine.

For a couple of days I kept the boy in there, I brought him food down from the house, still trying to think of what to do. Finally a fellow came in, Dan Kirtley, who was the pilot of the naval mission plane. He was the last person of what had been the Embassy to leave the country. He came in to say goodbye. I suddenly had a bright thought and said, "Dan, would you be willing to undertake a little skullduggery for your old friend here?" He said, "What would you want?" Dan was always a man of action. I told him I had this fellow and described the whole situation to him. I said, "He is either going to get tortured or killed and a lot of other people too, and I just wonder if you on your last takeoff from the Dominican Republic would take him with you." He said, "You have him at my plane at 2:00 and I will take him."

Well, there were nearly insurmountable obstacles between the office and the airport: how to get him out of the office, for example. First I had to get him up to the Residence. The office and the Residence were in the same block and there was a long lawn and swimming pool between them. John Barfield said, "I can back up the car to your office door and we can put him in the trunk." I said, "That is too obvious.

Let's just walk up to the Embassy as though nothing is wrong and maybe nobody will notice. If anyone does notice I will say it is Bill Raft." Bill was a Marine Guard who was the most like the young man in physical appearance. So we did that.

The garage of the Embassy was in the back. We took him out to the garage and then I drove the car out. We got halfway down the driveway to the street and I said to the boy, "I am going to open the trunk and you crawl in." I was just opening the trunk when the servants in the Embassy came out of the kitchen and saw us.

So I said, "No, don't get in the trunk," and I pulled down the lid. I said, "You get in the front seat between John and me. Just sit there." Of course I didn't want them seeing me putting someone in the trunk. I said, "If they say anything later I will tell them that we had a bet on to see if you could fit in the trunk, or something."

At the end of the driveway there was the street and up on a hill looking over all this was the national police station. Of course they weren't all up there looking at us, but it was just another thing to think about it. So we got in and started for the airport and this fellow grabbed a newspaper trying to hide behind it. I told him to put it down and act natural. So we drove through town, took the airport highway and about three quarters of the way to the airport on a stretch where we could see both ways and nobody was coming I said, "Now you get in the trunk." So I put him in the trunk and we drove the rest of the way to the airport.

We drove over to where Dan Kirtley's plane was, which was apart from the other planes. Dan said, "Is he there?" And I said, "Yes, he is in the trunk." There was a very low entrance to the plane so he said, "You back the car up to the door." Just as I was doing this, a Dominican who was hanging around the airport and used to help Dan out with things appeared. I said, "Now what do we do?" Dan began looking around the car and said to the Dominican, "Hey go back there and get a pump, the Consul's car has a low tire and he can't drive around like that." So, with the Dominican sent back for a pump, I backed the car up to the plane and the fellow crawled into the plane.

There was a tower with air controllers there and I didn't know what they were seeing or what they weren't seeing. But fortunately something happened that hardly ever happened: three international flights, I think one taking off and two coming in, were active all at the same time; and it started to rain. It was just plain luck. I nervously watched while Dan took off for Puerto Rico with his passenger.

I went back to the office and sent off a message through my CIA channel which started something like: I have probably broken every rule in the book, but...one thing I knew was that I couldn't let them catch this fellow. I often wonder where he is now.

GERALD J. MONROE

Visa Officer

Santo Domingo (1961-1962)

Gerald J. Monroe was born on October 13, 1933 in New York State. He attended City College in New York where he received his BA in 1955. Mr. Monroe served in the US Army as a 2nd lieutenant from 1955-1956. His career has included positions in Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Germany, China, Switzerland, and Italy. Mr. Monroe was interviewed by Raymond Ewing on March 22, 1999.

Q: After the marriage.

MONROE: After the marriage, because at that point, I didn't know much about it but Trujillo was about to be assassinated. We had just about closed our embassy. We had about seven people in the Dominican Republic. It was almost like a Huxley novel. He had tried to have Ramel Avetricor, the first democratic president of Venezuela assassinated. This caused the OAS to invoke sanctions against the Dominican Republic as long as Trujillo was there. Therefore, we had a scaled down embassy and there were no dependents because of the sanctions and because as I later learned, that dictatorship was beginning to crumble. In any case, I was sent there, peremptorily without much notice.

Q: In 1961?

MONROE: In 1961. I called to say that I had acquired a wife. They said, "Well, it doesn't show on your papers." The usual bureaucratic foul-up, but they didn't seem to care. Wife or no wife, I was just sent off there.

Q: On a transfer.

MONROE: Yes.

Q: What did she do?

MONROE: Well, it was a direct transfer. I hadn't quite finished my 24 months. They were being very bureaucratic about it. I wasn't eligible for home leave yet. Although the administrator and everyone else assured me that her allowances would continue, they stopped as soon as I left. It

took me several days to get to the Dominican Republic. Because of the sanctions, I had to go through Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Lord knows. For a two hour flight, I was three days in the traveling. By the time I got there, there was a telegram from Evangeline saying she wasn't being supported. We had been married three months, mind you. She, being native in Spanish because of her background in Santa Fe, just got on a plane, came to the Dominican Republic and talked her way in. Went to the embassy and told her story. There was a labor attaché who was a Cuban American, a very nice man who said, "Well, I'll hire you as a secretary. I can argue that I need a bilingual secretary." So, Evangeline became myself and my old college friend who showed up from Mexico City became the eighth, ninth, and tenth personnel at the mission. The three of us shared a house that someone had, a large house behind a coffee [plantation] I think it was called. A coffee ranch, I guess. They grew coffee and they raised cattle. We were on the edge of the city. Now I am sure it is almost dead center, but in those days it was the country and had all of the charms thereof.

Q: What was your job in the embassy?

MONROE: Both Roger and myself, My school friend and I were issuing visas once again. Then as I mentioned earlier, Trujillo had just been murdered as we arrived, just a few days before. There was great uncertainty, a great rush and struggle for power. Indeed a little known... I am going to presume that what follows now is declassified and part of the public record. As time passed it became very apparent that the right wing was going to make another grasp at power, overthrow a centrist junta that had taken control. Actually it was the Land Rover agent with the unusual name for a Dominican of Donald Reed. Donald Reed, however, unfortunately did not last long. There was an attempt, a bloody attempt actually at a counter revolution as one would call it. There was much bloodshed, a considerable amount of bloodshed. I have a vivid recollection, probably the only thing I remember clearly that [image] of a body being strapped to a white sports car of some sort, a white European sports car, tied across it spread eagle as this car sped through the streets. This body bled all over the white, there was blood all over the white front of the car. I remember it very vividly. We were cowering in our, cowering may be the wrong word. We were seeking cover in our offices, our visa offices which were away from what had been the embassy, and were right downtown. They were often mobbed as people became more frantic to get visas to leave the country, particularly people who had been associated with the old regime. Increasingly disagreeable things were happening in the streets. One of their favorite devices, those who wanted to make trouble were to since it was a city that rose no more than two stories, would be to climb onto roofs and drop manhole covers. If they missed people as they often did, they would shatter like glass on the streets below. People would pick up these shards and throw them at cars and at passers-by and whatever, people who were suspected of being revolutionaries or counter revolutionaries or whatever.

Q: On the other side.

MONROE: On the other side, that is exactly right. Well, we all had quite a collection of these things as desk weights.

Q: That had come through the window?

MONROE: That had come through the window, or picked up on the ground or in one or two cases had been thrown at us as we were driving along. We took ourselves and we took our local hires to and from work. We had a van until the van was torched one morning. So we were there without much, trying to figure out how we could close the building to some degree of dignity.

Q: Were you getting any protection.

MONROE: Very little. We had police who were doing next to nothing. Occasional firing into the crowd which we thought might not be a good idea, and we tried to dissuade them with little or no success. At one point we were literally under siege. We had an old consular officer type who had been in Latin America for years an agent who had a low whiskey voice and a pet lizard and was I suspect inebriated most of the time. He opened the door to confront this crowd. He was going to convince them that he was an American soldier. He immediately pulled by the necktie and slammed the door, and brought this American soldier in who was almost drunker than he was. This soldier had apparently been leading the mob at least as far as he was concerned. In any case, given the amount of noise, having seen this scene of this car and the body and so forth, that dramatic and frightening scene, we withdrew to the vault in the visa mill. We had a little vault to hold our seal, seal or no seal, we just got in time when they broke the door down. They went along and they took our office away. We came out terribly indignant that at this point we no longer had partitions. We had plywood partitions between the visa officers where the three visa officers sat. We called the major building and explained that we had no way of leaving. The offices had been looted. One of the senior officers left at the embassy got into his station wagon and came down, very courageously. We were all stuffed into this station wagon. There must have been about ten of us including locals. One policeman sitting on top of us all firing through the window against everyone's wishes. Away we went. I mean there was a bit of humor to it as we rode, I suppose. Of course, I was three people down; I really didn't get much of a view. But in due course when it became clear that my wife was there, the department became indignant and evacuated both of us.

Q: Took you out.

MONROE: Took us out of the Dominican Republic.

Q: How long were you actually there?

MONROE: We were there about five months. It never showed up on my card again although...

Q: That assignment?

MONROE: That assignment, although we were told when we arrived, when I say we because there were several other people with me, in the contingent, that we could go anywhere we wanted. Just ask, and they would send us where ever we wanted. We had gotten some award or something or other. Foolishness I think.

Q: Did we have an ambassador in...

MONROE: No we did not have an ambassador again.

Q: Because of the sanctions.

MONROE: Because of the sanctions. We weren't at all sure who was the government either at that point. That playboy, Trujillo De La rosa came in. It looked for a short time like he might declare himself leader, El Caudillo. That didn't bear any fruit. Ultimately centrist forces prevailed and elections were held, but this was long after I had left.

ECUADOR

RICHARD BLOOMFIELD

Ambassador

Ecuador (1976-1978)

Ambassador Richard Bloomfield was born in Connecticut in 1927. After serving in the U.S. military during World War II, Ambassador Bloomfield attended the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and joined the Foreign Service in 1952. He subsequently served abroad in Bolivia, Mexico, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Portugal, specializing in Latin American economic affairs. He was interviewed by Richard Nethercut in 1988.

Q: Ambassador Bloomfield, could you describe then how your appointment as ambassador to Ecuador came about?

BLOOMFIELD: Well, you know, as usual when you know that you're coming to the end of an assignment you start thinking about what happens next, and I felt at that point in my career that I could aspire to an ambassadorial appointment. So, just in case anybody might have overlooked that fact, I reminded some people in the Department that that would be my hope. Actually, one or two possibilities came along but they didn't pan out, and then somewhat to everyone's surprise, the fellow who was the Ambassador to Ecuador decided to come back to the States. I don't think he was quite due to leave Ecuador but for one reason or another he wanted to come back to the U.S., I think for personal reasons. At any rate, the post opened up somewhat unexpectedly and I was the Department's candidate. As you know the Department puts up probably two or three choices from the career corps, and then somebody in the White House who is concerned with the political patronage puts up outsiders. And the White House, the President or someone underneath him, has to make a choice. Well, at any rate, in my case the career choice won out, so I went to Ecuador. That was in early '76 in what turned out to be the waning months of the Ford Administration.

So I arrived there, I think in March, and only stayed 22 months because the embassy in Lisbon became suddenly vacant early in the Carter Administration when Frank Carlucci, who was then in Lisbon was pulled back to become the Deputy CIA Director, and so I was pulled out of Ecuador a bit sooner than I had expected and was sent to Portugal which, of course, didn't displease me.

Q: During your period in Ecuador were there some major issues or crises in bilateral relations?

BLOOMFIELD: We had some long-standing issues and, in addition at that point one overriding policy objective. After I arrived we had a crisis that was unforeseen.

The policy objective of the Carter Administration in Ecuador was to encourage the Ecuadorian military to return the government to civilian control. That accorded with Carter's policies in Latin America, pushing human rights, democracy, and so on. By the time I arrived in Ecuador the military had been in power for five or six years. Things had not turned out well for them. The military president, Rodriguez Lara, had recently been forced by his colleagues to resign. The junta was formed with representatives of the three services, and the junta committed itself to returning the government to democratic processes.

So when I went there my general guidance was to do what I could to encourage that process. That was the general policy objective. The main issue, the main bone of contention between the U.S. and Ecuador, was the fishing dispute. And that grew out of the fact that Ecuador was a country that not only had proclaimed the 200 mile economic zone, but was one of the few countries in the world that actually proclaimed a 200 mile territorial zone. That meant, as far as Ecuador was concerned, any ship or vessel that ventured within 200 miles was in effect entering Ecuadorian territory and had to get permission and obey Ecuadorian law. The problem was that at that point the United States did not recognize the 200 mile economic zone, much less a territorial zone. Our tuna fishermen, who were mostly from San Diego, California, would venture into what Ecuador considered to be its waters and get arrested by the Ecuadorian Navy, and pulled into port; and their catch would be seized, and they would be fined. And, of course, this immediately aroused the Congressmen from California, as well as other organizations, to raise hell, to be quite blunt about it. So we were constantly having problems with Ecuador. At one point some years before I arrived there, the Congress had passed legislation which in effect ordered the executive to cut off military aid to any country that seized American flag vessels for fishing in their waters.

Fortunately, by the time I arrived in Ecuador that problem was much less acute than it had been. The reason it was much less acute was that the U.S. was beginning to change its own attitudes. We hadn't yet, as I recall, adopted the 200 mile economic zone -- we did shortly thereafter -- but we weren't taking such a firm position as we had been. In effect, the Department had decided to "encourage" our fishermen to buy fishing licenses from Ecuador. And so buying a license in effect was a recognition of Ecuador's jurisdiction.

The way that came about -- I don't remember all the details -- but there were some people in Washington who managed, I think quite skillfully, to convince the tuna fishing industry in California that instead of standing on their high horse or principle, they should realize that buying a fishing license was a hell of a lot less expensive than getting their catch seized and having their people arrested. So, by the time I got to Ecuador, we were able to resume our

military assistance to the government and that provided us with a certain amount of leverage. That gave me the opportunity to politely and quietly point out that there was a connection between the speed that they returned to democratic rule and the U.S. Government looking sympathetically upon their request for military aid.

But, as fate would have it, another problem came along which could have been much worse than the fishing disputes. The Gulf Oil Company got into a very bitter dispute with the Ecuadorian Government within a month or so after I got there. To try to summarize the nature of the problem: Texaco and Gulf had a consortium in Ecuador. They had gone in some years before and discovered oil. They had invested several hundred millions of dollars in developing the oil fields which lay on the other side of the Western chain of the Andes, and had built a pipe line from the interior across the Andes down to the coast to be able to export the oil.

During the military regime that took over in the early '70s, there was a continuing series of controversies and disputes between the government and the oil companies; mostly because the government had adopted a very nationalistic policy about oil, and the state oil company, which acted as a kind of government regulator of the oil business, pursued a pretty arbitrary line with the two American companies. Even though, when the junta took over from General Rodriguez Lara it was much less chauvinistic than the previous government, the people who were running the oil policy in the government were the same kinds of people that had always been there, very kind of Nasserite military officers. So that the relations between the companies and the government were quite bad; and the Gulf Company in Ecuador seemed to be run by much more hard-nosed characters than the Texaco people who were in charge of Ecuador.

The Gulf Company simply decided one day that it would no longer surrender the foreign exchange that it was earning to the government until the government took care of some of its grievances. Texaco used its share of the oil produced in the field to supply its own refineries, but Gulf just sold the oil to third parties. So the Gulf people were selling oil on credit. I think they gave their customers 90 days credit. At the end of the 90 days, by which time they presumably were paid, they had to turn in the foreign exchange to the government at whatever share was stipulated by their contract. This meant that Gulf always owed the government something between \$40 and \$80 million in foreign exchange, sort of a floating debt. So one day Gulf announced that they weren't going to pay any of that until the government sat down with them and really seriously addressed their grievances. Well, the government reacted very, very sharply and pointed out to Gulf that they were a sovereign government and that they weren't going to be dictated to by a private company; and that under the Ecuadorian constitution any company that defied -- broke the law -- was subject to having its assets confiscated without compensation.

So here I could see one of these classical expropriation disputes breaking out, which meant that the U.S. would be -- the Executive, the State Department -- would be caught between the U.S. law, the Hickenlooper Amendment, which in effect mandated a cutoff of aid on the one hand, and its desire to have certain other things happen in Ecuador, like keeping the fishing

controversy under control, and encouraging the government to return to democracy. In other words, if that kind of a dispute had broken out, if Gulf had actually been confiscated, my ability as Ambassador to have any influence on what went on in Ecuador would just have been blown sky high.

So I immediately set about trying to avoid this from happening. The government gave the companies -- I think it was 60 days -- to comply with the law, and at the end of the 60 days they would be confiscated. Well, my approach was to, on the one hand, push the government and try to get it to address some of the company's grievances, which were real grievances, there's no doubt about it. On the other hand, I tried to press the company into compromising with the government. I had to work through the Department, I couldn't deal directly with the company's representatives in the U.S. because this involved a general policy issue. So I was dealing mainly through the Legal Adviser's Office (L), who in turn was dealing with Gulf headquarters.

I was trying to get the Department to tell Gulf that if Gulf broke the law, simply thumbed its nose at the law, the U.S. Government would consider itself not to be bound to try to defend Gulf's interests. I said that it was one thing to defend an American company's interests in which the company was being abused by a government. It was another thing to defend that company's interests if they were blatantly saying to the government, "We know there's a law that says so-and-so but we're not going to obey it."

Well, of course, the Department never quite wanted to go that far but I will say, the person in L who was handling the matter -- who now incidentally is the American Justice on the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Steve Schwebel -- handled the companies very, very well. I obviously didn't have tapes of his telephone conversations with the company people but my impression is that in a subtle, but unmistakable way, he pointed out to them that they were going to create serious difficulties for themselves if they insisted on this.

The company, for their part, squeezed all the leverage out of this that it could. They kept dragging their feet. What we wanted them to do was to agree that, if I could get the Ecuadorian government to offer them a framework for negotiating, for addressing specific grievances, then they in turn would say, "Okay, we're satisfied that the government is now going to seriously respond and we'll pay our debts." Anyway, they dragged this out until they were sure that they'd gotten the government to go as far as they could.

But even at that, at literally the eleventh hour, the very day before the deadline expired, they still hadn't agreed. So I finally called the fellow in Coral Gables who was -- I guess he was president of the Gulf subsidiary that covered Latin America -- and remonstrated with him for about a half an hour on the phone. So then they gave in. I think they'd already planned to. I could never be sure. At any rate, they paid what they owed which was, I think, maybe \$80 million, and then the government began seriously negotiating with them.

I was, of course, putting pressure on the government to make that kind of an offer. The man who was the Minister for Petroleum Affairs was part of the problem. He was very nationalistic, almost a xenophobic character. So I couldn't do much with him. But the man I was dealing with was the President of the country. He was the Admiral who was the first among equals among the three junta members. He had the title of President, and he and I had a very good relationship. We worked together very well, and as it turns out he was really responsible for keeping the military's commitments about returning the country to democratic rule.

So whenever this crisis would get to a sticking point and some minister would be gumming up the works, I had a channel by which I could see the President directly without going through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or anybody else, and I would do that. And then he would take care of things. So, as I say, I was trying to cajole the Ecuadorians on the one side and the American company on the other to come to an agreement. At any rate, at the eleventh hour, almost midnight of the last day, Gulf gave orders to its bank in New York to make the payments.

After that there were more after-shocks as it were, crises that would occur in the negotiations themselves. But, still, we managed to get through those and eventually Gulf sold out. The Ecuadorian government bought them out and they paid, I think, \$125 million and bought out their interests in the consortium, which left Texaco as a junior partner with the government.

Anyway, that crisis consumed most of my energies for the first six months of my tour.

The other issue which was something I worked on the entire time I was there, which was as I said only 22 months, was this question of returning the country to civilian rule. The problem there was that while the Admiral and the Navy were firm in that decision, the Army was the largest service and had the most fire power. The Army had some generals who weren't too sure that they really wanted to go out of the governing business, particularly, the Chief of Staff of the army had ambitions to run the country himself. Fortunately, he was not a charismatic leader. He didn't have full support within the Army. He had to contend with people under him who didn't really want him to get that power. Anyway, there was a sort of complicated game being played among the military, the three services, and obviously I only saw the tip of that iceberg; but I was able to weigh in at key times, both with the president, the Admiral, who was sympathetic, of course, and at times even directly with some of the army people, including the General who, we thought, wanted to take over -- just to get the word to him, "Look, you know, if you do this, forget about getting any help from the United States. You're going to be a pariah." We had some chips to play with there, because the Navy was very anxious to get some ships from us, some obsolete destroyers that they wanted to refit. So we held that bait out for them in case there was anybody in the Navy who had second thoughts. Anyway, it all worked out. The elections didn't take place until after I left there. I guess it was probably the following summer that they occurred.

Well, I probably should identify some of these people -- did you want me to identify some of the people I've been talking about just to make it clear? I mentioned that there had been an army

general who was president of Ecuador who had been deposed by his military colleagues before I got there. His name was Rodriguez Lara. And then the President with whom I was dealing was the Navy Chief of Staff, or CNO, whose name was Poveda, and he was the Navy representative on the junta but he was also given the post of president, so he was first among equals, you might say. The name of the Army Chief of Staff who we were pretty sure had aspirations to take over, was Duran. And then, in the elections after I left, the man who became president was a fellow by the name of Jaime Roldos; and he was killed in a plane crash within about a year of taking over. He was succeeded by the vice president and the country has been a democracy, up until now at any rate.

Q: During the period you were that you were there, under this military junta, were there any issues involving human rights, or involving drugs?

BLOOMFIELD: Yes, to both questions. Already, by that time -- and we're talking about more than ten years ago -- already the drug problem was a serious problem. The cocaine problem. As you probably know, although Colombia is the largest manufacturing area for cocaine, the raw material comes mainly from Bolivia and Peru, and Ecuador was a transshipment point. Ecuador, being just on the border of Colombia, a lot of cocaine would come up from Peru through Ecuador into Colombia. So while there wasn't, in those days, any coca grown in Ecuador -- not very much -- it was a transit point and so there was a lot of interest in Washington in that. And this is sort of a typical situation. The people in Washington who were concerned about the drug problem were single-minded about it, of course. They were impatient if the host government didn't seem to be doing everything that they thought it should be doing, and didn't take into account the fact that we were dealing with a society, and a government, and political institutions, which were far different than our own, and which were less efficient, which were very often corrupt. And that, therefore, without invading the country and taking it over, it was not always possible to do everything the way the Drug Enforcement Agency thought should be done.

At any rate, I was under a great deal of pressure to keep pushing the government at the very highest levels to do more on drugs. Now, it was quite obvious to me that there was a loop here. I mean the DEA agent in the embassy was obviously feeding information back to his headquarters saying that, "Well, you know, the Ecuadorians aren't doing this, and they're not doing that, and gee, if we could only get the Ambassador to weigh in more heavily..." DEA would then insist on that through the inter-agency group. But, more importantly, I think, they would go to their people in Congress, their Congressmen. And we had one guy from New York who was chairman of whatever subcommittee it is that deals with narcotics -- I don't think he's around anymore. In fact I think he's one of the people who ended up with some problem of his own, if I'm not mistaken, eventually. Wasn't re-elected. But, while he was there he was a very obnoxious character. He came to Ecuador at one point, and, you know, called me on the carpet, and claimed that I wasn't being diligent enough about following up on these things, which was not true. I mean I actually had taken it up with the President. I took it up periodically with the Minister of Justice who was a

military officer. We did everything that we could, but you can't order another government around. But that little detail is always lost on these kinds of people. So that was the drug problem.

On the human rights front, we had problems, although, fortunately, the government did not have a policy of abusing people. It wasn't a Pinochet type military regime, by any stretch of the imagination. But there were incidents where peoples' human rights were infringed upon. There were two that I remember particularly. I shouldn't laugh, I mean, one of them was pretty tragic. The other one was more farcical than anything else.

There was a bishop, an Ecuadorian bishop -- I think he was the bishop of Urubamba or some such and he was considered the Red Bishop because he was considered a leftist. Actually, I think, he was just somebody who was, you know, a reformer type. In that society, however, he was considered a radical. There was a meeting of bishops. I don't remember whether this was a meeting of the Ecuadorian Episcopate, or whether it was some special meeting. But, in any case, it took place in Urubamba, in this fellow's diocese and it was a meeting, as I recall, of all of the Ecuadorian bishops, and there were several American bishops who were invited, and who attended.

Now somebody in the intelligence services of the Ecuadorian Army had convinced this General Duran, the one I mentioned earlier that had presidential ambitions, that this was a conspiracy, that this was a bunch of clerical plotters. So they raided this meeting and arrested all these guys. It was the most stupid thing you can imagine. I don't remember whether they just sort of kept them locked up wherever they were, or whether they took them into Quito or what.

But as soon as I heard about this, I went in and made very strong protests to the Foreign Ministry. And, you know, the poor Foreign Minister, whom I knew, he obviously thought this was a real disaster, but he had to sort of grit his teeth and be dignified about it, and say, well, he'd have to take it under advisement... I mean, his official stance had to be, look, this was an action taken by the Ecuadorian Government in its sovereign capacity, and he wasn't going to apologize to me at that point for it. But the result of that representation was that they let the Americans go right away. But they insisted that they get out -- they expelled them from the country. So in order to make a gesture, a public gesture about this whole thing, I went out to the airport to see these guys off, and made sure my photograph was taken shaking their hands as they left. So that the Ecuadorian public would understand that as far as the American Ambassador was concerned, these two guys were respectable American clerics who were not participating in any plot. That was one incident, not a very -- as it turned out -- not a very serious one.

The other one was much more serious, and the details I don't think have ever come to light because this took place in a sugar mill down in the interior. There was a strike and some violence, I guess, among the strikers, and the -- I think it must have been the police -- went in there and killed a lot of people. And since there was still control over information in the country, it was never let out exactly what happened, or how many people died. But the information that we got

was that as many as 20 to 25 people in there had been killed by the police forces. In that case, you know, there were no grounds for the U.S. Ambassador to get involved directly. I did express to the government that if this were true, it would be a matter of serious concern. But they never admitted the whole story.

But human rights was not a kind of continuing problem there, because, as I said, by this time the government was committed to going back to democratic rule. So you had to give them the benefit of the doubt, to some extent. The newspapers were relatively free to report, and the ordinary citizen was not, you know, abused in his personal freedom, and so forth. He could be. I mean he didn't have much protection if they wanted to, but it was not that kind of a government, put it that way.

MICHAEL W. COTTER

Political Officer

Quito (1976-1979)

Ambassador Michael W. Cotter was born in Madison, Wisconsin on August 1, 1943. He attended Georgetown University, followed by the University of Barcelona in Spain. He entered the Foreign Service in 1968 and as a member of the Foreign Service, served in countries including Vietnam, Bolivia, Ecuador, Turkey, Zaire, Chile, and Turkmenistan. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 12, 1998.

Q: *You were in Quito from 1976 to when?*

COTTER: 1979. Dick Bloomfield was the ambassador when I was there, and Ed Corr, when I arrived, was the political counselor, and then moved up to be deputy chief of mission. Gerry Sutton was the political counselor. There were three of us in the political section. We would switch portfolios, but I generally had political-military issues (by this time, I was identified as a political-military officer) and external political affairs. Ecuador was under military government. The military must have taken over earlier, in 1976. It was a military junta, composed of three officers. They had taken power to prevent the election of a fellow named Assad Bucaram. One of the interesting things about Latin America is the inordinate, percentage-wise, presence in political life in many of the countries of immigrants from the Levant. The Latin Americans tend to call them all "Turcos," "Turks." They are mostly Syrians and Palestinians, and interestingly enough mostly Christians, people who had left with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, very often in the 1920s. Families like the Bucarams, obviously, were from this group. Carlos Menem, President of Argentina, is also from this group. It was a very active political group, and a very

high profile political group, given its small percentage of the population. Anyhow, Bucaram was seen as a dangerous populist. Having tried a number of constitutional ways to keep him from being elected president, including questioning whether he was actually born in Ecuador, the military ended up overthrowing the system. So again, we have a very active political life. You saw a lot, still at that time, of military governments being able to play the anti-Communist card with us in order to maintain a particular flow of assistance. That changed a little bit when Jimmy Carter came in. Of course, that was about the same time I arrived. The main issue I remember dealing with was an interesting one. We are not supposed to talk about classified things on this, but I guess this is now 20 years, so we will call this unclassified. But the Carter administration came up with an idea that I thought was an absolute disaster and one of the few pieces I have ever written was a piece for the Open Forum Magazine on it.

Q: Did human rights play any part, particularly in Ecuador? This was the Carter period. Was it a problem?

COTTER: Well, you had a military government, of course, which by definition violated human rights. Frankly, there was a lot of talk about human rights, but the policy was not articulated to the extent it is today. What has always surprised me in my career is that the Reagan Administration did more to institutionalize our human rights policy. I think the Democrats were very afraid that when Reagan came in, they would abandon that. The Reagan Administration didn't abandon it. It did institutionalize it. It was not institutionalized in Carter years. It was a matter of importance, but in fact it wasn't very clear what we were doing with this, except that we had an interest in it. We objected to the absence of political rights, of having military government and no democratic government. We pressed very hard on the Ecuadorian military to commit to a timetable to return to civilian government, which as I said, they did. I'm trying to remember whether we started doing human rights reports that early. I think we probably did.

Q: The Congress mandated it. I am pretty sure they were doing it about that time.

COTTER: The interesting thing with this has always been, of course, our definition of human rights as it applies to that report. Other countries have noted, for instance, that the U.S. doesn't consider the right to work or the right to salary or the right to medical benefits as a human right. We focus more on the political rights and not on economic rights. Anyhow, I transferred out of Ecuador in 1979. I was looking at that point career wise, professionally, at the prospect of becoming an Andean expert. I ought to say about dependency theory, one of the interesting things I did, having come out of Stanford, was that Dick Bloomfield was very interested in professional improvement. There was a big push in the Department at that point on continuing professional education and finding ways of doing this at post. They were pressing, among other things, posts to take the Great Issues series. Having come out of Stanford, I ended up being tabbed to run this for Quito. So, we generally would do brown bag lunches at the ambassador's

residence once a month. I would prepare materials and get them out to people in advance. I decided to do a session on dependency theory, an idea that at least people in the embassy ought to have some idea of what it was. Of course, you can imagine the reaction because no one was very enthusiastic about this. It was difficult for me because I wasn't a particular proponent of it, although I found myself in the situation where I ended up having to defend the pieces I wasn't very comfortable with, simply because everyone else was against it. I had lots of materials. I would copy materials and circulate them to people ahead of time, and then we would have a luncheon discussion. It was a very useful thing. It is something we got away from very quickly, and something that only works if the ambassador really spends a lot of time on it. It is good because it helps people get out of their little molds and think broader thoughts. Something, also, however, that is a little bit less necessary now, when globally you have much more access to information than you did in those days. Some people aren't quite as isolated intellectually at some of these posts as we were in the late 1970s. In any event, I was looking at becoming an Andean expert. I could see my career progressing downward, altitudinally, from La Paz to Quito, and then you go into Bogota, at 8,400, and then you would get an excursion at 7,600. But I had gotten to the point in Latin America where at some point I was going to strangle someone. While as an intellectual thing dependency theory didn't go very far in the 1970s, the basic idea underlying it was very popular. That was that nothing they do affects themselves. Americans control everything, and everything is our fault. After the umpteenth discussion with an Ecuadorian, supposedly an intellectual, telling me that everything that happened in this country was our fault and they had never done anything themselves to deserve this, I was going to stand someone up and throttle him. It is incredible how destructive that kind of a thing is because you simply don't have to have any responsibility for your actions.

FREDERICK A. BECKER

Labor Officer

Quito (1982-1985)

Frederick A. Becker was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1943. He attended Washington College in St. Louis followed by the University of California, Berkeley where he pursued his graduate studies at Claremont Graduate School. He entered the Foreign Service in 1975 and as a member of the Foreign Service, served in countries including Romania, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, and Nicaragua. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 16, 2004.

BECKER: In '82 I arrived in Ecuador.

Q: Did you feel as you went out that the hand of the AFL-CIO was resting on your shoulder? In other words, that it was going to be somebody to whom you had to pay due or basis or something like that?

BECKER: I had heard this in Washington, but it was never expressed in so many words. I quickly found out when you go out as a labor officer you are an oddball in the embassy. You don't belong to anybody, nobody really understands what you do, and nobody really appreciates where it fits into the overall scheme of embassy priorities. I was already pretty well settled in Quito when the new ambassador arrived. As part of our initial consultations, he asked me what I did. I briefly described my job. He said his impression of labor officers and of how the U.S. pursued labor relations abroad was like porcupines making love. You do it very carefully and very gingerly to avoid dire consequences. Then he gave me this advice. "Keep doing what you're doing, but I don't want the first hint of any trouble between you and your labor constituents that could bring disrepute on me or the embassy." It was not a sterling endorsement of the labor function. That said, Ecuador was an interesting environment in which the labor movement was deeply divided among unions federations, only some of which were, shall we say, AFL-CIO constituents.

Q: We've put quite a bit of money into it.

BECKER: We'd put a lot of money into establishing a U.S. labor footprint in Latin America. At that time nearly every country had an AFL-CIO institute, headed by a U. S. citizen country representative. The parent institute was AIFLD, American Institute for Free Labor Development. AID was always uncomfortable with its responsibility for the AIFLD program, whose budget was centrally administered by AID Washington. AIFLD was officially a contracted agency, but because it had so much independent clout in Washington, it didn't act like one of AID's usual dependencies or supplicants and didn't feel bound by AID rules or oversight. So there was constant friction between the AID mission director, who didn't have that much actual control over the local AIFLD operation. There were constant points of friction, tests of who controlled what, how programs should be structured, and whether they would be consistent with other AID programs in country. The AID program in Ecuador was very large, and AIFLD was viewed by many AID officers as money down the drain. AID directors and program officers were just as happy seeing someone else, in this case the labor officer, take an interest in AIFLD. AID often left practical oversight in my hands, even though I had no fiduciary responsibility. I was expected to be the broker, the referee or the policeman in any dispute that arose with AIFLD. To paraphrase the ambassador's views, I was supposed to make sure the porcupines made love according to the rules.

In addition to the trade unions sponsored or cultivated by AIFLD, there was a Christian socialist trade union confederation. These unions were another manifestation of liberation theology in Latin America. They were loosely sponsored by the Catholic Church. They were less likely to be industrial unions; but more often traditional artisan or agricultural cooperatives, small merchant

or vendor associations, or indigenous groups. In a less developed country like Ecuador these can have a great deal of influence.

Then there were the Marxists, the communist led labor confederation. So, there was a three-way, interwoven competition for the loyalty of workers and influence on government policy. It was an exciting place to do labor work, which was only part of my portfolio. I also had a lot of internal political reporting, similar to what I did in Brazil.

Q: You were there from '82 to?

BECKER: '85.

Q: '85. I think this is probably a good place to stop before we get into this and we'll pick this up when you were in Ecuador '82 to '85. You're the labor officer. We haven't talked about what the situation the basic situation was in Ecuador at the time and then we will pick up sort of how you mentioned the three labor unions, how they were operating, were they delivering to the workers or were these sort of basic political organizations that really weren't representing the workers and how the embassy worked and all that. How's that?

BECKER: Sounds good.

Q: Today is the 3rd of December, 2004. We're off to Ecuador, '82 to '85. You heard the questions I was asking, what was the situation there Rick when you arrived?

BECKER: Let me take a slight detour. Yesterday the Washington Post reported on page 23 the assassination of a U.S. labor organizer in El Salvador.

Q: I saw that.

BECKER: Page 23. Recalling that in the same epoch that I was working in Ecuador, U.S. and local labor organizers were under great physical threat in many Latin American countries. In fact, three organizers were assassinated in El Salvador around 1981. That was front page news then. The incident was portrayed as part of the contest between the forces of light and darkness in Central America by the Reagan administration, which of course was indifferent if not hostile to worker rights at home. Now the topic would be relegated to page 23. Labor rights, irrespective of the great Cold War contest, is a real human rights issue in much of the Third World, particularly in Latin America where there is growing political awareness and activism and where all kinds of groups exist to either exploit workers or else feed their frustrations. Ecuador had emerged from a prolonged military dictatorship in '79. When I arrived, the first democratically elected government was in power. The 1984 presidential elections in Ecuador would be the first test of democratic succession. Our own national elections in 1984 were a referendum on Ronald Reagan's first term of office.

To reprise, there were three major trade union movements in Ecuador and a lot of independent splinter groups. There was a communist trade union movement generally conceded as sympathetic to and influenced by Havana and Moscow. There was also a Maoist splinter group oriented toward Beijing at odds with the dominant communist organization. There was a

Christian Democratic or Christian Socialist labor organization, which claimed inspiration from the Catholic Church's liberation theology of the '60s. This organization sought to mobilize artisans, peasant cooperatives, the self-employed, even small merchants, as well as labor unions, anybody who would pay dues and boost membership. Then there was the social democratic labor movement which, if not founded and structured by the AFL-CIO, was certainly heavily subsidized and under the influence of U.S. trade union principles and practices. There was a great deal of territory to be sowed, regardless of the great contest for ideological superiority and supremacy. In fact, humanitarian concerns and human rights were much more valid than anti-communism as a foundation for pursuing U.S. objectives in the Ecuadorian labor movement. It really came down to trying to moderate the political ambitions of so-called democratic labor leaders, while empowering local unions to deliver essential services to their members, in lieu of fickle, manipulative populist governments or other political movements that did not have the worker's interests at heart. I spent a lot of time working arm-in-arm with the local AFL-CIO representative meeting with and cultivating trade union leaders on behalf of the U.S. government.

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador has two very important political parties: the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and the National Conciliation Party (PCN). Though they have similar ideals, one represents the middle class while the other represents the military. In 1979 a coup d'état brought the Revolutionary Government Junta of El Salvador to power. It nationalized many private companies and took over much privately owned land. The purpose of this new junta was to stop the revolutionary movement already underway in response to Duarte's stolen election. Jose Napoleon Duarte was mayor of San Salvador from 1964 to 1970, and then ran for president in 1972. He was defeated by the ex-Minister of Interior, Col. Arturo Armando Molina, in an election that was widely viewed as fraudulent. Duarte was kicked out of the country for supporting a revolt that protested the election fraud and didn't come back until 1979.

HENRY E. CATTO, JR.

Ambassador

El Salvador (1971-1973)

Henry E. Catto, Jr. attended Williams College before being appointed as deputy representative to OAS. He subsequently served as ambassador to El Salvador, Chief of Protocol, and permanent representative to the United Nations in Europe. Catto was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.

Q: And then you were appointed Ambassador to El Salvador.

CATTO: Correct.

Q: How did that come about?

CATTO: I don't really know. I had let the White House know that I after a couple of years was ready to move along and would like a mission. And in some mysterious way, the methods of which I never found out, one day I got a call that said I was going to be named Ambassador to El Salvador. I'm delighted that it worked out that way.

Q: Had you sort of indicated that you would prefer a Latin American post?

CATTO: Oh, yes.

Q: *Understood?*

CATTO: Absolutely.

Q: *How does this work? I mean, whom would you talk to to let it be known?*

CATTO: I talked to Peter Flanagan in the White House. He was an Assistant to the President at the time.

Q: *So he was the contact for this.*

CATTO: Exactly.

Q: *When you went to El Salvador, did you have any agenda in mind of things that you particularly wanted to do?*

CATTO: No. Absolutely not. I had no preconceptions. I had been to the country on a trip that I took when I was in the OAS delegation. I took a tour around, well I guess I went to Salvador and Argentina and Brazil briefly, to get a taste of the Latin political scene when I first went to the OAS. And then I, of course, to my surprise, came back to Salvador as Ambassador two years later.

Q: *Did you get any real instruction as far as what you were supposed to do from the State Department?*

CATTO: No.

Q: *Just go down there and--?*

CATTO: And try not to bother us too much.

Q: *How about how to be an ambassador.*

CATTO: The only thing that was really useful was a compendium of experiences that previous ambassadors had put together, pretty much on their own, entitled This Worked for Me.

Q: *As a matter of fact, behind that book is a little bit of the genesis of this project, because I think this is a major piece of statecraft as far as how to do this. I think it's a very useful book.*

CATTO: Does it still exist?

Q: *It still exists and people talk about it, but I don't think they've republished it.*

CATTO: Really? In all those years?

Q: *But it's a very good book.*

CATTO: Oh it was a terrific book. Very, very helpful because having never served in an embassy abroad before I really didn't know what was expected.

Q: *Even for professionals, it still is very useful as you move up. But then there was no course or major briefing before you went down?*

CATTO: Oh, sure. Yes. You went and called on the Secretary of Commerce and on the Director of the CIA and it seems to me there were some briefings at FSI and this and that. But it was all fairly slapdash.

Q: *You felt this was rather pro forma?*

CATTO: Pro forma, it clearly was pro forma. Everybody went through it and it was certainly not in depth.

Q: *When you arrived in El Salvador, could you describe how you found--what the situation in the country was at the time you came. We're talking about when in 1971?*

CATTO: About when in 1971?

Q: *Yes.*

CATTO: October, I think.

Q: *October of 1971. What was sort of the political, economic situation of El Salvador?*

CATTO: Well, the economic situation had deteriorated because of the paralysis of the Central American common market. That had really worked, and worked well, and the five countries were--the trade was flowing among them and it was a huge success. Unhappily the brief was bitter war of 1969 between Honduras and El Salvador--

Q: This is the soccer war?

CATTO: The so-called soccer war, which if there were ever a misnomer that was it.

Q: How did this happen? Why was it called the soccer war?

CATTO: Well, it was called the soccer war because slowly building tensions over the years between the two countries exploded into violence which led to war between the two at a soccer game between Honduras and Salvador. What it really was was a demographic war, maybe the first for all I know, because so many Salvadorans, given as they are to being very hard workers and given the fact that Salvador was and is hopelessly overpopulated, they seeped over the border into Honduras in vast numbers, taking jobs that the Hondurans, perhaps more languid people, wanted or thought they ought to have themselves. And they resented the presence of this foreign enclave along their borders. And the soccer game was the trigger that led to a brief, bloody war.

Q: When you arrived, what was the situation between Honduras and El Salvador?

CATTO: There were no relations. The OAS had been working on bringing about a settlement of the boarder. There had been a long festering border dispute as to exactly where the frontier lay between the two. Relations were bad.

Q: What was the government like in El Salvador when you were there, when you first arrived? I know there was an important election later.

CATTO: When we first arrived, the government was--the president was a man named Arturo Armando Molina, who had been a career military officer and was one of a line of presidents that belonged to the established party that had run the country for many, many years. It was passed from one military officer to the other, always the officer because of constitutional reasons would resign and then be elected as a civilian. But it was always an officer. Take it back, Molina was the one that was elected. The president when I got there was Fidel Sanchez. And Molina in a fraudulent election was--

Q: '72, yes, that's when he came in.

CATTO: --was elected president.

Q: What was the role of, was it the oligarchy. I understand there were two major powers, one was the military and one was the, I don't know, the 14 or however many families there were, wealthy families.

CATTO: There were about 100 wealthy families. Time magazine I think it was decided there were 14 families and the idea stuck with the media. But the relation was changing because in the '30s and '20s and earlier the power of the wealthy was tremendous. But in the '40s and '50s and '60s, as the economy grew, the state became a whole lot more powerful than it ever had been and the balance of power clearly shifted. There was a time at which the wealth of an individual family might have been a major chunk of the GNP, but that was no longer the case when I got there. The government clearly was powerful. The oligarchy sat in their *fincas* in the country and-

Q: *These are ranches?*

CATTO: Exactly. Mostly coffee plantations. And enjoyed the good life, eyeing nervously the military, who by then as I suggested, they were running the country and the government of the country had a whole lot more power than any individual family and a whole lot more than all of them put together. But the military mostly let them alone so there was an uneasy truce between them. In my judgment anyway, the idea that the military--correction, that the oligarchy ran the country was not correct. It was run by the military.

Q: *Where did the military officers come from?*

CATTO: They came from lower middle class homes. The military was the escalator for a bright and ambitious lower middle class type person to rise to the top of Salvadoran society. Conceivably he might marry into one of the aristocratic families, but much more likely he would ride up the military escalator and begin to enjoy the benefits of privilege.

Q: *What was the role of the companies who would buy the coffee, I don't know, it was United Brands, or United Fruit.*

CATTO: Not a factor. Salvador was not like Honduras or Costa Rica or Nicaragua in that coffee was the main crop. It was not a monopoly situation at all. They were always struggling to sell their coffee in the world markets against Brazil and Colombia and Mexico and some of the other coffee producers.

Q: *So there was no major firm, especially an American firm, that--*

CATTO: American investments as a whole when I got there it seems to me were less than \$100 million. It was a very minor--American companies were minor players on the Salvadoran scene.

Q: *Well, how did you find the embassy staff? I'm not talking about did you have enough people,*

but I mean, as far as their competence and--

CATTO: Very good, for the most part. Obviously some were more able than others. But generally the country team I thought was good. I made good friends among them, felt that I was supported even though I was an *auslander*, a non-career officer. From the very beginning I got guidance and support that was entirely loyal, as far as I could tell.

And of course one interesting thing was that it was a joy to work in that embassy because it was so beautifully done architecturally, the grounds, everything was pleasing to the eye. I'm sorry to say that the earthquake of, what, almost two years ago now, just destroyed it.

Q: And then of course the war there has not helped at all.

CATTO: No, the war has not helped. At one point a rocket was fired into the meeting room at the embassy.

Q: This was during the--

CATTO: During the height of the troubles that came along in the '70s and '80s.

Q: But you found, for example, your DCM was a good team player and--.

CATTO: Terrific guy named Terry Leonhardy. Went on to become Consul General in Guadalajara and was kidnapped, a case that was famous at the time.

Q: Yes, I remember that. Well, what were you trying-- what did we want out of El Salvador?

CATTO: Mostly votes in the U.N., cooperation on the world scene. It was for me a wonderful cautionary tale on the inability of the United States to affect what goes on. You hear people say, well, we ought to be able to get support from our European allies; they ought to go along with us. Hell, I would go call on the Foreign Minister and say, would you please vote for us on U.N. Resolution 242 or whatever it might have been. And they'd say, well, maybe, but maybe not. And often as not they would come down on the not side because they just couldn't have cared less, on most political issues, what Uncle Sam thought. Now when it got down to assistance, both military and developmental, yes indeed they would listen to us. But the assistance and the, quote, friendly relations, had very little to do with the way the Salvadorans would vote in international fora. They went their own way.

And of course we never pushed them vigorously like we are, for example, pushing the Panamanians today. We never really had to lean on them for anything, nothing of grave

importance came along. But they were pretty independent.

Q: What did the Salvadorans want from us?

CATTO: Money.

Q: In what form?

CATTO: Technology transfer. Educational assistance. During the course of my time there they were conducting an interesting nationwide experiment in educational television in which because there were many migrant coffee workers, they installed a nationwide curriculum so that the children of the coffee workers, if they began to do the coffee picking in the eastern part of the country and worked their way west, no matter where a child was for a month or two months or whatever, the curriculum would be the same and all of it was tied to television. It was a source of great pride to them that they had this national set-up which leaned heavily on television to teach the basics of education.

Q: This seems to be, must have been inspired more by the military? Because I would imagine that the wealthy families would prefer to keep the peasants relatively ignorant and docile.

CATTO: It was sponsored by the government. And by the bureaucracy. I think you can overplay the role of the military in things like the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy and other things. The military had its own problems worrying about the Hondurans and so forth. So I would say it was more a matter of the bureaucracy, not the military. And I don't really recall, but to the best of my recollection the oligarchy was proud, like everybody else, of the strides that they had made in education. I don't think there was any conscious attempt to keep the peasants ignorant on their part.

Q: What sort of aid were we giving to the military at that time?

CATTO: Not a lot, mostly training. Training in weapons use. The Congress about that time cut off some of the police training, which I thought was extraordinarily unwise just because in some Latin American countries police had been involved in human rights violations. This was upsetting.

Q: Probably more reflecting Argentina and--

CATTO: And Uruguay in particular. But, as I say, I think that was an error on the part of Congress because certainly in El Salvador the American police officials that we had there helping with police training were people of very high quality who only wanted to teach them that

you don't have to beat people up in order to get cooperation and to enforce the laws.

Q: So this is sort of an example of having an overall law passed by Congress which really didn't pertain to many other places.

CATTO: Exactly. Out of ignorance and good intentions really doing harm when they were trying to do good. The law of unintended effect was one of the first laws I learned about.

JOHN A. BUSHNELL

Deputy Assistant Secretary, ARA

Washington, DC (1977-1982)

Mr. Bushnell was born in New York State and educated at Yale University and McMurray College. An Economic Specialist, he served primarily in senior level positions at Latin American posts, including Bogota, Santo Domingo, San Jose and Buenos Aires, dealing primarily with Economic and International Trade issues. An assignment to the Staff of the National Security Council was followed by tours as Deputy Chief of Mission at Buenos Aires, Chargé d'Affaires at Panama City, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Mr. Bushnell was the recipient of several awards for outstanding service. Mr. Bushnell was interviewed by John Harter in 1997

Q: You were particularly concerned with El Salvador during the latter part of the Carter Administration. First, could you outline the historical context of what was happening in El Salvador at that time?

BUSHNELL: Perhaps I can best start the El Salvador story by what is my first recollection of dealing with that country in January or February of 1978. As I was trying to get a better understanding of the various complex situations we were dealing with, I would have meetings with all the people involved, the country officer or officers, the country director, other people that were knowledgeable within the Department and sometimes from CIA and Defense as well. I would explore not only what had happened but what might influence events in a direction we wanted – such as improved individual human rights or a movement to free elections. I remember the frustration of my first meeting on El Salvador. There seemed to be no sign of early improvement of human rights, nor any options for us to get such movement going. El Salvador's history is unique in this hemisphere. El Salvador is a small country, and there is no open frontier, unlike Nicaragua where, as I have said, people with ambition could move out to the frontier,

establish their own farms, and earn a modest living. In El Salvador most of the good agricultural land was controlled by a small number of families who were largely intermarried, called the 14 Families but actually several hundred adults. These families also owned most large businesses. This oligarchy tended to be extremely far right, and it controlled the army, partly because its own sons and sons-in-law were senior officers, but also in a number of other ways. Perhaps the current history of El Salvador started with a Communist revolt in 1932, which was really a peasant revolt. It seems to be accepted that there was substantial Communist influence, but intellectual influence not a role of Russia.

Q: There was a depression...

BUSHNELL: Yes, although I don't think El Salvador was any more depressed in 1932 than it was in other years. Peasants, who essentially couldn't feed their families -- at least that was the view -- rose up and tried to take over agricultural land particularly in western El Salvador. They were put down very brutally with many killed. Estimates were around 10,000. I don't think anybody knows. The result was to polarize the society so that a great many people were either on the far right, believing an authoritarian structure was necessary to keep the situation under control and to try to make economic progress, or on the extreme left, believing the whole society had to change in some revolutionary way, not necessarily communist. From 1932 to 1979 the extremes dominated rural El Salvador and national politics. The right maintained control. In rural areas a local power structure developed. In many places what most resembled a gang of thugs developed, perhaps paid by the large landowners. These local enforcers were loosely organized on a national basis in something called ORDEN. These thugs brutalized any peasant who challenged them or the landowners. Sometimes the thugs were members of the local police, but in many cases they were more a volunteer auxiliary police or military, usually with some link to the military but not on any military organization chart. The main role of ORDEN at the national level appears to have been to keep the various local ORDEN groups from fighting each other - a territorial division. Certainly the national ORDEN organization made no attempt to discipline or direct the autonomous local units. El Salvador had fairly long periods of apparent stability. The general who put down the 1932 revolt ruled until 1944, protecting the selfish interests of the leading families. Then there was a succession of either generals or politicians from the far right in cahoots with the military and the oligarchy. There was something that passed for elections, certainly not honest, free elections.

Q: Were there any interactions between El Salvador and Nicaragua, or totally separate situations?

BUSHNELL: We didn't see any particular interaction before the departure of Somoza except that the Salvadoran military provided some supplies to Somoza when he desperately needed

them. Only later did we learn that full units of Salvadoran guerrillas had gained considerable battle experience fighting and training with the Sandinistas.

Finally the first crack in the Salvadoran iceberg, and a big one, came in October of 1979, three months after Somoza fell. A group of officers led by lieutenant colonels staged a coup. They claimed they saw what had happened in Nicaragua with the complete destruction of the Guard and the execution or jailing on most officers that were caught. They said El Salvador was on a route which was inevitably leading the same way. Thus they said they had to open up the political and economic situation. Although I don't recall them ever saying it to me – they may have – what they also saw was an enemy emerging nearby in communist Nicaragua that was going to be a base, a supply and training base, for insurgents in El Salvador. In short the recent example of Nicaragua and the nearby support base in Nicaragua made the next revolt in El Salvador look life-threatening to many Salvadorian military. Any earlier beliefs that the U.S. would assure a communist takeover did not happen were erased by the Sandinista takeover. The coup was followed by a major shakeup in the military with the exile, retirement, or reassignment of some 10% of the officer corp.

Q: Also, there is more attention being paid to all this by the American press.

BUSHNELL: There was not much press attention to El Salvador in 1979. El Salvador was pretty much unknown to the American press until the assassination of Archbishop Romero in March of 1980. But we in ARA were delighted with this coup. I don't recall that we had any advance word, but it certainly seemed that this group of younger officers wanted to move the country in the direction that we thought would lead to human rights progress and democracy. The Army manifesto of October 15 denounced abuses of power by government officials and proclaimed a commitment to fundamental social reform and a transition to a democratic political system. Moderate civilians were invited to join the military officers in the government.

We picked up contact with the new leaders. At one point Bowdler flew to Texas, which was a convenient half-way meeting place, to talk with some of the military officers. We encouraged them to open up to the democratic political forces. The far left staged violent disturbances and called for the immediate dissolution of the security forces. The right was planning a counter coup. Lacking experience, this group of officers who had broken the iceberg saw their junta gradually disintegrating, unable to control the violence or implement reforms. In January 1980 The Christian Democratic Party, led by Duarte, announced that it would form a new government to implement reforms. An overwhelming majority of the military officers, aware of the danger of civil war a la Nicaragua, accepted the Christian Democratic program including land reform.

The Christian Democrats wanted to change the basic structure of Salvadoran society. They focused on two major things that needed change. First, they wanted to take land away from the 14 Families and distribute it to the workers that made the land productive. Secondly, they wanted to nationalize the banks, because they saw the banks as the other main means through which the

oligarchy controlled the economy. They also wanted to nationalize the export of coffee and sugar. Government control of coffee exports, the main crop and export, seemed to me a bad idea because it would become an invitation for corruption and inefficient bureaucracy. The coffee market internationally was a free market and that competitive situation was a major restraint on Salvadoran private exporters. Land and banking reform were necessary to change the power structure and give democracy a chance to survive. The key issue was the speed of change. The political situation argued for very rapid change before the oligarchy could counterattack. But the practical economic situation argued for going slow. Who would manage the new cooperatives taking over the large farms? How would the cooperatives get credit, lease needed machinery, assure the cooperative members put in a fair amount of work? Most of the professional farm managers were part of or associated with the oligarchy. Similar practical considerations applied to the banks. Would the rich be allowed to withdraw their funds? How would politically inspired loans which would not be repaid be avoided? Given the unexpected opening for major change and perhaps a little traumatized because we had not made the opening in Nicaragua work, we tried to help as much as possible while encouraging a staged approach to limit economic disruption.

I would emphasize that these revolutionary changes in El Salvador – the coup, the Duarte government, the land and banking reforms – came about solely through the efforts of Salvadorans. They may have guessed they would get support and assistance from the United States, but unlike Nicaragua where we played a major role in unifying the democratic forces and in the negotiation with Somoza, the Salvadorans did this themselves. We were interested and supportive spectators. Thus we had no basis for criticizing the land or banking reform except to help make it actually work.

The March 1980 land reform decree converted all large estates, more than 1,235 acres, into peasant cooperatives. Later stages were to distribute medium-size properties and provide that landless farmers could claim title to land they were themselves cultivating. By the end of April 1980 over 250 large estates had become producer cooperatives. The fundamental and large peaceful change in El Salvador was emphasized by the army's protection of government technicians and the peasant beneficiaries on these large properties. The AFL-CIO helped us quickly organize assistance from American unions and cooperatives. But at first Duarte's government was moving very fast without much skill in what it was doing. There was limited ability to manage big farms, and in most cases the coops didn't keep the hired professional managers that the oligarchy had on the farms. However, the reform was modified in practical ways which made it go smoother. For example, the previous owners were allowed to retain their homesteads, i.e. houses in which they sometimes lived, and quite a few acres around them. Subsequent stages of the reform went slowly and soon became bogged down. I liked the land-to-the-tiller program to move leased and sharecropped land to the workers who by definition knew how to produce, but this program required more resources in terms of land surveying, legal work, and other organization than were available. Also much sharecropped land was in more remote

areas where ORDEN and/or the guerrillas were disruptive of any such reforms and where violence was increasing. The banking reform was also chaotically managed. But the government took only partial ownership of the banks, and most professionals in the banks were retained and gradually got the banks back on a sound basis.

For El Salvador, where for over 50 years nothing had been changing, these were revolutionary, tremendous changes. This was more constructive change than we were seeing anywhere else in Latin America in terms of addressing what seemed to be the real underlying problems. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the Duarte government and much of the military, violence increased sharply caused by both the right and the left. Of course the oligarchy was unhappy with its loss of land and wealth, but members of those groups such as ORDEN and some of the right-wing political parties were even more unhappy at their loss of power to what they labeled a communist government. They tended to strike out almost at random. In March just after the first land reform decree Archbishop Romero was shot dead while saying mass; he had supported Duarte and reforms. Other priests and missionaries were killed as well as more than 60 Christian Democratic mayors and local officials. Although most of this killing seemed to come from the right and ORDEN, the guerrillas and the left greatly stepped up urban demonstrations which often became violent. In rural areas the left killed not only their ORDEN opponents but also Christian Democrat officials because they saw that success of the Duarte reforms would deny the communists and far left an opportunity to take-over the country.

The devastating economic effect violence can have was brought home to me by an experience even before the October 1979 Salvador coup. In late 1978 and early 1979 the far left targeted some of the unions that, with AFL-CIO help, had gotten a foothold in the Salvadoran assembly plants which produced for export to the U.S. under Sections 806 and 807. These leftish union organizers, who seemed more intent on destroying the 806/807 industries than in helping the workers who had newly found productive jobs with regular paychecks, adopted a very destructive tactic. They would seize the plant and kidnap the plant manager, who was often an American, and hold him until he agreed to gigantic increases in wages and benefits. There was often some violence. I don't recall that any American was ever killed in this process, but it was a pretty violent and dangerous situation, particularly since in most of these plants there were relatively few union workers. The union might have 40 workers in a plant of 400, and the 40 workers, or their leaders and some outside helpers, would promote this extortion. In a couple of cases the other workers threw the leftish leaders out violently. In addition to the actual take-overs and kidnappings such action was threatened in many other plants. This violence changed the economic situation. These assembly plants were the fastest growing source of new employment in El Salvador, and this violence not only stopped new investment dead but also resulted in many plants removing their American managers and often even picking up and moving the entire plant to another country, leaving hundreds of poor Salvadoran women without jobs.

In the U.S. there is an organization called the Committee for 806.30 and 807, which is a trade group that lobbies to protect and expand these trade provisions. Members are the firms that

invest in these assembly plants around the world and some of the retailers that buy from them. This Committee asked me to be the keynote speaker at their fall 1979 meeting in New York in mid-September. At dinner I was seated at the head table with the senior representatives, generally the presidents or chief executive officers, of the 12 to 15 most important and largest members. In the course of the conversation I asked them, if they added up all the employees their companies had worldwide, what it would total. They did a rough adding up, and it came to over half a million people worldwide that they employed. Then I asked them, if they were opening a new operation, where would they go on the basis of what they knew at the time – and it was their business to find out where you could go to do things cheapest and most effectively because that was the key to making money in their business. There was almost a complete consensus that, aside from this violent element, El Salvador was the best place. Salvadorans were hard workers. You could get skilled people, the skills that they needed such as machine operators and repair people. Transportation to and from the States was good. Everything was better in El Salvador than in the Philippines or the Dominican Republic or other places that competed for this investment. But there already had been a few cases of factories being taken over, and this violence punctured the Salvadoran boom. No one wanted to go into that sort of a situation. In fact, it became obvious to me that the reason that they had asked me to speak was that they wanted to get a State Department assessment of whether the Salvador situation was going to get better or worse.

Q: So what did you say?

BUSHNELL: As I recall, I had to say that we did not identify much movement in the Salvadoran situation. However, to give a little light at the end of the tunnel I talked a little about what had happened in Nicaragua and said that the military and others in El Salvador were watching their neighbor closely and they might well conclude that El Salvador needed to make some changes before it was too late. At that point I had no intelligence or anything except common sense to make this point. After the October coup a month later, one of the 806/807 executives called to thank me for saying as much as I could about upcoming developments.

By the middle of 1980 reforms were well underway in El Salvador, but violence continued to increase. Guerrilla activity was growing rapidly, and the Army did not appear to know how to cope with it. Production of coffee and other products from the new cooperatives was substantially less than the farms produced in previous years. The whole economy was slipping, and urban demonstrations continued. It was a shaky but still encouraging situation, at least in comparison with the previous years.

It was this Salvadoran situation that began my long-lasting struggles with Senator Helms. Senator Helms was one of the few people in Congress who paid any attention to what was going on in El Salvador in 1980, and he was ferociously against the land reform, particularly, and the banking reform too. Not long after the land reform was begun, probably in connection with the assistance budget, I testified before him and tried to explain the need for the land reform.

Q: Was this the first time you interacted with him?

BUSHNELL: No. I testified before Helms when I was at Treasury and for ARA in 1978 and/or 1979, but the issues had never been terribly contentious. In some respects I set myself up by taking the position that the land reform and the banking reform were needed to change the explosive trajectory of Salvadoran history and avoid a social explosion that would give the communists just the opening they were seeking. Of course, I also defended the AID programs that we were setting up to make the precipitous reforms work better; the prominent role of the AFL/CIO in these programs was a red flag for Helms. He launched several attacks on me and the program. He argued that it was grossly unfair to take away the land that families had worked hard for generations to develop and that the new cooperatives were destroying the coffee trees and undermining the economy. He said idiots like me in the State Department had no idea of what it took to produce things, and we also could not even identify communists before our nose as proven in Nicaragua. He went on at great length. Finally he said the people of North Carolina could never understand taking land away from the people that owned it; that was just against what America stood for. I was not being as cautious as I might have been, although I don't regret it, but I responded that, if almost all the good land in North Carolina were owned by 14 families, things might look very different to the people of North Carolina. This really set him off. How could I say all the land in North Carolina was owned by 14 families? How dare I suggest that land be taken away from any hard working and under-paid farmer in North Carolina? Of course, that isn't what I said at all. Over the next couple years he would mention that I was the first to favor land reform in El Salvador. I took it as a merit given the way El Salvador has progressed, but that is not the way he meant it.

In December 1979 after the icebreaker coup but before Duarte and land reform, there was a negative development which we knew about, although we did not know how to assess it. The far left in El Salvador consisted of both urban and rural guerrillas and a more traditional urban Communist Party, which often had to operate secretly, and several small Maoist parties. All these groups were against the government, the oligarchy, and the United States, but on many issues they had been quite divided. At times there were even gun fights among the groups. Some people thought the oligarchy employed good tactics to keep the left divided. I don't think the Right had anything to do with it. There was a natural division between the guerrilla street and field fighters and the more intellectual and doctrinaire political Marxists. There were leaders such as Communist Party Secretary General Shafik Handal who were basically communist intellectual professorial types. They were quite different from the rural guerrillas who were like some of the military and just wanted to go out and kill somebody. There seemed to be little cooperation or coordination among these groups. Then in December of 1979 the Cubans, Castro and his Department of the Americas, got the leaders of these far left groups together for a long session in Cuba. Following his pattern with the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, Castro urged and pressed these groups to agree to cooperate and form a common front. It wasn't clear at the time what leverage Castro had. Certainly he could offer training and some supplies. Little did we

know at the time how much he was offering. Up to this time I saw the Salvadoran left as being indigenous to El Salvador and not really dependent on Castro or the Soviets. But I had to be concerned that Castro's success in Nicaragua would encourage him to follow the same pattern in El Salvador and that the Russians, with their build-up of military materiel in Nicaragua, would bank-roll Castro and help supply the Salvadoran guerrillas.

With the advantage of hindsight we see that Castro followed basically the same tactics in Nicaragua and El Salvador, uniting and supplying the far left. The U.S. coincidentally followed completely different tactics. In Nicaragua we played a major mediating role to bring the democratic groups together, and we used distancing to urge Somoza out. In El Salvador we did little to organize a democratic alternative, but one arose. Then until January 1981 we did relatively little to support it. Yet the indigenous reformers in El Salvador beat the Castro-supported far left, while the democratic groups in Nicaragua tried unsuccessfully to change the nature of the Sandinistas. At the end of 1979 and through most of 1980 the intelligence was not very plentiful on the Salvadoran left and on their relations with Cuba and Nicaragua. I recall actually having the embassy inquire with the Salvadoran military to try to find out more about these various leftish groups. The military in El Salvador didn't seem to know much about them either, although they were their everyday enemy.

The security situation deteriorated and violence increased through 1980. The guerrillas began attacking individual military officers. In one case the guerrillas burned an officer's house with him and his family inside. The attacks on uniformed personnel provoked harsh counter-measures by the uniformed services with numerous serious human rights violations. The Treasury Police and the National Guard were the most frequent abusers. Because they operated throughout the country in small units, they were also most subject to guerrilla attack. It was becoming a desperate situation. In discussions various people from Washington and the embassy had with Christian Democrats we learned many Christian Democrats were afraid to go into the government because they would likely be killed. In fact, a substantial number were killed. The seizure of factories continued; the extortion of funds by right and left increased. The economy, affected by the land and banking reforms as well as the increasing violence, went into a free fall despite the fact that we cranked up AID spending. We were building streets, sewers, and such things all over in order to provide employment as well as building needed infrastructure. HA began arguing for human rights sanctions. We did press the military to take a number of constructive human rights steps such as adopting a good military code of conduct and strengthening military justice. The civilian government did not seem to be responsible for human rights violations; members of the government were among the main victims. The military, or more correctly people in the military acting on their own, committed a small part of the violations. The press in the U.S. was giving much more coverage to the human rights abuses under the moderate reformist government than it ever had to the abuses of previous right-wing governments. Some abuses committed by the guerrillas were made to look like government

abuses, for example the guerrillas frequently wore military uniforms particularly for urban operations.

Q: You say the assassination of Romero captured press attention?

BUSHNELL: Yes, Romero's cold-blooded killing was a big issue for the American Catholic Church, and it gave a peg for the press to start running Salvador stories. I don't think there were ever any American reporters stationed in El Salvador, but reporters would go there, and they'd even visit rural areas and write stories about local killings. A school teacher was trying to teach, and somebody thought she was teaching the wrong thing, so they killed her. That type of human interest stories and anecdotal stories on land reform began to appear. About the middle of 1980 there was a great acceleration in press interest, which I didn't understand at the time. I came to understand it later, but that's another story.

By the middle of 1980 we began to get reports both from Salvadoran intelligence and from our own intelligence that the Nicaraguans were helping the guerrillas in El Salvador. Arms were being smuggled across Honduras from Nicaragua to El Salvador (the countries do not have a land border). Guerrillas were going to Nicaragua for rest and recovery from wounds and, more important, for training. The intelligence reports did not indicate what volume of activity was going on, but by the fall of 1980 we had enough that we sent Jim Cheek, who had replaced Brandon Grove as Central American deputy, to Nicaragua to warn the Sandinistas. Remember, the Nicaragua aid legislation had recently passed and we had this \$80,000,000 to help Nicaragua, but we also had the provision that had been inserted by the Congress that aid had to be stopped if the Sandinistas supported terrorists. Clearly these insurgents in El Salvador who captured American factory managers and the guerrillas who killed land reform workers were terrorists.

Jim Cheek met with both the five-person junta that was formally running the country and most of the members of the Sandinista leadership. He made our point very forcefully but in a friendly manner. The Sandinistas knew Jim and knew he had been strongly anti-Somoza for a decade. They claimed that they, as a government, weren't doing anything to support violence in El Salvador but they didn't have absolute control of their territory. Something could happen without their knowing about it. Salvadorans could come to Nicaragua. They did all the time. The Salvadoran came, and, if he was injured and wanted medical treatment, what were they going to do? Things could move through Nicaragua, and they often couldn't stop them. Jim made the point that they should intensify their efforts to stop military supplies; otherwise our aid might have to be stopped. Subsequent evidence indicated that for a while they did stop moving military supplies, which were in fact being moved in much greater volume than we had thought through Nicaragua.

Q: Did the various elements of the US government agree on what was happening here? There was the Pentagon, CIA, State, various elements within State.

BUSHNELL: I don't recall that there was any real disagreement on a major effort to support the Duarte reform government. AID was super, getting a fast disbursing supporting assistance program going and increasing AID staff in El Salvador. The military was slow to increase programs with the newly purged Salvadoran military in part because the assistance and training budgets for Latin America had been cut so much. Many of the moderate Salvadoran military had been through US training over the years. These officers were closer to the US military than the officers they threw out, so our military was happy with these more moderate military. In fact, some people were saying the change in El Salvador showed the success of training at the US Army's School of the Americas. Everyone agreed the country had at least begun to move in the right direction. HA continued to oppose assistance to the military because military officers were still involved in some human rights abuses, although not as many as HA claimed. The CIA continued to be out to lunch. I forget when they decided to reopen a station, but CIA was not providing useful human intelligence from El Salvador. I would be hard pressed to think of any other situation where US interests were so substantially at stake where intelligence support was as weak as in El Salvador. At inter-agency meetings CIA representatives generally did not provide an assessment, and, when they did, nobody gave it any weight. Everyone remembered that practically until July 1979 CIA had said that Somoza and the National Guard could hold off the Sandinistas and that CIA missed that massive Cuban supply effort.

Q: You say we did have a small military assistance program?

BUSHNELL: Yes, I think we quickly began training and approving some export licenses. However, I don't believe we approved any lethal shipments in 1980, but I don't recall we actually turned any down. Because of our earlier refusal to provide lethal supplies either under the military sales program or even to approve export licenses, all the Central American countries had found alternative suppliers for the sorts of light arms and ammunition they used.

Q: You felt what we were doing was effective?

BUSHNELL: Oh, I don't think the small programs we were gearing up had much effect on the economic situation or on military readiness. The big effect was symbolic. These programs showed that we were no longer distancing, quite the contrary that we approved of the revolutionary changes in social and economic structure that were underway. Under President Romero we were phasing everything down and out. After the October coup and particularly when the Christian Democrats came into the government, we in effect changed direction and began expanding our programs. They were still small, but AID technicians were arriving in country instead of leaving, and in a small place that was noticed. Even statements like my exchange with Senator Helms got a lot of attention in El Salvador. Many did not believe the U.S. would break with the oligarchy, including many members of the oligarchy, who began giving more attention to their public relations efforts in the United States. I don't recall that there was any strong opposition to our policy aside from Helms and a few of his associates. The banking reform impacted one or two US banks, but I encouraged them to cooperate, and their situations

worked out with smaller losses than they had expected. HA strongly supported our help with land reform and increasing the AFL-CIO presence. Within the government there was very little disagreement on what we were doing except on tactical issues such as which institutions in the U.S. should be given AID contracts.

ROBERT E. WHITE
Ambassador
El Salvador (1980-1981)

Ambassador Robert E. White was born on September 21, 1926 in Massachusetts. He received his BA from St. Michaels College in 1952 and his MA from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1954. After entering the Foreign Service in 1955, Mr. White served in numerous positions in foreign nations including Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Paraguay, and El Salvador. Mr. White was interviewed by Bill Knight on June 10, 1992.

WHITE: Well, my last post was El Salvador. I was only there a year from February of '80 to February of '81. Here was a situation where the United States was looking at El Salvador through the prism of the Cold War and the contribution of the Salvadorans was supposed to be tranquil while we fought the good fight with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, Salvadorans had really suffered enough. The ruling cliques in El Salvador were as blind and as short sighted and as intransigent as any I've come across. So there was a revolution in swing.

Q: *It was already going on?*

WHITE: It was basically just getting started. My honest belief is that had we taken advantage of the changes--the so-called October 1979 change of government--had we been bolder, had we been more true to our principles then the revolution might well have been avoided. But the United States government in its foreign policy had never been accused of being a monolith. The differences between the Pentagon, the CIA, and the State Department were important differences, that were reflected in the embassy when I arrived.

When I went to El Salvador, everyone including the CIA said I would be back in two or three months. They said the end was inevitable, that the revolutionaries were going to take over. I just didn't believe that. Remember, I had served two tours in Central America, and I had been back in Central America when I was in the Peace Corps and as deputy representative to the OAS. I

probably knew Central America as well as anyone else in the Service. I always believed that there was a negotiated solution to be had. Indeed, I think the Carter emphasis on human rights, on agricultural reform and other reforms and on negotiations could have avoided most of the killing entirely. And I think that in the short time I had there, we were moving importantly in that direction.

The Reagan administration then came in and reversed those three facets of our policy with the result that, instead of emphasizing human rights, Alexander Haig said that counter-terrorism would replace human rights as a priority in U.S. foreign policy. Instead of an emphasis on reform, President Reagan said that reform would have to wait until after victory. And, instead of negotiation, we installed a policy to prevail on the battlefield. We turned this thing into a war. And I have to tell you that 75,000 tortured and dead people later basically the deal we could have had in 1980 but with the immense suffering that we visited on all these people in that decade.

So I left the Foreign Service over a real issue. The Salvadoran military had consistently tortured and killed people and lied to us about it. And we knew they were lying. We knew who was responsible. We reported to the Department who was responsible for it. Most of the killings occurred in the period between the election of Ronald Reagan as president and prior to his taking office.

We reported all that was going on. I reported that the military had killed the American church women. The military set up a commission at our insistence to investigate the deaths. The commission proved to be a mechanism to protect the military rather than to investigate. I received a telephone call from the Deputy Assistant Secretary just at the transition time--after the Reagan administration had taken office and after Secretary Haig had been named but before he had been confirmed--saying there was a problem that they were going to have difficulty getting military assistance to El Salvador through the Congress unless we could certify that progress was being made on the investigation into the nuns case. "We've got this problem," said John Bushnell, then Deputy Assistant Secretary. I said, "Well, I can see the Department has a problem, but I have to tell you that I don't have a problem because the problem simply is that I give you the facts...I report to you what has happened."

Well, it turned out that Bushnell really wanted me to say in a telegram that things were getting better. I said, "You know John, I don't really need a job that badly. I cannot say that because they are not getting better, they are getting worse. What's more, unless you take a stand on this, the killing is going to increase. You are going to have case after case after case of torture and murder of everyone who is against the military."

So over that issue, I went out of the Foreign Service. Frankly it was not a bad issue to go out on. It is always possible to stick around, but I felt this was something that was important and so I

left.

Q: Did they yank you?

WHITE: Secretary Haig called me to Washington and he complimented me on the job I had done--particularly on the reporting. He then said, "We are making some changes, one of the places we are going to make changes is in El Salvador." I said I understood that. So we were sort of winding down the interview and he said, "By the way, I don't want you to speak to the press." And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I have no intention of speaking to the press, but as long as you bring it up you can transfer me but you really can't fire me. You can but you shouldn't. You were kind enough to tell me that I had done an outstanding job. Therefore it seems to me that at the same time you announce my leaving El Salvador, you should announce my new position."

He said, "Well, we really don't have ourselves altogether sufficiently for that." I said, "Well, it seems to me you've got at least sixteen, eighteen, twenty openings. Send me away from Latin America, send me away from human rights considerations," I said, "if you transfer me as Ambassador to Sweden or some place like that, then I can certainly accept that. Nobody elected me to anything. You are the people who are in charge. But if you fire me, what then you are proclaiming to the world is that I deserve to be fired for some reason and am not being given an onward assignment." Secretary Haig said he understood my position, and would see what could be done.

So we had several more conversations at various levels. I'm not sure whether Secretary Haig tried. They claimed he did. They said they were having trouble with Senator Helms who wanted me punished.

I said, "I am not asking the impossible. If you want to make me Consul General in Hong Kong or Consul General in Berlin, something like that, fine. I am not asking you to pay a big price. I want to be reasonable, but I simply insist that I be treated with respect." It soon became clear to me that nothing was going to happen. They wanted me to go into the Inspection Corps. I said I really wouldn't do that and so I went out of the Foreign Service the same way George Kennan went out: Under the provision that if you are not offered a position or assignment of equal rank you are automatically retired.

JAMES F. MACK

Political Counselor

El Salvador (1983-1986)

Mr. Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin American where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy March 20th, 2004.

Q: After being the hard nose labor negotiator where did you go?

MACK: Well, in 1983 I was asked for the second time whether I would be willing to serve in El Salvador as political counselor. The first time I was asked, San Salvador was a non-accompanied post and I had then three little kids at ages four, three and one. As interested as I was in the job from the professional point of view, I was not going to volunteer for a job that would separate me from my family.

The person who had asked me to go was Ted Briggs, then Deputy Assistant Secretary in ARA. Nineteen months later came back to me to tell me that San Salvador was being reopened for families, and asked if I would take the job. Under those circumstances I could not say no. So in April 1983 my wife and I became the first family with kids allowed to live in El Salvador. Our arrival at the Embassy turned out to be quite an emotional experience for all of us. When we walked through the door the local FSN staff was so excited to see an American family with kids that they broke out in applause. They had interpreted our presence as being positive sign for the outlook of the country. In fact, as I soon realized, the situation in the country was still deteriorating.

Q: My God!

MACK: The Embassy had been without families for eighteen months. Of course, in that atmosphere, a kind of macho kind of culture had developed in the Embassy. Everybody was single, divorced or separated. Work hard, party hard. I had seen it in Vietnam. Over time more and more families came back which changed things.

Q: You were in El Salvador from when to when?

MACK: '83 to '86.

Q: What was your job?

MACK: I was Political Counselor.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at the time?

MACK: Well Dean Hinton was the Ambassador when I arrived in April 1983. He left post three months. Tom Pickering arrived in the summer of 1986.

Q: What was the situation in El Salvador when you got there in '83?

MACK: When I got there in April the situation on the ground was terrible and getting worse. I remember having a kind of heart to heart talk one weekend with an Agency Officer who had been there a while and whose opinion that I respected. His view was that if things continued the way that they were, with the government losing a battalion every month to the guerrillas, the insurgency would win a military victory some time in 1984. This is a true story.

Q: Was it that the guerillas were that effective, or was it that the army was so ineffective?

MACK: Probably a combination of both. The Army as it was then constituted just could not deal with the guerillas. The guerrillas were much more nimble. They used hit and run tactics very, very well. They carefully chose their ground, where to fight, where to attack. The Army was kind of a parade Army and they just couldn't deal with guerrillas.

Q: As political counselor, what did you find was happening with the populace?

MACK: Well for one thing, right wing death squads were killing more than 800 people a month. The Left was killing people too but not at that rate. You may recall that under Carter, the Congress of the United States had passed an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act which prohibited the provision of military assistance to governments which were judged to be engaged in patterns of gross violations of the human rights of their population. With respect to El Salvador, that had the practical effect of severely limiting the amount of military assistance we could provide. And it was very, very clear to us that unless the U.S. Government could provide substantial military assistance to El Salvador, like training, equipment and munitions, that the Government could not sustain itself over a period of time. I told you before that, that was the impression of one guy I talked to early in my tour. That became my impression in those first few months. It was just bad news following bad news. Military setbacks and horrendous human rights violations.

Elements of the Army and their friends felt they could deal with the insurgency by grabbing people in urban areas suspected of supporting the guerrillas and executing them. They couldn't deal with the guerillas in the countryside.

Q: Well, how did Dean Hilton operate in this?

MACK: Dean was a good friend, but left post within about two or three months or so of my arrival. He was a very, very strong leader, impatient with incompetence and those who he perceived were not pulling their weight. He was a very, very astute political observer. Had very few resources to work with because the terrible state of human rights in the country made it impossible for the U.S. to provide much assistance to the Salvadoran government. He was trying to help Alvaro Magana the interim President, who was a basically decent man. But against the

background of all these death squad killings and military defeats, he was very limited in what he could do in 1983.

So, what happened was after several months or so at post, it was late summer, about four or five us in our section got together to talk over what we could do about this situation. Our judgment was that the Salvadoran Government was losing the war. Yet given the terrible human rights situation with people in the Salvadoran military linked to death squad activity, the U.S. Congress was not going to provide any assistance. But without it, the war was lost.

We asked ourselves what we could do to change the equation? One of my officers named Felix Vargas had actually written a paper to get the folks in the political section talking. The idea we came up with was for the Administration to send down a very high ranking person, someone with credibility with the Salvadoran military, to read the military the riot act. To tell them “look!. We can help out but only if you do certain things and which included, obviously, getting the death squads under control and reducing the death squad killings dramatically. But we did not think that alone would be enough to justify US assistance and turn things around. The Salvadorans also would have to make major reforms in Army command structure as well and get rid of certain people. We kicked that idea around, polished it up and a month or so after Ambassador Pickering came to post, presented the proposal to him. He thanked us and we didn’t hear anything for awhile. I don’t know if I should say this on tape?

Q: Put it on tape and then you can always look at it later.

MACK: First of all I have to tell you that I have tremendous respect for Ambassador Pickering. He has been a mentor and a great friend and an awesome person who served his country very well in many, many ways. I worked for him twice. In any event, about one month after we had made our proposal, he called me up to his office and he said, “Jim!” You have betrayed me.” Those were essentially his words. I was crestfallen because I idolized him. He told me that someone in my section had violated a confidence. Someone had leaked the document that we had given him, or at least the ideas in the document, to the press. It was clear that he had taken our proposal to heart and had planned to turn it into a proposal to send to Washington. I went back and to tell my troops, all whom had been working like crazy, all of whom were totally loyal to Pickering, what had happened. I felt quite strongly that nobody in our section would leak the contents of this document since that would guarantee that nothing would come of our proposal. To leak it would have undermined its impact and made the Salvadorans much less likely to react in the way we wanted.

Right after that episode we asked for a meeting with Pickering and told him that we had not leaked the document. That was that! He just said, the proposal was over. He essentially led us to believe that the proposal was dead and would not go forward. We were all about ready to submit our resignations because we were so upset at what happened. We felt that if we did not have the confidence of the Ambassador, the section could not operate with the personnel it had on board.

Keep in mind ours was a very active political section. We were not just reading newspapers. We were out on the street, all over the country talking to people, taking the human rights message to every actor we had access to. All of us had sacrificed a lot to take this job. American Embassy San Salvador was not your casual assignment. Ambassador Pickering did not want us to resign but said no more about the incident.

About a month later as he was about to leave on a trip to Washington, he called me in and asked me to ride with him to the airport. En route he handed me a paper and asked me to read it. Basically it was a cable proposing what essentially what we had proposed to him. His gesture was his way of saying "you have regained my confidence."

About a month later, I think it was December, 1983, Vice President George Bush, Sr. came to San Salvador on as head of the high level mission we had proposed earlier to meet with the entire Salvadoran high command, all of the senior colonels and President Magana at the President's residence. I was the note taker. Bush told them that the US wanted to help El Salvador but could not under current circumstances. Congress would not allow it. He delivered the message on human rights, and without accusing them directly, not scolding them, but as a friend of El Salvador who wanted to help but also wanted them to understand some political realities in the US and some organizational realities in their own armed forces. He said that death squad killings had to end and that the military command structure had to be reformed. Following his visit there was an immediate and precipitous drop in death squad murders from almost 800 a month to almost nothing. In fact, the drop probably started before he got there because the Ambassador had told the Salvadoran high command in advance what message the Vice President was bringing. So the Salvadorans were leaning forward by the time he got there. And the number of death squad killing remained very low for the rest of the time I was in El Salvador. That changes, plus the reforms in the military, together with, I have to add, Ambassador Pickering's very persuasive lobbying of Members of the US Congress during their frequent visits, convinced the Congress to dramatically increase military assistance.

Let me say something about CODELs. In my first 18 months at post we had 80 CODELs, 80. Not 80 Members, but 80 CODELs. The political section was in charge of scheduling CODEL agendas and reporting on their visits. We had a guy who did nothing but organize CODELs. We all shared the task of taking them to meetings with Salvadorans and translating. I would say that a quarter of the Congress came to El Salvador at least during my three years there. I am talking about CODELs as large as 14, which is a huge number to handle. Many came on weekends since it was so easy to get there from Washington, tough on us but we did have an excellent opportunity to explain our case on what was happening. As an aside I should tell you that we would frequently brief the CODELs in my house, which means we had to feed them and their accompanying staffs. But since only Americans were present for those briefings, that also meant we were not allowed to claim those meals as representational expenses. Once my wife pointed this out to a CODEL and the rule or law was changed.

And the fact was that things began to improve in early 1984. In addition to the improvement in the human rights situation, Napoleon Duarte was elected president in a free election. He was a Notre Dame grad so was quite effective with the members of Congress. The war also began to turn around. There were some preliminary peace talks with the FMLN groups in 1986 in a little town near the Honduran border called La Palma.

Q: Did the Salvadoran military get rid of some poor commanders or people linked to death squads?

MACK: Yes. Some were some people sidelined or sent abroad.

Q: Wasn't an American Navy Seal assassinated when you were there?

MACK: Yes. Lt Schlafenberger. He worked with the MILGROUP in the Embassy. He had a girlfriend who studied at the Catholic University. He would pick her up every night after class. A guerrilla sympathizer obviously spotted him told his friends who set up the assassination attempt. He was sitting in an armored car but the a/c was not working so he had opened the window.

Q: Did you have case any case of US Nuns being killed? The Churchwomen's murder was still hanging fire wasn't it?

MACK: Oh yes! In fact, the Churchwomen's case was successfully prosecuted while I was there. The US justice department sent down a Spanish speaking lawyer named Carlos Correa to work a Salvadoran lawyer to build the case. Preparations took almost two years.

Q: Who were convicted?

MACK: About four or five National Guardsman. Apparently, the wife of one of the Guardsman was an Evangelical Protestant and I guess this guy got religion too. Eventually he decided to cooperate with the prosecution. And through him they were able to get information about the others who were involved in the murder. The trial was in a dusty little town down near the National Airport and the verdict was guilty. That was a big deal, and a big political issue, especially in the US. The family of the murdered churchwoman had tremendous support in the US Congress and they were not going to let this case go. The Congress wasn't either. It was successfully prosecuted. Many believed the higher ups had known who was responsible and were involved in a cover-up. The people who actually committed the murders, apparently on their own, were nailed. There was a lot of excitement, a lot of excitement in the Embassy when the guilty verdict came in. By the way I had a death threat, from the far right apparently. For my last year I had two armed guards with automatic weapons at my house at all times. I don't know if the threat was serious, but the Embassy security officer took precautions. I always traveled in an armored car.

Q: In a way you were feeling pressure both from the right and from the left, weren't you?

MACK: Right! One thing we were trying to do was – how do I say this – to civilize or democratize the far Right – to bring them completely within the democratic process, to abandon recourse to political violence. Now the Right had a lot of public support. Despite what many people think the far right was quite popular and they could get the vote out. Most of the Salvadoran people were basically quite conservative; at least they were in my time. The proof of that is that following Duarte's presidency, the rightwing party ARENA has proceeded to win every presidential election to this day. Internationally observed Free elections. So, our view was, look! The Right exists, has popular support, so what we need to do is bring them into the legal political process to operate like a loyal opposition. Remember, while I was there, the Christian Democrats under Duarte were in power. Anyway that was our objective to bring the right in to political process and abandon violence. That was our message to these guys. I'm not saying that all the people on the Right were involved in or supported the death squads. But there was some overlap between the democratic right and the violent right, no question about it. I would have been kidding myself if I said it didn't exist. But we wanted to strengthen those on the democratic side of the party, and to democratize the Army, if possible.

GUATEMALA

Colonel Carlos Manuel Aran Osoria became president in 1970. A new guerrilla movement entered the country from Mexico, into the Western Highlands in 1972. In the disputed election of 1974, General Kjell Lauger Garcia defeated General Efraim Rios Montt, a candidate of the Christian Democratic Party, who claimed that he had been cheated out of a victory through fraud. On February 4, 1976, a major earthquake destroyed several cities and caused more than 25,000 deaths. In 1978, in a fraudulent election, General Romeo Lucas Garcia assumed power. The 1970s saw the birth of two new guerrilla organizations, The Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) and the Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), who began and intensified by the end of the seventies, guerrilla attacks that included urban and rural guerrilla warfare, mainly against the military and some of the civilian supporters of the army. In 1979, the U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, ordered a ban on all military aid to the Guatemalan Army because of the widespread and systematic abuse of human rights.

GEORGE F. JONES

Political Officer

Guatemala City (1974-1977)

George F. Jones was born in Texas in 1935. He graduated from Wabash College in 1955 and received a Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Stanford University. His postings abroad have included Quito, Accra, Caracas, Vienna, Guatemala City, San Jose and Santiago, with an ambassadorship to Guyana. Mr. Jones was interviewed in 1996 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You left Vienna in 1974, then where did you go?

JONES: To Guatemala. I had had my excursion tour out of Latin America and I was now ready to come back into it. So I looked around for a job in Latin America and there were several things under discussion and I remember it was three weeks before we were due to leave Vienna, my successor was arriving, and I still didn't have an assignment. I called up the guy in personnel who was handling my transfer and he said, "Haven't those orders been issued? You're going to Guatemala, everybody here knows that, didn't anybody tell you?" [laughter]

Q: So in 1974 you were off to Guatemala. What was your job?

JONES: I was head of the political section. There were two other officers in the section, Donald Johnson and Raymond Burghardt. I had dinner with Don two nights ago, he has just completed a

tour as Ambassador to Mongolia, and the State Department's candidate to succeed him there is Ray Burghardt. [laughter]

Q: I hope they've improved their quarters. I interviewed Joe Lake who ran the mimeograph off of the bathtub with a piece of plywood put over the back of the bathtub. I think at one time they were working in an apartment house where his wife and his son were both involved in helping run the office because there was nobody else around. [laughter]

JONES: I would also hope that it has improved somewhat. Although I gather that conditions remain about as rough in Mongolia as they are anywhere. Among other reasons, because of the terrible climate.

Q: Well, back to Guatemala.

JONES: Yes. So we had a very high quality political section there that went on to do great things.

Q: You were in Guatemala from 1974 to when?

JONES: From 1974 to 1977.

Q: Okay, that was three years, when you arrived in 1974, what was the situation in Guatemala, politically and economically?

JONES: Politically that particular period was something of a lull between storms. The President was Kjell Laugerud. A general with a Norwegian name, who was probably the best of the military presidents that Guatemala had in the post World War II era. He was not a saint, by any means, but he was by temperament more of a conciliator and less of a tyrant than most of his colleagues who made it to the presidency. So it was a military dictatorship, on paper it was elected, but the elections had been repeatedly stolen over the years. We were able to have reasonably good relations with his government, he certainly sought good relations with the United States. Because the level of human rights abuses was relatively low at that point, we were not under such tremendous pressure as we were both earlier and later, to really turn the screws on the Guatemalan government.

Q: What were American interests there at this time?

JONES: The issue that took up the largest single chunk of my time was the Guatemala/Belize dispute. Guatemala claimed Belize was a part of its territory. There was considerable concern that with a military government in power, the Guatemalan army might simply take it into its head

at some point to invade the territory and seize it. Belize at that time was still a British colony, and because of the dispute there were no diplomatic relations between Guatemala and Britain, but there were consular relations. One of the nice aspects of Latin America is that, I think uniquely in the world, they long ago invented this doctrine that political relations and consular relations are separate, and if you break relations with a country you don't withdraw your consul--it's very pragmatic, you've got to figure that your citizens have got to travel to the other country anyway, and so you need somebody there to issue the visas. So Guatemala never closed down its consulate in Britain, and they allowed the British to have a consul there. Of course the British named someone who was senior enough to be an Ambassador and functioned as an Ambassador. We worked very closely with him in exchanging information and looking for ways to resolve the dispute--the British of course were interested in getting it off of their back. They had to station troops in Belize which they would much rather not have there, they would like to be able to pull them out and get disengaged and disinvolved from this remote corner of the world. Our interests largely coincided with theirs because we were very interested in not having a war in the Americas, not having a military action between any two countries, including Guatemala and Belize, with all of the consequences that we saw later in the Falklands. So I spent a large part of my time -- you would get pieces of information that the dispute had heated up, or it had cooled down, and you were always involved in trying to assess just how likely it was that the Guatemalans would take some hot-headed action. And also analyzing various proposals and ideas for resolving the dispute.

One of the real problems the Guatemalans had was in terms of the maritime boundary; if you drew the boundaries by conventional rules, they would have a very narrow corridor out into the Caribbean. So one of the solutions to the dispute was to try to encourage both sides to agree on modified maritime limits--there was no disposition on the part of Belize or of the British to cede any of the land territory, but there were indications that they were willing to compromise on the issue of the maritime boundary. That would solve one of the Guatemalans' problems and might help push the overall dispute along to resolution. During my three years, we didn't get anywhere. These territorial disputes move extremely slowly if they move at all. I think we were essentially pretty much where we were when I left as when I arrived. I did feel that the U.S. influence, exercised primarily through the embassy, had helped restrain the hot-heads in Guatemala--had helped convince them that if they did invade Belize they would have not only the British but also the Americans very much against them.

Q: The British couldn't counter an attack with their troops as a response?

JONES: They could have held off the Guatemalans until reinforcements arrived, no question.

Q: I assume our policy was that we wouldn't recognize and we would look very hard on anybody who seized territories.

JONES: That's right.

Q: Was this spelled out again and again to the Guatemalans?

JONES: Yes, mainly in private. We tried to avoid embarrassing them by rubbing it in more than we had to publicly. It was our assessment, which we had to make over and over again in reporting to the Department, that the Guatemalans were unlikely to attack. The British were always more nervous than we were (understandably given their situation). The British were always alarmed by some new piece of intelligence or other information that they interpreted as meaning the Guatemalans were getting ready to move. It was the embassy's judgment that it was very unlikely that the Guatemalans would in fact do this, that whatever else you thought of the Guatemalans, their leadership was not stupid and it was not going to plunge into this, given the obvious consequences. For whatever reasons that was the right analysis since no Guatemalan action ever took place then or later.

Q: What about American commercial interests in Guatemala?

JONES: They were not great, there wasn't a huge amount of American commercial interest. The other major issue that consumed our time (at least in the political section) was in the broadest sense, the issue of human rights. From the perspective of U.S. human rights organizations there was only one aspect to Guatemala, which was the aspect of government security forces killing innocent people, which certainly occurred in Guatemala, before, during and after my time there. But from the U.S. Government's perspective, the situation had other aspects as well. One of them was the fact that Guatemala had and has the oldest guerrilla movement in the Americas, it has had a continuous guerrilla movement going on since 1960. There was no indication that it was anywhere close to coming to power, but its activities were a concern to us. Then, and perhaps the greatest concern of all at that time, there was simply the Guatemalan propensity for killing each other for political reasons. Guatemalans are wonderful people and I enjoyed tremendously knowing them, but I never served among a people who would so casually eliminate each other as they would in Guatemala. Most politicians carried weapons all of the time. A significant number of my closest contacts were killed either during the time I was there or after I left. Meme Colon, the former mayor of Guatemala City, Danilo Barillas and a host of others. Trying to report on and analyze this self-destructiveness in which the Guatemalans were engaged, was a major preoccupation. The specifically human rights side of it was a growing concern because of growing interest in the United States. First of all we had the amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act in the Ford administration and I remember standing in the embassy in Guatemala and listening to Jimmy Carter's inaugural address on the radio, in which he used the term human rights over and over.

Q: That was January 20, 1977.

JONES: Right. So there was a trend in the United States and also there was a trend in Guatemala, particularly after things grew worse and worse. As near as we could tell (there was a lot of debate about it) Laugerud had control over who would succeed him and he picked (I won't say the worst General, because there were certainly a lot of competitors for the worst possible General he could have picked) one of the worst people in the senior levels of the Guatemalan army, Romeo Lucas, that he could have possibly picked to succeed him. Something we didn't understand then and I don't think we ever understood was if he felt compelled, if he felt he didn't have any choice, or if there was some mysterious tie to this guy that we didn't know about. We thought Laugerud had done a reasonably good job, given the fact that he was a military dictator, in restraining the violent forces that were involved in Guatemala. And to sort of throw it all away by turning the government over to a troglodyte, a Neanderthal, was incredible. And things didn't get any better for years after that.

Q: How were relations with the other two neighbors, El Salvador and Honduras?

JONES: They were good, there were no particular problems. There were also military governments in both of those countries at this time, so they were birds of a feather. There was no reason not to get along well.

Q: I'm not sure about the timing on this, but while you were there did the Somoza regime go down the tubes? Had it collapsed while you were there?

JONES: No, that was a little later. It was in 1979 when Somoza was overthrown. That had not become a Central American issue at that point.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at that time?

JONES: The Ambassador the first couple of years that I was there was Frank Meloy, who went from Guatemala to Lebanon and was murdered in Lebanon almost immediately after arriving. Most of us who had known him were still there in the embassy and it was a great shock to the embassy staff when we heard the news. He was succeeded by Davis Eugene Boster, but everybody called him Gene. I think he was there a year, maybe less than a year before I left.

Q: From your perspective how did they find the country? They've got a military dictatorship, our interests were not overly great, and most of the time it sounds like we were nagging at them about human rights.

JONES: That's true. I'm tempted to say that was true of most of our embassies in Latin America. That's changing and hopefully that will change entirely someday. As countries become industrialized and full participants in the world economy, then you have a mature dialogue, there are all kinds of common issues that you can talk about. When the countries are not yet at that level then the connection, the relationship, between the United States and the country, is much less rich and varied. A lot of what you are dealing with them on is complaints, you are nagging at them. Or they at you to a lesser degree, but still to some degree. Because the thing that Washington wants you to do above everything else, is to get them to stop causing trouble, whether over a border controversy, or human rights, or a military coup, or their expropriation of an American company. Those were the things which were the big issues during most of my time in Latin America. Because their economy and their internal development hadn't reached the level where those irritants simply wouldn't occur--there would be no question of their invading a neighbor, there would be no question of their expropriating a foreign company, they wouldn't be abusing human rights, there wouldn't be military coups. Those things are all characteristics of less developed countries and when you get beyond that stage, those are no longer issues. So the U.S. Embassy is no longer nagging at you about them. [laughter]

Q: What about, from the political officer's perspective, the contacts you would make? Some of those countries obviously don't know anything about that, but you have the ten families of any Central American country--did you find that there were people you went to, other than the Generals?

JONES: There was not an economic oligarchy in Guatemala as there--at that time--I'm groping to say whether or not it's a factor of time or simply the difference between one country and another. I think it's probably more a factor of time, not only in Guatemala but in other countries as well. Back in the period when coffee was overwhelmingly the export, the coffee plantation owners not only in Guatemala but in other coffee exporting countries, they did constitute an oligarchy. You had similar situations in other countries where you had one dominant crop and its control was in the hands of a few families. Again, there is a factor of development that occurs here. There are infinite stages of development that you go through, not just a simple step of one day you are less developed and the next day you are developed. They had moved beyond that stage, the economy was more diversified. There were certainly businessmen who exercised political influence, but they were by no means a secret group that was running the country. The military ran Guatemala then and for a long time afterwards. Although there were ways in which their interests were allied with those of the powerful businessman and it was quite common for Colonels to--businessmen would take a Colonel and make him a low interest loan or sell him a valuable piece of property at a low price, or something like that in order to establish a relationship with him that they could draw on in the future. Nevertheless, the military really governed Guatemala in its own interest, in its own perception of Guatemala's interest and it wasn't being manipulated by other groups.

Q: Did we have a military representative, an attaché, or program there that was dealing with the military, military to military?

JONES: Yes.

Q: How did you find this as an instrument for what you wanted to find out about Guatemala?

JONES: [laughter] I expect you know the answer I'm going to give to that question, because I expect it's the answer you get from everybody. The military attachés were almost useless as sources of information, not only in Guatemala but elsewhere as well. In the first place their function was to be an intelligence officer but they were not professional intelligence officers, most of them were serving a single tour of duty as an attaché. Very few attachés went on to become Generals. It was not regarded as a career- enhancing specialty in the Army or in any of the services. So it did not attract the best people, they were not professional intelligence officers, they were from another specialty who were dragooned into a tour as an attaché. The Latin American military were smart enough to know that what they did say to a U.S. military attaché was going to be reported and rarely did they say anything that was of any significance or that helped us out. The military attachés used to send in a lot of newspaper clippings to DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency. We used to joke that that was their main function. In their defense, they had a very hard task, especially in Guatemala, but generally in any of the military dictatorships that I was familiar with. The task of finding out what the military thought and what they were up to, was an extremely--they were a very hard target. They were not talkative about the institution and discussing its intentions with foreigners was, to put it mildly, not encouraged. In Chile it was very tightly controlled, I've forgotten if we observed this in Guatemala, but I wouldn't be surprised. If you were invited anywhere by a foreigner you had to report it to your superiors and it had to be approved before you could go. If you invited a whole bunch of military people, if they decided to go at all they would pick two or three who would be their chosen representatives and everyone else would decline. [laughter]

DAVIS EUGENE BOSTER

Ambassador

Guatemala (1976-1979)

Ambassador David Eugene Boster was born in 1920. He served during World War II on Harvard's Communications Training Center Staff. His Foreign Service career included positions in Mexico, Poland, and ambassadorships to Bangladesh

and Guatemala. Ambassador Boster was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: You went to Guatemala as Ambassador in 1976 and stayed till 1979. How did this assignment come about?

BOSTER: I got this assignment because after the third coup, I was getting pretty frazzled out there. I was tired. So when I returned to Washington I spoke to Carol Laise, who was then Director General. I told her I would welcome another assignment. She said she would keep her eyes open. That resulted in a telegram in due course saying that the Department intended to propose me to Montevideo. That looked alright to me and I agreed to the proposal. Then came a second message saying that Montevideo was not available, but that the Department wanted me to go to Guatemala to take Frank Meloy's place, who had just been named as Ambassador to Lebanon, where he was murdered by terrorists within ten days of arrival. So I went to Guatemala.

Q: What were US interests in Guatemala during the 1976-78 period?

BOSTER: Some of our main interests were in the country's economic development. Our AID program was of course much more modest than it had been in Dacca. We were interested in the development of credit facilities and agricultural production. In general, we were trying to foster increasing cooperation between the two countries. Toward the end of my stay, and even more so after I left, the Nicaraguan problem began to loom in importance. These discussions were primarily undertaken by Bill Bowdler, our Assistant Secretary of State, who visited and consulted with the government. During my time, the main interest was in maintaining good relations. We were interested in a good aid program and stable relations.

Q: It is often claimed that American business interests drive our policy toward Latin America. Did you have any pressure of that kind?

BOSTER: It was not the case in Guatemala. I don't remember any specific issues which were raised in response to American business interests. There were US businesses in Guatemala, but they were going along fine.

Q: How was the Guatemalan government while you were there?

BOSTER: My principal contacts were with President Laugerud who was in office for the major part of my assignment. I would see him with some frequency. He was extremely cordial. Spoke excellent English and a wonderful person to deal with. The Foreign Minister was one of the ablest people I have ever known. It was an ideal situation--a congenial, intelligent President and a congenial, highly intelligent Foreign Minister. One problem we had to resolve during my tour

there dealt with the draft of the US government's report on human rights, as mandated by Congress. They were very upset about us preparing a report on another country's human rights record. They felt this was an intrusion in their internal affairs, that no one had a right to such intrusion, except maybe the United Nations, and certainly that no single country had that right. As far as the Guatemalans were concerned, we could keep our aid if it was conditioned on passage of a human rights test. Brazil took that same line with us later. Frankly, in my own mind, I thought the Guatemalans may have had a reasonable position.

Q: Did you report this reaction back to Washington?

BOSTER: I reported the Guatemalan reaction but not my own view. I remember that some people in the Foreign Service, including me, felt in the beginning that this was some kind of unnecessary complication of our relationships with other governments, that human rights in foreign lands may not have been our business, and that in any case, our pursuit of it was to the detriment of our relationships with other countries. They would have been happier to shove the whole issue under the rug and felt that if the human rights proponents, particularly in the State Department, could be kept under control, matters would be far better.

Of course, since 1976, US interests in human rights around the world have strengthened and have become a basic part of our approach to foreign policy. In some relationships--with Romania, for example--it is key. I was wrong to think of it as mere meddling. In fact, the US support for human rights has worked and we no longer think it is anything strange.

JOHN T. BENNETT

Deputy Chief of Mission

Guatemala City (1978-1979)

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 wrote his memoirs in September 1996.

BENNETT: By 1977, I was becoming itchy about staying in Korea. I had lost my chance for the DCM's job when Sneider decided to replace Dick Ericson with Tom Stern--the two traded jobs, and Ericson went back to become the number two in Political/Military Affairs. Sneider explained that I was doing such important work so well that he couldn't afford to replace me. The

Department seemed to think nothing was likely to open up elsewhere that would be very interesting. It looked as if I was trapped in Korea and confronted poor career prospects.

When my wife went back in May of 1977 to look after her mother who had become ill, she also talked to friends in the Department, including Tony Lake. He apparently took an interest, and I got assigned to Guatemala as DCM. I was delighted.

When I arrived in Guatemala, it was already known that I would be chargé for some period of time. That was gratifying, though it cost me the DCM job in Bangkok, where I had been requested by the new ambassador, Mort Abramowitz. That would have been an even greater job. Unfortunately, the Guatemala assignment was already in concrete -- it was too late to get another person there in time, and he would have to be Chargé.

I arrived in the midst of a general strike over a rise in bus fares. They had risen from 5 to 10 centavos (less than a US cent), after years of being held constant. But this was a poor country and so the cost was significant for the multitude who depended on public transport.

The strike had been developing for some time. The government had asked the US to sell it tear gas and that required State Department approval. Consideration bogged down in a fight between the country desk and the Human Rights Bureau which thought quite rightly that Guatemala's record in this area was dismal.

But the government was running out of tear gas and was getting frantic. After a few days, I realized that this looked like turning into a disaster. Lacking tear gas, the police and the military would use rifles and bullets to maintain order. It was a case where the new arrival could see the likely outcome easier than those on the scene -- probably because I had most recently talked to the people in Washington and had the best sense of what was bothering them and how they thought.

The talks I had had before hand were not very informative. Neither the country desk nor the human rights people had brought up the impending strike or the request for tear gas. They were interested in the overall situation but not the immediate crisis that was building. The human rights guys were more interested in Korea than Guatemala and on that I had a good deal to say -- mainly to the effect that it was often bad, but people weren't being killed (there were rare exceptions). Indeed, overall, Korea was constantly improving life for its people.

And the tear gas business did turn out badly. Approval of the tear gas was delayed, the police did use rifles, and people were killed -- I no longer remember how many. It had done no good to send a message suggesting that this was likely to happen. This incident was the first direct experience I had of the system totally ignoring what was supposedly the best advice that their

people in the field could give them. There would be more.

JAMES F. MACK

Guatemala Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1979-1981)

Mr. Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin American where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy March 20th, 2004.

Today is the 12th of September 2005. Jim you are the Guatemala Desk Officer?

MACK: Yes, I was the Guatemalan /Belize Desk Officer so I covered both countries. The reason for this was that at the time there was, and I believe still is, is a serious border dispute between the two countries. In fact, at one time Guatemala claimed all of Belize, which in 1979 was still a British colony. I think the Guatemalans have since reduced their claim but it is still rather substantial. Anyway that was the big issue at the time I was on the desk. The British were anxious to unburden themselves of Belize, which was one of the few remaining British colonies in the Caribbean at that point. Also, important in their thinking was the cost of maintaining defense of the colony. Because of the ever present threat of a Guatemalan incursion they had to keep a couple of thousand troops in Belize, including a unit of Harrier jump jets, which was an expensive proposition to them. At the same time, they worried, as did the elected internally self-governing Belizean government of George Price, that a grant of independence without a border settlement could provoke a Guatemalan invasion. So they were stuck.

In any event the border issue consumed a significant amount of my time as a desk officer. During this period, I worked very closely with guy named Millard Burr from the State Department Office of The Geographer. Burr came up with the proposal to guarantee Guatemala *sovereign* access to the Caribbean sea from their main port of Puerto Barrios. The problem was that without an agreement, while ships did enjoy physical access to Puerto Barrios in accordance with the international law of the sea, it was not the *sovereign* access that Guatemala felt it had to have for political reasons. So when we received word that the Guatemalan dictator might be willing to cut a deal, Burr came up with the idea of granting the Guatemalans a mile wide sovereign channel through Belizean waters to Puerto Barrios. The problem we had to solve was that smack in the

middle of the proposed sovereign channel were several very small islets called the Sapodilla keys, which belonged to Belize. We knew that George Price was adamant against giving up an inch of territory, so Burr came up with the idea of granting Guatemala *usufruct* of the islands in perpetuity which would allow Guatemalan to claim it had won sovereign access to the sea.

Now *usufruct* is a word I had never heard before, but exists in international law, It means *use as if it were sovereign*. For Belize that meant they would retain theoretical sovereignty, but Guatemala would get to use them as if it were the sovereign owner. We thought this was a brilliant solution that would acceptable to everybody, end the dispute, allow Belize to peacefully achieve independence and win us the Nobel Peace Prize. Just kidding but we were very excited.

Unfortunately, the problem ended up not being the Guatemalan dictator president and notorious human right abuser Gen Lucas Garcia , but the democratically elected Belizean Prime Minister George Price. Price was adamant that he wasn't going to agree to any deal that as much as *implied* loss of any sovereign territory even some water and a few islets. And so, Price lost the opportunity to settle the deal then and there. The British were pushing Price very hard to accept.

Q: I was wondering why we were making a deal or acting as though we were outside authority. Why weren't the British doing this?

MACK: Oh the British were very actively involved. Lord Carrington was very, very involved in this.

Q: He was a Foreign Minister?

MACK: He was the head of the FCO, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the time. He was very, very active in the process and the British dearly wanted to get out. I am sure I am missing some details twenty-six years later. But that occupied a lot of time. My other important issue as desk officer was Guatemala's horrendous human rights record under the military dictatorship, which was waging a war without quarter with Marxist guerrilla group.

Thousands of people were killed in the rural areas where the insurgency raged. In the urban areas, hundreds were gunned down by Lucas Garcia's people working from death lists which it was my understanding he personally approved, kind of like the evil Ming the Merciless in the Buck Rogers movies. It was pretty awful. Not that we could do too much about it since the US already had cut Guatemala off from military assistance a long time before. Remember this was under the Carter Administration. But what this also meant was with no US assistance, we could not use the threat to cut it off as a lever to force greater respect for human rights, although I'm not sure that Guatemalan government would have been susceptible to pressure in any event. They had decided to fight the insurgency, and any suspected of supporting it, their way, which was brutally. In some ways they were successful. Not that they are better off today because for it. In fact a lot of the lawlessness, high level corruption and impunity in Guatemala today can be traced to that period.

In any event, all this was happening in the context of Central America going down the tubes. Remember, the Sandinistas come into power in '79 or '80 in Nicaragua. The insurgents were rapidly gaining strength in El Salvador. The Chichoneros were growing in Honduras. These were not the most happy times to work in the Office of Central American Affairs. And the nights were very long. We were seriously understaffed.

Q: Well now who were the Guatemalans dictator and his crew killing? Were they basically Indians or were they people who had gotten in his way, or were they unidentifiable group that was fighting him?

MACK: In the rural areas anybody who was perceived to give aid and comfort to the guerrilla was a target. I didn't have much access to what was going on. The Embassy could not travel to the worst areas because of security reasons. I really didn't know much unless an American or a missionary living there got caught up in it. In urban areas however they were going after anyone perceived to oppose his regime. Those killed were not necessarily communists at all. They may have been labor union leaders or democrats. I am sure there were some communists among them. I had some contact with the people that the dictator was going after when they would come to Washington. This included a Vinicio Cerezo who later became President. But he was certainly no communist at all. He survived a number of assassination attempts and so anybody who was opposed to the dictator seemed to be fair game for Lucas Garcia.

Q: Well now, this during the Carter Administration?

MACK: Yes, and Carter was going full bore on the whole issue of Human Rights. So here we are in 1979 in a situation in which on the one hand the leftist insurgencies in Central America were rapidly gaining ground, and on the other President Carter's Human Rights policies were coming on strong. The State Department was kind of caught in a bind. On one hand, obviously we didn't want to see all those governments in Central America be taken over by leftist guerrillas. On the other hand, we wanted to carry out the Human Rights policy. In the case of Guatemala, we did not have a friendly government to support. In fact, they did not want anything to do with us. They were not receiving any military assistance from us.

Q: Who was the US Ambassador in Guatemala during your time on the desk?

MACK: Frank Ortiz, he just passed away. He was in Guatemala at the time that I was there. He had a very difficult job given our terrible relations with the government, the human rights violations, the insurgency etc.

Q: That must have been a difficult place for the officers there and the staff.

MACK: The security was awful. And there was a lot of killing going on. The leftists were active too and they were carrying out assassinations. It was a very, very nasty situation.

Q: You were doing this from what '79 to '81?

MACK: Yes!

Q: Did you feel the cold hand of the Reagan takeover because it really hit Central America, I mean ARA . Or were you too far down?

MACK: No. I mean there was certainly major change when Reagan came in but remember the Republicans did not control the Congress. So the Carter Human Rights legislation stayed in place. We still had to abide by the law. But the Carter Political Appointees who had wielded tremendous influence, who staffed the powerful Bureau of Human Rights, which had grown to wield an enormous amount of power and practically had veto power of any policy initiative proposed by the careerists working on Central America, were gone.

Q: Had we pretty well written Guatemala off?

MACK: We just couldn't do very much with Guatemala because of the human rights problems. It was a very difficult place to work. The country was in the midst of a very serious insurgency and a large part of the country was closed for casual travel; let's put it that way. The government was organizing the rural indigenous population in the highlands into local militias to defend their villages against the insurgents. This turned out to be a rather effective program. But these groups also carried out their own vendettas.

ALBERTO M. PIEDRA

Ambassador

Guatemala (1984-1987)

Alberto M. Piedra was born in Havana, Cuba and raised in Europe. After a brief stint in Fidel Castro's government, he left Cuba to finish his degree at Georgetown. Piedra worked for OAS, then was appointed Ambassador to Guatemala. Some of his other posts included special advisor to the General Assembly of the United Nations and a appointment on the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Piedra was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: In 1984 you were nominated to be Ambassador to Guatemala. How did this appointment come about?

PIEDRA: The person who sponsored me was Jesse Helms. I hardly knew him personally, but I knew some of the people who worked for him. I knew some of the people who had been in

contact with Senator Helms. Plus the fact that I was a good friend of Ambassador Mitterand who also had at that time a good deal of influence in the government. I was also a good friend of Jeane Kirkpatrick who had a lot of influence. I was a good friend of many people in the government at the time that backed me. So it was a combination of Congress plus the State Department who basically supported me.

Q: You were already inside the system by being in the OAS.

PIEDRA: Correct. When I started in the OAS Tom Enders was the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs and he knew me also. Then came Tony Martinez who saw how I operated at the State Department and he did not object. I don't know if I was his prime candidate, probably not because he told me personally afterwards, "Alberto you have my total support now that you have been appointed Ambassador." And I did get his support. I don't think there was any major opposition. Senators Dodd and Pell backed me without any problems.

Q: These were Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee.

PIEDRA: I had absolutely no problem with the Foreign Relations Committee. It was unanimous.

Q: I wonder if you could explain a little about Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina because he plays a fairly strong role in our Latin American policy at that time? Not only Senator Helms but as you mentioned you knew some of his staff members. It was almost as if Senator Helms had, and maybe still has, his own sort of Central American foreign policy. He feels very strongly about this although he doesn't come from a particularly Spanish-oriented state.

PIEDRA: He did have his own staff which was interested in Latin America, but I don't think this was true of only Senator Helms. Afterwards I operated with other Senators as well. For example, Senator Dodd from Connecticut became a very good friend of mine and came several times to Guatemala and stayed with me. He also had a staff that was very interested in Latin America at that time. The other Senator who came very often was Kerry from Massachusetts. In fact, when I left Guatemala, which is ironic, I came in with the most conservative, if you want to use the term, in the Senate and I left with the compliments of one of the most liberal in the Senate which are Senators Dodd and Kerry. In fact, Senator Kerry had inserted into the Congressional Record three or four pages in which he quotes from the Foreign Minister of Guatemala and his own personal experience in Guatemala saying that I was one of the best ambassadors he had ever known. So I am very proud, I have to admit it. On the one hand, Senator Helms was instrumental in my getting the position and on the other hand when I left the greatest compliment given to me was one by Senator Kerry.

Q: Going step by step, when you went to Guatemala, how were you prepared by the State

Department?

PIEDRA: They have what they call an Ambassadorial Seminar which I think was a three-day affair.

Q: So it wasn't a very extensive course?

PIEDRA: No. But it was useful. But, of course, in my case the usual questions of security, how to handle oneself for security purposes, etc....part of it was the process of adaptation. I, being of Latin background, the process of adaptation was very little or nothing. So there was really no problem. We adapted almost the very instant we arrived. On the other hand, the other part of it was interesting. The entire Ambassadorial Seminar, I think, is extremely interesting. I think Tony Martinez gives them now.

Q: He does, I have interviewed him.

PIEDRA: I do want to mention that Tony Martinez during my stay in Guatemala was totally supportive of our actions there. We had no problems.

Q: Before we get to the situation in Guatemala, what was your impression of the Embassy's staffing and its effectiveness when you were there?

PIEDRA: I have no complaints about the Embassy in Guatemala at all. From the day I arrived I found support, people who were friendly. I found no antagonism even though there is always the danger of it being a political appointee and having been appointed by Senator Helms.

Q: Particularly in the Foreign Service there was the impression that Senator Helms and the people he would appoint would be ideologues who would go in with a fairly extreme rightist point of view.

PIEDRA: That is correct. That is why, I said it before, that I am proud in many ways to say that when I left Guatemala the persons who gave me the greatest compliment was Senator Kerry from Massachusetts and Senator Dodd.

Q: What were American interests in Guatemala when you arrived and during the time you were there?

PIEDRA: As you know there was a military government in Guatemala when I arrived. You ask me, what were the main objectives? Primarily I would say to reestablish free elections in a democratic process in Guatemala. Establish respect for human rights in Guatemala was another

priority. Unfortunately it is true that there have been many violations of human rights in Guatemala. I mean that is a fact of life.

Q: Could you describe how we defined human rights and what were our concerns about human rights?

PIEDRA: Violation, for example, in this particular case in Guatemala of freedom, not only the freedom of expression which is one of the basic things, but freedom to be able to move around. To be able to participate in a democratic government with free elections. To respect your neighbor and his property. All of these things which were not the norm in Guatemala.

Q: There were kidnappings, killings, etc.

PIEDRA: Yes. And what the tragedy of Guatemala was, and that happened very often in Central American unfortunately, was that you never knew who did it. There is no doubt that in Guatemala violations were committed from both sides. It is not a question of only the government committed all sorts of violations, and the army in many ways, but the other side was also responsible for violations. So it was a very complicated thing. It is true that the army very often from what we heard committed all sorts of wrong doings.

I do want to clarify one thing which I think should be clarified. When I arrived in Guatemala the situation had improved already. Under the regime of Vitor the situation began to improve. I honestly believe that during my stay in Guatemala that the whole situation of human rights improved very significantly. I am not trying to get credit for it...circumstances or whatever you want...but it was a fact of life.

Q: But the United States through its Ambassador was putting tremendous pressure on Guatemala. So we had democracy, human rights and...

PIEDRA: Development. As you know you cannot have development if you don't have stability. So therefore in order for you to have development the first thing you must have is stability politically and otherwise because otherwise you cannot invest, you cannot do anything. Our basic idea was to try to set the scenario so that development could take place...investment could return to Guatemala. For example, in Guatemala the flight of capital was horrendous. Many of the wealthy were taking the money out and putting it in Miami, etc. Why were they doing this? There were many factors. Maybe some people were doing it because of greed, others were doing it for other reasons. But there was no doubt that many people honestly did it because they felt unsafe in Guatemala. So therefore they thought it was better for them to have their money out. Therefore, if you want all that money back, the first thing you have to do is get stability in the country. If you don't have that stability it is very difficult to convince anybody to put their money

there. I think this is one of the main reasons apart from the human aspects of it that we were so much interested in getting political stability in the country and at the same time improve the human rights situation, possibly eliminate completely all violations, and try to convince people that Guatemala had the human and material resources to be developed.

Q: Had the United States played any role by offering more aid, etc. in exchange for democracy?

PIEDRA: No, we didn't make any conditions at all as far as I can remember. I never said, "either you do it or else." We just told them point blank that if a coup or junta took place we would take it very negatively. We showed strongly our interests in democracy and human rights and it was obvious to them, but it was not specific with strings attached.

Q: You mention in human rights that it came through kidnappings, killings, threats and terrorists were coming from the right, left and all, but who was on the right and who was on the left?

PIEDRA: It was very difficult to tell. You see they had four revolutionary movements so you could tell more or less, but not specifically who were their representatives let's say in Guatemala City. For example, I used to go to Guatemala quite a lot before I became Ambassador. I remember one day in Guatemala City -- Guatemala City was a dead city. The restaurants were empty. You couldn't see people on the streets. You put on the television and all of a sudden the program would be interrupted and it would say the rebels, or whatever you want to call them, declared a state of seize, blah, blah, blah. In other words it was a situation which was really dramatic. And of course shootings were going on and it was a total disaster.

When I arrived and Majea Victor took over the situation improved very significantly. People were beginning to think that maybe he really wanted the country to come back to a democracy. Restaurants began to open again and there were people on the streets, etc. When the elections took place it was like the Fourth of July.

Q: Tell me, why did Guatemala go this way and El Salvador has remained until at least yesterday a major area of contention with the Nicaragua Sandinistas stirring up a lot of trouble?

PIEDRA: I think there are several differences. First of all I think you cannot compare the Guatemalan army with the Salvadoran army. You can say whatever you want about the Guatemalan army, but they do have esprit de corps, they have a high morale, at least among the officers. I don't think you find that in the Salvadoran army. The Guatemalan army, and I am not justifying it, I think it is terrible, did wipe out the guerrilla movement. El Salvador never did that. Why, I don't know. Maybe because they were so corrupt. So in Guatemala from that point of

view there is a significant difference. I am not saying this was justified. The ends do not justify the means. But they did act in such a way that the guerrilla movement ...don't forget that you couldn't go from Guatemala City to Antigua. The guerrillas would interfere along the main roads. In other words, it was a situation in which they occupied large portions of the country. The army was able to liquidate most of the guerrillas with tactics that...I want to repeat a hundred times that you and I would not agree with. Therefore when Majea Vitor came to power the country was in a totally different situation then it was before. So from that point of view there was greater stability in the sense that there were not guerrillas threatening to occupy cities, etc. as there was previously.

Q: Honduras was not an area where we were as concerned about as we were with El Salvador. Were the Nicaraguans trying to do anything there or were they...we are talking about the Sandinistas?

PIEDRA: Yes, they did. But you see by the time I got there the guerrillas were concentrated in the remote areas of the country so they did not constitute a threat to the major cities, communications, etc. They were more or less in isolated regions. But there were three or four areas in the country where they were operating. But they did not constitute such a burden to the cities. You could roam around Guatemala City with no problem.

Q: Did you have to worry about your security? Could you talk about what it is like being an Ambassador...?

PIEDRA: That's another story. It was two different things. We are talking now of guerrillas. The political aspect of it. The threat almost disappeared in the cities but it existed in the mountains, etc. That is correct.

Now, common criminality. That, unfortunately, began to increase. You are asking why? There are different versions and different theories concerning that. But the fact still remains that from the point of view of common criminality it began to get worse and worse. Some people claim it is because the economic situation deteriorated at the beginning. I don't know if you can give credence to that or not because in reality it is true that it deteriorated in terms of the consequence but on the other hand it also improved because better economic measures were taken. Another reason and it may be more correct, I don't know, was that many of the old policemen were kicked out. There was a cleanup. Many claim that many of these people who were before involved had the arms, etc. and became common criminals. Perhaps a weaker democratic government played a role as well.

Q: What did this mean for being an American Ambassador there?

PIEDRA: From our point of view and in all honesty I never felt fearful at all. We had very good security. Sometimes you wondered if we had too much security.

Q: Some years ago we had an Ambassador killed there, John Gordon Mein.

PIEDRA: Correct. I have to admit that I never felt in any way insecure although we had a lot of security at the Embassy. Personally I had two American bodyguards all the time next to me, plus about 10 Guatemalans. You know, advanced cars, etc. There was always the danger that something could happen, but as long as I was there nothing happened.

Q: Did you have problems with members of the Catholic Church from the States?

PIEDRA: No. They would sometimes come with complaints about human rights and we would try to investigate it but they never created any problems for us.

Q: Well, let's say you get a complaint about human rights. After all one could say that if a policeman beats up a minority in Los Angeles, the Guatemalan Ambassador in Washington isn't going to send out someone to investigate. But what were we doing?

PIEDRA: We would if it were an American citizen.

Q: But what if it wasn't an American citizen? You would get a report saying that there had been a killing in such and such a place; this would get in the papers; and then they would say what about this?

PIEDRA: Well, first of all we would try to find out the facts as they were...sometimes, as you know, these things are difficult. If there is something that is legitimate and we think it of serious consequences we would go to the Foreign Minister, or whoever it was, first and go through the proper channels. If necessary we would take it to the very top and say, "We are very concerned because we hear this is going on, and as you know we are opposed to any violations of human rights. We do not believe this is a question of getting involved with internal affairs, it is just a question of justice or humanitarianism."

For example, if we knew of a sudden kidnapping of somebody...one case when I was there had to do with trade unions. I went in to see the Foreign Minister and said, "This is terrible, how could it happen? Can you imagine the impact this will have abroad if something happens to this person?"

If they got the message they would try to solve the problem.

Q: I take it that there was understanding on the Guatemalan side of the government that when we made these protests it was not just meddling.

PIEDRA: It all depends on how you say these things. If you go there pounding on the table, that is ridiculous. But if you go and say, "Look, Emanuel, we just found out this. How could this be possible now that Guatemala is going on the right track? Now that Guatemala is doing the right thing – now that the prestige of Guatemala is coming back after so many years of being considered the worse. Can't you investigate to see what is happening? I am sure you are not behind it." And let them do the rest. They know we are concerned. They know that we know about these things and we are putting it in general terms of "Hey, do this!" You don't say that, but they get the message.

Q: I take it that within that society you worked very hard to be on a first name basis?

PIEDRA: Yes. That is why I have always maintained that if you want to be a good diplomat the first thing you have to do is cultivate human relations. Because it is much easier for you to operate once you have this good personal relationship at the very beginning.

Q: How about the media? How did you find the press within Guatemala, and did you also get American reporters coming looking for horror stories? Was media a problem at all?

PIEDRA: I have to admit that as long as I was Ambassador in Guatemala we had no problem with the media except one case. Our security had decided that we should improve our security system around the Embassy in Guatemala and we had to close one of the streets, etc. That was used by one of the newspapers as a pretext to attack the Embassy for our policy in general. Saying that this is once again a demonstration of American imperialism, blah, blah, blah, and they think they can control everything, etc.

My personal opinion was that the attack was not so much an attack on us as it was a way to attack the mayor of Guatemala City whose rival in the mayoral elections had been the head of the newspaper involved. The mayor, of course, was the one who gave us authorization to do things. I think in order to hit the mayor he used us.

In terms of foreign correspondence who came, yes, sometimes they tried to...but I generally would say no. Even 60 Minutes interviewed me for half an hour, but used only 2 minutes.

Q: 60 Minutes is sort of a muckraking TV show in which, if you appear on it, you are usually going to appear looking awful.

PIEDRA: They were asking me about human rights. I said to myself, "I bet you anything they are going to ask me and I am going to say the situation improved, etc., and right after that they will show somebody lying dead in the street." They did do that, but they didn't do it right after I spoke. With me personally, they didn't embarrass me.

Q: Was there any problem with drug smuggling or anything else at that time?

PIEDRA: Towards the end of my tour the drug problem began. There were rumors and talk, etc.

Q: So this was not on your priority list?

PIEDRA: It was beginning but at that time not a major problem.

Q: So you left in ...?

PIEDRA: August, 1987 and then I was appointed to the United Nations with Dick Walters.

THOMAS F. STROOCK

Ambassador

Guatemala (1989-1992)

A native of Wyoming, Ambassador Stroock was educated at Yale University. He was active in the petroleum industry in Wyoming and soon became engaged in Wyoming State government and politics. A member of the Republican Party, he was appointed Ambassador to Guatemala, where he served from 1989 to 1992. Ambassador Stroock was interviewed by Andrew Low in 1993.

Q: Now I think we were at the point where you had now been nominated as ambassador to Guatemala. Rather than going over the whole confirmation process, if we have time maybe we can come back later and pick that up at the end, but perhaps it would be best at this point to jump to the point at which you were confirmed and then cover the preparation period when you were getting ready to actually go to Guatemala.

STROOCK: Well once I was confirmed, I was in Guatemala ten days later. There wasn't much there, the preparation all came before. After I was nominated, they sent me to what I laughingly

call "charm school." Well before I did that, of course, they had the usual investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the State Department Security. And there are a hundred funny stories to tell about that. A favorite is that the guy came to me afterwards, and he said, "I haven't had one person say a bad thing about you, Senator (because I was a State Senator at the time)." But he said, "Everybody agrees that the President would have been better off if he named your wife instead of you."

And the other one that's my favorite is my great pal, John Hilsom, who has since unfortunately passed away, was interviewed in his office in New York, and afterwards he sent me a telegram. He said, "Unpack your bags. They have just interviewed me. You aren't even going to be able to get on the *bus* to Guatemala!" (laughs)

Q: Maybe the most orderly way to do this would be to take these subjects one at a time and to track through your experiences in the three and one-half years that you were in Guatemala subject by subject, and of course as we go there'll be inter-relationships. I'll let you choose--but you know we had drugs, the political problems, the upcoming election, the guerrilla war, the general relationship with Nicaragua...

STROOCK: When I first got to the State Department everybody was busy with their own particular piece of the Central American pie, and nobody had truly concentrated on the slice of the pie that said, "Guatemala." The "Guatemala" piece in the puzzle was still to be solved, and I rapidly realized that no one was going to do it except myself. So while it was "studying in", I decided that I would try and keep things simple--in accordance with that management style that you mentioned--try to concentrate on what in Spanish came to known as "los Cuatros D's," "The Four D's," They were drugs--of course not *for* drugs, but against drugs, democracy, development, and human rights. Human rights doesn't begin with "d" in English, but it does in Spanish, ("d..."). And drugs is ("drogas," and democracy is "democracia," and development is "desarrollo..."). So you can call them the "Four D's" in Spanish, and we did.

In my opening statement at the airport when I arrived and in my opening speech to the mission--which I called an "all hands on deck" speech, and in my opening conversations with President Cerezo, I concentrated on the "Four D's". I made them our keystones and I would constantly refer to them. It got to the point where people wanted to throw up when they heard me talk about them. But they did become the focus of the mission, and we did, I think, make progress in all four areas.

Q: Let's take one "D" at a time. You want to start with drugs?

STROOCK: Well, drugs was the one that most directly affected the average citizen in the United States. There were two drug problems in Guatemala. The first was the actual cultivation of the poppy flower in the narrow high valleys of the Northern Altiplano, the ones in Guatemala that lead up northward into Mexico. They're very deep; they're very narrow; they're ideal for cultivating poppy. The small farmers take the poppy seed out to Mexico where it's chemically treated and becomes heroin. We found only two chemical installations, you couldn't even call them laboratories, that would turn the poppy into crude heroin in Guatemala itself. Mostly what happened was that the poppy plant was picked, placed on mules and taken on back dirt roads up to Mexico to be treated and turned into heroin there.

We were very involved trying to stop all this when I got there. We had our own air force of six helicopters and six thrush airplanes, all under private contractors reporting to the Drug Enforcement Agency, the DEA, to fumigate, poison and eradicate poppy seed. We used to make large claims about how many acres of poppy we had eradicated. I went along on a couple of these airplane spraying trips. I never went in the thrushes because they would dive down into those valleys, and I wasn't sure they were ever going to come out. Those thrush pilots were brave guys. They would go into every valley and spray. I did go twice in the helicopter gunships flying up above as protection and looked down. Negotiating these efforts was tricky. An American plane had been shot down over Nicaragua running contraband to the contras. They didn't want the same thing to happen in Guatemala, which was why the U.S. armed forces never were involved. It was a very inefficient way to operate, but nevertheless that's the way it had to be. We had to secure permission from the Guatemalan government to allow us to run these secret contract operations in their country. We had to base the plane's pilots on Guatemalan air force bases, and we needed the cooperation of the Guatemalan army. Well the Guatemalan army is a part of the problem, not part of the solution in Guatemala. While they were and are very constructive and necessary to us in the war on drugs, they also are one of the big threats to growing democracy. They are one of the great causes of the violations of human rights endemic in the country. Some of them were part of the drug organization. They have an enormous influence on the country's ability in every area because they are forty three thousand of them, they're disciplined, and they are the only agency in the country that really works. We can get into that later, but in many of these small, unstable societies it takes the military to make things happen--no other agency, public or private, has the necessary money or organization or manpower.

In any event they were the only people we had to work with. In the three and a half years we were there I desperately tried to move our drug enforcement dependency from the army to a civilian police force--the ("Guardia Civil"), the treasury agents. As I left we had succeeded in establishing some basic treasury organizations that were involved in seeking out those who would transport drugs and contraband into Guatemala, which was the second problem. We never succeeded in getting our program of spraying and fumigating and trying to kill poppy plants

away from the necessity of cooperating with the Guatemalan army. We absolutely needed their logistical bases. We couldn't operate without them. We needed their permission to fly over the country because we couldn't do without that. We needed frequently to call on them for repairs to our equipment. They could have shut us down overnight, and they frequently threatened to do just that.

Q: Did they ever demand concessions in return for permission to operate?

STROOCK: That was the whole fight. My frequent conversations with the various officers in the Guatemalan army almost always carried the implied threat of cooperate or your drug effort will suffer. When we cut off military aid in December of 1990, which is another story, the thought was that we had just blown the poppy interdiction program because the military would shut it down. They didn't because we were working with them through the back door of the Central Intelligence Agency, which is again yet another story. But in our relationships with all Guatemalan government officials, and with the army in particular, we had constantly to keep in mind that we were interdicting and fumigating poppies in San Marcos province, at their sufferance, and they could shut down that program at any time. The farmers whose poppy was being fumigated didn't like it at all. There was a tremendous uproar all the time claiming that we were destroying and causing peasants to lose their legitimate crops, none of which was ever proven and none of which was true. Nevertheless at least once a month we got a complaint about that. It was a very involved and dicey situation.

Q: Was there any other aspect to the war on drugs in Guatemala other than eradicating poppy fields?

STROOCK: Yes. The biggest part of our drug problem was that Guatemala increasingly became a way station for transmitting cocaine from South America into the North American market. The coca plant itself is principally grown in Peru. It is shipped into Colombia where it is made into cocaine. Then the Colombians want to bring it into the United States. They used to bring it up in boats through the Caribbean, but our naval interdiction efforts in the Caribbean got very efficient, so they started shipping through Guatemala. The whole time I was in Guatemala we had five United States Navy cruisers with radar and antenna and support, cruising off the coasts of Colombia attempting to track drug flights in airplanes and speedboats, leaving Colombia. They would come up to Guatemala and Mexico then transship and the cocaine would go up into the United States. Guatemala was an ideal place to do that because of the large farms, the large banana plantations, the large coffee fincas, the large sugar ingenios, and the large cattle ranches all had air strips. It was easy to drop into these air strips and transship from planes to either mules or human beings or trucks or other airplanes.

To patrol this interdiction effort we had a very large DEA presence in the embassy. We had a

Guatemala City Office Chief, five DEA agents and two pilots. There was constantly the desire to expand the operation and to make the DEA bigger. We had something called "Operation Cadence," which had its own staff of people who were rotated in and out of Guatemala. The whole time we were there, I think we seized a total of maybe sixty tons of cocaine. Our biggest haul was one haul of about thirteen tons as I remember, which was towards the very end of my stay there. This caused a Colombian hit team to come into the country, so we heard, to try and kill me. This was why in my last month there; I made public appearances with a flak jacket on, which was very uncomfortable and very damned unpleasant. We were successful, I think, in training the Guardia Civil--the Treasury--Police to become effective in this area. We did succeed in getting the extradition of five drug traffickers under extradition treaties. That was an enormous political effort to get that to happen. We did have pretty good information on drug trafficking, and drug interdiction across all of Latin America became the number one mission of the United States Southern Command after Noriega was taken out of Panama, and after General George Joulman became the commander in chief of Southern Command succeeding Max (Thurman). That was the mission that George seized on as being the most effective thing he could do. I had several meeting with him, several in Guatemala and two in Panama where we got to be friends. George was right because he said, of all the things we did, this was the one that would affect most on American society and therefore justified the American taxpayer dollars being spent. He was hopeful that we could make a serious dent in the drug transshipments.

I wonder if we ever did. I am convinced after three and a half years that we did not win the war on drugs. It's still going on, and I think we're losing. I think we need to do something else, but at least a quarter of my time as ambassador was spent dealing with the interdiction problem, with the cultivation problem and with the extradition problem.

We would try to stop the poppy from growing, we would try and interdict the flow of cocaine through the country, and we would try and find out the people who were involved with it and extradite them to the United States. Sometimes we weren't even so delicate or diplomatically nice as to extradite them. There was a Nicaraguan citizen, a known drug Kingpin, named Gadea, who came into the country. We knew he was coming and we got the Guardia Civil to nab him as he got off the plane, and we got them to put him on a special plane that was flown down by the United States Marshal for Florida where there was a warrant out for his arrest. All of this was done outside the extradition treaty, because he was an undesirable alien. This was legal except the Guatemalans, in their hurry, forgot to go through all the legal steps they had to do through the court. Where that guy is today, I don't know, but we got him out.

Q: When you say, "Got him out," you mean you got him onto the airplane...

STROOCK: Got him on the airplane and into the hands of the U.S. court in Florida.

Q: So he was arrested in court?

STROOCK: That's right. We legally extradited under a very complicated extradition treaty. it takes months to do. Some important figures, including Arnolando Vargas, the mayor of Zacapa and a key figure in the old Cali cartel, a known murderer, a real thief had controlled (Zacapa) province for years. He had been involved in transshipping cocaine for years, and we proved it. We got him, we extradited him to the United States under the extradition treaties; and we got four others as well. Sue Patterson the Consul General, one of the most dynamic ladies I've ever met--she was not only attractive, but very bright and very hardworking; was crucial in getting those guys, and the Guatemalans were fascinated by having this very attractive, bright, petite American woman really pounding on their tables to get these extraditions accomplished. Again with the management theory we discussed, I would go with her when she wanted me to, and she would want me to go when it got really sticky with the Army. Otherwise she did it alone and she deserves a lot of credit.

So we did make a difference in the war on drugs, but it did take up a lot of time, and we didn't make enough of a difference. We won some battles, but we never did win the damn war, and I don't know if the war is winnable.

Q: Was the war on drugs linked in any way with the corruption problem in Guatemala?

STROOCK: Yes. Unfortunately, half the history of small Latin American nations is one of corruption, and drugs brought in a tremendous amount of money that flooded through the country. The claim in Guatemala was that the guerrillas were using drug money. The second president that I had to deal with, Jorge Serrano, used to claim that all the time, but he wasn't always right. I'm sure that there was some drug smuggling going on with the guerrillas, but the biggest amount of the drug smuggling that was going on was with the rich new entrepreneurs and the army, and we never could find out where that was done because they were very clever, very well connected and very organized.

Q: When you say, "going on with the army," do you mean the army was actually cooperating with the transshipping of drugs?

STROOCK: No the army as an institution was actively cooperating in suppressing it, but individual army officers and soldiers were bought indeed. There's no question about it.

Q: What were they actually being bribed to do?

STROOCK: Yes, to look the other way or help as drugs were transshipped in all parts of the operation. Many of our pieces of our information led us to believe that lower ranking army

officers--majors, lieutenants colonels--were involved. Cerezo turned a deaf ear to that, but Serrano, the second president was a strong, born-again evangelical Protestant--really hated that idea in his guts. He really moved heaven and earth to try and shut it down, but even *he* wasn't successful. We got our best cooperation from Serrano in this area of drug interdiction.

Q: When you talk about "shut it down," are you talking about shutting down corruption or shutting down drugs or both?

STROOCK: Shutting down drugs. Serrano himself was terribly corrupt, so he wasn't at all good at shutting down corruption, but he did want to try and shut down drug trafficking, and yet it didn't happen. The huge amount of money available through drugs was a big part of the large corruption problem in Guatemala. Many money laundering operations took place. We held classes trying to train the financial institutions in the country how to recognize and handle money-laundering, but we never really did a good job because *we* don't know how to handle it ourselves.

Q: Did you speak out at any time about corruption?

STROOCK: Oh Lord, it got to the point where I think they were tired of it. I started out by saying that Guatemalans made a business out of , hell an *art*, out of not paying taxes. I would say that they couldn't expect United States taxpayers to support activities in their own country that their own taxpayers refused to support. I would talk about corruptions in generalities because there are some things that as an ambassador that you just can't say. To remain effective, you couldn't say that you were convinced the president was corrupt. You just couldn't do that. I had to maintain a relationship with him. I really had to try and be his friend. But you could say that some of his friends were involved. The first big drug incident that I got involved in, shortly after I arrived there, illustrates this conundrum. The President, Cerezo, appointed one of his buddies, a former colonel by the name of Hugo Moran, as director of the port of Santo Thomas. Just before I arrived in Guatemala, Hugo Moran had been involved in a drug transshipment at La Aurora, the main airport of Guatemala. He and two of his cronies were involved in drug trafficking up to their eyeballs. The CIA, the intelligence station, and the DEA, the drug enforcement agency, had the proof. They even had pictures of these guys carrying the stuff out of the airport. To get Moran out of the town, Cerezo named him as the chairman of the Port of Santo Thomas, which is the country's leading port. Eighty percent of the country's imports and exports go through there. A lot of drugs are transshipped. This was just an open license to conduct illegal activities. Many of our officers believed that President Cerezo himself was involved because his brother definitely was.

Q: It was like putting a fox in charge of the henhouse...

STROOCK: Exactly! So I went to the president and spoke to him about it. I made a special trip down there to the palace for that purpose only. We would have breakfast once a month--and I would bring it up each time, but three months went by, and he hadn't done anything about it. At this same time, there was a flap over the visas that were being requested by Guatemalan congressmen. They were being held up because the congressmen refused to fill out certain forms. Sue Patterson, our Consul General, felt that while they were entitled almost automatically to visitor's visas to the United States on official visits, they were asking for official visas to do private business. She was trying to make a point, that congressmen should not expect special privileges from the United States Consul General--in direct contradiction to the way they operated in their country.

Q: *Guatemalan congressmen?*

STROOCK: Yes. Sue was holding up four or five visas. I went down to see the Interior Minister to ask that he cooperate with us in getting these Guatemalan congressmen to clear their paperwork so we could issue them visas. When I came out of his office after the interview, the press was waiting there for me. The American ambassador attracted press down there. On TV and radio and newspapers and everything else, they wanted to know why we were holding up these visas; *denying* these visas were the claims. I said that we weren't "denying" any visas. We were just requesting that everybody in Guatemala go through the same procedures. Congressmen were, in our view, no more entitled to special privileges than any other Guatemalan citizen, just as in our country. The press insisted, "Well you are *denying* visas," and I said, "No, since I've gotten here, we've only denied two visas." "And whose were those?" I said, "One of them is a mayor of a small town up in the Peten, who is known as an illegal alien smuggler, a 'coyote,' and we're not going to give him a visa. The other is Colonel Hugo Moran, who we believe to be involved in drug trafficking. As far as we're concerned Colonel Moran's activities have made him undesirable and we don't want him in our country." Well, that certainly created a storm. It's the only time in our two year relationship that President Cerezo really got very personally angry at me. He thought I put him down personally. And I told him, "No Mr. President I didn't put you down personally, I just got tired of waiting for you to act." (chuckles) I'm just picking out one incident out of maybe fifty, but there were fifty of them just like that.

Q: *Maybe it's time to move to the second "D," democracy. That would have been heavily tied up in the upcoming election. . .*

STROOCK: Yes. Well, at the time the big concern was that the Christian Democrats, who had controlled the congress--they had fifty-two out of the hundred deputies--and who also controlled the Presidency had a candidate by the name of Alfonso Cabrera. He had been the foreign minister and State Secretary Shultz hated him because he lied to him. He was reputed to be heavily involved in drug trafficking. There was no question that Cabrera's older brother was a

drug trafficker. He went to jail. There's no question that a large amount of drug money supported Cabrera's political ambitions. He flew around the country in a helicopter owned by a drug king named Escobar. He had known ties to both Cali and Medellin cartels. But I must say that *I* was never convinced that Cabrera himself was involved in drug trafficking. It's just that if he had become president, he had so many chits out to those who *were* involved in drug trafficking that it would have been impossible to control. Furthermore, the army did not like Cabrera. We had all kinds of information that had he become elected, they would have moved against him and overthrown the government.

Q: Let me stop you for just a second. The president when you arrived was Vinicio Cerezo.

STROOCK: Yes.

Q: And how had he come to power?

STROOCK: He was legitimately and democratically elected in 1985. The story of the Cerezo election has been covered many times before and we shouldn't take the time to go into it here, but he had the opportunity to be the George Washington and Abraham Lincoln-rolled-into-one in his country. But he blew his chances and suffered two coups, in which he succeeded in escaping narrowly with his life and his government. The last two years of his administration, when I was there, he didn't care really whether school kept or not. He was there to enrich himself, which he did. He was personally corrupt. He took money, to our certain knowledge, from education funds, and from road funds.

Q: And he shipped the money off shore, didn't he?

STROOCK: I haven't any clear idea what he did with it, I just know that it disappeared. He bought himself a yacht called "Odiseus" for one thing.

Q: So you were talking about Cabrera and the...

STROOCK: Anyhow Cerezo was the president. He was an extraordinarily likeable guy. If he walked in the room right now, I would be glad to see him. As a human being he was despicable, but as a personality he was lots of fun. He was a guy you could always have a good time with. He liked jokes. He liked girls--he really did like girls! He liked to drink.

But he was corrupt, and in the last two years of his administration he didn't care whether school kept or not. When the economy started to inflate, he didn't even try to control things. In any event, Cabrera had been his buddy who helped him get elected, and so he in turn now was committed politically to help Cabrera get elected. Cabrera was the candidate of the Christian

Democrat Party. There was a strong central group, the National Central Union, headed by a guy who I knew very well. He has since been killed very tragically; murdered by political opponents, but it was covered up to look like a robbery. His name was Jorge Carpio. His brother, Roberto, was Vinicio's Vice President. That gives you an idea of how involved all these families are in politics.

Carpio owned the newspaper, *El Grafico*, and he had been the candidate against Cerezo in 1985 and had lost. He had built up a pretty important party that controlled a number of seats in the congress. It was the second largest party in the country, and he was a very viable candidate.

Then there was the extreme right wing that had nominated an engineer who had become an economist, by the name of Manuel Ayau. He had been the rector of Francisco Marañón University. He had dual citizenship, American citizenship and Guatemalan citizenship. He was running as the candidate of the MLN, the extreme right wing party. As the campaign developed it became obvious that he was going no place, so he made a deal with the VCN. He came on board as Jorge Carpio's vice president. So Carpio and Ayau ran as one team and Cabrera was the major opposition. There were several smaller parties in the election that weren't given much of a chance, including the MAS, the Action Socialista, which, despite its name, was a conservative republican party, run by Jorge Serrano. He had been an associate of General Rios Montt.

Past histories will tell about the Rios Montt phenomenon. He seized power in 1983 and was forced out by the army 18 months later. In 1990, Rios Montt was running for the presidency on the FRG ticket. The constitution that the country operated on, and still operates on, was specifically designed to keep him from becoming president because of the events in 1983-84. But he claimed that he had the right to run for president. The truth of the matter is that there wasn't any question in my mind that had he been allowed to run, had the constitution not specifically prohibited him from running, he would have been overwhelmingly elected on the first ballot, in 1990, because it was known that he personally was not corrupt. He really shut down corruption in 1983 when he was president.

It was felt that the Cerezo regime was so corrupt, so lackadaisical, and the economy was inflating so fast, with no one paying attention to the store, that Rios Montt, despite all the evangelical Christian craziness that he had demonstrated in the two years that he had been the usurper president, still was the preferable candidate. The people believed that he would have brought order out of chaos. The Guatemalan people believe that to this day. He's got to be figured on when talking about the future of Guatemala. He is very definitely there, and very definitely interested, and still an active man; he's in his early sixties. A dynamic guy. Unfortunately for him, the Supreme Court ruled, shortly before the elections, that he couldn't run. The voters were looking around for someone who was as close to him as possible and they settled on Jorge Serrano. Jorge Serrano is a very interesting personality, one of the most interesting people I ever

met; very difficult man. He was born-again Evangelical Christian, whose main problem was that he would not listen. He was an engineer. He wanted to handle everything himself. He believed that he was a prophet of God and that he spoke directly to God. Phil Taylor, our DCM, very accurately said, "This guy's in transmit 99 percent of the time," and he was. When I interviewed him you could see that he wasn't really listening to what I had to say. He was merely waiting til I got done so he could say what he had to say, and while I was talking he was thinking about what he was going to say. He wasn't taking anything in. He surrounded himself with yes-men, but he ran a very, very good political campaign in 1990. In September of that year he had perhaps two percent of the vote in the polls, and they were pretty accurate polls. Then the Court of Constitutionality ruled that Rios Montt could not run. From that day on the people drifted off the Rios Montt bandwagon and got on Jorge Serrano's. He got some money, and he went on television with some very clever ads with attractive jingles. He said the right things. He did the right things. He hired Roger Ailes from the United States as a political expert to come down and advise him. From two percent in early September of 1990 he got to 24 percent in the elections held in November. Jorge Carpio got to 26 percent, and the other parties didn't reach double digits. One of the brighter stars in the firmament of Guatemalan politics is a young former mayor of Guatemala City by the name of Alvaro Artu. He had a party called the PAN, and they came in third. The Democrat Christians, because of their corruption, came in a poor fourth, and Cabrera was out of it.

Guatemalan law requires that you can't just win the presidency with plurality, you have to win with a majority. So there was a run off between Serrano and Jorge Carpio – Carpio having had 26 percent of the vote, Serrano 24 percent of the vote. And the thought was that they might split that difference; no one really knew what was going to happen. But again, Serrano campaigned very well, and Jorge Carpio campaigned very badly. He proceeded to attack Alvaro Artu, saying that Artu had made a corrupt deal with Serrano to support him as Foreign Minister if Serrano won. It was true, but saying it publicly and nastily, somehow he didn't do that right. There's a right way and a wrong way, and he picked the wrong way. Carpio hardly improved his vote at all. He went from 26 to 28 percent of the total vote. He only picked up two percentage points. All the rest of them, unanimously, went for Serrano who was elected by a large plurality.

Q: So it was 72 percent?

STROOCK: Approximately. Then subsequently Alvaro Artu became the Foreign Minister in the new Serrano cabinet. So Jorge Carpio wasn't wrong in his accusations. Nevertheless, the whole campaign, which was beginning to heat up by the time I got there in October in 1989, got very warm all year long. The threat and counter-threat of "there's going to be a coup, the army's going to take over and not have elections, Cerezo is going to resign and turn things over to Cabrera, Rios Montt is going to mount a coup, the army is going to support Rios Montt"--I mean, pick your daily rumor, and it would sweep the capital city. Since most politics in small Central

American countries are controlled in the capital, what happens in a small group in the capital is much more important than what happens inside the beltway in Washington. In Washington inside the beltway, you can influence each other, but the huge mass of the country isn't that effected. In Guatemala, what happens inside their proverbial beltway does indeed affect how the country goes. The country is primitive enough, and the society is fractured enough, with half the population being Indian and not really *in* the political culture. What happens in the capital has tremendous influence.

Q: What was the turn out like in terms of registered voters?

STROOCK: It was about 65 percent in both cases.

Q: Do you know what percentage of person who would be eligible to vote, had they registered, were registered?

STROOCK: No. One of the problems in a Latin American country, particularly in one like Guatemala, which is so poor, is that they haven't had a reliable census ever. You are really guessing at how many people. I think there are more than ten million people living in that country, but I still see figures that say eight and a half to nine million. I think they're guessing at the population of Guatemala City. I believe it to be an excess of two million, but they're not quite officially showing it to be two million yet, so it's very difficult to tell. Of course the country has a huge rate of illiteracy, so people vote with their thumbprints when they can't spell. The Democrat Christians, have a well organized organization in the countryside, and they literally truck the Guatemalan Indians into town and march them up to the polls where they put their thumbprint where they are told. Nevertheless, the election was legal. It was clean. It was open. We had a lot of investigators, international and American observers, down there during the election, and all agreed on this.

Q: Who was the head of the observer team, do you recall?

STROOCK: Well, there were many different ones. The UN had one. We had one. President Carter was down there. So it was hard to say, but there were several of them. I guess the UN would have been the principle one. It was headed by a man by the name of Tomuchat. But I went around all the country on both election days, up and down the countryside, and I'm convinced that they were open, clean elections; that there was no fraud, either time.

Q: Do you think voters were coerced?

STROOCK: Well, I think that it was a cleaner election in that regard than you have for Sweetwater County Sheriff in Wyoming. It's the same kind of coercion as "Bring your friends

into town on the truck and you all vote." In any event we did have a clean election, and I flatter myself that much of what we did in the embassy; the constant talking and prodding and visiting the army and saying, "you can't do that," the visiting with the various political figures and saying, "You have got to do this right." I saw Rios Montt twice. I became a very good friend of his vice presidential candidate, a man by the name of Harris Whitbick who again had dual U.S.-Guatemalan citizenship. Several of the major figures in Guatemala society have dual citizenship. Harris had been in the United States Marine Corps, liked to play tennis and was a good friend. I would say, "Harris, as a leader in this culture there are things you really must do. You will lose more than you will gain unless you run a clean election." I really spent about a quarter of my time from October of 1989-January of 1991 trying to promote a legitimate election.

Although we were accused of it, definitely we had no preferred candidate. That was the other thing: we were accused because I got early on to be a personal friend of Jorge Carpio. I thought he was a very educated, erudite, interesting man.

Marta and I got to be social friends of Jorge and his wife Marita. They would invite us to their home in Antigua, and we would have them over for small dinners--as personal friends--at the embassy. And because of that, it was assumed that, certainly Serrano assumed, that I was supporting Carpio. But we never did, and never could. We refused to take sides publicly or privately. I would tell Jorge privately, "Jorge, you're my good friend and I hope you always are my good friend, but you're going to be my good friend whether you stay as editor of El Grafico or whether you're president of your country. That's the way it's going to be." Also, I got to be very, very impressed with Alvaro Artu, and I made a point of meeting personally with all the candidates at any time that I could, refusing to have my picture taken with them publicly (which they all wanted), because I didn't want the United States to get involved in the decision of the election. But we were very heavily involved in the mechanics of the election.

One of the things we did was support the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which was run by a wonderful man by the name of Arturo Herbrugger who is today the Vice President of Guatemala. He's 81 years old. He's a distinguished jurist. He's one of the leading jurists in Central America, and he's one of the few uncorrupt members of the Latin American judiciary I've ever met. A wonderful man of whom I'm very fond. He ran the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, and we said, "Look, what do you need to run an honest election in terms of computer capability, in terms of FAX machines, in terms of communication, because if we can use computers, where communication is instantaneous, it will tremendously cut down the ability to manipulate the election." We must have spent well over 300,000 dollars of our AID funds with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, on this program. It was one of the few programs where I would not insist on having matching funds because the Supreme Electoral Tribunal had no funds to match. As we get into development I'll talk about the matching funds concept. But this was just an outright grant of US AID money to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to equip them, to have safe and

secure transmission of results, instantaneous communication, and safe and secure computation results. Because of that the election was very well run in a country where elections had not been very well run previously. The AID mission that coordinated this was run first by Tony Cauterucci and then by Terry Brown. They both did an excellent job. I really think that was one place where the American taxpayer got a very good run for his less than half a million bucks.

Q: Was democracy still a major issue after Serrano took office or was that really the end?

STROOCK: No, no, no. It's always going to be a major issue. In fact Serrano fell off the wagon after I left. I left in November of 1992, and in May of 1993, Jorge Serrano tried to turn himself into a dictator. He tried to abolish the courts, abolish the congress, and muffle press. He tried that twice before during my stay there. He would convince himself that anyone who opposed his programs was in the pay of a drug lord, was a narco-trafficker, trying to destabilize his government and had bought off and bribed the TV and newspapers. He was a great believer in the conspiracy theory and believed that just about everything was a conspiracy against him. The newspapers would attack him in cartoons, or when they would publish that his family had taken up buying polo ponies and playing polo, or that he had purchased a (finca) and was trying to throw some poor Indians off the (finca) land in Rio Dulce. All of this was true, but he took these as personal assaults and personal attacks on him--the equivalent of lese majeste--trying to destabilize his state.

I sent our defense attaché to see the Army Chief of Staff, Tromciso Orvega, who was his good friend, to say that this can never work. I went down to the police myself to say, "If you proceed to continue to terrorize the newspaper editors [which he was doing], and if you abolish the congress-- "If you do that," I said, "you will make my life a lot easier. I will become the world's greatest senior tennis player because there will be nothing for me to do except to go out on that tennis court I've got in back of the embassy and practice so that when I go back to Wyoming I'll be the senior's tennis champ. I can promise you that every single program and every single communication between you and the government of United States will be cut." I think, truly, that this was one of the key factors in delaying in his decision until after I left. A few times he really listened to me because I really got in his face. But not very often.

Q: So you think you talked him out of turning himself into a dictator?

STROOCK: I don't know that I myself was responsible. There were several other factors. The time wasn't right for other reasons, too. I think one of the reasons that he did make the attempt in May 1993 was that there was no American ambassador there. We had an extremely able deputy chief of mission. The DCM was John Keene, who couldn't be a more able man, a better officer, who some day surely will be an ambassador. He got an award for his handling of affairs during those difficult days, but he couldn't go down and pound on the table the way a Chief of Mission

could. I used to pound it literally, pound my hand on the side of the chair of the visitation office of Serrano. He didn't like it: he really didn't like me. In private, he called me "Cowboy that Ambassador." I did not have the same nice, warm personal relationship with Serrano that I had with Cerezo. Serrano was a tougher character. I think Serrano started out wanting to do the right things, and we had great hopes for him the first six months. But he interpreted everything that was in the least bit critical as being destabilizing, and we were constantly being critical. Constructively critical, but--still--critical. And he didn't have the ability to laugh. I mean when Cerezo and I got done beating up on each other, we'd go play tennis. When Serrano and I got done talking, he would stomp off with the steam coming from around his collar. It was a totally different personality mix.

As I say, Serrano was an extremely complex character. There was so much that was good about him, and there was so much that was bad about him. The corruption was bad, but his abilities to engineer and organize were good. Cerezo was controlled by the army. The Defense Minister--Alejandro Gramajo--would come over to the palace and was able to move Cerezo around. The army never dared tell Serrano what to do. In fact, he told the army. He grabbed a hold of it, was its Commander in Chief and the infractions they committed while he was President, he knew about. He either approved of them or at least didn't object to them. Two totally different sets of personalities.

There was constant worry on our part about this guy who is an autocrat. He literally would tell me, "I spoke to the Lord," and I had an answer for that, but I never used it, I was always prepared to say, "Well, you know I speak to the Lord, too, and He tells me something different than what he tells you," but I wasn't sure that would do it. Instead, I said, "Well, I spoke to Bernie Aronson, and he isn't quite the Lord, but..." I tried that on him once. It's difficult to make him laugh, but he did on that one.

Q: Should we move on to Development now?

STROOCK: I suppose we'd better. You need to know, and those who deal with the history of this period need to know, that democracy is only skin-deep in Guatemala. It's not a real democracy, it's just a facade. It's a Potemkin village. They have the president, the courts, and congress, but the corruption, and the lack of support, and the fact that there is no social contract down there means that our concern about real democracy was truly justified, and our continuing concern to make sure that it take some kind of root is really justified. This was--and will continue to be--a big problem for our bilateral relationship.

Q: Let's do move on to Development. Why don't you tell us what the issue was in your mind? What it was you thought you could do?

STROOCK: Well, there were two ways to handle it. We had two programs. One was the AID programs to try and help them get on their feet with our U.S. taxpayer resources. The other was the trade program, the private effort, which was much more effective, but much more difficult to handle. When I got down there, the AID program the previous year, had spent almost 200 million dollars. The biggest problem was that the Guatemalan government had not been taking in any money from taxes. They were printing money and the inflation had grown to more than 20% annually.. The quetzal, which was their unit of monetary exchange, had been stable at one quetzal to the dollar exchange. When I got there it was 2.8 quetzals to the dollar, and it was heading north to three, of four, and then five quetzals to the dollar. Inflation of 26, 27, almost 30 percent. A very corrupt young man, Oscar Pineda, had become the Minister of Finance. The extremely able president of the national bank, Frederico Linavas, had resigned, and the new finance team had no grasp of what they were doing. They were in arrears to the World Bank, the price of coffee was falling, coffee being their principal export, so the economy was in desperate shape. Because of cheating and corruption, much of our AID money had been misused. The year before I got there, we had given them so-called "Economic Support Funds, EST, which are direct injections of U.S. taxpayer dollars, into the Bank of Guatemala in the amount of 80 million dollars. The quid pro quo for the 80 million dollars was that instead of trying to control the currency, they would remove all currency controls, which they did. So the 80 million dollars did accomplish convertibility and opened up the economy, which was necessary. But instead of solving the country's economic problems for two or three years, it didn't even solve them for two or three months. The 80 million dollars were disbursed in August of '89. I got there in October of '89 and it was almost as if, except for the convertibility factor, this money had never been seen. So we immediately started to try and change the way the economy was handled. We had a brilliant economist from Georgia State University with AID mission by the name of Sam Skogsted. The Economic Section of the embassy, which later on became extremely strong under the very able leadership of one of the best economists, male or female, I ever met, Geri Chester, wasn't all that strong before her arrival. It was the weakest of the agencies that we had down there. So I depended on Skogsted and his economic team from AID to help with the private sector.

We were trying to get the government to privatize many of the agencies which were so fat and bloated. They refused to privatize the telephone monopoly, (Guatel), because it made so much money for the government. They had already privatized the national airline, Aviatecu, the year before I got there, but they'd done it in an extremely dirty and crooked way. Interestingly enough the president and the lady who was his personal secretary, and who quite frankly lived with him, Claudia Arenas, were the largest stockholders. They also were on the board of directors. It was that kind of an operation.

We tried to set out an economic program that they could follow. We insisted that we wouldn't put up any more Economic Support Funds unless they did follow that economic program. AID

had 50 million dollars of economic support funds allocated for Guatemala, in January or February of 1990. We didn't actually disburse any of it, because we were negotiating the treaty under which it would be spent, until September of 1990 in the middle of the presidential political campaign. Then we only released 20 million dollars of it, directly into Guatemala's account at the World Bank. Further, we made it a requirement that they would take certain actions set out in a Memorandum of Understanding that we negotiated in order to get the balance of 30 million dollars. They never took those steps so we kept the 30 million dollars they didn't earn and held it over for dealing with the next administration.

We were trying to get them to do what was necessary to curb inflation, to stop printing money, to privatize their government agencies, and to open up the economy so that at least the "trickle down theory" of economics that they believed in would work. The problem in Guatemala is that when they do run their economy and run it right, they don't allow the workers to get any of it. Their minimum wages are not enforced. The private sector says they're going to pay minimum wage, but they rarely do. The social security system doesn't work. The public health system doesn't work. I paint a very black picture because the picture is black. The economy is good for maybe 10 percent of the Guatemalan population. It's excellent for one percent. It's okay for maybe another ten percent, and then 79 to 80 percent of the people live in constant and abject misery. The benefits of an open economy aren't getting down to them because the economy isn't open below a certain social and economic status. We were constantly working on that. I think, along with the guerrilla war, this is the long most important range problem of Guatemala. The people who control the economy will not allow even the "trickle down" theory to work. There is no social justice in Guatemala today--that is the sad truth.

Q: One of your major initiatives had to do with the matching funds, didn't it?

STROOCK: Well this was in the area of AID, and that's another problem altogether. The part I'm talking about is the private economy...

Q: So I've change the subject prematurely then?

STROOCK: No, it's all right. Let's talk about it. The other component in developing a country is to try and develop the social system and, most importantly the educational system. We tried to promote contacts, scholarship programs that bring Guatemalan students to the United States, and Americans to Guatemala, Fulbright scholars and that kind of thing. The Peace Corps is great. We need to talk about the Peace Corps as a separate matter altogether. Remind me to talk about the Peace Corps because I think it's very important.

When I got down there, we had a program of a hundred and twenty million dollars in what they call DA, Direct Aid, for specific programs: bilingual education, immunization of children,

nourishment of mothers, women's health care and road construction for farm to market roads. What I found we were doing, to my utter horror, was: when the program was approved in Washington, we would hire a contractor, and put up the money in advance, letting the contractor draw against it. Well you can imagine how much went into roads and how much went into education and how much went into health care and how much went into somebody's pocket. I found that in a sixteen million dollar program in health care, over a million dollars was unaccounted for. The AID inspector general just couldn't account for it. This was probably the most difficult decision for me as Ambassador. The sixteen million dollar program was one for immunization of children and in that society, children not immunized against the simplest germs, such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, anything. The disease just takes them off because they're not properly nourished. I had to decide whether or not I was going to shut that 16 million program down because the Guatemalan health department had stolen a million dollars of it. I got advice that I would be responsible for the deaths of many, many children. I decided that yes, I would, but unless somebody made a stand some place they'd likely run out and at least half of what was left of the sixteen million bucks. So I shut the program down. I had to fight the bureaucracy up and down to do it. It was amazing, when the government there saw that we weren't kidding--it took about 90 days to convince them that there was going to be no more money and that program was going down the tubes--the corrupt Minister of Health (and he really was corrupt), named Doctor Gellart Matas, began a real rain dance. He was a friend of the Ambassador of the Order Knights of Malta. Gellart Matas had the Ambassador set up a dinner to which I came, and there he made this plea to me. The Ambassador of the Knights of Malta, who was really my friend, said, "Pancho, I appreciate this dinner and I appreciate Dr. Matas being here, but the fact of the matter is that American taxpayer money was stolen and until it's replaced, the American taxpayer has no business supporting this program. If a lot of children die, it's not the fault of the American taxpayer, it's the fault of the people who stole their money. I think both you and the Minister had better understand that." And he backed off a mile, and Gellart Matas was finally convinced we were serious. We finally got three people thrown in jail. We got half the money back, finally, and we reinstated the program a year later.

Q: Just for the record, what was the name of the ambassador of the Knights of Malta?

STROOCK: Pancho Balzaretti, Francisco Balzaretti. He's still there. He's a wonderful friend and a good guy.

Q: So you got three people put in jail...

STROOCK: We got three people put away and got half the money back, we reinstated the program. But in the course of doing all of this, I called on some of my very firm memories of days in the Wyoming State Senate. I remembered how federal funds were being sent to Wyoming to be spent on road programs. The federal highways, the big four-lane highways, are

built on a program that is 10 percent state money and 90 percent federal money. The state Highway Department hardly gives a damn about those highways. They send out an inspector occasionally to look at it, but it's the Federal Bureau of Roads that builds them and worries about them and essentially maintains them. The State Highway Department looks after them, but most of the money comes from the feds, so it is not their main focus.

The main focus is on any program where the State Highway Department spends all its money or at least pays 50 percent of the cost. I'm thinking of market roads, industrial development roads, and roads like that, where the state has to come up with at least 50 percent of the money. And there the state engineers are out there examining that the money is being properly spent, because now they've got real "skin" in the deal.

Human nature is the same world-wide, and if the Guatemalans had 50 percent of their own dough in the deal, then they're going to pay attention. I think this served as a screen as well. A lot of programs we had promoted in the past in Guatemala were our own great ideas, but they weren't what the Guatemalans really thought was so great. As long as we were going to give it to them, why not take it? But by the time I left, we had quit advancing money. We had only put up our AID money after the Guatemalans had put theirs up. And we did it on a 50 percent matching basis in every single program. The few exceptions were the specific ones already mentioned, and another one which funded the Human Rights Ombudsman's office so that it had agencies in all 23 provinces. Also, the Peace Corps volunteers--we put up a fund of 250 Thousand Dollars. The volunteers could come in and--up to a maximum of 5 thousand dollars--get a program going. But even those were matched because while the five thousand dollars bought the materials for the school house, it was the villagers who built the school. While the five thousand dollars bought the plastic pipe for the potable water system, it was the villagers who dug the ditches and put the pipe together and dug the well.

Q: So they matched with their labor your funds.

STROOCK: Yes, but I'm talking about actual fund matching because that was another argument we had. The Guatemalans said, "Well, we'll match it with rent space and with effort." I said, "No, that's been done in the past, and it doesn't work, it's not the same. It's got to be dollars." And I think whoever runs this program that we're talking about, will want to talk to Terry Brown our AID Mission Director and get his vision on it because Terry is the one who really carried it to fruition.

Q: Do you think it worked?

STROOCK: I know it worked. I know it worked. It made our aid much more efficient. You could see the efficiency growing in front of your eyes, you could see many more miles of road

for our dollar, you could see the roads were better maintained, you could see that the schools were better built, you could see that the schools which we had built with a hundred percent of our dough, weren't properly cared for. They were falling down and dirty and messy and looked generally neglected. Once those local people had half their dough in it, man, they looked spick and span and were great.

Q: Was there less corruption? Less money...?

STROOCK: I hope so. I don't know. Once you turn the money over to the people, you're at their mercy. WE certainly scared a lot of people with our actions on the health thing. I mean that reverberated around the country. I'd like to think so. I can tell you that I saw the change that we got more bang for our buck, but I didn't see whether or not we had curbed the corruption.

Q: You said before that there was something you wanted to mention about the Peace Corps. Was it about that 250 thousand dollar fund or...

STROOCK: Well, that's the part that leads me into the Peace Corps. I think the best thing that we do in terms of our people to people relationship, in terms of being good neighbors, is the Peace Corps. Certainly in Guatemala. The Peace Corps got out to small teeny rural villages that would never see an American. Guatemalans were used to seeing Americans who are diplomats and visit in big cars or helicopters, or ministers or preachers, who evangelize a certain belief. They see either diplomats or religious types or rich tourists who dress funny and travel in big tourist buses. But they don't see the real people of the United States who make up the head and heart of our country. The Peace Corps volunteers live in the villages just the way the villagers do and get to know them and have a little bit of money to promote a local project and make people's lives a little bit better. When the Peace Corps guy or gal leaves the villagers may forget the particular lesson of how to plant trees, or they may not plant anymore trees. They may not remember all the health instructions that the nurse gave, or the water system may break and they may not remember how to fix it. But as long as they live they'll remember that a young (or in some cases old), American came and lived with them and shared their lives, and did it for no other reason than to make the lives of those villagers better. And you're never going to get anti- Americanism in a generation who has been exposed to these kinds of Americans. That's the best thing we do overseas.

Q: Management of what?

STROOCK: Of the embassy, which was over-staffed. We reduced the staff of the embassy substantially. And I think that there are many more places in that embassy and many other embassies where the staff can be reduced in size. I don't think that we have in the past used proper business management in running embassies, but one place that we should not cut, one

place where we get much more than we give is in the Peace Corps program.

Q: Had we pretty well covered, given the scope of this short conversation this morning, have we pretty well covered developments?

STROOCK: I would think so.

Q: Okay. Should we move on to human rights? which begins with a "d" in Spanish?

STROOCK: Yes, it does. Before I got there, there had been the murder of twelve university students which had happened in August of 1989. There's a pretty well accepted statistic that well over 120,000 people have been murdered by both sides in the 32 year long guerrilla war. I am personally convinced that about 25 percent of those murders and atrocities were committed by the guerrillas and their supporters, and about 75 percent of those murders and atrocities were committed by the army and their supporters. There's an organization called the "Patrulleros Civiles," which the army has set up in each village. They are taking a lesson out of Mao Zedong's book; that he who controls the sea controls the fishing. The Patrulleros have been set up to make sure that guerrilla groups don't move in and out of these small villages. They have ended up in too many instances, tyrannizing and terrorizing these villages. By now they pretty much control them.

The army is the most important figure in the rural areas of the country--95 percent of it--for a very simple reason. If you are the mayor of a little village up in the boondocks, or down in the jungle, and you want a road, or you want a well, or you want potable water, or you want a community building built, you can write and petition and budget and go down to the capital, which is where everything has to be done. The government operates on an extremely centralized system--you can't even get an automobile license outside of one building in the capital. Well, as mayor, you can write and do all, but you'll never get what you need, because the money isn't there, and the ability isn't there. But if you go down the road to the local army barracks, and talk to the captain, or the lieutenant in charge, he'll send a group of troops out and they'll dig the well, or they'll build the school, or they'll build the road. That's where the army gets its strength and support. They are the only effective force of any kind, for good or evil, that represents government out in the country. And, of course, they take advantage of it. They steal and rob and commit atrocities, and anybody who speaks out against them is going to disappear.

There is no social contract as we understand it out in the back country. Furthermore, half the population of Guatemala is "indigena"--direct descents of the Mayan Indians the conquistadores encountered. They speak 23 separate different and distinct languages. Not dialects, distinct languages. So one tribe doesn't understand the other. They're separated by their language, they're not united. Perhaps half of them know how to speak Spanish, which is the official language of

the country. So at least 25 percent of the population doesn't speak Spanish at all, just their native languages. They're people who don't read. They vote with their thumb; they sign contracts with their thumb print.

The land distribution system of the country is totally skewed. There are families trying to make a living on a plot of land no bigger than this conference table. As each family has more children the land will get divided further. There's no primogeniture in Guatemala. When someone dies, and he has a plot of land as big as this room, it gets divided up five ways if there are five living children, and there generally are at least that many. That's another problem that we haven't time to touch on in this conversation, but population control is absolutely essential to the future of Latin American countries, and of Guatemala in particular. If the economy grows at 3 percent annually, that would be marvelous. But the population grows at more than 3 percent, so you're working like hell to fall further and further behind on a per basis. The misery index just keeps going up

Q: What did you as the Ambassador try to do about this human rights?

STROOCK: When I first got to the Department, and read the cables, it became obvious to me that State was apologizing for the human rights atrocities that had been committed for years. We were so concerned that the Soviet Union would extend its influence in Latin America that we accepted the atrocities committed by the rich oligarchs who controlled the economy, and the army who controlled the rural countryside, and the corrupt governments who controlled the city streets. We accepted corruption and atrocities as the price we had to pay to make sure that the country didn't fall into the hands of the Soviet Union, or that the Soviet Union wasn't able to make a Cuban-type base for ballistic missiles aimed at us. It was a legitimate concern, and one which drove our policy in Latin America for years, including the first two months that I got to Guatemala.

But there was a sea change in November and December of 1989: an amalgam of Gorbachev, perestroika, glasnost, the fall of the Berlin wall, and the fracturing of Eastern Europe. We saw the disappearance of the Soviet Union. Now there was no reason to tolerate human rights violations by anybody, but certainly not by the army. There was no longer any communist threat for them to protect us against. If there ever had been a communist threat, there certainly wasn't one now. That whole perception that existed in Washington for so many years that we had to worry about leftist infiltration and takeover in Latin America diminished considerably. It wasn't gone by the time I left, and I dare say it isn't gone as we sit here and talk today. And yet, the reality is that, in fact, it is gone, and American policy in Latin America and Central America has to realize that it's gone. There is no excuse anymore for us to tolerate the human rights violations we thought we had to tolerate in the past, particularly in view of our own heritage of freedom and independence.

I went down there with the belief that we had been much too accepting of human rights violations in the past, that it was not in our national character, heritage or interest to continue to accept it. And yet, I couldn't be a do-gooder and ignore the fact that one had to work with what you had there, the agencies that were functioning. The fact that the economy was controlled by the few wealthy, you had to work with that. You couldn't destroy the economy because you didn't like that. Despite the fact that the army had contributed to 75 percent of the atrocities, you had to work with the army. You had to try and persuade all these people that things had to change.

So I tried with the Cerezo administration, particularly after the fall of the Berlin wall which was a dramatic event that was really noticed all over Latin America. Perestroika and the glasnost hadn't affected them as much, but the dramatic visuals that were carried all over the world by TV. On the fall of the wall made a big impression. That's a new factor in our policy now; instant television communication and the fact that CNN is available in every little village in the world. I kept asking; let's find the people who murdered the students (it was undoubtedly the army), and make an example of them. Doing justice would raise the army's estimation in the rest of the world, I said. I tried that on Gramajo, the Defense Minister I don't know how many times. Senator Dodd and Senator Warner came down and spent the night, and we took Gramajo out to dinner. They each individually took it up with him, to no avail.

A month after I got there we had the case of a young nun, Sister Diana Ortiz. Something terrible had happened to her. When I finally saw her after she had been kidnapped for 48 hours, she had been seriously beaten. But her story just didn't hang together. What she said happened to her, just couldn't have happened to her. Nevertheless, something had happened to her, and we were trying to get the Guatemalan officials to cooperate with us. They refused.

It was frustrating as hell because I knew that the fact that an American nun was kidnapped, beaten and possibly, but not probably, raped and tortured was bound to appeal, and did in fact appeal to American television, American newspapers, and upset the Catholic church.

Many, many Catholic bishops and priests accepted her story at face value. Who wouldn't, if you didn't know that what she said happened to her, couldn't have happened to her. But something bad did happen to her, and today we still don't know what that was. As I sit here talking to you, I don't know what it was that actually happened. I just know that for whatever reasons, she lied to us, tried to implicate the embassy in the affair and refused to cooperate with our efforts in any way. That story hit the headlines and we were getting stonewalled by the Guatemalans. Every day you'd pick up the papers, read about another murder. There were street children being tortured. A street child was kicked to death. There are about 5,000--probably 10,000 now--children who live on the street every night in Guatemala City, abandoned by their families. Of

course, they're not little boy scouts and girl scouts. They're 10 year old prostitutes, and 9 year old thieves--and that kind of thing. But you don't murder and torture them. There were pictures of three street boys who had been tortured. I'm convinced security forces, maybe not army, maybe the police, did it. Their tongues were cut out, their noses were cut off, their fingers were burned. I mean torturing children; it was truly terrible. Something I didn't think people of the United States could possibly condone. We tried to get the police to come forward as to what happened, and to investigate. Unfortunately, the courts were hand in glove with the police on this, so nothing happened. I got there in October. By February of 1990, I had my belly full. I'd spoken to the president, we had monthly breakfasts, so we'd had four monthly breakfasts in which we'd discussed all of these things. I'd made at least two special trips down to see the Ministry of the Interior. I don't know how many times I've gone by the Defense Ministry with the Defense Attaché, Colonel Cornell, to discuss them. We were getting nowhere. They knew that the American Ambassador was going to leave in three or four years. Their plan was to stiff him and pat him on the head. In time he would go away, and things would continue in their natural course.

I was scheduled to make a speech to the Rotary Club, which is the biggest gathering with businessmen in the country. I got a hold of the Public Affairs Officer, John Tracy; a marvelous Irishman, a great friend of mine and an excellent PAO. I said, "I want to make a speech. I want to make it as friendly as possible under the circumstances, but as firm as a rock about human rights." That's what it was. There was a phrase in there that said, "The United States cannot long have productive relations with a country that either promotes, or tolerates, human rights abuses of its own citizens because that is not in the tradition of the American people." Well, that created quite a sensation. The press asked Vinicio Cerezo, the President, about it, and he said, "Well, I know Tom. He's kind of a cowboy, and these are just his personal opinions, I'm sure they don't reflect the opinions of the United States government."

So, for the first time, I really pulled in whatever chips I had. I called Bernie Aronson in the State Department, and I said, "You guys have got to support me." I give Bernie a great deal of credit for a lot of things; but certainly on this one. He backed me up 100 percent.

He was mad at me, "Damn it, why didn't you send up the speech for me to read before you gave it?" "Bernie, I did." What we'd done, John and I, was to write the speech in Spanish. We'd sent it up in Spanish because it was going to be given in Spanish. What neither of us knew, and I didn't realize until quite a bit later, was that Bernie didn't speak Spanish. He saw it but he didn't read it, or have it translated. Because it was in Spanish he just skipped it. From then on out, of course, I cabled everything I was going to say in English as well as Spanish.

Regardless of the fact that he was upset about that, Bernie backed me up 100 percent. He said, "What we'll do is we'll bring you home. We'll recall you as a sign of our displeasure with the

president's statement."

When I got back to Washington, I thought to myself; just being recalled and coming back, that's not dramatic enough. I need something dramatic. I need a letter signed by the President of the United States saying that Ambassador Stroock does indeed speak for this administration. To get a letter signed by the President through the fudge factory down at Foggy Bottom, is not going to happen in a week. I wanted to get back to Guatemala in a week while this thing was still hot.

Joe Sullivan, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central America was in favor of doing it. Bernie Aronson was in favor of doing it. You have to understand that Guatemala was not large on their radar screen--they had a few other problems. It was essentially turned over to me. "If you can get a letter, hurray."

The first thing I did was get a hold of Margaret Tutwiler who had worked on the Bush campaign as Jim Baker's secretary. She was now the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. I got an appointment with her and asked Margaret to get me an appointment with Jim Baker so I could get my letter. Then I worked with the Guatemala desk officer, a brilliant girl by the name of Debbie McCarthy. She ran around the Legal Department and I got input from anybody she could. We worked up a one-page letter in Spanish--with a good English translation this time--for the President to sign. It said that indeed I did speak for the administration, and while the President had every kind of admiration and respect for President Cerezo, he really wanted him to know that human rights were an important component of our relations. I have a copy of the letter. I forget all the details but it was a good friendly, fair, but very firm letter.

I was trying to get up to see Jim, and Bernie said, "You'll never get to see Jim on this. He's flying around..." He had the Middle East, and Poland. I said, "Let me try." So I got a hold of Margaret, and we got a hold of Karen Davidson, Jim's scheduling secretary and the next thing you know Baker said, "Yes, I'd like to talk to Stroock. I want to talk to him about my ranch in Wyoming." Jim looked at and almost bought the Moose Willow, our place in Dubois, and he did buy a place 50-60 miles away. "I want to talk to him." So I had an appointment at 11:00 on the Thursday.

In the meantime I had also contacted Chase Untermeyer, and Nancy Wong on the staff in the White House. I wasn't getting anywhere to get in to see the President. Suddenly I remembered that General Brent Scowcroft, who was the head of the National Security Council was a good friend of Dick Cheney's. I had met him through Dick and we had gotten along well at subsequent meetings. So I called Kathy Enbody, Dick's secretary-- she has been his secretary for years--and got her to call Brent Scowcroft's secretary. Then I called Brent and said, "I really, really need to talk to you." So I had an appointment on Thursday with Baker, and Friday with Scowcroft. The deal with Scowcroft was that he would take me to see the President with this now famous letter. Saturday I would spend with my sister Sandra and then Sunday I was going to fly back to

Guatemala.

Nobody in the State Department really thought that all this would hang together, but I did persuade the ARA staff to help. Thursday morning Bernie Aronson said, "If you're going to see Baker, I'd like to go with you." I said, "Of course." We showed up in Baker's office at 11:00, and were marched right in. Jim wanted to spend the whole time talking about his ranch near Boulder in Wyoming. He'd shot an elk 400 feet away at his neighbor's ranch, at the Skinners. Of course I love to talk about Wyoming too, and we exchanged fishing lies. Finally, we could tell it was getting to the end of the time and he said, "Oh, about this Guatemala thing, you've got a letter you want signed by the President?" I said, "Yes, Mr. Secretary, I sure do," and I explained to him why. He turned to Bernie and said, "Bernie, what do you think?" Well, by this time Bernie has realized that Jim and I go back a little ways. To be fair and to be truthful he was not as gung-ho as I was. He would have sent me back to Guatemala with or without the letter. But he said, "Yes, I've read it, it seems it's okay." "Okay, then let's do it," replied Baker. And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I have an appointment over at the White House to expedite this." And he said, "I'd rather you go through channels, but the letter is okay."

When we went out in the hall, I said to Bernie, "If we go through channels, I'm never going to get this letter signed in time. I'm going to take this letter over to Brent Scowcroft with me. Would you authorize it to be typed?" And he did, bless his heart. So I had the letter typed in final form, the official letter in English, and also the official translation in Spanish. Friday I waltzed it over to the White House at about 10:30 in the morning. I waited for about 50 minutes, and finally got in to see Brent Scowcroft, and of course, no chit-chat there, just me and Brent Scowcroft.

I told him my problem, and he read the letter and he said, "Bernie Aronson has signed off on it?" I said, "Yes," and I had the whole file, and I said, "I've talked to Jim Baker about it too." "Okay." He said, "You better hurry." So he picked up the phone, and spoke to the President. Immediately, he walked me from his office down two corridors into the Oval Office. You can hear that there is a chopper warming up on the White House south lawn. That's how close it was. The President was headed off at noon for some place--I think Camp David, I'm not sure. We spent two or three minutes chatting--how are you? how is Marta? and how are things going?

He was very flattering, "You're doing a wonderful job, and I hear there's a problem? You've got a letter for me to sign?" And I said, "Yes, Mr. President, here it is."

He said to Brent, "Is it okay if I sign this?" And Brent said, "It's been approved by everybody in the State Department." He looked at me and said, "This better not be wrong," and he put it up on the door jamb as he heads out the door, signed George Bush, and handed it to me. Then he went out with his entourage, got in the helicopter and lifts off. Very impressive: Marines saluting--everything. I breathed a sigh of relief.

That's how I got the letter. Then I took that letter back to Guatemala over the weekend and arranged an appointment that Monday with the President at his official office in the palace.

The people in the embassy were really impressed with that letter. Until then, they didn't know whether I was for real or not. We had our country team meeting that morning. A lady that ran one of the missions in AID--ROCAP. It was the regional AID mission that did regional things, mostly in the environment. This gal was a real friend. Her name was Nadine Hogan, and she's a great politician, a good friend of the Coors family who has been active in Denver politics, Colorado politics and national politics for years.

She has great political instincts, so I asked her, "How do you think I ought to handle this thing?"

She said, "You show that to everybody on your Country Team. They're all wondering whether you're for real." So we called them all in, 19 or 20 people, and I showed the letter before I took it down to the palace to show the president.

I said, "I've got this letter and this is the way we're going to go. We've got Bernie Aronson and Jim Baker and the President behind us 100 percent." That letter, I think, was the pivotal point that changed the whole direction of the way the embassy moved on Human Rights. It changed the way the Guatemalan government perceived us. It also changed how the rest of Guatemalan society perceived us. Because previous to that, talking about human rights violations wasn't quite the right thing to do. After all, it meant that everybody knew you were bad mouthing the security forces, and the army, and the government; because they did most of it. It was considered maybe a little too pro-communist, and a little too far to the left to do that.

But once the American Ambassador came back with a letter from the President after that speech, it was very obvious where the United States stood; and where the United States stands is where most of Guatemalan society wants to be. From then on out I really did begin to notice great change in the way the Guatemalans approached human rights violations publicly, privately, and governmentally. The army assaults on human rights, the official assaults on human rights declined--markedly. There were other factors contributing, of course. One was the fact that when Cerezo came to office, one of the good things he did was to open up a dialogue with the guerrillas. The guerilla war is responsible for an awful lot of these human rights violations. When you put a claymore mine in a road, and someone walks on it, no matter whether the guerrilla placed the claymore mine or the army did, whose ever leg gets blown off, that's a human rights violation. That sort of thing diminished as the guerrillas and the army would talk to each other. The people began to believe that there could be a peaceful end to this guerrilla war. It hasn't happened yet--but they still have that belief. There wasn't the intensity of trying to mutilate each other in the guerrilla war. It got better--but it wasn't good.

There were still violations. The guerrillas still came in and burned up hospitals and kidnapped and threatened death to American missionaries. Perhaps the most famous case that involved an American, was the Michael Devine case in June of 1990. An American named Michael Devine, who had been a Peace Corps volunteer, and who lived up in the little town of Popgun, had a restaurant, a camp ground, and a small ranch. He was accosted by five non-commissioned officers, directed by at least a captain and probably a colonel in the Guatemalan army, and accused of stealing, or trafficking in a Galil rifle that had been missing from the local army base. He hadn't been. He had a Galil rifle all right, but he had purchased it quite legally. He hadn't stolen it from the army base, and the army knew better than that.

But in the course of interrogating him, they killed him. The details as to whether or not he got mad and they killed him, or whether they beat him up and then killed him we aren't sure, but we had enough circumstantial evidence and eye witnesses to know that these guys forced him out of his pickup truck, and put him in their pickup truck. They took him into the Poptum army base, and later his decapitated body was found beside the road at the gate of his ranch. We know who did it. We know the vehicle it was done in.

So I went to the then new Defense Minister, a wishy-washy, sneaky type named General Bolanos, and tried to convince him if they would just bring the people who did this to justice, that they would reflect on themselves. It could turn it into something positive. Instead of causing great American distress, it would cause great American support. At that time we were giving them something more than \$6 million in military aid each year. They were very worried that it had gone down from \$12 million the year before. I said, "I can promise you it's going to go to nothing if you don't solve this, because the key thing here is that no American taxpayer is going to want any penny of his money spent in an army that murders an American citizen and then covers up the murder. That's just not acceptable behavior."

Again, it was still too soon--they hadn't really realized the sea change in our human rights policies caused by all the events I've described. They didn't really believe we would take action, so the army stonewalled us. They just flat wouldn't cooperate. They really did cover up. The captain in command of the murder squad was Hugo Contveras. He was known as Hugo, El Maldilo, Hugo the bad guy, the evil one. There was a Captain, from the secret service who was involved in covering up the crime. I forget the name of the colonel in the military district of Santa Elena, who gave the order to "controlas." In Spanish it means control, and it also has the state of the art meaning of, that's okay to kill him.

We had it cold. We had the reports both from the Military Defense Attaché and from the CIA station. They had gotten information out of the army. There were enough dissenting army officers who were telling us, and we were sure of what we had.

So when they stiffed us, I got absolutely furious, and again I have nothing but good things to say about my relationship with Bernie in this regard. I called him and said, "I think we ought to cut off the military aid. These guys think we're kidding." It had taken me from June until October to get to this point. We had several telephone calls and I even came back to Washington in November of 1990 for this. So the decision was made. We were now in the time period when the first election of 1990 had been held, and 26 percent of the vote went Jorge Carpio, and 24 percent of the vote went for Serrano, with all the rest splitting up the difference. So there was going to have to be run-off election in December or January.

We knew that Serrano now had an excellent chance of being president. We knew that he would not want the fact that we had cut off military aid to happen on his watch. He would want it to happen on the Cerezo watch because it was Cerezo's refusal to interfere with the army that caused the problem. Cerezo had been scared by two previous coup attempts. So it was decided that we would cut off military aid just as quickly as we could get it done, which turned out to be the first week of December 1990.

Q: I think we missed just the last half of the last sentence.

STROOCK: Well, the decision to cut off military aid in December, still while on the Cerezo watch, and still while Bolanos was Minister of Defense, caused a true sensation and much consternation. They didn't believe we were going to do it, even though I warned them it was coming several times. The official announcement came from Washington D.C. out of the Defense Department. I had had to talk to Dick Cheney about that, which was fun to do because he doesn't generally get mixed up in \$6 million deals in Guatemala, but I did get through and talk to him. Dick has always been more than kind, and more than helpful, and more than generous with me.

So we cut off the military aid, and you know, that was a thunder clap. From then on out, we got verbal assurances that they were working on it. And we eventually got the five poor sons of bitches, the privates who did it, 30 years in jail. But we never were able to get the colonel in Santa Elena who I think was the intellectual author of it. Someday I'm going to write a book about the twists and turns of the legalities of how we finally got Captain Hugo Contravas before a court, and caught him in several lies. The court finally condemned him to 18 years, and he went to jail. But guess what? The first night he was in jail he escaped. Isn't that miraculous? In a military jail? And he still hasn't been caught. But the very fact that he was convicted, that we pushed it, and that we still have not returned to military aid for the Guatemalan army was pretty impressive.

When I talk about military aid you have to understand that there are all kinds of games played

with military aid. We froze the official, authorized, up-front, everybody sees it, and its accounted for military aid. There was about \$10 million worth of military aid in the pipeline from previous authorizations that had been agreed upon, trucks, boots, Quonset huts, medical supplies, ambulances, that kind of thing--that we stopped. So we really froze about \$16 million worth of aid. Once the privates were in prison, then--as evidence of good faith--and as evidence that we wouldn't just beat them with a stick, we determined to release about half the military aid that was in the pipeline. Then, once Contravas was convicted--even though he "escaped"--we gave them some more military aid. We still had about \$6 million frozen when Serrano came to me and said, "Look, I'm having terrible problems with the military. I'm going to appoint a new Defense Minister, I'm going to get rid of General Mendoza who says he is helping me, but really is not. I'm going to put in a general named Garcia Samayoa. When I do that I want you to turn loose the rest of the military aid to give Garcia Samayoa a good start in his job."

It seemed to me that that was the right thing to do. We had a country team meeting, the Defense Attaché urged me to do it, and his judgment was good, and so did the station chief. The political officers thought it wouldn't hurt, it wouldn't help. He was of two minds about it. And the Public Affairs Officer, Jim Carroll by that time, said it would play very badly in the United States, but who gives a damn how it played in the United States. Could we get the army to move forward? So we released the rest of it.

All of the time we're dealing with the army on human rights violations. I'm just describing two or three of the most obvious cases, there were many more. We should take time to cover the Maria Unudia__ case. There were many others, perhaps one a week. All the while this was going on we still were fighting the drug war. We still needed the army to help us with it. So through secret funds the CIA has, we were indeed helping the army. So while publicly we're saying, you're bad boys and we're not going to give you this aid, around the back door we are helping them. It's a very difficult and ambivalent situation.

I pressed the whole time I was in Guatemala for someone to unscramble... This was a decision that was bigger than mine to make. I'm not the one to decide whether the United States government pays more attention to human rights violations, or to drug interdiction. But I was begging for someone up there to make that decision because we were sending totally mixed signals. Not publicly. Publicly--as far as the civilian population was concerned, as far as the government was concerned--we were squarely on the side of human rights and drug interdiction, and the two did not interfere with each other. But in the actual workings of the machinery of how these were accomplished, the people involved in it, we were giving terribly mixed signals and I think we still are.

Q: That decision was never made then?

STROOCK: That decision was never made. To my knowledge, it has not yet been made. It's a very difficult one to make. It's easy for me to sit here and say, this is the one we ought to do, but it's very difficult for our government to do that. If we make that decision, what decision do they make in the neighboring countries, and how does that affect our relationships with Peru, and Colombia, and Bolivia, and so on.

JOHN ALLEN CUSHING

Economic/Labor Officer

Guatemala (1994-1997)

Mr. Cushing was born in New York City and raised in New York and Hawaii. He graduated from Reed College and continued studies at a variety of institutions in the US and abroad. After service in the Peace Corps, he held a number of positions as English language instructor before joining the Foreign Service in 1988. Mr. Cushing served abroad, variously as Consular, Political, Economic or Public Affairs Officer, in the Dominican Republic, Korea, Benin, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad & Tobago. In Washington, Mr. Cushing served as Korean Desk Officer. Mr. Cushing was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

CUSHING: I went to Guatemala. Guatemala was good. I was the labor attaché and there was a very chaotic situation there. I worked on labor rights. Every now and then the workers would occupy a farm or ranch and they would be shot up by the army or the police or something. There were abductions of labor activists, there were murders.

Q: Where was this?

CUSHING: Guatemala. After getting up really early to catch the plane I arrived totally exhausted on the first day and the ambassador said, "Oh, we have a delegation here from USTR so I want you to come to this lunch." I was totally exhausted but she said, "You must come to this lunch," so I started working the first day. The ambassador...

Q: Who was the ambassador?

CUSHING: Marilyn McAfee, a nice lady, very sharp. Marilyn McAfee had been in Guatemala many years before with USIA and she was now the ambassador and so she put me to work the very first day, which I thought, after two years of sitting in a Pullman doing nothing, was good.

I was extremely busy there. The assistant secretary of labor came down. I was in charge of labor rights. I was not the human rights officer but I was the refugee officer so I covered refugees returning from the insurgency who were being resettled in various places in Guatemala. There

was a massacre of returned Guatemalan refugees by an army patrol. I got very involved in that and I worked with the UN High Commission for Refugees and also with MINUGUA, which is the United Nations Verification Mission to Guatemala. I had a lot of work with them. Every now and then a refugee would be killed in a camp and I would have to go and investigate that. There was a great deal of pressure from human rights groups, church groups, labor groups in the United States that had a knee jerk reaction that because of the 1954 coup, anything that had happened since then in Guatemala was the fault of the United States.

Q: This was the Arbenz coup.

CUSHING: The coup where Jacobo Arbenz was thrown out. That was the United Fruit Company coup, by John Foster and Allen Dulles.

Once I got a human rights group down there and I gave them what I thought was an objective assessment of the situation and one of them later wrote a letter to the assistant secretary of the American Republic Affairs complaining that I was unsympathetic to human rights concerns. I was obviously unqualified to be a Foreign Service officer and I should be fired immediately.

The other big thing down here was the Jennifer Harbury case. Jennifer Harbury claimed she had married Eduardo who was a guerrilla in the insurrection and that he had disappeared so she demanded since she was an American citizen and he was her husband, she demanded that we help find him. We went around and around and around with that.

There was also Dianna Ortiz who claimed to have been abducted and tortured by the Guatemalan military, including being thrown in a pit with decaying bodies and all this other stuff. There was never a dull moment down there.

I was there for three years. It's a beautiful country.

Q: You alluded to a number of things but what was the basic political situation at that time?

CUSHING: There was the democratically elected president, of Ramiro de Leon Carpio. He was under a great deal of pressure from the military. The public prosecutor's office was also kind of under the sway of the military so Myrna Mack, an anthropologist who was working on human rights cases, had been stabbed to death not too long before and labor activists were taken away and beaten and so forth.

There was another case where there was a woman who claimed she had been abducted and assaulted for her union activities but she turned out to be mentally ill. There was a labor rights group in the United States that was pushing her case and I found out that her stories were made up of whole cloth but I did not feel like telling everybody, "Look, she's mentally ill and she has made all this up and her husband is also mentally ill and they are both HIV positive. I have checked her story and it doesn't add up."

Among other things that happened, one night she claimed that her son had been kidnapped. Her son had disappeared so the legal attaché, who was an FBI agent, he with a firearm and I with nothing went out to the toughest neighborhood in Guatemala City and spent the entire night looking around, asking people if they had seen this boy. It was one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the whole city. He turned up in the morning and claimed that he had been held and tied up and this, that and the other but eventually it turned out he just spent the night at a friend's house and had come back the next morning. So that whole story was a fabrication too.

This woman's claim to be persecuted was very thin but this labor rights group from the U.S. with union officials and so forth came down and they said, "Why are you not pursuing this more vigorously?" I already knew the entire background of it and that it was all made up but I said, "Well, I am not able to comment on that." "You don't care. You just don't care. I'm going to go back and tell everybody in my union the very poor service we are getting from the United States Embassy."

I said, "I'm sorry. That's all I can do."

This woman was eventually granted asylum in the United States but was such a difficult person that two or three different organizations asked her to leave. She was in these group houses for refugees and they would throw her out.

At any rate, Guatemala was a good post; interesting, a lot of work.

Q: You were there from when to when?

CUSHING: I was there from the summer of '94 to the summer of '97.

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL

Ambassador

Guatemala (1999-2002)

Ambassador Bushnell was born in Washington, DC into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in Washington and at Foreign Service posts abroad and received degrees from Russell Sage College and the University of Maryland. After working as a clerk at Embassies Teheran and Rabat, she became a Foreign Service Officer in 1981 and subsequently served in several posts before serving as Ambassador to Kenya 1996 – 1999. There she experienced the bombing of the Embassy by al Qaeda. In 1999 she was named Ambassador to Guatemala, where she served until 2002. During her career, the Ambassador served in several senior positions in the

Department in Washington. Ambassador Bushnell was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Well, tell me, how did you find you were treated by Western Hemisphere?

BUSHNELL: Very nicely, very courteously. They helped prepare me very well, though I have to say I was shocked to learn during the last days of consultations that I would have 24-hour security guards, because one of our ambassadors had been assassinated in 1968.

Q: John Gordon Mein.

BUSHNELL: Right.

Q: He was killed in August 28, 1968.

BUSHNELL: You have a good memory. Thirty years later, Guatemala was still a violent country and bodyguards were not unusual among the elites and diplomats. It was so different from my experience in Kenya --I had an advance car, an armed guard in my vehicle and a chase car with more armed guards.

What was not at all different from Nairobi was the chancery. It was, in fact, the exact duplicate in architecture of the one that had been blown up. It was also on a main street with little offset, and not on any list to be moved. You can just imagine the conversation with the heads of FBO and Diplomatic Security, who, by the way, refused to see me individually. I found that rather amusing -- less so when they asked "Why are you always going to embassies with no offset?" The three of us negotiated an agreement because, once again, the list of chanceries to be replaced did not include the one I was going to. The Assistant Secretaries promised they would respond as best they could to suggestions to improve the security if I would refrain from sending the kinds of cables I sent from Nairobi.

The first day I went to work, the driver out of habit drove the car into the embassy's underground parking lot, again a duplicate to the one in Nairobi. Every cell in my body went into panic mode, I mean every cell. I told myself, "it's okay, it's okay; this is not Nairobi. You will not make an entrance by screaming down the corridors!" Eventually, of course I got used to it.

The arrangement we came to with Diplomatic Security and FBO was to purchase the apartment building next door and entice Guatemala City's Mayor to close the other streets around us. A costly but effective way of gaining security perimeters.

Q: Well now, when you went to Guatemala you were there from when to when?

BUSHNELL: I was there from 1999 to 2002.

Q: What was the state of relations between Guatemala and the United States?

BUSHNELL: For the most part, pretty good because President Clinton had apologized for the role the U.S. had played in orchestrating the 1954 coup d'état that began 35 years of internal conflict. This was a country in which the "war against communism" was played out in horrible and vicious ways. The human rights abuses were outrageous. In 1996, Peace Accords were signed that essentially reformulated the social contract between the government and the people and among the people themselves. They articulated exceedingly ambitious changes that would not easily be implemented. As a result, they were only partially and superficially implemented. The Accords provided an absence of war, not yet peace and tranquility.

The U.S. government was very invested in the negotiation and the success of the Peace Accords, to the tune of about three-hundred-million dollars in AID programs. Coming from Africa, I was stunned. Three hundred million dollars for this little country when the best the entire continent of sub-Saharan Africa could manage was eight hundred million!

Most of our programs were focused in the Mayan highlands, where much of the conflict had taken place. We were investing in education, particularly for women and girls, health systems, the rule of law, the environment – a variety of areas. Our efforts were to facilitate implementation of the Peace Accords as fast and smoothly as possible. On the surface, the Guatemalan government was giving lip service to peace, to donors like the U.S. that were providing funding. In reality, social change was moving at a snail's pace, the Presidential Guard was almost literally holding the president as hostage, and corruption was rampant.

Conditions worsened under the tenure of President Portillo, who was voted into office at the end of '99, three months after my arrival. As an example, a "white budget" existed for military expenditures that could be audited, but the actual budget was something else again. The military was up to its neck in corruption, intimidation and cover up. The country was still awash with mistrust and hatred.

Q: OK. Well, we will stop at this point. You've just entered Guatemala City. You talked about this theater of Guatemala politics and implementing the Peace Accords.

GUYANA

THERESA A. TULL

Ambassador

Guyana (1987-1990)

Theresa A. Tull was born in New Jersey in 1936. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in 1972. Her career included positions in Brussels, Vietnam, Washington D.C., Philippines, Laos, and ambassadorships to Guyana and Brunei. Ambassador Tull was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November 2004.

Q: Well, then, let's get when you were, you were in Guyana from when to when?

TULL: '87 to '90 and roughly I guess it would have been August.

Q: What was the embassy like, your DCM and how big was it and what were they doing there?

TULL: It was a decent size. Unfortunately I had a DCM who was already on the way out of the service. He had been low ranked, so he was finishing what was going to be his last, well, he maybe got one more tour after that I don't think so. He was known to be a loser. Pleasant, but he knew the handwriting on the wall, too so he wasn't going to kill himself. Pleasant, knowledgeable. I think all told we maybe had about 25 Americans there at that time. We had a large consular section because half of Guyana was trying to immigrate to or visit the States one way or another. It was a horrendous consular load. I think we had five consular officers. We had a USIS operation and a very capable USIS officer, a library, decent programs being run, a nice center there for USIS. I had two economic officers, political officer, security people, a couple of communicators, Marine Guards, the whole nine yards of a decent sized post. We didn't have Peace Corps and we didn't have AID and even though we were administering this PL-480 program which did so much to help the Guyanese.

Q: That had been reinstituted after Burnham died.

TULL: After Burnham died, yes, under the initiative of my predecessor.

Q: Who was your predecessor?

TULL: Clint Lauderdale. It was a wonderful thing to have done and he was able to get it organized and it made quite a difference in the lives of the ordinary Guyanese to have flour coming in and they could have bread again and it certainly went a long way toward shaping attitudes, which had been very leftist there, shaping attitudes more favorably toward the U.S. At the time I was there, there was a huge Cuban presence, large Cuban health presence with doctors and nurses. A large Russian presence. A large North Korean presence, very heavy diplomatic presence on the leftist side. There were some elements in the U.S. government some individuals anyway who thought that Burnham was a communist, none of this socialist nonsense, but everything we had indicated no he was not a card carrying communist, he was an extreme left wing socialist who just didn't like the U.S. and if he could get anything from the other side, fine, that would be good. At any rate, we had a decent-sized staff.

Now, what it was like was at that point our embassy was an old wooden house right on the sidewalk of one of the main streets in Georgetown. It was a firetrap, a cigarette, a thrown cigarette would have been our biggest terrorism problem. It was bad. One of the things that had been hanging fire for several years was to build a new embassy in Georgetown. The money had been appropriated and it had been going through the various planning and approval stages. The plan was to build a really beautiful state of the art embassy meeting all of the new security requirements: setbacks, walls, everything and the decision was made before I got there, not that I could have influenced it, but the decision was that they would take the property of the ambassador's compound for this building project. There were two or three houses plus tennis court and swimming pool, plus the ambassador's residence on this plot of ground. The decision was that that would be an ideal place to build this big embassy. They were in the process when I got there of cranking up. A contract had been awarded and the contractor was due about the same time as I was. One of my jobs was going to have to be overseeing the construction of this embassy in a loose way. The ambassador, my predecessor, strongly disliked the ambassador's residence. It was an old Georgetown style colonial house. I thought it was great. It was a big, wooden place with the Georgetown shutters.

Q: Did you get any high level visits at all?

TULL: No. The highest level was this three star SOUTHCOM commander. I had a deputy assistant secretary I think that was it. I don't think anybody higher than that came that I

remember. One little aside that I found was interesting; a very powerful figure in Guyana at that time was the head of their national police who was also the head of their secret police, sort of the CIA equivalent. He was the principal contact of my station chief. He happened to be very good friends with the general who was in charge of the armed forces, the equivalent of the Joint Chiefs of Staff commander. Well, I had only met the police fellow once or twice, he had quite a reputation. I did know the general pretty well. At a reception I was at the general said to me, "Ambassador, I hear that you play bridge." I said, "Yes, I enjoy bridge." (That's another thing I did. I'd play bridge and you play with average people, business people, you wouldn't just be locked in with a narrow crowd. You'd learn a lot about what was going on in the countries over a bridge table.) I love bridge. I said, "Yes, I play, I'm not that great, but I play." "I like to play" he says, "I like to play, but I'm not that good. Could you play sometime?" "Yes, I'd like to do that." He says, "Oh, good." He says, "So and so and I, he wants to play, too." It was the secret police fellow. I said, "Oh, that would be fine. Yes, well, where would you want to do it? I can get somebody else to make a fourth." He said, "I have the fourth. Mrs. So and So. She's my wife's friend. We've played a couple times. You've met her." I said, "Yes, I have." Anyway, we established that we'd get together at my home the following Wednesday night. Well, it was kind of cute because I got a call from my station chief saying, "I understand so and so is going to come and play bridge with you." I said, "Yes. Do you play bridge?" He says, "No." I said, "Oh, well, I'm looking forward to it. I'm playing with so and so." He says, "Yes, I know." I said, "Well, you're welcome to come over if you want. You can kibitz." "Oh, okay, maybe I would." We got together and he got absolutely bored to death. He could see that we were just sitting there playing bridge and anyway, so, "well if you don't mind I think I'll go. I promised my wife, blah, blah." So, he went off. We had such a good time with these games and I never asked a single question. We stayed completely on bridge. I thought here's an opportunity for the police chief to see me with my fangs removed. This is the nasty woman who is meeting with the opposition and Jesuit priests who are opposed to the government and we'll just see how it flows. We had a great time because these two men were so aggressive in their bridge. You know bridge; you can be aggressive if you've got the cards. They frequently didn't have the cards and they got were funny. They couldn't stand to have me and my partner take a bid on a few occasions. They would bid higher and I would say, "Double." Well, we set them. It was so funny to see their reaction. They would be so annoyed, but they'd laugh. I went out to this man's home a couple of times on a Sunday afternoon for bridge and I went to the general's house and it really helped establish a relationship. I did not use the occasion to say, are you going to crack down on the demonstrators, you know, nothing, this was social. I think it served me well, as well as being fun.

Q: You mentioned the Jesuit priests. Was the church a factor there?

TULL: There was a group of Jesuits who had been a real factor in the opposition to Forbes Burnham, opposing his brutality and lack of freedoms and absence of human rights. This one

elderly Jesuit, I think he was British. They were known to be opponents in the sense that they were seeking human rights and free elections. In fact during the Forbes Burnham period, a priest who was a dead ringer for this priest literally became a “dead ringer”. He was murdered on the streets of Georgetown about a block from the rectory where he was staying. He had come in from another country to visit and went out at night, not late, and he resembled this man. Thugs came and killed him. The Jesuits didn’t have a lot of warm feelings towards the Guyanese government, but they were also a source of some information and I also felt that they could use a little protection in the sense of letting the government know that the American Embassy knew these people existed and valued their views. I met with them a couple of times and occasionally on a Sunday night I would go and play scrabble with them. With the official car, you know, the whole routine. I never did anything surreptitiously. I always let the government see what I was up to. The Jesuits were an opposition element in a subdued way. They were pretty bitter having had one of their people murdered.

Q: Were there student demonstrations or things of this nature going on?

TULL: No, not at all. Not at all. When I was there, I never heard of any thuggeries or murders perpetrated by the Hoyte regime, if it was taking place I was unaware of it and I did have pretty wide-ranging contacts. The biggest problem, the worst part of all, was the economic disaster. Guyana was regarded as having some of the finest bauxite in the world and they had gold, but the big crops were rice and sugar. The sugar was highly prized in England, but at any rate the biggest thing was bauxite. At the time of nationalization, the Burnham government did a few smart things. They entered into an agreement to repay the companies that they were expropriating and they maintained a payment schedule. One of the companies was Reynolds of the U.S. and I believe Alcan a Canadian group. But with the best intent in the world, you know, this group of unqualified government officials were incapable of maintaining the bauxite mines and therefore, hard currency became extremely scarce. The electricity grid went down. Terrible. They didn’t have enough money to import enough oil to keep the generators going. It was terrible. It was just an awful situation. You would go with massive power outages a day two and a half days at a time. Of course it would shut down the mine, too. If they were trying to keep the mine open they’d shut down the grid elsewhere and get the power going into the mines. It was just so unnecessary and so sad. While I was there Reynolds came down and one of their executives, a very nice man, came down to see if there were opportunities for more investment with the Guyanese and he did generate some. There was also a company that came in to try to do something about the power situation. It was terrible. Eventually the embassy was able to get generators for every house. That meant of course buying gasoline, diesel I guess to run the generators. It meant noise. It meant the neighbors weren’t happy because they didn’t have generators and oh, gosh, it was just an awful situation to deal with. It was such a shame.

On one occasion, I think I was on leave in the States so I missed the worst of it, but they had a massive shutdown for two or three days and if you don't have power, you don't have water coming into the pipes. You can't flush toilets, or any of that. The water situation had gotten so bad, now here my general friend did a smart move. He sent army tanker trucks filled with water into the neighborhoods in Guyana and let people bring their buckets and fill up from the army tankers to try to keep the peace. They were on the brink of riots and it was over water and power, principally water. On this occasion the Department very smartly because I hadn't been there for the worst of it, and they said if I asked for it they would authorize an additional R&R for my staff which I did ask for and it was granted so they were able to get out again. It was a hard post. A hard post. It was hard enough for me, but I had the enthusiasm of my job to get me through. It was hard for me, but if you were a regular staffer and particularly if you had little kids it was awful. Really difficult. It's the worst living situation I've ever had.

HAITI

JACK MENDELSON

Consular/Political Officer

Port-au-Prince (1964-1966)

Dr. Jack Mendelsohn was born in California in 1934. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Dartmouth College and his Master's from the University of Chicago. His foreign assignments include Port-au-Prince, Warsaw and Brussels. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed him on February 12, 1997.

Q: You were in Haiti from when to when now? This is...

MENDELSON: '64 to '66.

Q: *What was the political situation in Haiti when you were there, when you arrived?*

MENDELSON: The United States had just sailed some heavy warships into the Haitian harbor. I think in '63, before we got there, because there had been rioting in the country. Papa Doc had recently declared himself President "*a vie*", President for life.

Q: *This was Duvalier?*

MENDELSON: Papa Duvalier...the good old days...

Q: *This is the father?*

MENDELSON: This is Papa Doc, not Baby Doc. This was the real...you know...when men were men! Relations with Haiti were very bad at that time and Papa Doc was a very unpopular leader. To put it in very simple and probably incorrect terms, basically we were so seized with the Cuban issue that we refused to deal firmly with Papa Doc. He constantly said he was the only person who stood between a Communist takeover or between where we were then and a Communist takeover in Haiti. So we basically continued our relations although they were very, if you put them on the Human Rights scale, they were very bad.

Q: *What was the issue why we considered things very bad?*

MENDELSON: Well basically because he: (A) disrupted the democratic process, (B) was quite repressive to any political opponents. So it was a dictatorship with lots of imprisonment, disappearances, and executions about which I will speak in a moment. American tourists who

had built the country up in the late '50s and early '60s just stopped going. The place was going downhill dreadfully. We had poured a lot of AID money into it. It was corrupt. It was a sinkhole for AID money. Apart from that it was an interesting place, a really interesting place.

It was a combination of it being a third world country, tropical, a totally different culture, and a first tour. All of which made it a great, great two years. We had a family problem we can talk about briefly. But my wife and I were passionately taken by local culture, voodoo, by local art -- Haitian art's a big deal -- by the people who were just as charming as could be, the ones we dealt with of course were the educated ones who spoke perfect French and very good English. Whites were not in danger. I don't know what it's like now. They were never in danger when we were there. And always there was this persistent, and I'm sure it's still there, this persistent ambivalence about the United States. Some people saying that the occupation was the best thing that had ever happened to Haiti and the other ones resentful that the Americans had sort of taken it over.

Q: We're talking...

MENDELSON: We occupied it in, I believe, 1919, and stayed until 1934 or something like that. That would have been 17 years, 15 or 16 years, but that was a moment that was looked at both positively and negatively by different people or by the same person. The occupation did do a lot, but it was degrading. It did a lot in the classic sense of what occupations do, the roads got built, things worked, there was a certain amount of, let's say, reduced venality in the bureaucracy. I won't say it was eliminated but on the other hand the tradition of the occupation was that the Marines dealt only with the mulattos and that the Black population was considered as it was in the United States sort of beneath caring. So there was a lot of ambivalence.

In any case when we were there Whites were really quite safe from the political violence and there was no domestic or street violence. It was safer than New York or Chicago and certainly Washington. But it was not a happy place. It was beggary poor. We lived exceedingly well and you always felt this incredible gulf between the way you as a member of what would be the elite in the country. You felt this gulf between [the way] you lived and the way everybody in the country lived. I was a \$7,200 a year FSO-7 first assignment and I had the nicest house I'd ever lived in because all of the foreigners had cleared out after Papa Doc took over. We were living in the house of the Mercedes Benz dealer and it had a swimming pool, three servants you paid \$13 a month and the house was \$160 a month. You know it was just incredible. We lived very well, but you also felt how enormous the gulf was.

I did what was at the time a junior officer trainee rotation. It started out with a year in the Consular Section, which was bloody hard work because you had an interminable number of applicants. I did half a year in the Administrative Section as a GSO, General Services Officer, which I thoroughly disliked. I disliked the whole idea of it and this is probably heretical to put down in the Foreign Service Oral History, but I disliked the whole idea of the kind of service that

we were expected to provide as a GSO. I felt it was both degrading to provide it and degrading to ask for the kinds of things that people might ask for.

Is this too controversial to put down in an oral history?

Q: No, no, absolutely not.

MENDELSON: I thought people behaved and asked for things they would never...behaved in ways and asked for things that they would never ask for back in the United States. I did it but I thought it was wrong. I knew when I was not a GSO we were always very, very sparing of our demands on the Embassy because I always felt that was wrong.

My last tour was in the Political Section, which was clearly what I wanted to do.

WILLIAM B. JONES

Ambassador

Haiti (1977-1980)

Ambassador William B. Jones was born in California in 1928. He graduated from UCLA in 1949 and USC law school in 1952. He joined the State Department in 1962 serving in the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, UNESCO, and Haiti. Ambassador Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: Coming to your appointment as ambassador to Haiti, I would have thought this might prove a problem because you obviously had gotten the backs up particularly some of the members of Congress who were particularly allied to the Israeli lobby. This normally is the "Kiss of Death" if you want to get anything that requires their approval.

JONES: As I told you, I talked to them many times, and I made a conscious effort to improve the status of Israel in UNESCO, and I think that I was reasonably successful in doing so. So there was no opposition to me whatsoever. When I came up for my confirmation hearings, the only questions I was asked was about my position, what I would do when I got to Haiti. I was not asked anything about UNESCO. So that never became a problem.

Q: You went there in 1977?

JONES: I went there the first part of August of 1977.

Q: What was our interest, at that point, in Haiti?

JONES: We had a number of major problems with Haiti. As you know, the Duvalier family had been in control of Haiti since 1957. The father François Duvalier, and the people around him, had been an absolute dictator and a very brutal dictator until 1971 when he died, and his son Jean-Claude ascended to the presidency at the age of 19. I came in 1977. So then Jean Claude was in his mid- to late twenties.

Around him was still the Duvalier clique, who were running the country and running it very firmly. There were, maybe, a couple of hundred political prisoners in jail at that time. One of the cornerstones of the Carter Administration was human rights. One of the major issues that I had was to encourage the appreciation of human rights in Haiti, to get political prisoners released, to try and get Jean Claude to move towards a more democratic and liberal society, to have elections which were relatively free, to allow more dissent in the country, more opposition.

Those were the political goals, then there was always the underlying premise that we did not want Haiti to come under the influence of Marxism. Cuba beamed broadcasts to Haiti every day. There were lots of Haitians living in Cuba.

Thirdly, the most overriding problem in the country was economic development. It was the poorest country in the western hemisphere. We had, at that time, which was before the outbreak of hostilities in Central America, this was before Somoza was overthrown, the foreign aid program to Haiti was, I think, the second largest in the western hemisphere at that time. Of course, now it's totally overshadowed by the Central America. But at that time, it was the second largest aid program. Our aid program was focused on rural health delivery, programs helping the poorest of the poor, as the Carter Administration liked to say, building roads so that the peasants could bring their produce to market, and improving the soil. Much of Haiti's forest had been chopped down for charcoal and the hills were barren from erosion and top soil was washed into the ocean. We tried to replant the hillsides to improve agricultural production; to develop cooperatives and to help the farmers better market their products, particularly coffee; to encourage industrial development within the country; to negotiate new textile agreements with the United States which permitted the development of a textile industry in Haiti; and also to provide an R & R facility for Guantanamo. That was major. We had a flight to Guantanamo every week from Port-au-Prince. It was a major stop-off port for the Caribbean fleet because the Dominican Republic did not welcome American warships after the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. They were particularly paranoid about airplane carriers, so we had three or four visits a year of airplane carriers that would come into the Port of Prince for R & R for the sailors.

Q: Let's go to human rights. After all, here is a régime which is founded on everything that the human rights policy opposes, no democracy, knock down your opponents, torture them, imprison them and all this. You lift this and you, in effect, depose the government. How did you preach this to people who certainly had no interest in following our preaching?

JONES: First of all, a lot of people didn't understand Haiti, and I suppose they still don't. It's a very complex country and a very complex society.

The Duvalier régime was based upon the support of the peasants. It was not an oligarchy in the Latin American sense. In most Latin American countries, such as Somoza, for instance, and Nicaragua or El Salvador, it was based upon the landed oligarchy who ran the country, the 2% of the people who own 98% of the land, as you had in El Salvador. That was not the case in Haiti.

Duvalier came into power with the support of the masses of the peasants, of the poor people. His régime was a poor-people's régime. The upper-class Haitians who were of mixed blood, mulattos, fair-skinned, were frozen completely out of the Duvalier régime. They did not participate politically in the régime at all. Many of them were killed by him, simply wiped out. There were cities in Haiti where there were no longer any of the old elite, the old fair-skinned elite, although they were still there and still controlled the economy around Port-au-Prince.

So there was support among the masses for Duvalier. He was not a régime that was uniformly condemned by all the people in Haiti. The exiles who had left Haiti and come to the United States or had gone to Venezuela or to France, were absolutely livid and irreconcilable as far as Duvalier was concerned. They were totally hostile to the régime and wanted only to overthrow Duvalier. But the masses of the poor people supported Duvalier.

I traveled with him a couple of times around the country. The outpouring of enthusiasm by the poor people, particularly women, who saw themselves as potential brides of Duvalier.

Q: This was before he married.

JONES: This was before he married. It was enormous, and this was not just generated by thugs, by Tontons Macoutes, of which there were plenty. There was support in Haiti for the Duvalier régime at that time. Now, this began to erode later on. But at that time, there was considerable support among the poor people.

The opposition to Duvalier was mainly the better educated people, the intellectuals, the elite, not the business elite, but the intellectual elite of Haiti, the newspaper people, the writers, the better educated people in Haiti, particularly in Port-au-Prince and in some of the other smaller cities like Gonaïves. Contrary to some opinions, I felt that, at that time which was 1977, there was substantial support of Duvalier among the masses in Haiti.

Now as far as political freedom went, it was nonexistent in Haiti. No Haitian president since they became independent has ever left office voluntarily. They have either died in office or they have been carried out. So there was no real tradition of democracy as we know it in Haiti. Haitian society did not function in that way. So the agitation for the American style of democracy came from a small group in Haiti and then from a large group of exiles outside of Haiti.

I felt, at that time, it was important for us to improve the human rights condition, to move Duvalier towards democracy, and if possible, to liberalize the society and to develop contacts with all elements of society because I always felt that the Duvalier régime was temporary. In the Haitian tradition, régimes did not last. In fact, I used to tell Duvalier that. I developed a pretty good working relation with Jean-Claude.

Q: From the outside he seemed to be a rather ineffectual president, but he remained in power a long time. What was your evaluation of him?

JONES: There were people around him who wanted to keep him in power. He was a very clever person. He was not at all dumb as some people thought. Jean-Claude was very clever in playing one group off against the other. He genuinely did, I think, want to develop his country but in a way that would support him. In other words, his primary motive, his *modus operandi* was to retain power. There was no question about that. This was his overwhelming goal. If that meant developing the country, improving the economic situation in the country, then so be it. He would certainly support it.

He differed from his father in that Jean-Claude was not as strong as his father, and he did not have a killer instinct. He did not like bloodshed. So he tried to run the country without too much violence, without overt suppression of the people unless it became necessary. He would resort to it but only as a last resort. He didn't have the stomach for brutality.

I developed, as I said, pretty good relations with Jean-Claude. After I'd been there for about two months, then I met with him and talked with him several times and told him how important it was, in terms of maintaining relations with the United States, to observe human rights particularly regarding political prisoners.

He did release 125 political prisoners in the fall of 1977 which was the largest group of political prisoners ever released by Duvalier. Now I don't know how many were left. I think there were only a very few left in the jails. But he released 125 political prisoners.

He also had sham elections. They were sham in that, if you opposed the Duvalier régime, you were not permitted to run. However, if you agreed to support the régime, he did permit candidates to oppose each other so that the elections were contested in the sense that as long you did not advocate the overthrow of Duvalier, then you could argue over any other issue, and you had an election. And they did have parliamentary elections twice, I believe, while I was in Haiti.

I was never able to get much relaxation of the media. He still controlled the press pretty stronger. He did allow some opposition voice on the radio. There were a couple of radio stations that were very muted in their opposition to Duvalier and they were able to get away with it. He tolerated them.

At one point, toward the last two years that I was in Haiti, Duvalier occasionally, I think two or three times, called me when I didn't expect it and asked me to come immediately, unannounced, in a private car to his villa on top of the mountain. He never gave me time to go to the embassy and get instructions. He would just send a car and driver for me and summon me to his villa.

Then we would sit down, for maybe two hours, just he and I alone in a room. He would offer me Cuban cigars and scotch whiskey. We would sit down and talk, and he would just listen to me. I would go down his Cabinet and tell him the ones who I thought were crooks and suggested that he get rid of them. And, as I said, I told him very candidly that, "You cannot last. This régime is not going to last." And I suggested to him that he adopt a parliamentary-type of democracy whereby he stay on as head of state, but he would have an elected prime minister, who he could gradually turn power over to. I told him I thought this was the only way he was going to stay in power. I said, "It's just not in the cards that you're going to be President for life. You're only 28, 29 years old. You're not going to make it." I said, "You've got your choice. You can either moderate your position and perhaps stay on, or you can continue allowing the more reactionary elements to dominate the society. I guarantee you will be carried out feet first."

He always listened to me and laughed, and we joked. We developed a pretty candid relationship. Of course, I would go to the embassy and report the conversation as it happened and report it to Washington. So I think that I developed a pretty close relationship with J.C., as we called him.

The way I divided my embassy, I was the main liaison with the senior levels of the Haitian Government, which meant the Duvalier régime. Only the ambassador can do that, and someone had to do it. You cannot have relations with a country, whether you agree with what they are doing or not, and ignore them or insult them. Then you are simply freezing yourself out of decision making and freezing yourself out of information which is vital. So I was the major contact with the high-level political controllers of the country, Duvalier and his ministers and the head of the army.

I was also designated as the main contact with the elite group in Haiti, the business elite, the people who control the economy. These were fair skinned mulattos who were frozen out of government entirely. They were very well educated, very sophisticated. They were not land owners. There were no big land owners in Haiti. The peasants owned the land in Haiti. But they owned the industry. They owned the computer chip factories, the baseball factories, the textile mills, the light industry sector that was developing in Haiti, patterned on Taiwan and Hong Kong.

So I developed close relations with the Mevs family--Pritz Mevs, whose grandfather had come to Haiti from Germany to avoid service in the Kaiser's army and had married an African woman. The Mevs family controlled the sugar mill and shoe factory in Haiti. They controlled the soap making, toothpaste manufacture. The Brandt family, Clifford Brandt, who was a Jamaican, was also of German-African origin. The Brandts owned all kinds of different factories. Brandt was the wealthiest Haitian with a reported worth of \$150 million. Mevs was probably worth \$70 million.

George Leger, who later became ambassador from Haiti to the United States--his grandfather had been president of Haiti--was the leading lawyer in Port-au-Prince. He was a great fisherman, as I am, and we would go deep sea fishing together frequently. When we would get out on the boat, of course, we could talk freely with no one listening.

With other members of that group, no one else in the embassy could have access to because they wouldn't be bothered with anyone else in the embassy below the level of ambassador. They simply wouldn't.

My DCM, of course, was the manager of the embassy, and he had contacts. But my political officers were instructed to develop contacts with potential opposition groups. We had direct liaison with Gerard Bourge, who founded the Haitian Civil Rights League, and Jean Dominique who was the young broadcaster who was openly anti-Duvalier.

The political section was tasked to develop contacts with potential opposition groups in the country and so on down the line in the embassy, with the military attaché dealing with the military, and the information people with the press, and the aid people out in the country, out in the field in the rural areas.

So I thought we had the country pretty well covered. I think we knew what was going on in Haiti, in those days, very well. I had a good staff there.

Q: What were the pressures on you? You had the Carter Administration, the State Department and Andrew Young. The U.N. was playing a very active role. It was an administration that was looking closely at so-called trouble spots on the human rights deal, and you were on one of the main ones. How did this impact you?

JONES: Human rights was the major problem that I had in Haiti. My role in convincing Duvalier to moderate his human rights policies was one of my major efforts.

As I said, we got political prisoners released. Sometimes it was successful. Sometimes it wasn't. The Human Rights League started largely through quiet encouragement from our embassy, from us, through my political officers. They got themselves organized and were going great guns. Then the Duvalier crowd decided that they were becoming too potent a factor in society, and they sent their counter-insurgency battalion called, "The Leopards" in plain clothes, into their meeting one night and destroyed the entire complex, beat up everybody there including my political officer who was there representing us. He got hit in the ear with a karate chop and fractured his ear drum and had to be evacuated. So they broke that up.

I guess we might have gone a little bit too far. I don't think we did, because we didn't control it. The Haitians thought that we had more control than we did, and they went one step too far. When they crossed over that line of openly opposing the régime, then they were suppressed and suppressed brutally.

The other major effort was our aid program. That was always very emotional because I would go out into the field and see these malnourished, undernourished children. I would go into the hospitals in the field and into a hut that would be a hospital and see these people who were ill and sick and have to involve myself at all levels of society which I tried to do.

It was very difficult to go into an area where you had such extreme poverty and see it. But we had to do it because we had to have contacts. We could not operate in that country effectively unless we did. But, nevertheless, it was very difficult for someone coming from a highly developed society as we are to go into a Haitian village and go particularly into a hospital because the villagers didn't live all that bad. Some of them lived quite decent lives. But to go into a hospital where there was no medical care and see these babies and injured people, it was always very difficult.

ANNE O. CARY

Economic/Commercial Officer

Port-au-Prince (1978-1980)

Anne O. Cary was born in Washington, DC in September of 1952. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and entered the Foreign Service in 1974. Her career included positions in Brussels, Port-au-Prince, Paris, Addis Abba, New Delhi, Casablanca, and Washington, DC. Ms. Cary was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 30, 1995.

Q: Then you left [Belgium] in 1978. Where did you go?

CARY: I went to Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Q: Boy, what a switch! Talk about going from one type of economy to another. You were in Haiti from when and when and what did you do?

CARY: I was economic/commercial officer from 1978-80. I got off the plane and I just had never seen anything at all like this. The poverty was just incredible. A ramshackle city with animals all over the place. I was pretty appalled at how poor people could be. US economic interests at that time focused on Haiti as an off-shore zone, industrial zone. All baseballs used in the major leagues are sown in Haiti. There were a number of electronic companies, Motorola, GE, GTE plants there, apparel companies, stuffed animals, etc. So, economically US investment was not very much in real terms, but light industry mostly fueled by US companies was the only sector of the economy that was growing.

Q: Was this a policy of just doing something economically for Haiti?

CARY: It was really more of a basket case problem. The boat people more or less started while we were there. Jean-Claude Duvalier, "baby doc," was the leader and he wasn't as stupid he looked, but he was not intelligent. He was 28 or so at the time, really incompetent and had no real interest in doing anything other than party. His mother was still alive and was plain evil, having people killed and being extremely greedy. He really wasn't that way, he just, I think, wanted to get out.

Q: You left there in 1980. Whither Haiti as far as you are concerned?

CARY: Haiti is the one place I have been that I did not think had any hope. Nobody puts anything into that country unless you can get it out on a plane. There is just no investment. There was a minister of commerce that I got to know pretty well and he was well educated and had been teaching in the United States. I thought he would be different, but he was on the take just like everybody else. I talked to him about it and he said this was the one chance he had. He would be minister for maybe six months and he had to get everything he possibly could for his family in that six months. Until that mentality changes and people see that there is a long term future in Haiti, I just don't see it getting better.

Q: How pervasive was corruption?

CARY: It was pervasive but not bloodsucking. If you were a businessman and wanted to meet Duvalier, for \$5000 you could meet Duvalier and probably get whatever it is that you need him to sign. But, you could also meet him by chance and get the same result. So, it was affordable corruption for those well-healed. For a peasant, even 100 gourd (\$20) was too high a price for the right stamp. Towards the end of my tour drugs became a part of the picture and changed the corruption situation. Haiti is strategically located for small private planes to refuel on their way to Colombia. There was an increase in the number of Lear jets coming in with drugs, having gone down to Colombia. This appeared to tie in with Baby Doc's marriage with Michelle; the Bennett family has been implicated in drugs.

Q: Baby Doc's wife.

CARY: After that we started getting Lear jets coming through and we had a couple of crashes. One was just disgusting. It was coming from the United States. The plane crashed outside the airport and the family came down and could care less about their son who had been the pilot. The important thing was the jewels or money that he was taking down to Colombia to bring drugs back. It was disgusting to see how eager they were to have access to the plane, while not seeming to care about their son's remains. As the drug culture moved in the corruption got worse. We were leaving just about that time so it was only by stories later I learned how much things had changed.

INTS M. SILINS

Political Officer

Port-au-Prince (1978-1980)

Ambassador Silins was born in Latvia and raised in Latvia and Maryland. He was educated at Princeton and Harvard Universities. He entered the Foreign Service in 1969 and served abroad in Saigon, Duc Thanh (Vietnam), Bucharest, Stockholm, Port au Prince, Leningrad and Strasbourg. In 1990 he was appointed United States Representative to the Baltic States, resident in Riga, Latvia, and from 1992 to 1995, he served as United States Ambassador to Latvia. He also had several tours of duty at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. Ambassador Silins was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: Oh yes. Well you were in Haiti in '78. What was your job there?

SILINS: In Haiti I was the chief of the political section, the political officer.

Q: And what was the situation in Haiti when you were there?

SILINS: As always, terrible. But not as terrible as it got later. Haiti was still very livable for those who could afford it. We were in the early Baby Doc period. We hadn't quite scoped him out yet, we didn't know whether he had promise or not. The initial readings, of course were, as you recall, negative on Baby Doc. He was called Basket Head because he looked dumb. But during my time there he married Michele Bennett, who seemed to be a very savvy woman from a good family. We thought, okay, maybe this is going to do the trick, maybe she is going to give him some smarts and point him in the right direction. Didn't turn out to be the case, but that wasn't apparent by the time I had left. At the time it was still a pretty tough place, of course very poor, poorest in the Western Hemisphere. We were trying to, now we are into the post-Carter period, we're into...

SILINS: By post-Carter I mean Carter has arrived, in the sense that we have a more active human rights policy. So one of my jobs was to go around and talk to freethinking people, opposition people, people that didn't think that the country should have a president with lifetime tenure. So that was an interesting part of the job, including one very dramatic example.

Q: What was that?

SILINS: Well, this was an attack by the *Tontons Macoutes*, Haiti's paramilitary thugs who acted as enforcers for the Duvalier regime, on a human rights meeting I had gone to. This was in '79, I guess. The meeting was held in a church auditorium by the Haitian Human Rights League. The

group's president, Gerard Gourgue, was giving a talk and he had filled the hall, so you could see there was some real support for these ideas in Haiti despite the oppressive regime. I had arrived a bit late and so I was standing outside by a side door looking into the packed auditorium and listening to the speaker. Just minutes after I arrived the trouble started. A bunch of muscular thugs began to chant *DUVALIER! DUVALIER!* in deep guttural voices, both inside and outside the auditorium. Then all hell broke loose. Inside, the thugs started smashing the furniture, breaking the legs off the chairs and hitting members of the audience with them. People began streaming out, and as they ran out they were beaten by *tontons* who were waiting for them outside the door, not far from where I was standing. I stood there appalled, taking it all in as the hall emptied. Then a young woman ran up to me, Gourgue's daughter, and appealed to me for help because her father was being beaten up and her mother as well who was with them. I went back inside with her and saw them.

By that time the church was almost empty, most of the chairs had been broken up, but there were still three or four of the thugs left. They were leaning menacingly over Gourgue, who was down on one knee on the floor, his hands up trying to protect his head, which was bleeding, these guys were pounding on him, his wife was next to him. I don't know exactly what I thought I was doing but I walked up to Gourgue, pulled him up and began to lead him out of the hall, his wife and daughter following. And at first the *tontons* let me get away with it, as though I was wrapped in a bubble of diplomatic immunity. And so I got the Gourgues out of the church. But as I led them toward the exit gate, one of the *tontons* gave me a tremendous whack with the flat of his hand on my left ear. I was stunned, disoriented, almost fell. The blow ruptured my eardrum. I was separated from Gourgue but I learned later that he got to safety; he was taken by a priest into the basement and hidden there. And the *tontons* didn't attack me anymore, so I made my way out to my car, drove home, and reported the incident to our ambassador. Quite a demonstration of the regime's attitude toward human rights at that point in Haiti.

CLAYTON E. McMANAWAY, JR.

Ambassador

Haiti (1983-1986)

Clayton E. McManaway, Jr. was born in North Carolina. He graduated from the University of South Carolina and served in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in Phnom Penh and Saigon, and as Ambassador to Haiti. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Q: Let's talk about your time going to Haiti as ambassador. How did that come about and how long were you there?

McMANAWAY: I arrived there in mid-December, 1983 and left on the August 1, 1986. I had learned that the State Department's recommended candidate had been turned down by the White House. [The rejection] was not in favor of a political appointee, but something else had caused that. The normal tour of the Secretariat is about two years, that is about all you can take, and that would be in around January 1983. So I went down to see Tom Enders, who was Assistant Secretary for ARA at the time, and asked him what his reaction would be if I threw my hat in the ring for it. Tom's answer was typically Tom Enders, honest and to the point. He said that he had to support his candidate from the Bureau but he would not object. So I was nominated from the Secretariat. When the committee met, which at that time was the Deputy Secretary's committee which hadn't been operating very long consisting of the Director General; Under Secretary for Political Affairs, who was Larry Eagleburger at the time; Executive Secretary, who was Jerry Bremer; Assistant Secretary concerned and others. I was selected. I was recommended to the Secretary and my name was sent over to the White House.

And then began the long wait. [The nomination] went over in March and I didn't get the appointment until November. Senator Percy, who didn't know me from Adam but was running for reelection and was chairman at the time of the Foreign Relations Committee was mad at the White House. At the same time the Republican Party of the State of Illinois had recommended a retired doctor to be ambassador to Haiti who felt that because he was a doctor he could go down and deal with Baby Doc, who was not a doctor. Percy seized this as a way to get more support out of the White House for his campaign and he held up my nomination. He had me up there once to explain to me what the situation was. That it was nothing personal, it was politics. Of course, the White House didn't feel that he had done such a grand job as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee either, so he finally gave way. But it was very disruptive personally. My wife was working and didn't know whether to put in her resignation. She was working with the CIA. And, of course, we had to put our daughter in school and then take her out. It was a very disruptive thing from a personal point of view, but that happens to a lot of us and no one in the Congress particularly cares. It doesn't bother them in the least.

Q: Senator Percy was defeated wasn't he?

McMANAWAY: Yes, he was defeated.

Q: Before you went in December, 1983, how did you bring yourself up to speed on Haiti?

McMANAWAY: I left the Secretariat almost as soon as my nomination went in and began working both on French, refreshing my French, and getting familiar with the Haitian issues. This was an eye opener because a small country like Haiti barely comes up on the screen in the Secretariat. When you go down to the bureau you find out about all these problems that people are working on that you had no idea about. It was a very active relationship. But I had plenty of time to get on top of the issues.

Q: You hit there at a key time, but as you were going and when you arrived, what was the situation in Haiti from the perspective of the United States?

McMANAWAY: The situation was that Haiti was sort of stumbling along and had been doing so for some years. It was still the poorest country in the hemisphere and was not improving a great deal. There was only one sector of the economy that was improving and that was what we call the assembling center which was essentially American companies setting up plants to partially assemble things to be brought back to the U.S. for final production. Everybody knows the story of the baseballs, I guess. All of our baseballs, including the pro baseballs, are made in Haiti.

The problem that we faced immediately was that there was a group on the Hill, not just the Black Caucus, although some of the Black Caucus, Fauntroy in particular was active. There was also a group of staffers over on the House Foreign Relations side who were interested in Haiti and had become active. They had decided that it was time to do something about the human rights situation in Haiti and the lack of any political progress in the sense of movement towards properly elected democratic system. They wrote into the AID legislation...in fact, just as I was leaving to go down there...they wrote in language that was the toughest language I think that existed anywhere at that time. In fact, in talking to the staffers later, I think they were a little aghast at what they had done and realized they had gone a little too far, but it was already there. It called for political parties and certification by the Department of State that there was progress in these directions and human rights in order to continue the AID program. This was put into law just as I was going to Haiti and became the centerpiece the whole time I was there.

Q: Before you went out did you talk to both the staff members and their principals and say, "What do you mean by this?" There must have been implications there that there was a good possibility that aid would be cut off. Was that acceptable?

McMANAWAY: It wasn't acceptable to the administration. The administration fought it. Something else had gotten the attention of the administration that year on the aid bill. I forget what it was, but it was bigger than Haiti and nobody notice this until it was too late. They couldn't do anything about it. It slipped through the normal give and take on the aid bill with the staffers and the Congress itself. It caught the administration by surprise. Haiti wasn't the only country that had these certifications. The general position that the administration was taking at that time was that all of these certification requirements were unconstitutional in the sense they tied the hands of the President too much. So the position that the administration was taking was that they were going to fight all of these, Haiti being among them. I didn't think that the administration was going to be successful, so I felt it was incumbent upon me to warn the government of Haiti, Duvalier and his principal ministers, that this legislation was now in effect. In the spring I was going to have to submit a recommended report that would go to the Congress. Even though the administration was not please, the report would have to be taken seriously. My initial courtesy calls turned substantive right away.

Q: Did you find the attitude there was, "Well, the administration is challenging it so let's not worry about it?"

McMANAWAY: Oh, it varied from minister to minister. Some were outraged by it, some were frightened by it, some were defensive, some were offended by the intrusion into their internal affairs. So you had a variety of reactions. It started my tour in Haiti off on a very interesting foot. Here I was basically coming in telling them they were being challenged to make political improvements or the AID program was going to be cut off. The AID program was the biggest thing in town, not a huge program but big enough to make a difference. It made a difference because other donors tended to follow our lead. Not only other countries like France, Germany, Japan, who had small programs, but it also influenced attitudes of the World Bank and IMF. They were having troubles with the IMF. So it was a serious issue in Port-au-Prince.

Q: When you arrived there, were things in a state of flux at that time, or did some things start to fall apart as far as Duvalier later on...?

McMANAWAY: Well, in March of '83, the Pope had visited which I think is a marker, is one of several turning points. Because when he left he said: "Change must come to Haiti" in his remarks and the church became much more active. Here's another irony of Haitian history. Francois Duvalier had deliberately set out to get himself excommunicated by the church, which he did. He then renegotiated the concordat, he renegotiated this treaty with Rome, with the Vatican, in which he got the authority to name Haitian bishops and he got rid of all the French, foreign bishops. It was those bishops that turned on his son. His son was faced with a Haitian Catholic church, led by an Italian nuncio, and he and I worked very closely together. But the church became much more active, speaking out about the disparities in the society between the rich and the poor. Gradually about the Palace we had this combination of things taking place, these forces converging on Duvalier. The marriage was resented deeply by the military and by the blacks because she was as white as you are and Duvalier himself is really... would classify as a mulatto, Jean-Claude. His father was black. There was resentment over the marriage. There was growing resentment throughout Port-au-Prince and wherever there were businessmen in Gonaïves or Cape Haitien of her father and his [greed]. It was gross, his corruption, his greed was one of the worst I've ever seen anywhere.

Q: His corruption was gross?

McMANAWAY: Yes. It had to become an ego trip because no one needs that much money. He was bragging all the time about it, [manipulating] foreign currency and... It was outrageous. You had the church speaking out against corruption and making the public increasingly aware of the discrepancies about their way of life and the rich people. And you had the U.S. government bringing pressure to open up the political process and for human rights improvements. These things were all going on at the same time, all this mix began to really become [critical].

Q: How did you see it when you went out there? You had rather explicit congressional instructions. You understood the climate in the United States when you went out there. What did you see at the end of the road as far as where we were pushing for Haiti to go within your time?

MCMANAWAY: I decided to try to use, since I really did not have much choice. It was there, it was the law. I didn't have much faith in the administration even though Motley [Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs] was trying along with others. In fact there had been a task force set up I think to try to overturn these conditions on AID that Congress was increasingly imposing in those years. I didn't have much faith that they were going to be successful, so I said: "Let's use it, let's make use of it to see if we can bring some improvements here." Where that was going to lead I didn't know for sure. I was secretly hopeful without ever saying it to anybody that it would lead to the departure of Duvalier. I didn't have any idea that it would actually happen. The reason for that I thought it would be a good thing is that Haiti has got too many people basically. It's just a fundamental economic problem which is not going to be solved by Haitians. Now I guess they're saying seven million, when I was there six million and on the east end of the island. You got the worst in the island. Two thirds of that island is on an incline of twenty degrees or greater. The trees have been cut down, the land is washing away. It's going to take an international effort to do anything positive about Haiti's economic condition. As long as the name Duvalier was associated with Haiti I didn't think you could get that. I thought if you could get that name away out of here, then you could. And we did start it. As a matter of fact I did start it working behind the scenes, working with the World Bank, working with other donors, trying to get something headed in that direction. But I didn't know what would happen and certainly when it did happen it wasn't just our doing. What happened in the end, it got to the point where if we had a choice. If Duvalier stayed, it would mean the deaths of thousands of people, which would have driven us away from it. The position that we at the embassy took vis-a-vis Washington was: "Let's not wait. Let's not wait until we're forced to pull back. Let's pull back now. He's gone; he's finished." Mind you this was right toward the very end.

Q: Actually Duvalier left in February of '86. So we're talking about the end of '85?

MCMANAWAY: Yes, December, January. We started taking some deliberate steps which upped the ante and increased the pressure on Duvalier at a time when all the other things were beginning to come to a head. They made some really stupid mistakes which gives you an idea of their state of mind. "They" being the Duvaliers. They had in May of '85... Well, my first Fourth of July, I invited...

Q: July of '84?

MCMANAWAY: Of '84, I invited some of the dissidents and the government tried to get me to disinvite them and I refused, so the government boycotted my Fourth of July, and I made a speech which made me a hero on the Hill, you know, an absolute hero. They thought they were doing me in and they were making me a hero back in the Congress. So my tenure there was

pretty rocky, it was full of tension a lot of the time. There are a number of different stories that I'm going to tell you. I don't know if we're going to get to them today because I had an experience there which I think is somewhat unique. I don't know if it's unique or not, but unusual certainly. But the mistakes they made in May of '85... They had this huge big party. They invited people in from Paris and all over, a big thing. They gave door prizes and one of the door prizes was a twenty thousand dollar necklace. This was on TV

JAMES DOBBINS

Deputy Special Advisor for Haiti, Department of State

Washington, DC (1994-1996)

Ambassador James Dobbins was born in Brooklyn, NY and raised in New York, Philadelphia, Manila, Philippines and Washington, D.C. area. He attended Georgetown University and served in the US Navy before entering the Foreign Service in 1967. He served in France, German and England. Ambassador Dobbins was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: We'll move to Haiti. This will be what?

DOBBINS: Well, this would be '94 to '96.

Q: Jim, again, you were doing this, what was the title regarding Haiti?

DOBBINS: Well, it changed, because initially they brought in a fellow named Bill Gray, who had been a former congressman.

Q: Yes, head of the Black Caucus, from Philadelphia, I believe.

DOBBINS: Right, and he had retired from Congress a few years earlier but remained an important leader within the black community, and he was brought in as – I can't remember what his title was, but something like presidential adviser, special presidential adviser, or something like that, on Haiti, in order to give it some political visibility. And also because the administration itself was so beleaguered as the result of its mistakes over both Haiti and Somalia and had lost a lot of credibility as a result, and I think felt they needed some new faces and some effort to restore their credibility. Also, of course, this was responsive to the base of support for a more robust policy on Haiti, which was the Black Caucus in Congress, all of whom were Democrats.

So I was assigned as his deputy, so I think my title was something like deputy special adviser for Haiti, or something like that. I was the senior professional on that team, and it was actually a somewhat difficult situation, because both the NSC, both Sandy Berger and Tony Lake in the NSC and Strobe Talbott in the State Department, who were managing this effectively regarded me as their personal subordinate for managing it. And they regarded Bill Gray as not a figurehead, because he was too significant for that, but as somebody who needed to be managed and kept on task, and it was sort of my task to do that. Whereas Gray regarded me as his deputy, not theirs, and so I was rather constantly being pulled in two directions, because his views were often different from those of the senior elements of the administration. So it was a difficult period, which lasted really until a few weeks after we had invaded Haiti. I guess when Gray stepped down in that capacity formally when Aristide returned, which was about a month after the actual invasion.

Q: Well, then, here you are. What were you doing? What was your organization doing?

DOBBINS: Well, first we had to create an organization, but that wasn't too big. We recruited a dozen or so people to manage the process. There were several streams. One, as it turned out to be, in many ways, the most time consuming, was dealing with the altered refugee policy, which had not been well thought out, and which quickly became almost unmanageable. The policy had been previously when Haitians were intercepted at sea by the Coast Guard, they were simply returned to Haiti without any review as to the validity of their claims to be political asylees.

The Clinton administration said that henceforth they would review those claims before returning them. The problem is that in order to review the claims, you need to interview the person and you need to make some judgment as to whether the individual is likely to suffer persecution of some sort if he returns to the country, or is he, alternatively, simply an economic refugee. He's fleeing because he's starving to death, not because he's going to get shot by the local constabulary when he gets back. And if he's just starving to death, then you can return him, in effect. Of course, there were programs to feed people in Haiti that were underway, so you could save your conscience in that regard.

So you needed a process in which an interviewer who was qualified, which meant somebody from INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services) who had the appropriate training, could interview these people, which you could do on Coast Guard cutters if the numbers were limited. But pretty soon the numbers overwhelmed us, because as soon as the Haitians found out that there was a chance of getting in the United States, the number of boat people magnified tremendously. From a few dozen every day, it magnified to thousands and then tens of thousands every day that were taking anything that would float, getting into the water, getting out. They didn't have to try to get to the United States. They just had to get out far enough to get picked up

a Coast Guard cutter, and then they were in the system, and then they had a chance of persuading whoever interviewed them.

So the change in policy greatly expanded the number of asylum seekers, so you needed a place to put them while you reviewed their cases pending their return. There was a lot of debate about where to put them. One thought was that we'd hire a few big ocean liners that would sort of cruise around and the cutters would bring them to the ocean liner and they'd be processed on the ocean liner and then returned. And we actually did go out and hire a couple of ocean liners, although I'm not sure any were actually used for it. This was a pretty crackpot scheme, actually. But then we decided we'd put them in Guantanamo. The military didn't like that, kept saying it wasn't possible, and then when they admitted it was possible, they'd say, "Okay, we're going to take 5,000," and then when we got 5,000 there, they'd say, "Well, we can't have any more," and we'd say, "You have to," and then they'd go up to 10,000. It eventually got up to about 40,000, if I recall.

This was all complicated because there was a simultaneous outflow of Cubans and there was a change in our Cuba policy about this time, so we ended up having a lot of Cubans detained in Guantanamo in more or less the same timeframe, and of course the two had to be kept separate. So Guantanamo was clearly filling up.

Then we had a policy where we were running around to other Caribbean nations to ask them to set up refugee processing centers, and one of my tasks was to fly down to meet with the president of Panama and persuade him, which I did briefly, to accept this. A lot of time was spent going around to Jamaica and Panama and Trinidad and other places that no one had ever heard of in the Caribbean and offering them huge sums of money to accept essentially a concentration camp for Haitians on their soil. We actually started building some of these camps, although I don't think we ever put anybody in any of them. There was this mounting pressure, because the immigration policy that the administration had announced was ultimately unsustainable.

Q: Were you there at the time when the policy was developed?

DOBBINS: No, it was announced coincident with Gray's and my appointment.

Q: Was anybody saying, "Hey, this is really going to trigger something?"

DOBBINS: Yes, all the professionals were saying, "Boy, you've got to watch what you're doing."

Q: Well, then, how did this particular part play out?

DOBBINS: Well, it was one of the factors that forced the intervention. As long as you were prepared to return people that were intercepted at sea to Haiti, you wouldn't have many people who were leaving, and as long as you didn't have many people who were leaving, you didn't have

a refugee crisis. You had a human rights crisis in Haiti, because up to 1,500 people a year were being killed in politically connected violence, according to NGOs (nongovernmental organizations). So you had a human rights situation in Haiti, but you didn't have a refugee problem.

Once you began to acknowledge the human rights situation, once you began to acknowledge it, you then had a refugee policy. Once you had a refugee policy, you then had mounting pressure for an intervention to correct the human rights situation so that you could then begin returning people again, and that was the dynamic that ultimately led to the intervention. So one strain of what we were doing was running around with our hair on fire, dealing with this mounting refugee crisis, and the administration was very concerned that they had another fiasco on their hands, after the gays in the military...

Their credibility was pretty strained, and then another reversal, another admission that this policy was unsustainable would have been very difficult.

Q: Who were some of the principal players at the top of the Clinton administration in this?

DOBBINS: Lake, Berger and Talbott, and John Deutch in the Pentagon.

Q: You mentioned the human rights situation, the economic situation, and particularly with sanctions, that's on its own. But what else was happening politically? You said there were something like 1,500 killings a year?

DOBBINS: Well, Haiti had long been misgoverned and was continuing to be misgoverned by a combination of the army and the mulatto elites that had traditionally run the country. The coup regime wasn't very competent and it didn't have much legitimacy, even within the country. There was resistance, not violent resistance, but political resistance on the part of Aristide and his supporters, and Aristide had wide support in the population as a whole, and as a result there was continuous violence that was creating casualties. There were some really clearly targeted assassinations of prominent Aristide supporters. Other of the violence was less clearly targeted as opposed to sort of more indiscriminate efforts by the security establishment to maintain control in a society in which they lacked legitimacy and support in the population.

Q: Well, now, where did Gray fit in on this? You say that you had conflicted supervision, you might say.

DOBBINS: Well, Gray first threw himself into it, and we spent a lot of time flying around the Caribbean, both recruiting allies but also looking for places to stuff Haitian refugees while we processed them, and he became very engaged on that. He liked flying around as a presidential envoy. He also, as I said, established a relationship with Aristide. It then began to get very complicated. The refugee crisis was mounting, and we were barely keeping our head above water

in terms of our capacity to cope with it. The political situation was getting complicated. The whole issue was becoming much more controversial in the country.

At some point, Gray decided that he was overexposed, that the administration, by making him the point person and always having him give the press conference, was transferring a lot of the responsibility for this policy to him, while at the same time not giving him a free hand in deciding what the policy was. And he chose to step back and become less visible and less engaged, and he did. The last six weeks or so before the actual intervention, he wasn't inactive, but he was much less active.

Q: Well, I just vaguely recall some of the report, but it seems like Carter actually found that he was being preempted when he was talking to the Haitian leadership. I mean, he was told the 82nd Airborne was on its way, or something.

DOBBINS: He knew what the timetable was. He might have wanted more time, and at that point, the president wasn't prepared to give him more time and wanted to make sure that he and his team were out of town before the paratroopers arrived.

Q: How did things evolve?

DOBBINS: Well, it went better than Somalia, but it was a more benign situation. It was always likely to go better than Somalia. There were still big gaps in our ability to plan and execute these types of missions, and these are partially dealt with in the book we published here on these nation-building missions. The military had insisted that it wasn't going to get involved in policing, and the State Department kept telling them that they were going to have to, because once they got there, there wasn't going to be any alternative. The existing Haitian institutions were ineffective, corrupt, discredited, and to the extent they did policing, they did it in an abusive fashion, which we couldn't tolerate once we were in charge.

The military responded, "Well, fine, if the State Department thinks it's important that somebody do policing, then the State Department ought to find some people to do it, but we're definitely not doing it." So we spent a few weeks before the intervention rushing around Latin America, mostly, and recruiting dribs and drabs of police, including American police, and we got the former head of the New York police force, Ray Kelly, to head this effort. We eventually did deploy 1,000 U.S. and other national police as part of the intervention force, but these didn't arrive in the beginning and weren't likely to arrive in the beginning. The military were taking the position that they weren't doing policing, and then the first day, as they were getting off the ship in the middle of Port-au-Prince Harbor, a friendly crowd arrived to watch the disembarkation. The Haitian police, who were actually military, arrived to disperse the crowd and did so in their usual fashion, by knocking them over the head or shooting them, and they did that in front of CNN, and that was broadcast back here, with U.S. soldiers just sort of looking on while the human rights abuses

were seen. That immediately caused the White House to tell the military to drop its objections and get some military police down there.

Fortunately, the commander of the military police elements within the Army knew he was going to be needed, even though the Army and Shalikashvili were saying they weren't, and he had units alerted and ready to go, although he had told them they weren't going to be necessary. The next day, they flew down and the U.S. military, at least in the interval before the State Department mobilized civilian police, could get there, took over responsibility for overseeing the Haitian police. So that was one small crisis. Special Forces units were dispersed throughout the countryside and did a good job of establishing security out there.

There was another incident the first week or so, the first few days, where some Haitians in one of the other cities in Haiti, in Cap-Haitien, a bunch of Haitian police looked cross-eyed at some Marines, who shot them dead, killing six or seven of them, and that pretty much ended any thought of resistance on the part of other Haitians. In retrospect, it wasn't ever clear whether they intended to do any harm. They were just looking threatening, and that was enough for the Marines.

Those were really the only early incidents, and otherwise security was established pretty comprehensively, but there were lots of other problems. We had a good plan to establish a new police force. We vetted that with Aristide beforehand. We had the assets and the people. We opened a police academy. We began recruiting. Pretty soon we were pumping out several hundred new recruits in a fairly comprehensive training program, and eventually we trained about 5,000 of them over a two-year period. That was quite a successful program. We did nothing comparable to reform the judicial or penal systems, and so the police eventually became immured in a basically corrupt system and the reforms had only limited long-term effect, but it was at least a relatively successful short program.

There was a big dispute about what we would be doing with the military. Our intention had initially been to reform and retrain the Haitian military. Aristide preferred to disband it, and we eventually went along with that, and it was disbanded completely and never replaced, so Haiti doesn't have a military. It just has a police force. Then the spokesperson for the former regime, a woman, was assassinated just three or four days before President Clinton was due to go down on a visit. That created a great furor, particularly back here on the part of the Republican opponents, who saw this as the kind of political violence that they had been criticized for condoning in Latin America for so long, and now they could criticize the Clinton administration for condoning it.

The Clinton administration responded by getting Aristide to request the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) investigate it, which they did, but Aristide and his people tended to stonewall that investigation, leading the FBI to conclude that there may have been some complicity on the part of Aristide and his people in the murder in the first place, which there may well have been. Not

perhaps of Aristide personally, but some of his people, so that poisoned relations pretty thoroughly and made the whole issue much more controversial here.

We eventually succeeded in holding elections on schedule, both elections for a new parliament, and then eventually elections for a new president. The opposition decried them as unfair. Some didn't run. Some ran and then disclaimed them as having been unfair. I think most neutral observers felt that they were poorly run, but fair as things go, but again, the Republicans here decried the results and the opposition there refused to accept them, so that became extremely controversial.

Aristide was initially attracted to the idea that his five-year term should not count the three years he had spent in exile, and there was some logic to that, but we wouldn't accept it, largely because of what we knew would be the reaction from the Republican right here. The Republicans had secured control of the Congress four or five weeks after the intervention, so they were on a much stronger position. We, along with elements of his own party, required Aristide to step down, five years after he had originally entered office, even though he had three years of exile. And his response was to run a candidate who would take orders and do nothing for five years until he could run again.

Aristide originally had espoused a fairly progressive economic reform program involving privatization of a lot of corrupt and incompetent parastatal companies, but once he got back, he backed away from these reform programs, because he felt they would give too much leeway for foreign capital and international investment, which he was opposed to, and sided with the vested interests that saw some advantage in the status quo with respect to these parastatals, the power company, the port. And, consequently, most of the economic reforms that the World Bank was prepared to fund were not funded. Our own aid program was fairly limited after the first year, largely again out of concern that we couldn't get more through the Congress.

We left within the timeframe we said we would leave, which was two years, by which time the situation was peaceful, they'd had elections, but most of the underlying reforms that would have made this of long-term value had not been put in place. The situation then gradually began to deteriorate, until in 2004, the U.S. had to intervene once again.

Q: Well, you were there for almost two years dealing with this?

DOBBINS: I was dealing with it. I was based in Washington, not in Port-au-Prince.

LESLIE M. ALEXANDER

Ambassador

Haiti (1999-2000)

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.

Q: Well, let's talk about Haiti. You were there, when?

ALEXANDER: The second time?

Q: Yes.

ALEXANDER: I went there January 3rd or 4th, something like that until around June the 1st of 2000.

Q: What was the situation when you got there?

ALEXANDER: It was nasty. They were killing journalists and political opponents. They were gearing up for legislative elections and, later in the year, for presidential elections. We had to have the legislative elections first; they had been postponed for a year and a half and, without legislative elections, you couldn't have the presidential elections. Washington said, "You've got to do everything in your power to see this thing gets organized." And I said, "Wait a minute, guys, this is Haiti. I went through this election business back in 1989 or 1990, getting Aristide elected, and this is even worse." "Yes but you've got to do it. And oh, by the way it has to be fair and transparent, we don't want anyone killed." They always kill people during elections in Haiti. And I said, "Is there anything else you want me to do while I'm at it, go to the moon?" They said, "No, if you do that we'll be happy."

Well, we did it. How we did it, I don't know. Combination of luck and I guess the fact that I had been there and had the experience. I knew what to expect. USAID did a really great job in organizing all the stuff that we had to organize. I had a good staff and we did it. In fact, after it was over, the assistant secretary said to me, "I'll be honest with you, I thought if anyone could do it, it would be you, but we didn't give you very high odds of succeeding. We kind of figured that something was going to go wrong." But he said, "You guys did great."

Q: Was your friend Aristide still there?

ALEXANDER: Aristide was there, he was not in power per se.

Q: What had happened to him?

ALEXANDER: As a condition of returning him on the backs of the U.S. military in '95, we said you're going to finish the term you started in February of 1991, your five-year term and when it's over, that's it. You don't run for re-election. You step down and you let somebody else take over. He didn't want to do that, but he did. He stuck to the agreement. He finished up his presidency in '96 and one of his protégés was elected president, Rene Preval, who had been his prime minister when he was president the first time. Rene Preval became the president and Aristide moved back to his private residence, which was a new residence, by Haitian standards a rather comfortable residence which raised a lot of questions about where did the money come from. Be that as it may, he remained very much the power behind the scenes. He was the power broker, the man that you had to get the nod from to do anything. Preval tried to be his own man to the extent that he could.

Q: This is tape eight, side one with Les Alexander. Go ahead

ALEXANDER: I would say that President Preval tried to be his own man but he didn't really have a power base. His power base was Aristide's power base and so Aristide continued to assert enormous influence over the affairs of state. It was pretty much a given that Aristide was going to run again after that interlude that we required him to step down. He was going to run for and be president once again, which is exactly what happened. When I first went there in early 2000, I resisted going to see Aristide, even though my masters in Washington said you have to go see Aristide. The deputy secretary, Strobe Talbott, said to me two or three times, "you have to see Aristide." The funny thing is Sandy Berger didn't even want me to go to Haiti because he had heard from other sources that Aristide and I didn't get along, which was half true. I had talked to Aristide in the past, knew him before he was president. I didn't like Aristide, that's true, but I think that what got to his ears was somewhat of a distortion that I absolutely despised Aristide and I was just going to cause trouble when I went down there. So anyway, he had to be convinced, and Strobe convinced him that he had talked to me and I was a career FSO and I would follow instructions, which I did. But the one thing I resisted was going to see Aristide. No sooner did I get down there I started getting phone calls, "when are you going to go see Aristide?" I said, "I don't know." Who is Aristide really? He's a private citizen." "Yes, but you know he's the power behind the throne." I said, "be that as it may, he's a private citizen. Why does the head of the U.S. embassy have to go see a private citizen? You're making Aristide a power broker." "No, he is a power broker." I said, "I know that, you know that, but we don't have to give the impression that he's somehow the president already. But I'll get around to it." I was so pressured eventually I did go see Aristide. We had a very nice conversation. He was a very genteel, very polite, pleasant person. It was clear, before I went to see him and after I went to see him, that yes, Aristide was Aristide, and he was the man to beat in the presidential election later on that year.

I do think that Aristide helped make the first election – the legislative elections – a successful election. I think he did send word to his partisans to call for no violence, no nonsense; we have to have a clean election. In fact, he and I talked about it. I said if the election is tainted then your election and what appears to be your certain victory in the presidential election will be tainted. So it's not in your interest to do this. After I left they indeed had the presidential elections, he went on to win that and then he got chased out of power by the former military and others who didn't like him.

Q: How stood the military when you were there the second time?

ALEXANDER: The military had been disbanded; that was a condition that he imposed on us. We said you finish up your term, he said fine, but I want the armed forces disbanded. Haiti doesn't need an army. They've been nothing but a source of trouble, coups, and we just don't need an army. So the U.S. disbanded the Haiti army, the result being that there was no army when I went back the second time. There was a police force. Aristide obviously miscalculated when he disbanded the military because he had several thousand unemployed soldiers with plenty of time on their hands and one hell of a beef and, as it turns out, they were the ones who threw him out of office. Not that the violence wasn't visited upon him, but certainly upon others, and they're the ones who went into Port au Prince and he had to flee. The question in my mind is, had he found a different solution to deal with the military, would he have remained in power? I don't know. But there is no army, there's some talk about restoring the army. I don't think they're going to restore the army. I think what they'll try to do, if anything, is integrate those soldiers who are still young enough to be integrated into the police force. There were some, myself included, who felt that they should have created a gendarme. Some sort of a paramilitary, para-police, that would have resolved all the beefs, all the gripes of what they call the petit soldat, the little soldiers. Yet at the same time it would have given Haiti what it so desperately needs, and that is a force for public order. Such a creature doesn't exist. You've got a police force that's corrupt, abusive, and there are no checks and balances. Before, the army was more powerful, but there were some checks and balances. Now, the crime in Haiti has just gotten so out of hand that it's the Wild West. It's crazier than it's ever been.

Q: Did you have a feeling that Haiti had disappeared off the radar of U.S. politicians or not?

ALEXANDER: Oh absolutely, absolutely. I think the Clinton administration, once they put Aristide back on the throne, they immediately began to distance themselves from him. There was just too much out there indicating that Aristide was not the guy his supporters had tried to convince Clinton that he was. Domestic politics, particularly pressure from the Black Caucus, I think Clinton felt compelled to put Aristide back on the throne. After he did that I think he said that's it. I've done what you people want; I've got other things to do. And they kept an eye on Aristide. There were certain people like Tony Lake who felt a certain, not loyalty, to Aristide, but a certain commitment to him. But Tony was no longer the national security advisor and so his influence on the situation was very, very limited. Sandy Berger just wanted Haiti to be quiet.

Basically, no boat people, nothing so explosive as to raise questions about why we invaded Haiti on Aristide's behalf. As it turns out, a lot of Aristide's critics felt vindicated because Haiti became what it was accused of being under the opponents of Aristide. It became, among other things, a dysfunctional state, a little narco country, all the things which the Black Caucus said it was when Aristide was in exile. Aristide comes back and becomes president and all of a sudden our Coast Guard and our DEA and everybody else is pulling out its hair because Haiti is involved up to its eyeballs in drug trafficking and Aristide is abusing human rights left, right and center. Didn't we invade Haiti to bring this guy back? And wasn't he Mr. Democracy? And what happened here? I think a lot of people had a lot of egg in their faces, but as long as Haiti was relatively quiet and didn't make the front pages, it was okay.

Q: Had the boat people business but pretty well stopped?

ALEXANDER: Yes, yes. The boat people business stopped for two reasons. We stopped it, physically stopped it, we just put so many cutters out there between Haiti and the U.S. and just made it impossible for them to get anywhere. Once Aristide was restored there was no way that human rights advocates, immigration lawyers who were advocating for the rights of the Haitian boat people, didn't have legs anymore to stand on, legal legs. Aristide was restored, he was synonymous with democracy; therefore boat people couldn't be fleeing persecution because Mr. Democracy was back in power. The argument was gone and the justification for letting them in was gone and so taking to the seas so that you could claim political asylum if you made it wasn't going to work anymore. You had to now go back to the old fashioned way, getting in the boat and sneaking in, you know walking across the beach, Pompano Beach or Hollywood or Miami in the middle of the night, and hoping you didn't get caught.

Q: Were you seeing any improvement in the economy of Haiti?

ALEXANDER: Absolutely not. When I went back the second time, I left in '93, Aristide was restored, we invaded in '95, Aristide was restored to power, I came back in, I left in, around June 1st, 1993, I came back the 4th or 5th of January, 2000, so that was what? Six-and-a-half years. It was a poor country when I left; it was the Fifth World when I came back. I was absolutely stunned at how much the country had degenerated in such a short time. Absolutely miserable place. Not that it was a paradise when I left in '93, but when I first saw Haiti in the '80s it was a Third World poor country, but there were still a lot of beautiful houses and decent restaurants. In the '90s, especially after we clamped an embargo on the country as a consequence of Aristide's being ousted, the country very quickly went to the dogs; it never recovered. I haven't been back since I left in 2000. I still read Haitian newspapers and get information all the time and talk to people, and I'm told that if I thought it was bad when I left in 2000, I wouldn't recognize it now. I do know that the crime has gotten just insane, absolutely crazy.

Q: Well then, you resigned or retired in 2000?

ALEXANDER: 2000, officially July the 1st 2000.

HONDURAS

MARI-LUCI JARAMILLO

Ambassador

Honduras (1977-1980)

Mari-Luci Jaramillo was born in New Mexico. Jaramillo was educated at New Mexico Highlands University. She then joined the faculty at the University of New Mexico and worked her way up to becoming an associate dean, vice president, and an assistant to the president of UNM. Ms. Jaramillo served as ambassador to Honduras and worked at the Pentagon. Ms. Jaramillo was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin in 1987.

JARAMILLO: It was very, very nice; people were just wonderful. So, we left. At that time you couldn't go to Honduras quickly. We had to spend a night in Houston and then the next day we had to go to Guatemala; stay in Guatemala that night and the following morning get to Honduras. So it was a long, long time for a person that was as nervous as I was to get on with it.

I had heard a lot, in a lot of indirect ways--nobody ever telling me directly, but in a lot of indirect ways--I had picked up that, number one, the media was going to eat me alive because I had no experience with the media; number two, the military weren't going to pay any attention to me because I was a woman. That boiled down to, I was going to be failure. And I had heard that many, many times. Never directly, but a smart person putting two and two together; that was there.

But I knew a lot of things. I knew that I had studied like crazy during those three months and I knew Honduras well. Number two, I knew I was bicultural completely and I knew that Hondurans were going to understand me, and I knew that I was going to show them that I would be the best that I could possibly be. In every job I've always taken it like that: "I don't know much about it, but I'm going to do my very best." That's my motto.

That morning that we left Guatemala, we were on the plane, and that's a short little distance--a short little hop--I was so nervous. And there I was, with my navy blue dress, tugging on it, tugging on it, and tugging on it, and saying to Heri, "I should have worn my slacks."

Q: Did you find that the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights was a plus for you?

JARAMILLO: I think that that, along with my good luck, that is the *bottom line*.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: Can you imagine going into the hinterland in some place where you're with campesinos--these rural people that don't have anything, and you're out there in the middle with these people that have nothing in the world; have no home, have *nothing*--maybe a little shack to keep out of the weather--and they're standing there with the American ambassador in the middle of the field, talking about human rights, *their* human rights.

Q: Yes. And that they're just as important as your human rights.

JARAMILLO: That's right, that's right. And where would they have gotten it? They got it from Carter; that's where they got it from. So it was a perfect time. I know when I came back I heard things like, "President Carter wasn't a very good president," and I said, "Listen, I've been out of the country; I don't know what's happened here, but let me tell you, he was wonderful where I was at as a world leader." Oh, just fabulous, just fabulous." Because people were saying, "There's dignity to the person, and everybody should be working toward that. " So that was good.

FERNANDO E. RONDON

Deputy Chief of Mission

Tegucigalpa (1978-1980)

Ambassador Fernando E. Rondon was born in California in 1936. He received his bachelor's degree from University of California (Berkeley) in 1960. His career has included positions in Tehran, Tangier, Lima, Algiers, Tegucigalpa, and ambassadorships in Antananarivo and Quito. Ambassador Rondon was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 4, 1997.

Q: Then in 1978, you were assigned to Honduras? What was your job?

RONDON: I became the Deputy Chief of Mission of our Embassy in Tegucigalpa. I felt it was time for me to get managerial experience. ARA supported me in my desire to become a DCM, but Personnel objected--they thought I was still too junior. They tried to persuade Ambassador Mari-Luci Jaramillo that they had more seasoned candidates than Rondon. But the Ambassador, having talked to me, stood behind my selection.

My wife was a great help to me at this time. Mari-Luci was married; her husband did not fit in too well as a dependent because most of the organizations in Tegucigalpa were designed for the female spouses of ambassadors. Mari-Luci did not have the time to be both the ambassador and the Embassy's "first spouse." While we were still in Washington, the Ambassador discussed her problems with my wife. My wife was quite sympathetic and willing to support Mari-Luci as best she could. I suspect my wife's willingness to play the role of "first spouse" had as much to do with my getting the DCM job as anything else. That may not sound exactly right these days, but it is the truth.

Ambassador Jaramillo had been in Tegucigalpa for about a year when her DCM was reassigned. I had heard good things about her work and therefore threw my hat into the ring. Todman spoke highly of Jaramillo as did Wade Matthews, the Central America Country Director. She had been an unknown quantity to the Department when she was appointed. In fact, she turned out to be a first rate ambassador. I was delighted when she selected me to be her DCM.

Mari Luci Jaramillo is a Chicana--from New Mexico. She had been nominated by the Carter administration. She spoke Spanish, of course. She had been a respected educator at the University of New Mexico. She served the administration's political purposes by being both Mexican-American and a woman. She was the first Chicana to be named as an ambassador. The word "Chicano" is used to describe a person of Mexican origins, although I have never used it for myself, even though my mother was Mexican. It is word that came into vogue about twenty years ago.

At the time, it seemed like a strange appointment. Honduras was run by a junta of colonels who had a reputation for alcoholism. The question was why we were sending a teetotaler to be ambassador to hard drinking colonels.

I think I might add a few words about the "male" bastion that the Honduras regime was. The head of the Junta did not want a female ambassador to call on him regularly at the palace. He thought that he should call on her at her residence. Mari-Luci said that if that was what the General wanted, it was fine with her. So the General would often visit the residence and meet with the Ambassador for an hour or so. They would discuss whatever business there was to take up and then would go to shoot pool with the Ambassador's husband. The other members of the Junta picked this up and began to do the same thing. The Ambassador, very sensibly, thought if the regime's leaders were more comfortable with that process, she would certainly go along. By the time, I got to Honduras, the Colonels had warmed up to her and would tell her virtually everything that was happening in Honduras. Being a teacher, Jaramillo was a good listener and knew how to get the best out of her interlocutors. So, in fact, a bond was developed between the Honduran military and our Ambassador.

When I got to Honduras in 1978, the country was very peaceful; not much of great moment was going on. It was caught between Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, all of which had strong governments. There was considerable violence in El Salvador and Guatemala. Honduras was the poor cousin in Central America; no one paid much attention to it. Honduran society did not have much of an elite upper class, so there were no great societal tensions. In fact, Honduras was best known for its tranquility--a backwater. We could travel throughout the country safely; there were no guards at the banks. It was just a very pleasant atmosphere with some very nice people.

The military Junta--the Colonels-- that ran Honduras consisted of professional officers who had attended the military academy and had worked their way through the ranks. Each took his turn in power. Had there not been a threat from Nicaragua, there may not have been elections and the Junta might still be in power. The military officers became quite wealthy; being in government was a profitable enterprise.

In 1979, the Nicaraguan government was overthrown, with the Sandinistas taking charge from Somoza. Some remnants of the Somoza National Guard fled into Honduras, changing the atmosphere in that country almost overnight. Terrorism, from both the left and the right, became common place. Bank robberies became a phenomenon. Our residence had no wall around it; within six month after the Nicaraguan invasion, a twelve foot iron fence was erected around our place. The whole atmosphere in Honduras changed overnight.

This was also the time during which the Carter administration was making major efforts to get along with the Sandinistas. The US did not want to be accused of having pushed the Nicaraguan government any further to the left than it already was. We wanted to give the Sandinistas a chance, now that they were in power, to govern more from the center and to allow a more democratic form of government to evolve. There was sympathy in Washington with the Somoza overthrow; he ran a repressive regime which was not palatable to the Carter administration.

At about this time, the FMLN in El Salvador was becoming a force to be reckoned with. It appeared that the moment had arrived for the left to sweep Central America. The question was which country would be next to succumb to "leftist" fever. All of the sudden the US had to become concerned about Honduras' stability and its security. There were members of some of the leading families in Honduras who were becoming concerned about their future. They were lining up at our Embassy to get their visas in case they had to flee their country. So Honduras went from being the peaceful and harmonious country that it had been to another Central American cauldron. It suddenly counted for the US.

US pressure on the Paz government increased. Ambassador Jaramillo discharged her brief very carefully; she avoided lecturing the Junta. She tried to explain that the US-Honduras relationship

would be greatly strengthened if the Junta were to move to a more democratic system. In fact, that development did start and the Ambassador did not have to be very critical of the Junta and the military because they themselves were moving in the right direction.

At the same time, there were disturbing signs about Honduran society. People were beginning to disappear; arms were flowing through Honduras to El Salvador. The US Congress passed an amendment barring assistance to Nicaragua if it was found to be a shipper of arms. Eventually, Nicaragua violated the letter of the law. The Carter administration was most reluctant to invoke the amendment. There was a feeling that to suspend assistance was premature, even if the law was being violated. The administration wanted more time for discussion to see whether the US could convince the Junta to stop the arms flow to El Salvador.

Unfortunately, the USG was not successful. We reported truthfully what was happening in Honduras. I know our reporting made Washington uncomfortable. It was about that time when the administration decided to "promote" Jaramillo to be a deputy assistant secretary in ARA. It named a more experienced practitioner as ambassador, in part because there seemed to be a desire in Washington to play a more artful game in Honduras that would impact on Nicaragua as well. As I said, Jaramillo was very truthful about events in Honduras. She was concerned about the security threat to Honduras and was able to get US military assistance increased.

I don't think Washington wanted to hear anything about possible Nicaraguan violations of US law. We were receiving evidence of arm shipments to El Salvador. The facts as we reported them would have required the imposition of sanctions on Nicaragua.

I thought that the Carter administration wanted to bury its head in the sand with respect to the revolutionary intentions of the Sandinistas. However, Congress wanted to tie the administration's hands, thereby eliminating any possibility of exploring whether the Sandinistas could be weaned away from their hard line revolutionary positions. In fact, I don't think that it would have been possible to do that, but Congress barred any possibility of exploring that avenue.

Human right violations in Honduras was not a major issue during my two years there. The issues of torture and disappearances was just beginning as I left. Our number one priority in the field of human rights was to convince the Junta to hold free and democratic elections. In fact, the country was proceeding in that direction. The Ambassador spent most of her last year holding the hands of the center/left--the liberals--who did not believe that the Junta would allow elections or if it did, they would not be fair ones. But elections were held; they were free and fair and both liberals and conservatives celebrated the outcome in the streets of Tegucigalpa--some cried joyfully.

American business was not a political factor in Honduras during the 1978-80 period. US

investment assisted Honduras with its balance of payments--e.g. export of bananas managed by United Brands and Standard Fruit. The Embassy had good relations with United Fruit, which by 1978, had changed considerably. It was no longer the monopolistic giant that ran governments in its heyday. By 1978, United Brands was a respected, well run American company which operated in Central America as a responsible private enterprise.

In the years after my departure, under the Reagan administration, Honduras became a bastion in Central America--or rather it became a fortified camp as we poured more and more military material into that country.

JACK R. BINNS

Ambassador

Honduras (1980-1981)

Jack R. Binns was born in Oregon in 1933. He received a bachelor's of science from the Naval Academy in 1956 and subsequently served overseas with the U.S. Navy. In 1963, he joined the Foreign Service, serving in Guatemala, La Paz, and San Salvador. Mr. Binns was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: Your next assignment was as Ambassador to Honduras. How did that come about?

BINNS: I am not exactly sure. Bill Bowdler came to Costa Rica and said to me: "Jack, you know you haven't been here very long, but I have a proposition to make. I don't know whether you'll find it acceptable; I don't know if I were in your shoes that I would accept it". That piqued my interest. He said that the Department had been watching what we were doing in Costa Rica and some of my messages had reached the Seventh Floor. They thought I had done a real good job and besides the Seventh Floor remembered me from London days. So Bowdler had asked Harry Barnes, then Director General, if I could be considered for Ambassador to Honduras, even though I was still in a relatively low rank. Bowdler said if I accepted the offer, my name would be forwarded to the White House for approval. I really didn't want to leave Costa Rica because it first of all a very nice place and I was enjoying it immensely and secondly, I had a daughter who was senior in high school, who would have to move for a third time during her high school years, which would not have been a good thing for her. She was very happy in Costa Rica and as it turned out, was very unhappy in Honduras for a number of reasons. But after a family confab, we agreed that the Ambassadorship was an opportunity that couldn't be passed. So I accepted.

Q: What was the human rights situation in Honduras in the late 70s?

BINNS: We of course were involved in that issue, but there weren't many problems in Honduras on that score. One of the interesting thing about the Honduran military rule and Honduran society in general did not condone repression and therefore there wasn't much. There was some, but not much. The military had never been violent against their own people, One did see the kind of repression in Honduras that you saw in Guatemala, El Salvador or Nicaragua.

Q: That suggests that these countries are much more different than is usually thought.

BINNS: That is right. If you have been there and have spent any time in more than one, the differences are clearly greater than their similarities. In the macro sense, their similarities are strong, but at the micro level, dissimilarities prevail.

I might just mention the Contra issue as it manifested itself toward the end of the Carter administration. When Somoza fell, much of the National Guard left Nicaragua, especially the leadership. They went to Costa Rica and Honduras. Initially, in the latter country, there were about three thousand former Guardsmen in holding camps. The Honduras left it pretty much to international organizations to support these refugees. Some went to the US; some filtered into the Honduran society and became legal immigrants. Eventually, all the people in the camps dispersed and they were closed. So we had about one to two thousand former National Guardsmen in Honduras. Many settled in the Choluteca area which is the south corner of Honduras. Some of them staged raids across the Nicaraguan border, which according to our information, were not so much military actions than they were just harassment. For example, they would rustle cattle to bring them back into Honduras. These incursions were not significant or effective either militarily or politically. In Tegucigalpa, there were a number of former Guardsmen or Somoza supporters who were running around telling everybody that they were the leaders of one Contra group or another which was fighting in Nicaragua. Most of that was illusory; most of these individuals were pretty seedy.

I thought I was on the same wave-length with the CIA, although near the end of my term, there were some events that caused me to raise my eye-brows. It was not entirely clear what was going on. I only put the whole picture together later when more information was revealed. Indeed the CIA was preparing for a Contra movement, but during my time in Honduras, I think there was a consensus in the Administration that these guys were little better than criminals. In many cases, the organizations they claimed to represent were penetrated by the Sandinistas; that is to say that some of the people in leadership position of these organizations were suspected to be either Sandinista agents or at least sympathizers. That came from CIA intelligence as well as from the Hondurans. So we did not take these organizations seriously. On the other hand, these groups

were constantly trying to push the Embassy in one direction or another. I think they were trying, by being seen with us, show that they US support. At one point, I issued a policy that the Embassy staff have nothing to do with these people--they were not to be invited to our parties, we were not to accept their invitations. If they came into the office on legitimate business, such as consular, the policy was to deal with them in a business-like fashion, but to avoid any public contact with them. I had a couple of Embassy officers who were a problem in this matter; that is the reason I issued that policy directive. In one case, the officer had served in Nicaragua and was sympathetic to the Contra cause on a personal basis and was opposed to the Sandinistas.

But the Contra movement at that stage was not a serious matter. I advised the Department of my policy and never received any disagreement. My view was supported by our Embassy in Managua because both of us felt that we should not appear to be favoring the anti-Sandinistas.

In the Summer of 1981, there was a growth in lawlessness in Honduras which became a concern. Bank robberies increased dramatically, super market and payroll robberies increased; there had not been much of this before. Then there was a kidnapping of the child of a wealthy Nicaraguan Somoza supporter who was living in Honduras. We suspected that the bank and payroll robberies were being conducted, in part at least, by former National Guardsmen and so reported to Washington. The kidnapping, as it turned out, was conducted by former National Guards elements--Contras. They were holding the child for ransom to finance their movement. We reported this event since the information reached us through liaison channels. Ultimately, the child was released and the Contras were warned by the Honduran authorities that "enough is enough" and that either the crime would cease or that they would be expelled to Nicaragua. That stabilized the situation in a hurry. It was clear that certain Contra elements were engaged in criminal activity. We reported all this in both State and CIA telecommunication channels. The Agency instructed the Station Chief to stop that kind of reporting, or so he told me. That was a straw in the wind. He also received similar cautions about reports of human rights violations by the Hondurans.

When I arrived in Honduras, we knew that there was a group of between 10-12 Argentine military officers working with the Honduran G-2 (Intelligence). We didn't know why or what they actually did. They kept to themselves and neither our MilGroup or defense Attachés were able to get any information on their activities. You will recall that at this time Argentina was under a forceful and repressive dictatorship. It turned out that these officers were training the Contras with the knowledge of the Honduran military, if not the whole government. Subsequently, in the Reagan Administration, we approached the Argentines, got them to increase their staff in Honduras and used them to train the Contras, before we had authority to get involved on a large scale ourselves.

SARAH HORSEY-BARR

Political Counselor/Regional Affairs

Tegucigalpa (1990-1992)

Mrs. Horsey-Barr was born in Maryland into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in the Washington DC area and abroad and was educated at Georgetown University; and Loyola University in Rome, Italy. Her service with the State Department took her to several posts in Latin America dealing with both consular and political/management affairs. Her last assignments were with the Organization of American States, where she served in various senior capacities with the U.S. Mission. Mrs. Horsey-Barr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: And you were in Honduras from 1990 to...

HORSEY-BARR: ...to '92.

Q: What were you doing?

HORSEY-BARR: Well, I had two jobs. The ambassador there at the time was a fellow, Chris Arcos, who was a USIA officer, had been public affairs officer when we were there the first time, and he had two senior jobs and could not fill them, and that's how he got out of Manila. One of the jobs was political counselor, and the other job was what they called regional affairs coordinator or such. Honduras was the only place in Central America that had not or was not experiencing civil war – Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua- and so a lot of the regional activities were based there. There were a lot of bilateral activities based there, too. He wanted me to be political counselor and my husband to be the regional affairs counselor because he, my husband, had worked with the Contras for many years, both in Honduras before as well as in Washington, and it made sense. Unfortunately the Department wouldn't let him do that because they were afraid of being sued by my husband, who was political officer and therefore rightly in their view should be the political counselor as opposed to me. But he didn't want to be political counselor. The Department would not assign us to the jobs we and the ambassador wanted to go to, so we went there assigned by the Department as the Department saw fit and then the ambassador detailed us into each other's jobs, and there is this obscure provision we found whereby an ambassador can do that for up to a year. So at the end of the first year we went on holiday and then he did it again, infuriating the Department but accomplishing his purposes, with which we were quite comfortable anyway. So in the beginning before we figured this out, I was the regional affairs person and then we switched over when we figured out the loophole.

Q: Let's talk a little about Honduras in '90 to '92. What was the situation there government and American interests?

HORSEY-BARR: They had their third or fourth elected president at that time. They were sort of a shining star in terms of democracy, a peaceful-transition democracy, and transition from one party to another and all that sort of thing. In fact it was skin deep and isn't much better now, but of course one has to do what the other countries would want it too. It was in fact much better. We had poured a lot of money into Honduras during the '80s, and I don't know to what extent that kept it stable, probably a fair amount, but Honduras doesn't have the great divisions, great social and economic divisions, that most of the other countries in Central America have. So, the really difficult part about Honduras in '90 to '92 was that it was rapidly vanishing from the scope. The embassy was drawing down. The money was dropping off. Peace was springing up in other countries in Central America. So Honduras was losing its interest to the United States, and I think for the ambassador that was a difficult process to manage because it is fairly easy to grow but it's only a big person that can be honest about cutting staff, resources and what have you when the political situation had changed. So it was reverting to being a backwater that it has been for most of its history. Most of the regional job had three aspects: one was the Contras, one was narcotics, and the third was refugees. The first and third were wind-up operations, and the narcotics was of course growing because Honduras hadn't had the conflict and didn't have the organization of the other countries and was missing the money that had been flowing in from the United States, was ripe for traffickers to use and was a growing transit point for narcotics. It was very different being there in those years than early in the '80s and kind of a disappointment because, of course, in the early '80s one was at the center of the foreign policy focus and certainly from '90 to '92 one wasn't. Honduras doesn't have that much to offer in terms of places to visit, things to do. It has always been sort of a backwater, backward water for the Spaniards, backwater in the 9th century, backwater in the 20th century. So if you don't have a really demanding job, it was sort of a challenge to find things to do to...

Q: How did you work as a political officer? What did you do?

HORSEY-BARR: We focused on human rights at that point. People were very open, very pro-American in Honduras, so there was absolutely no trouble finding people to talk to. That was a period of time in which the Department was very interested in Honduras. The military was, as we were, the Honduran military was downsizing, was being forced to downsize, and this was really the one element of potential instability. I mention it because the military was the source of most of the human rights violations there, and the police was part of the military. As the United States we were beginning to concentrate on human rights violations in Honduras, but it was difficult because, I think - and there are different points of view on this - my view is that they did exist in the '80s in a big way, and because we had other priorities, we in fact didn't pay attention to them, which happens a lot. What is the greater priority for the United States in situation X, Y, Z? Human rights in the '80s were not going to be the biggest priority.

Q: Could you explain in the Honduran context what were the problems in human rights?

HORSEY-BARR: Disappearances, indefinite jail tenures, torture, forced conscription; the military essentially was the law of the land. In many developing countries, at least in Latin America, in the absence of a strong civilian democratic government and not just presidency but regional representation, legislature and such, once one gets out of the capital, the only presence is the military - taking people's land, raping women so as to buy their acquiescence, the military looking to agriculture, the military looking to banking.

MEXICO

JOSEPH J. JOVA

Ambassador

Mexico (1973-1977)

Ambassador Joseph J. Jova was born in New York in 1916. He joined the Foreign Service in 1947. In addition to serving in Mexico, Ambassador Jova served in Iraq, Morocco, Portugal, Chile, and was ambassador to Honduras and the Organization of American States. Ambassador Jova was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: What about the role of Mexico? Obviously we're going to get to Mexico in a little while, but was Mexico sort of the burr under the saddle every time you had to deal with anything?

JOVA: Yes, and no. That changed. Mexico naturally has its own policy. It was always very anti-imperialist, anti-intervention in the affairs of others. They were really the guardians of those principles against the U.S.A. because they were the ones who had suffered most. On the other hand, on many things, if it was a debate, and we could be on Mexico's side, if we could be together, one could feel good in one's conscience, usually, in those days. Plus the fact that the Mexican ambassador was sort of the dean. He was one of the veterans of the Mexican foreign service, and a lot of his career had been spent in U.S.A., in border posts in his youth. And then he had also been ambassador to Japan, ambassador to the United Nations; the White House actually; and now he was the ambassador to the OAS; or permanent delegate. And, mind you, the vice dean of the OAS, the Nicaraguan, had been there longer, but the Mexican ambassador was the next in rank in seniority, and he was also much wiser, and more judicious, and had the universal respect of everybody, and affection also.

Q: You were talking about American prisoners and the participation of the DEA people. And you were saying that you'd worked with the DEA, warning them not to get involved.

JOVA: I think I was a source of strength. I had access to them at any time, the Foreign Minister of course, but the Minister of Justice, Director General or whoever it was that was in charge of the drug problem. And I think we did great things collaborating together as a country team, and the ambassador is a very important part of it. But the mistreatment of Americans, sometimes it was unintentional. The jails were no good and in some places the jailers were mean. In other

cases there were interrogations but we were in no way condoning torture, or illegal methods of interrogation.

I paid for it later. I'm not going to go into it here, but there was a resentment on this particular thing that perhaps caused me trouble.

Q: On this television interview, did a question come up about that?

JOVA: This interview was almost suspicious, I realize now. "There must be something good about this approach, about their being arrested, and imprisoned. Can't you come up with one good thing that flows from this?" This is after an hour. "Yes, I suppose if even one single person is dissuaded and discouraged from participating in the drug trade which is such a terrible thing. It's affecting the whole social fabric of the country. In that case, I suppose you could say yes, something good has come of it." "That's fine, that's just what I want." The interview finished. "Thank you very much"

And the next thing I knew I was up here in Washington on consultation, and the desk said, or the Secretary's office, "What the hell has Jova done?" They were getting calls, the American ambassador let those bodies swing, that sort of thing. Complete misinterpretation, completely taken out of context. It's much better to do an interview and say, "Okay, as long as you're going to use the whole thing. I'll make an on-the-record statement. Two minutes, do it, but I won't talk for an hour and you just chose what you want."

Q: What about the prisoner situation? When you got there, and while you were there, did you find that you might say the enforcement side was the predominant side? Because there's this terrible dichotomy between the enforcement side, and we want to stop drugs, punish the people. And the other one is protecting the Americans.

JOVA: For the Mexicans this was an easy way, a cheap way. "We're strong on the drug war. We got these Americans at the airport ranging from young people, to grandmothers sometimes." Some American kids are so dumb they bring marijuana into Mexico to smoke during the two days they're going to be in Tijuana, knowing this is a paradise, and then get caught. Some were the couriers coming from Latin America with cocaine, for instance, and just transiting the airport. But rather than going after the real drug lords that were organizing the heroin trade, they would go after the marijuana stuff, and the cocaine that was brought from elsewhere, and yes, they'd collaborate on the heroin too, but they couldn't show statistics. That really wasn't affecting them in any way. Now, once this guy got captured the temptation was to get as much information as they could, in some cases very violently; and in some cases they were just badly treated in the jails. If you didn't have somebody to give you food, you didn't get food; or you had to get a good cell or you'd be sleeping out in the courtyard. But at the same time we must recognize that in many of the jails they were better off than they were here. Some jails were very nice, all wallpapered and that sort of thing, for women and for men also.

Now, my work also was with the Foreign Ministry, as well as with the enforcers. The enforcers didn't want to talk about it. "You're insulting, you're driving us crazy and here we have results, and this is the way a Mexican would be treated too." I remember the Foreign Ministry saying, "This is embarrassing. I can just see the embarrassment for this government on a civil rights violation because this is really a human rights...these individual cases are interpreted as violations of human rights." In some cases they're no-goods, other times they may be no-goods but they come from good families, and that means they're related or they have access to the Congressman or the Senators, and that's why we're being driven crazy. And there are headlines in the U.S. press all the time, and the Department is getting all these complaints, and we're being pressed by members of Congress. Well, the law is the law.

And finally one of the last Foreign Ministers of my stay there, said, "You're right in taking this under study." But the main thing is to find the formula, and this is not an exchange of prisoners, but exchange of sentences. And it has to be mutual, work both ways. That when we propose that any American, that you say, "We'll exchange his sentence, and we'll take him to serve his sentence in the U.S., and we'll agree to it. And any Mexican that wants to serve his sentence in his homeland, we'll turn..." So it isn't judging the validity of the process of the court process. So I set that up, and no reply from the Department. Then I set up another one and I said, "Look, this is unusual, and this is a Mexican initiative on a problem that we've spent so much time, and so many representations on. Now they've come up with something that's possible. Maybe it should be changed a little bit, but please..." No, no, it's against the law from L.

Q: L being the Legal Adviser's office of the Department of State.

JOVA: Then Kissinger arrived on one of his last visits, and I said, "You're going to have problems with this. They're going to raise this." And sure enough, we called on the Foreign Minister and obviously he was kind of annoyed and humiliated. He'd made this constructive suggestion at some risk...and getting a negative bureaucratic answer from our side. And Kissinger, of course, could get things done, and he said, "Put another set of lawyers on that." Well, that worked out, and a treaty has made legal history. By that time I had retired; I was so pleased many months later, maybe more, when they called me--you don't often get this--from the Department, actually the Legal Adviser who had worked on this; Monroe Lee was involved except by that time he was out too; they invited me to the Rose Garden ceremony for the signing.

Q: How did you find your dealings with the Drug Enforcement Agency? In the first place what control did you have over them as far as their participation in interrogations and things like that?

JOVA: They did their own housekeeping, and they sent down one of the big senior persons in it. How long it has lasted, I don't know, but at that time I said, "No, we can't put ourselves in the position where we're accused of something that goes against the U.S. constitution, and to say publicly that we can get information here that we can't under our system." So that was that. Later on I'll speak personally.

Q: Moving on, what about another problem that I'm sure must have been with you all the time, immigration?

JOVA: Oh, yes. At that time it got quite acrimonious because a Marine General had been appointed commissioner of immigration, and he wanted results. This was back in '74. "And we'll send them back by God." So for a while it was terrible to see these planes coming in; buses sometimes; but a lot of the time a plane; and all the passengers would get off; and then this little huddled group that had been returned with their little possessions, old rags and a few little...it really made a terrible public relations image, if you want to look at it that way. Here they had gone up there to work, and they'd been sent back--some of them after having lived there a long time, and some of them just captured. And, of course, the Mexican press played it up, and the Mexican government played on that greatly. It's a law of supply and demand. As long as there's a demand for it here, and actually its applicable to drugs also--as long as there's a demand for it here somebody is going to be producing it if the price is high enough. As a Mexican said, "I never saw a diving board without a swimming pool." And, of course, this is what we're facing now. I think education...just as we've turned people off about smoking tobacco. I'm not going to enter into that thing, whether it should be legalized or not.

Q: Back to the immigration side. We're talking about supply and demand.

JOVA: The same thing. There's a pull-push. A pull from here, and a push from Mexico because there the conditions are hard. The more prosperous Mexico is, then the less push there will be. In a depression there's apt to be less pull. But there again it has to be done humanely.

Q: Was this a matter of negotiations, or complaints?

JOVA: Oh, yes, all the time. Were they doing their part to prevent the flow? First of all the constitution says a Mexican is free to move anywhere. So there had been a program to make life easier and better in the northern part of the country, to encourage them to stay there. But naturally it wasn't a perfect program, far from it. Perhaps they could modify the constitution, reform it, amend it. "But look, Mr. Ambassador, are you asking us to build a Berlin wall type of situation where we prevent people from getting out? That's what you think about eastern Germany." And, of course, if you look at it that way, it gives you pause. How can we ask them to keep their people in with machine guns, and the wall, or whatever it is? Now it's up to us to keep them out as best we can, but we have to do it in a humane way, an effective way. I don't know, particularly after I came back and I testified. This was changing the law here, reforming the act. It has helped for a while by the way. I gather that right now it has helped less.

Q: Well, you didn't have many tools to deal with this problem, did you really?

JOVA: The tools would backfire. The business of exploiting willy-nilly like the general was doing; or building the fences. And, of course, that stupid man..."Yeah, they're going to cut their feet climbing over this fence," because it had razors. It hit the press, and that was awful in those

days. The other thing is, everybody has the right to control their own borders. They also recognized that it was up to us.

LEONARD F. WALENTYNOWICZ

Administrator for Security and Consular Affairs

Washington, DC (1975-1977)

Born and raised within the Polish community of Buffalo, New York, Leonard F. Walentynowicz obtained a law degree from the University of Buffalo. He was appointed director of consular affairs under Presidents Nixon and Ford. Mr. Walentynowicz was interviewed in 1992 by William D. Morgan.

Q: She came back after you?

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, Barbara took my place after I left. She was a Carter appointee. I have some other thoughts on that too for Barbara's sake, but that's for another time. But, the important thing is we then had a treaty with Mexico, the first time in the history of this country, where we exchanged, so to speak, prisoners, or defendants in criminal action, when we gave them that option. And, what was remarkable about that treaty, it was sustained under constitutional attack, and it was sustained only because I insisted, this is where I am going to take a little horn blowing. My practice, as a lawyer, from Buffalo, my tradition in human rights, when the treaty was originally prepared, it did not contemplate the involvement of the individual. This was between two sovereigns states. They decide who goes where. I says, no way Jose. And then under the US constitution, and not only under the US constitution, but I think, it is a matter of international human rights. You've got to get the person involved; you've got to tell him what's involved and you've got to get his consent. Does he want to do that? He may want to stay in Mexico.

Q: He might want to stay where drugs are more available in jail.

WALENTYNOWICZ: And that's the same way for the Mexicans; they may feel that American jails are better than Mexican jails. I don't know that it is, so you see, my point is, I insisted on this, because there were conferences, and I insisted with Bob--from legal--he brought in the treaty. That was Bob Dalton. I insisted, and I said, "What are you talking about?" and he said, "You know, all of the people are saying this is sovereignty, this is between sovereign states." "What are you talking about, this is human beings involved, see." And guess what was the reason why the second treaty wasn't put under attack and was sustained? Because that treaty had that provision in it.

Q: Protection of the individual choice?

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct. So, I feel good about that, that we got that in there. There were two major initiatives in offering protection, which still are there, and not only that, but the Mexican treaty became a prototype for other treaties that the United States has, not only with Canada, ...we started one with Canada when I was still there. But I understand now, of course I haven't followed up on it, but with many other countries, including Turkey. And some other countries, similar treaties, not identical, but at least similar treaties, that provide... and I think that's a major human rights...

Q: I think that the reader should know that at this time also was an explosion of the drug problem, that had started a few years before, but had really reached a crescendo. Also, the attitude that you described before of "they're all a bunch of bad guys"--but especially the official emphasis on anti-drug policies, which is understandable-- caused you to walk into these issues just as you came on board, just when the brakes had to be put on.

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes.

Q: Someone had to do something, even though you went through what you went through, on your very first congressional encounter. It was good.

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, yes.

Q: It really alerted you to the human sensitivities, and the political sensitivities.

WALENTYNOWICZ: Not only that, but I want to make sure that the record is clear on this. I am not taking credit for originating of the idea on this, because this to me, was brought to me by two people, I can't think of their names, from New York City. There was a man and a woman. Very nice people, they were from some kind of a defense fund, okay, you know, that's what they were from.

Q: Um hum, a defense fund...

WALENTYNOWICZ: Anyway, whatever it was, they brought it up, and I want to give them credit. I can supply their names from my notes later on, but I just don't want to say that I was the originator of the idea, but I certainly energized the idea in the Department.

HERBERT THOMPSON

Deputy Chief of Mission

Mexico (1975-1978)

Herbert Thompson was born in California in 1923. After serving in the US Army from 1943-1946, Mr. Thompson finished his bachelor's degree at the University of California. His career included positions in Spain, Bolivia, Argentina, Panama, Chile, and Mexico. Mr. Thompson was interviewed by Thomas J. Dunnigan in 1996.

Q: Well then in 1975 at the end of that tour, you went to Mexico City as DCM, an even larger embassy. There you had two ambassadors, Ambassador Jova and Ambassador Lucey, I believe. Is that correct?

THOMPSON: Yes, that's right. With a substantial hiatus between them during which time I was chargé.

Q: What were the principal problems that you encountered on arrival in Mexico?

THOMPSON: Of course, one has to live in and deal with a border country, perhaps other than Canada to have any sense of what relations with Mexico are like. Perhaps the best introduction I had to things Mexican was that within days after my arrival, we had a CODEL [congressional delegation] arrive that insisted on meeting with the President. As a result, the ambassador and I took them, two Congressmen, to the Presidential Palace and participated intermittently, rather participated in what proved to be an intermittent nighttime meeting with the President, Echeverria, which I suppose began at 9:00 P.M. and ended sometime after 1:00 A.M. At some point, First it must be understood that President Echeverria's work method was to have a variety of consultant groups and conclaves and meetings with supporters going on in the palace simultaneously. He would move rotating from one group to the next so that our conversation would reach a certain point in our group when he would turn to the foreign minister and ask him to continue and excuse himself and disappear. For the next 20 minutes the conversation went on without the President at which point the President might or might not intervene again, and then be gone again. Somewhere in the course of this rather chaotic evening, I remember excusing myself to locate the gentlemen's room, and upon being told where it was, I found I had to traverse a long corridor which was also a kind of petitioner's waiting room, so that the corridor was full of people lining the walls waiting and hoping to speak to the President or someone. This is after midnight, because Echeverria was famous for his night hours. As I went down this hall, I was suddenly struck with the realization that what I was looking at over the heads of these waiting Mexicans were drawings of the gun emplacements of General Scott at the time he invested Chapultepec. It suddenly dawned on me that the President of Mexico, every day, walked past those symbols of American occupation of his capital, and it helped to a degree to explain some of the attitudes.

In addition to the great peculiarities of serving in and with a country which shares an immense ungarded frontier with the United States, I had supposed that personal relations would be very difficult in Mexico because of the constant stress of endless problems being

sifted by representatives of both governments in Mexico City. To my surprise I found that the Mexicans were very adept at distinguishing between personal relations and official difficulties and did not tend to carry one over into the other. I found Mexican officialdom not only very cordial but very cooperative and enjoyed a splendid working relationship during the time I was there, despite the problems we were constantly being confronted with.

Q: You had two new Presidents confronting one another. Was the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights well received in Mexico or cause them problems? Or did they react to it at all?

THOMPSON: As I recall, the Mexicans, that is the government, did not react particularly at all. The Mexicans having handled this business much more adroitly than other governments in the hemisphere over the years, did not have clean hands altogether in this area, but they never showed their hand in a way that could make it an international incident.

Q: During your period there was it evident that Mexico was being used as a drug conduit to the U.S.?

THOMPSON: I think the Mexican role was more as a producer than a conduit at that time. Mexico of course was producing huge amounts of marijuana and was also cultivating other narcotic products, but it was not at that time a significant way station to the United States. I remember the drug problem was a major problem that we had to keep an eye on because it, and our problem of Americans in Mexican jails on drug charges, were two areas Ambassador Jova asked me to be responsible for immediately [upon my arrival], since when one wasn't driving us crazy, the other was.

Q: How were your relations with the CIA station in Mexico City, which I presume is rather sizable?

THOMPSON: I think they were no worse than other places.

JOHN A. BUSHNELL

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, ARA

Washington, DC (1977-1982)

Mr. Bushnell was born in New York State and educated at Yale University and McMurray College. An Economic Specialist, he served primarily in senior level positions at Latin American posts, including Bogota, Santo Domingo, San Jose and Buenos Aires, dealing primarily with Economic and International Trade

issues. An assignment to the Staff of the National Security Council was followed by tours as Deputy Chief of Mission at Buenos Aires, Chargé d'Affaires at Panama City, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Mr. Bushnell was the recipient of several awards for outstanding service. Mr. Bushnell was interviewed by John Harter in 1997.

Q: What was the nature of the Mexican Foreign Ministry and how did ARA deal with the Mexicans?

BUSHNELL: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico had some very competent people, but it was what I would call a weak Ministry. By this I mean it did not coordinate the actions of the many other parts of the Mexican government that had foreign operations, many of which affected the United States. This weakness of the Mexican Foreign Ministry had a major impact on ARA because we dealt primarily with the Foreign Ministry and the Mexican Embassy in Washington which was essentially part of the Foreign Ministry. Meanwhile, most US agencies that had something to do with Mexico, and there are many tens of them from the Department of Agriculture and the Social Security Administration to the FBI and the Forest Service, dealt directly with their counterpart agencies in Mexico, usually without even keeping the State Department informed. The result was that we had many positive interfaces with the Mexicans and solved many problems for them and for us, but this good relationship did not have any impact on overall relationships as expressed between the foreign ministries. ARA had no way of bringing these positive programs together to present a positive picture of Mexican/US relations. In fact the Mexican Foreign Ministry often criticized our foreign policy. Mexico often opposed us in the OAS, the UN, and other international organizations, but such opposition had no effect on the hundreds of positive programs we shared with Mexico.

When Pete Vaky took over ARA, he wanted to do something to bring the full range of interfaces with Mexico together. He had identified this problem over the years during his various assignments in Washington. He proposed setting up a Mexican coordinator in ARA and requiring every government agency to involve this coordinator in overseeing all their Mexican programs. Although everyone in State liked the concept, there was a State bureaucratic struggle because various bureaus wanted a piece of the action. For example, EB thought economic agencies such as Agriculture and Treasury should work through EB. Finally, Secretary Vance decided to appoint an Ambassador at Large and Coordinator for Mexican Affairs responsible directly to him. With some difficulty we worked out an arrangement such that the ARA Mexican desk would be the staff of this Ambassador and he/she would work closely with the ARA assistant secretary. Fortunately, Ted Briggs was the Mexican Country Director, and he managed to co-opt the Mexican Coordinator under ARA's wing.

Ambassador Robert Krueger was appointed the special coordinator for Mexican affairs for the Secretary of State. He had been a Congressman from Texas. He was in charge for some years of a Mexican-American coordinating mechanism including several cabinet ministers from both

countries which would meet a couple of times a year, with the delegation generally chaired by the Secretary of State. This arrangement substantially improved relations because it changed the focus of our relations from our conflicting policies in various international fora to the actually positive cooperation among our various agencies in solving problems affecting one or both countries.

I did little on Mexican affairs. The one major issue where I became involved was the purchase of Mexican natural gas by the United States. Our lead negotiators were Jules Katz, Assistant Secretary of EB in State, and Harry Bergold, a FSO who was serving as Assistant Secretary of Energy for International Affairs. Harry had served in our embassy in Mexico at one time and spoke Spanish; he handled the Mexicans quite diplomatically. But Jules was quick to lose patience with the Mexican practice of dragging out negotiations and trying to make every little detail more favorable to them. I was told by the officers on the ARA Mexican desk that negotiations would deteriorate into a big spitting match between Jules Katz and the Mexicans.

The Mexicans wanted to set an outrageous price for their gas. We did not want to pay any more than what we had negotiated with the Canadians for their gas adjusted for transportation costs. The Mexicans wanted to charge, delivered at the Mexican border in Texas, the same price that the Canadians were charging at the Canadian border. The difference was that gas at the Texas border with Mexico was coming into an area of the U.S. which had lots of gas. The American market for this gas was far away, whereas Canadian gas was coming into the U.S. much closer to its natural market. However, the Mexicans politically couldn't agree to setting a lower price than the Canadians had set for essentially the same product. There were difficult negotiations on this matter. Several times I met with Jules to try to work out some imaginative proposal that would move the negotiations forward. I thought the Mexicans needed some face-saving proposal so they could claim they got the same price as the Canadians while in fact they would in one way or another pay for the greater transportation cost. However, Jules believed we had to explain the pricing clearly to the American people, which would of course destroy the face-saving. We then worked on setting the Mexican border price based on the price in Chicago or someplace where there was a big market. The transportation costs would then be subtracted before the Mexicans were paid. We really wanted the gas, and the Mexicans had no other market so I could not understand why an agreement could not be reached. Finally, Harry Bergold worked out a formula that was acceptable to both sides.

Q: Did you travel to Mexico?

BUSHNELL: I went to Mexico twice while I was assigned to ARA. My central concern on both visits was the situation in Central America. We tried to coordinate our efforts toward peace and improved human rights in Central America with the Mexicans or at least explain carefully to

them why we were doing what we were doing. Most of the time we were at cross purposes, and it was not possible to get Mexican support for our policies. However, we had an opportunity to discuss them. Once I met with officials of the government and the political parties; the other visit was to participate in a foreign policy seminar organized by the Mexican Congress.

I might record something that explains a lot about Mexico but even more about US foreign policy worldwide. Early in the Reagan administration, it was decided to send General Vernon Walters to Mexico to explain the new Administration's Central American policy and seek Mexican support. I assumed Secretary Haig picked Walters for this mission. As acting ARA assistant secretary I met with Walters to brief him before his trip. When he came back, he came in to see me after he had debriefed Haig, and his story really opened my eyes. He had spent a long evening, largely alone, with Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo, who I had long considered one of the brightest and most level-headed Mexican politicians. They had relaxed by telling war stories and developed a good relationship. Walters had then explained Reagan's determination to halt and even turn back the expansion of Russian communism. Lopez said he was glad the U.S. was finally waking up but it was too late. He said the Mexican government believed the U.S. would be overcome by Russian led communism sooner or later and that was why Mexico had to maintain a fully independent foreign policy and keep its distance from the United States, so it could eventually strike its own deal with the Russians. Walters challenged Lopez' conclusion. Lopez argued that communist gains in Angola and east Africa, in Afghanistan and Nicaragua showed that communism had the momentum. Moreover, Lopez argued the authoritarian Russian system, although not to be preferred in an ideal world, gave them a big advantage in maintaining the discipline and forced sacrifice for world domination. The United States, he said, was consumer dominated and would not make the sacrifices necessary to stop the advance of Russian communism as had already been illustrated in recent years. He referred to our embarrassment in Iran and the fact that Cuba, despite its small size and weak economy, could play almost as big a role both in this hemisphere and in Africa as the United States. Both Walters and I were shocked at what Lopez presented as considered positions of the best minds in the Mexican government. For the first time I fully realized how our well-meaning Latin policies which leaned against the right on human rights grounds and offered some small movement toward Cuba could be misinterpreted around the world, especially in light of other signs of US weakness. Of course Lopez headed a largely authoritarian government which a single party had controlled for almost as long as the communists had ruled Russia, so in part he was speaking of the advantages of the Mexican system. Lopez told Walters Mexico would watch carefully what Reagan did in the worldwide struggle against the Russians. He also said Mexico would be neutral in Central America while trying to increase its own influence without taking sides between the U.S. and Russia. History proved the Mexicans completely wrong, and after a few years they tied their wagon to the rising US star. This Mexican view showed me Reagan and Haig were right that the U.S. had to show strength against any communist threat to regain momentum for democracy in the world.

WILLIAM T. PRYCE

Political Counselor

Mexico City (1978-1981)

Born in California and raised in Pennsylvania, Mr. Pryce was educated at Wesleyan University and the Fletcher School of Tufts University. After service in the US Navy he worked briefly for the Department of Commerce before joining the Foreign Service in 1958. Though primarily a Latin America specialist, Mr. Pryce also served in Moscow. His Latin America assignments include Mexico, Panama, Guatemala, Bolivia and Honduras, where he was Ambassador from 1992-1996. Ambassador Pryce was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: So then what did you do?

PRYCE: I went on to be the political counselor in Mexico City. There was a question of whether I was go as deputy chief of mission to Guatemala or as political counselor to Mexico City. In those days the discipline was greater than it is now. The official word was that both posts were equally important. I tended towards wanting to go to Guatemala because I had known the ambassador. I had worked with him and he wanted me to be his DCM and I looked forward to working there.

At the same time they needed a seasoned, well qualified person to be political counselor in Mexico City. We had a political ambassador who had been unsatisfied with his embassy. He had fired a number of people and he was out to basically hire his own team. My name came up as a potential candidate for political counselor. I interviewed Ambassador Luce and his special assistant and got along very well with him. He decided that I was the person he that he wanted and the Department told me, "This is in the best interest in the Foreign Service and it doesn't really matter to you whether you go to Mexico or Guatemala." I wasn't completely convinced because I thought Guatemala might be a better assignment but I accepted without much question and said, "Fine, if that's where you think I should go, that's where I'll go." I went to Mexico City and had a very, very positive tour. I enjoyed it and found that it was productive and useful.

Q: You were there from '77 to when?

PRYCE: I was there from '78 to '81.

Q: What was the political situation in Mexico from '78 to '81?

PRYCE: There were obviously strains. There are always strains in our bilateral relationship because we have so many individual interests along with sharing 2,000 miles of border. We had

problems that we didn't talk all that much about publicly. We had human rights problems that we were trying to get the Mexicans to be more responsible on. We had border problems with the treatment of Mexican citizens in the United States. We had the whole gamut of Cuban problems; Mexico was sort of a protector or a special conduit to Castro. We had Mexico being involved in supporting the opposition in Salvador providing a place of refuge in Mexico City for the dissidents. We were trying to promote in legitimate ways the growth of democracy, more respect for the opposition parties which of course were completely dominated by the PRI. There again it was an interesting time which I enjoyed very, very much.

Q: I would have thought that there could have been some problems with our relations given the Carter administration with its strong emphasis on human rights which included a democracy. In a way it was much less tolerant of other countries which had their own ways of governing which did not seem to fit into what we would consider democratically...

PRYCE: That's true, there were problems.

Q: Can you talk about that while you were there?

PRYCE: I can tell you that, for example, we worked very hard at writing an objective human rights report. Of course an objective human rights report was one that was not looked upon with kindness by the Mexicans because we pointed out the problems there with human rights. Now in those days we tended to do it more quietly. We tended to go beat on the Mexicans not in the press but by quiet diplomacy both at the political counselor level and at the ambassadorial level pointing out problems, suggesting where improvements could be made. When our human rights reports would come out, we would say where the problems were and the Mexicans would always be very unhappy. I know we tried to soften the, I won't say to sugar coat the pill but to explain ahead of time what our human rights reports were going to say without using them as threat because it doesn't work. One thing you don't want to do with Mexicans is you don't want to be heavy handed. But they knew that we wanted to be able to point to improvements in the Mexican human rights situation and so by putting it in a positive way you had some effect but there were definite tensions.

Mexico had a very effective apparatus. I served in Mexico twice and my first time there, there were several times when the Mexicans were confronted with an insurgency which was dangerous to them. At one point they wanted to make sure they got the rebel band and the leaders so they went in and wiped out a little pueblo and just leveled the place. It was absolute brutal elimination. They got their man but they also got everybody else in the small community. They could be ruthless. The Mexican government could be very, very authoritarian.

I think that you will see really only today is there a real change in the question of Mexican democracy. I remember I used to give lectures to visiting Americans, or talks, reminding them

that the PRI had been in power longer than any other party in the entire world with the sole exception of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. But things have changed now.

It is very interesting President Zedillo who with great frankness was up here not too long ago and the conversation that I was privy to he was saying, "You know the recent election in July was a free election and a fair election." He said, "Now my election was a free and honest election." He didn't say it was fair, and it wasn't. He talked about looking for a broader base of stability now which was not based on one-party hegemony. In those days clearly Mexico was not a democracy and I think that even on our list we listed it in a gray area; not a dictatorship but clearly not a democracy either.

Q: As political counselor were you reaching out to the PAN and other areas?

PRYCE: Oh absolutely. We had a structured and organized work program which meant that we visited with all the opposition parties. We had them over to the house; we had lunches with them. Sometimes the PRI didn't like it. They always had to say, "We understand and we agree that you should see everybody." Of course they had a token opposition and they wanted it to be that way. We would have congressional delegations come down. You would always have the opposition there and have them participating in discussions but they were pretty helpless because there was complete control by the PRI. We reached out to all the parties of the left and of the right.

The PAN was probably the most effective party. It was basically their equivalent of the Christian Democratic Party. It is still one of the most viable opposition parties. There were also other leftist parties and other splinter parties. There was a military type party and there were five or six parties that we maintained open contact with. We also kept contact with the university. I knew the rector and used to go out and see him every so often. We would have breakfast with students. We were very close to student leaders.

Q: There had been a horrible massacre of students during the Olympics.

PRYCE: I think it was '68.

Q: I think it was '68. How were we seeing the students at that time because traditionally in Latin American countries the students are a force unto themselves and are usually quite leftist, the professors are leftist and all, and then they change when they graduate? Were we seeing change?

PRYCE: Yes. We had contacts with the student leaders who were often leftists. Even back in my first tour in Mexico in '61-'63 the ambassador was invited to a graduation party by the principal head of one of the leading student groups. Again it was partly because it was interesting to him, this student leader, but it was also interesting to the ambassador. It was through the embassy's workings that this happened, but we were always interested in what students were doing.

In my first tour, I don't remember if we talked about this before, I took a course at night at the national university. I was really a little bit scared about it at first and would wear sort of scruffy

old clothes and go out there. It turned out that I had no problems. I had some heated arguments but no animosity and they treated me with respect. But it was a hotbed of leftism, no question about it. I was doing that on my own as a junior officer and I enjoyed it. The embassy consistently had people who reached out.

THEODORE WILKINSON

Deputy Political Counselor

Mexico City (1981-1984)

Chief Political Officer

Mexico City (1991-1994)

Born in Washington, DC in 1934, Theodore Wilkinson received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree from George Washington University. In 1961, he joined the Foreign Service, serving in Venezuela, Sweden, Belgium, Mexico, Honduras, Brazil, and Washington, DC. Mr. Wilkinson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

WILKINSON: Yes, that's right, very similar situation. And I was offered a couple of posts in the Far East for which I would have had to learn the language, and the deputy political counselor in Mexico. And so, I said, "Well, you know, Mexico has always been... I've never been to Mexico. You now, 20 years in the Foreign Service and I'd never been to a neighbor country, except across the border maybe once or twice to Tijuana when I was in the Navy, for no good purpose. And I incidentally had an ancestor named James Wilkinson, who died in Mexico City after conspiring with Aaron Burr to try to get Mexico away from-

Q: *Oh, yes. He was commander in chief of the army or something like that.*

WILKINSON: He was.

Q: *The big Mississippi Conspiracy.*

WILKINSON: That's right. He conspired with Aaron Burr, and sent Burr's letters to Jefferson. They were subpoenaed for Aaron Burr's treason trial, because he wrote to Jefferson in code, and Jefferson said, "I won't send them to you." And Marshall sustained him, which was the beginning of the doctrine of Executive Privilege, so he has his place in history. But Wilkinson died much later in Mexico City after writing that he didn't know why he was wasting his time in

this “filthy, idolatrous place.” Despite that, I decided that the Mexico assignment was the one that I wanted, and I went there in the summer of ’81.

Q: And you were there till when?

WILKINSON: Till ’84.

Q: You were deputy political officer?

WILKINSON: Deputy political counselor.

Q: Counselor.

WILKINSON: Yes, it’s the deputy chief of the Political Section. And at that point I was freshly remarried. My divorce from Lee Ford was final in early ’81. We had been separated for several years. And I married another Foreign Service officer, Xenia Vunovic, and she had to decide between going to Cairo as the peace negotiations officer which she was tentatively assigned to, or going to Mexico with me, and learning Spanish, with no Foreign Service job right away. She agonized over that but eventually decided to cast her lot with me. I called Bill Price, who was the acting DCM. He was political counselor, but he was acting as DCM at the time - and said, “When do we need to be there?” And he said August 3rd. So we had a five-day honeymoon that consisted of driving, being married on July 29th and driving five straight days to get to Mexico City by August 3rd, and my wife subsequently has asked herself a number of times whether she really made the right decision, because it was not fun doing a forced march for your honeymoon. Then we got there on August 2, and I came in duly the next morning and reported for duty, and Bill Price said, “Oh, you’re here. Why are you here so early?” At which point I had to ask whether this was the profession that I wanted to be in.

But it was a fascinating three years. I very much enjoyed work in Mexico, and I did it twice, in fact. I went back again in 1991. I served from 1981 to ’84 and again from ’91 to ’94. We’ll come back to that later.

Q: Well, now, could you talk about first the embassy and the atmosphere of the embassy and all and talk about what your job was?

WILKINSON: Sure, well, my first impression, not only was I not overjoyed coming to the embassy and find that I really didn’t need to get there as fast as all that, but driving in to Mexico City late the previous day and running into an interminable traffic jam. Life in Mexico City is one set of traffic jams after another in which you are probably inhaling enough pollution to shorten your life considerably. Then going into the embassy’s temporary quarters, which are pretty primitive - all of these things are not a great first impression. But I love Mexico, and I soon got over those. My wife took a little bit longer. She didn’t know any Spanish, and she spent her first year in Mexico going to Spanish language training instead of working, and then at the end of the first year she got a job, all because the ambassador liked her and prevailed on USIA to

give her a job as the exchanges officer. But Mexico City then and even now is kind of a nightmare from the standpoint of urban problems. People who served there in the '60s say it was the most wonderful place in the world, and I can believe it because that was before it got overgrown and overpopulated and over-polluted.

I came at the time of the Presidency of López Portillo, who was probably the last “dinosaur.” “Dinosaurs” is what they call the PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, old-timers who grew up in the tradition where the PRI really ran the country and there wasn't any opposition, and elections were window dressing. The PRI candidate always won, and López Portillo was certainly one of those types. When Reagan was elected, for instance, he found a white stallion to give him as an election present, and what Reagan found a way to accept it, and they both seemed to understand each other very well. López Portillo lived that way. He built himself a gigantic estate on a hill over Mexico to which he retired, and his police chief had a similar estate in the south part of Mexico City, with a dog track and a race track and guest quarters for two or three hundred people, and houses all around the country. So corruption was . . . it wasn't even corruption - it was just understood that part of the income of the state was for leaders' private maintenance accounts. It was a different era in Mexico from what it is today.

Q: One of the things in looking at American diplomacy dealing with narcotics is that there really is a broad divergence between the Foreign Service and the DEA as far as procedure and all that, isn't there. I mean, the DEA sort of operates on its own, and you are constrained by international law and how we deal with that.

WILKINSON: That's right. They are too, when they operate abroad, supposedly, and the embassy has to answer to it, and there are times when we wish we didn't.

Q: Oh, yes. Way back in the '70s I had problems with... heh heh... Well, okay, now to Chiapas. Could you explain what this is all about?

WILKINSON: I wish you'd ask me another question. I was on vacation in Valle de Bravo, which is about two hours drive west of Mexico City and a place where we spent a lot of our time, not only because we liked it but to get out of Mexico City, which wasn't good for our health. On New Year's Day, 1994, when having come off the tennis court, a doctor friend said, “You know that there's a revolution, at least a revolt, going on in Chiapas?” Not the capital of the state but San Cristóbal, the second city (and perhaps more important city because it's a religious center) of southern Mexico, has been taken by the rebels. It's called San Cristóbal de las Casas (which is named for Bartolomeo de las Casas, the monk who came in and wanted to try to civilize the Mexican Indians), and it was taken and held briefly by Indian revolutionaries and by a funny, pipe-smoking masked figure named Comandante Marcos. I went back to Mexico City late that day and found that my deputy political counselor, Ross Rogers, had taken the initiative, quite rightly, to get on the first plane he could to Chiapas and, in fact, got to San Cristóbal, borrowed a

car from an American animal and plant inspection service facility down in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the capital of the state of Chiapas, and took the car, drove the car to San Cristóbal, and got there before the army, so that the American embassy, true to form, was on the scene before the police came in to clean up the action. He got there - there was no action, luckily - he got there after the rebels had left the city. They came in, they took the place, and then they beat a strategic retreat; and when Ross Rogers got there, they had already left, but they had made their political statement. A number of people had been wounded and some killed in the brief action, and they went back into the forest, an inaccessible region of the Lacandona Forest and adjacent areas in the heart of Chiapas, which is still undeveloped, and they're still there. Why are they still there and why hasn't the Mexican army come in and simply wiped them up, which they're perfectly capable of doing? The answer to that is that, one, they had a lot of support and sympathy from, you might call him, the "Red Bishop" of southern Mexico, whose name is Samuel Ruiz, who, as the religious leader of the region has a lot of resonance on the political left not only in Mexico but throughout Latin America. Ruiz felt they had legitimate claims and for years had been telling them that. So one could even say that he helped instigate this revolt by encouraging the Indians to believe that they were not treated justly by the Mexican Government. That's one reason. A second reason is that no sooner had the news of this revolt spread throughout the world than hundreds of reporters and human rights organizations descended on San Cristóbal to make sure that the Indians weren't mistreated by the Mexican army when it came in to clean up the place. So the Mexicans, Salinas's government, which was already close to on its way out of office, because his term ended in 1994, decided that for political reasons it didn't make any sense to simply come in and wipe these Indians out. Let them have their heartland of the Lacandona Forest (it has no strategic importance in Mexico; Tzotzil rather than Spanish is the language there). And a number of high-level negotiators were appointed, all of whom sincerely tried to find some kind of a solution, whether to allow them nominal autonomy, some special provisions in the State Charter for their councils to be elected in a different way, for their taxes to be treated differently so as to respect their communal traditions. All of these efforts have failed to date, not just because the government hasn't been willing to cede them local sovereignty or to rescind the 1994 elections or to take some national step that they demand or to agree to some exaggerated position on the part of the rebels, but also because the Indians themselves don't really seem to know what they want. They're divided; they're obviously very difficult to negotiate with. So there's a stalemate, and it continues even today, five years later.

Q: Did you find yourself under pressure because this thing gained so much notoriety in the media and all, and obviously within the media and within the, I don't know, the ranks of the chattering class, or whatever you want to call it in the United States, that there would be a great deal of sympathy for the Indians? Did you find that it was difficult to operate in this particular arena as a political officer?

WILKINSON. No, by no means. This is one of those few issues where the United States wasn't such a directly involved player that we were forced, for some political reason, to take a position

that was difficult to sustain in the local context. Washington, of course, wanted to be sure that no human rights were violated, and for that reason we, I think, we kept somebody down there for a long time. Ross Rogers stayed for two weeks. My local Mexican assistant went down to help him and arrange appointments for him. I went down and spent a couple of weeks there in the end of January. I was succeeded by other people from the Political Section. And eventually I told our ambassador, Jim Jones, "Look, this doesn't make any more sense. We've been down there for six weeks or eight weeks; nothing is changing; this is a static situation; let's come back and just visit occasionally." So he went back to Washington and said, "We're going to withdraw our semi-permanent position. We're not going to keep somebody reporting down there, just watching things all this time." And Washington said, "No, we need somebody down there. It doesn't matter whether anything is happening or not. We want to be able to tell Congress that we're on top of this and we've got somebody down there watching it." So we kept somebody there for maybe six months, on a rotational basis, even though, you know, there were little flurries of isolated aggravation. Maybe somebody would shoot a bullet out of the woods at soldiers, but there were no pitched battles any more. The Mexicans had been constrained not to go into the forest and wipe these people out, and the guerrillas in the forest knew very well that if they went out of the area, if they tried another sortie, they would be decimated. The people who complained the loudest and who suffered the most, I found, already when I was down there in the second two weeks, were the law-abiding citizens who were neither Indians nor representatives of the government, who said, "Law and order have disappeared. These people have come and taken our cows. What are we supposed to do about it? Can't you provide us some police protection?" These were people living on the edge of the guerrilla area, and they eventually organized themselves into vigilante groups, and that has caused a series of separate problems. Some vigilantes a couple of months ago shot up a village and killed about 34 of the people and, again, quite naturally there was a great outcry from the human rights organizations - there's no justification for shooting 34 people - but on the other hand, in order to maintain law and order, they have no recourse other than to form their own vigilantes.

I have another anecdote from the days that I was down there, which I guess was probably the peak of public interest and press involvement. There were still several hundred reporters down there looking for news, when there wasn't any, trying to create it. And there were also all sorts of human rights activists, including Ramsey Clark. Ever since being Attorney General under Lyndon Johnson, Clark has given himself to all kinds of liberal causes and was down there on behalf of one group and had a press conference in which he denounced alleged violations by the government of Indian rights. And later in the day, somebody came up to me and said, "That was a brilliant speech you gave this morning." And I said, "I didn't give any speech. Who do you think I am?" And they said, "Aren't you Ramsey Clark?" And later in the day, I stood next to Ramsey Clark, and oh my God, he and I really do look like each other. We're the same height, about the same size, and we were both dressed in lumberjack shirts and... I've got to be careful - I might get zapped by some loose rightist. So...

Q: Were we watching for similar types of movements in Mexico, particularly southern Mexico, groups that were encouraged, you might say, who felt they'd been left out and wanted to draw attention to themselves?

WILKINSON: This revolt in Chiapas in January, 1994, came as a complete surprise, certainly to me. I had spent a week in Chiapas the year before, in 1993, traveling around talking to people, mayors. I talked to the governor. The governor was an old-school... what's usually known in Mexico as a "dinosaur," one of the old-school PRI politicians who believes very strongly in tough law and order but who, at the same time, said that he was very conscious of their need to develop the Indian heartland of the state and made all the right noises - no suspicion that anything was going on, brooding down there. The attachés had been down once or twice, and they had one report that a patrol of army people had come across an armed camp somewhere in the forest and reported back that there was something going on, but this was one isolated report and it got filed away and nobody paid any attention to it. So even though Comandante Marcos had allegedly been training down there in the forest for some months, if not years - years, I think - nobody had really come across them, and if they had they wrote them off as crazies, as you might write off some militia group in the United States, just a bunch of crazies who would never amount to anything. Oh, and when they did revolt and publish their manifesto, even leftists like Gabriel García Márquez, who at least used to be a sympathizer of the revolutionary left, people like that said this is archaic, these Zapatistas are talking about some kind of revolution that died with Che Guevara. This is classic Maoist revolution-rises-in-the-countryside, which has been proven to be fruitless - it doesn't work. It's a dead ideology, and it will never get anywhere. So disregard it; they'll wither on the vine. Don't worry about it. And what's more, it's the only place in Mexico where this kind of dissidence exists. This was 1994 or 1995. Now in 1997, 98, you have other groups claiming to represent the revolutionary left arising in other states in Mexico, in the south. In Oaxaca and in Guerrero and even in Puebla, there are elements of several revolutionary groups, although they seem to be very fragmentary. But by 1994 none of these organizations had done anything, if in fact they existed then, and nobody had ever heard of any other revolutionary left in Mexico since the '70s, when there was a small rural armed guerrilla group in Guerrero state.

NICARAGUA

CHARLES ANTHONY GILLESPIE, JR.

USAID

Managua (1976-1978)

Nicaragua Task Force

Managua (1978)

Charles Anthony Gillespie Jr., was born in Long Beach, California in March, 1935. He graduated from UCLA in 1958 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Following a six year term with the U.S. Army, he entered the Foreign Service in 1965 and was nominated by President Reagan as Ambassador to Colombia in 1985. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to the Philippines, Indonesia, Belgium, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Chile.

Q: Then where did you go? You got out of Syracuse University in 1976.

GILLESPIE: At that time there was no rigid rule about onward assignments. However, by about December, 1975, or January, 1976, I was basically told, "Look, the job of Administrative Officer in Managua, Nicaragua, is coming open." Managua was the place where a terrible earthquake had taken place in 1972. It housed the largest AID Mission in the Western Hemisphere and one of the largest in the world at the time. Interestingly enough, there was more money going through there than anywhere else. It was the biggest aid pipeline in the world, because of the earthquake-related relief effort. At the time it amounted to something like \$150-200 million annually.

The Administrative Officer had a joint administrative responsibility. There had been all kinds of discussion about duplication of effort at Foreign Service posts and who was going to manage what. There was also a little bit about ambassadorial authority. It turned out that Managua was one of the few places where the Administrative Officer at the Embassy was also delegated the appropriate authority by the Agency for International Development and by the U.S. Information Agency to be Administrative Officer for those agencies and to handle their administrative work. At other places you often had three Administrative Officers. There was a USIS (United States Information Service) Executive Officer, an AID Administrative Officer, and a State Department Administrative Officer.

Anyhow, I was approached by some people, including a man named Carl Ackerman, who was a very senior administrative type, and Joe Donelan, for whom I had worked previously. Donelan said, "We'd really like to put a good officer in Managua. Would you go down there and take that combined Administrative Officer job?" This was one of the reasons why, during my second semester at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University I paid a lot of attention to the AID programs there, because I knew that I was going to be involved with AID in a very real sense. So, at the end of the first summer session at Syracuse University in 1976, we packed up and went off to Managua, Nicaragua.

Q: You were in Managua from when to when?

GILLESPIE: We got there in mid-summer of 1976 and left in August, 1978.

Q: What were the political and economic situations in Nicaragua during this 1976-1978 period?

GILLESPIE: As I mentioned before, Nicaragua was still heavily involved in recovering from the earthquake of 1972. It had been devastating. Some 10,000 people had been killed, and the whole city of Managua had been virtually wiped out. The population of the country was about 2.0 million. Its economy, which was basically agrarian, included the production of cotton, some sugar, some beef, coffee, and not much more. These were the main products, the main exports, and the mainstays of the economy.

The country's history, and particularly its relations with the U.S., have been troubled and difficult, by most people's accounts. Back in the 19th century and in the early part of the 20th century we had no compunction against intervening directly in the country. If customs duties were not being collected or other things were not It had been taken over by people called "the buccaneers" and an American in the 19th century who thought he would set himself up as...

Q: "The grey-eyed hand of destiny."

GILLESPIE: Yes, Walker. The situation was difficult, at best, like that in a lot of the Central American countries. Nicaragua itself had been ruled, if that's the right word, by two groups which competed for power. They were the Conservatives, who lived on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, especially near a town called Granada, and the Liberals, who were anti-clerical and lived near a town called Leon Northwest of Lake Managua. They were really groups of warlords or gangsters who administered the law however they wanted to do. They vied for power and fought with each other. Eventually, Managua which is located more or less half way between Granada and Leon was settled on as the capital. It was supposed to bring the two groups together, but never very successfully. There was a nominal democracy, with lots of corruption, and so forth.

I guess that modern U.S.-Nicaraguan relations have to date from about 1936 or so - the immediate post-Depression era - when there were real problems there. Basically, to quiet things

down, we sent in the Marines. The Marines trained a body called the *Guardia Nacional*, the National Guard - kind of what we're doing in Haiti. But it was in a much more unilateral and bolder way.

I had gotten into scuba diving up in New York, as a matter of fact, and did my qualifying dives in Lake Erie. However, there is a lake called Lake Managua - not the big lake, Lake Nicaragua - into which the Marines managed to crash a couple of planes in the 1930s. I did some scuba dives to bring out some pieces of wreckage from these aircraft. In any event, we probably helped to create two monsters in Nicaragua during the Marine occupation or presence there. The first was the National Guard and [the second was] its leader, who was named Somoza. He was the beginning of the Somoza dynasty, because that is what it was. The Somoza family controlled Nicaragua under an almost hereditary succession process from the 1930s until 1979.

The reason that the U.S. intervened in Nicaragua in the first place in the 19th century was that there was a rebellion taking place, led by a man named Augusto Sandino. By our actions we probably at least contributed to the creation of *Sandinismo*, which turned out to be the National Sandinista Liberation Front, *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional*, whose Spanish acronym is FSLN. I got to see sort of the end of all of that during the period that I was in Nicaragua from 1976 to 1978.

I am not an expert on our ambassadorial succession there in Nicaragua, but the two Ambassadors for whom I worked and their immediate predecessor were political appointees. Two of them were appointed by Republican administrations and one by a Democratic administration. They were all the wrong man in the wrong job at the wrong time. The Embassy in Managua itself was an interesting place. It's where I began to see and to question why there weren't better Foreign Service Officers in these jobs. I suspect that my question could have as easily been asked in some places in Southeast Asia and Africa, but these happened to be in Latin America.

I arrived in Managua in 1976, initially serving under a Republican-appointed Ambassador James T. Theberge, whose Deputy Chief of Mission was Walker Diamante, a career Foreign Service Officer. We had a wholesale turnover of the staff of the Embassy. The Political Counselor, the Administrative Counselor, the Economic Counselor, the chief of the Consular Section, and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) Chief of Station were all replaced. The turnover in the Public Affairs Officer from USIA (United States Information Agency) took place a year later. All of them arrived at post in 1976. The DCM, Walker Diamante, stayed on for about six months and was basically let go by the newly-arrived Ambassador.

Ambassador Theberge's predecessor was interesting and worthy of a book: Ambassador Turner B. Shelton.

Q: Could you talk about the role of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua as you saw it during this period?

GILLESPIE: This was a time when theology oriented to "community bases" as the essential element of the Church or liberation theology was beginning or, at least, becoming evident to me. In Nicaragua during the 1976-1978 period, the Catholic hierarchy was really torn between alternatives. The Church is essentially conservative and takes the long view. The hierarchy in Nicaragua looked out over time and felt that paternalism, dictatorship, and authoritarian governments were not inherently bad, under those circumstances, even if people might like to see change.

What had been going on, beginning in the late 1960s - 1968 to 1970, before the Managua earthquake of 1972 - was that the Sandinista Liberation Front had become more active. There was an attempt to kidnap Ambassador Shelton. I don't think that they actually held him but I think that they came very close to getting him. They had taken over a U.S. Embassy residence, and he was supposed to have been there at the time. I don't remember the details too clearly. The Sandinista base of operations was primarily in North Central Nicaragua, up near the Honduran border. This was mountainous and difficult terrain. As we learned in the late 1970s and later, a small scale rebellion or guerrilla war had been going on. The Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional was involved in attempting to put this down.

The U.S. had a Military Group in Nicaragua whose job was to provide assistance to the Guardia Nacional. We had had a close relationship with the Guardia Nacional for many years.

Nicaragua was marked by corruption. You could almost see it and touch it, all of the time. By the early 1970s, after the Managua earthquake, reports began to come down out of this mountainous region about atrocities, including murders and massacres. Torture by the Guardia Nacional and attacks by the Sandinista Liberation Front were reported involving what we would call today guerrilla terrorism, or human rights violations by the Sandinista guerrillas. The preponderance of the reports was that the Guardia Nacional was the oppressor. The sources of the reports were Catholic priests from that region. They would bring down these reports.

The Catholic hierarchy in Managua didn't reject the veracity of these reports but was uncomfortable with them. The American Embassy in Managua had accepted and, later on, actively sought, access to this reporting by the Catholic priests. The reports were often considerably delayed. You might hear of 150 people involved in an attack on the garrison of 100 troops of the Guardia Nacional in a town. Well, it would turn out that this had happened three months previously. But there would be a headline somewhere - either in the U.S., Europe, or somewhere in Central America - portraying it as if it had just happened. It was very difficult to handle the reporting on these incidents.

As far as the U.S. Government was concerned and, I think, as far as the Catholic hierarchy was concerned, the people engaged in the rebellion against the Nicaraguan Government were godless

communists supported by Fidel Castro, the Soviet Union, and other bad people. We later learned of training of these revolutionaries in Libya and Communist China. There was a lot of that going on.

Next door to Nicaragua, on the other side of the Gulf of Fonseca, in El Salvador, where the "14 Families" allegedly ruled, the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) had assassinated government officials and cabinet ministers. I think that the Salvadoran Foreign Minister had been murdered. All of this was happening in the 1976- 1979 time frame. There was a lot of support for the FMLN from Cuba.

Honduras was relatively stable but was a dictatorship. Guatemala was under an oppressive, military regime. Costa Rica, to the South of Nicaragua, was the bastion of democracy in the area. It had no Army as such - just the Civil Guard and Rural Assistance Guard. The Costa Rican Constitution prohibited armed forces.

The Catholic Church in Managua took the long view. It was clearly anti-communist but did not embrace Somoza personally or closely. Later, this developed with the appointment of Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo as Cardinal. He then became known as the anti-Sandinista, but also pro-democracy Cardinal of Nicaragua. He was known as a kind of bastion against the Sandinistas and against the Ortega family who emerged from this situation and took over the country in 1979 as leaders of the Sandinistas, after I had left.

The Catholic Church was not at all united. There were supporters of liberation theology. Nicaragua, by the way, is divided, culturally and ethnically. I guess that you could say that the eastern two-thirds of the country consist of a lot of swamp, mountains, and river basins running into the Caribbean Sea. The population there is Caribbean, composed of Negroes of African descent and indigenous, native peoples, including the Miskito Indians and others. They didn't like people of Spanish descent. It turned out that they didn't like the Sandinistas because they were of Spanish descent. The western one-third of the country is where most of the economic activity takes place, where the people consist of the descendants of Spanish settlers and persons of mixed blood.

There were racial divisions in much of that area: white skin is fairly rare. There was one medical doctor whom I met there, a friend of the man who offered me the snuff and whom I mentioned before. At this point this medical doctor was about 85 years old. He was said to have sired 63 children. Politically, he was quite conservative in his thinking and was of Dutch descent. All 63 of his children wanted to have his name, although only one or two of them were legitimate. There was a lot of that. There were many people of mixed ancestry.

Q: While you were in Managua, did you see a growing estrangement between Somoza and, now, the Carter administration? Human rights were a very big issue with the Carter administration.

For example, did Pat Darien Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs ever come down to Managua?

GILLESPIE: No. It's interesting, because Pat Darien was always a distant presence. What happened between the departure of Ambassador Theberge and the arrival of Ambassador Solaun, when Rubenstein was in charge, was Somoza's heart attack. Anastasio Somoza suffered a major coronary attack and was at death's door. Terence Todman was the Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs in the Department of State. Somoza's son, "Tachito," called the Embassy. Rubenstein was the charge d'affaires. This could have affected his relationship with Ambassador Solaun later on, although I am not sure of this.

There were two aspects involved in this. First, Rubenstein had been charge d'affaires for several months. Secondly, Somoza's heart attack occurred on his watch. We had the option of sending Somoza to Gorgas Army Hospital in Panama or Brooke Army Medical Center in Houston, Texas. Somoza's son called the Embassy, talked to Rubenstein, and said, "You have to help my father. He needs to go to the States. We'll do anything, we'll pay anything, but we have to get him into the hands of De Bakey or one of those heart specialists." We started getting calls from Somoza's West Point classmates. They were big guns in the U.S. I can't remember their names, but they were senior executives in big corporations. They were all older men by this time. Many of them had left the Army. Anyhow, the pressure was really on to take care of Somoza.

Irwin Rubenstein, who was without any doubt a staunch Democrat, and I would say with both a small and a big D, was torn. He thought, well, on the one hand, it wouldn't hurt the world if this man died. On the other hand, Nicaragua is a friendly country, he is the President, and we have done this for others. So Rubenstein took the ball and threw it to Terence Todman, the Assistant Secretary of State for ARA. I'll never forget Todman. Rubenstein called me over to his home in the evening. He was trying to reach Todman. Finally, he contacted Todman at a dinner party in Washington. Todman didn't know quite what to do. You could tell this from the telephone conversation, as heard from Irwin Rubenstein's end. Todman said, "I'll get back to you."

Todman called back and said, "All right. We'll send a medevac plane from the U.S. Air Force down to get Somoza. But make sure that this is not being done for free. They, the Nicaraguan Government, are going to have to pay the bill." Irwin Rubenstein duly called Somoza's son and told him, "We'll do it, but you have to understand that you will have to pay the tab, and it will be expensive. It will be in the tens of thousands of dollars." Rubenstein had asked me to listen in on this part of the conversation. Somoza's son replied, "Don't worry, we'll take care of it." Well, Somoza went up to the U.S., was treated at Brooke Army Medical Center, and he recovered. He came back to Managua, moved out of the "Beach House," and went into seclusion at a place called Montelimar. This all happened before Ambassador Solaun got there.

Being Latin, whatever else they were, the debt of gratitude of the Somoza family was to Irwin Rubenstein. And Rubenstein didn't mind this at all. He would be called down to see Somoza,

who was recovering. This was also a moment when the people in Nicaragua, both those in favor of Somoza and those not in favor of him, saw his mortality. He ended up losing 50 or 60 pounds. He was a tall man but was a shell of his former self. Anyway, they could see him, and there were lots of problems involved. Irwin Rubenstein, as charge d'affaires, had a fair amount of contact with Somoza.

Nonetheless, we had done all of this. This happened during the transition between the Ford and Carter administrations. It was the incoming, Democratic Party administration that had helped Somoza.

Other things were coming up. It turned out that the U.S. had sold to the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional, as part of the FMS, or Foreign Military Sales, program, and at a subsidized price, but a purchase, nonetheless, a considerable number of M-14 rifles, the predecessor to the M-16 rifle. These were Army assault rifles. The rifles had slings, or canvas straps which are used to carry them over the shoulder. There was a manufacturing defect in the sling swivels. A big, political issue arose as a result, with human rights involved. The Nicaraguans said that the U.S. must replace the sling swivels on 15,000 rifles. There were two sling swivels required on each rifle, so a total of 30,000 sling swivels were involved, at a cost of two to three dollars each. It was not a big deal, but they went on a rifle, and the reports of the conflict between the Guardia Nacional and the Sandinista Liberation Front were bubbling up in the early days of the Carter administration. The first thing we heard from Pat Darien and the human rights people was, "No, we will not replace the rusting sling swivels."

Well, this was silly. We had a colonel who was the commander of the Military Group in Nicaragua, with about ten officers and NCOs. They were saying, "Come on, let's get real. We sold them this, and there is a defect." This was Nicaragua where issues of this kind had not been on the front burner in this mechanical way. Everybody had been concerned about atrocities and all of that, but my recollection is that Pat Darien and her supporters all of a sudden concluded, "We're going to stick it to the Somoza regime and the Guardia Nacional. We're not going to replace the sling swivels."

So the cables flew back and forth. Ambassador Solaun arrived, and the controversy was still going on. Robert Pastor was the National Security Director for Latin America. He was 29 years old, an academic from Georgia, and was President Jimmy Carter's man on Latin America. He was a major activist. I first met Bob Pastor before Ambassador Solaun arrived. In June, 1977, Rosalyn Carter the President's wife decided that she would make a trip to Latin America. She would carry the human rights word with her. The target was mainly Brazil and a lesser target in Peru. But the first, overseas stop for Mrs. Carter as First Lady was Caracas, Venezuela. Just as they had done with me in Yugoslavia, we received a telephone call or cable that said, "We would like Gillespie to go to Caracas to help to manage Mrs. Carter's visit to Venezuela. The Embassy in Venezuela is not strong in the administrative area, and we'd like to have Gillespie go down and do it."

So I packed up, and in June, 1977, I went down to Caracas and stayed for about six weeks, getting ready for the visit of Mrs. Carter. This is where I found out about Bob Pastor. Bob, who is now a friend of mine, was something out of a book. Everything was changed three times. Something was approved, then disapproved, a new thing was approved, and all kinds of things happened. It was all Pastor, Pastor, Pastor. Here was this young guy going around and making things happen.

At the time Caracas didn't have any major problems. There was a President, Pete Vaky was our Ambassador, a really strong, career Foreign Service Officer. Diego Asencio was his Deputy Chief of Mission, another very strong career officer. Myles Frechette, now our Ambassador to Colombia, was the Political Counselor and a very strong Latin Americanist. So the Embassy in Caracas, on the substantive side, was fine. A little weak on the administrative side, but I was sent there to help them out. The administrative guy was a little slow-moving, and all it took was to say, "I'm here to help you," and we moved it all. Diego Asencio was great. Mrs. Carter had a good stop in Caracas, but there was where I saw Pastor. And I could see how this guy worked. His mind was moving a mile a minute or faster - maybe with the speed of light. Everything was changing from minute to minute and hour to hour. Everybody was tearing their hair out - Ambassador Vaky, the DCM, and so forth. They said, "My God, we just arranged this. Now we have to change it!" Pastor began with, "Mrs. Carter wants this." Then it became, "I want this."

Pastor was the actor in Nicaragua about the time that Ambassador Solaun arrived. Not Pat Darien. Darien's office was in the State Department. The scene of the action was really in the NSC (National Security Council) in Washington. The Nicaraguan situation began to build. In the course of Mrs. Carter's trip to Latin America, after going to Peru and really hitting them hard on the human rights issue in Brazil and, I think, Argentina, she returned to the U.S. and didn't visit Nicaragua. However, at a certain point, Pastor became involved, as 1977 ended and 1978 began. I guess that the first thing that hit us was that the publisher and owner of *La Prensa*, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, was assassinated - gunned down - early in 1978.

Everybody suspected that Somoza was behind it, but there were just enough things "off" that you could not be sure. Some really bad actors had entered on the scene in Nicaragua. They were Cubans. Not Cuban-Americans, but Cuban exiles. They were running a blood business - literally. They were buying human blood, converting it into blood plasma, and selling it on the international market. The murdered man, Chamorro, had sharply criticized these vampires in the press. There is no doubt that as Cuban exiles who were anti-Castro, they, Somoza, and all of those around Somoza, had a great affinity for each other. But there was some suspicion that these Cuban exiles either got Chamorro because they didn't like the publicity, or it may have been a little bit of "Who will rid me of this troublesome priest?" Perhaps they didn't hesitate and just said, "We'll do it!" The idea may have been that the Cubans wanted to make sure that they would always have a nice home for their blood sucking operation in Nicaragua.

One or two of these Cubans may have either had American connections, or there was a business connection. I can remember that they came into the Embassy. At this point I vividly remember Ambassador Solaun asking me to join him, the Economic Officer, and the DCM, because he wanted lots of people in the room when we met with these guys. I sat in on this meeting. These Cubans were not savory people. They were not nice men. You could tell that these were tough guys and were not in this blood business for any humanitarian reason but because it was a profitable business. Anyway, Chamorro was killed, and Ambassador Solaun and all of us went to the funeral. We met his widow, Violeta, now the President of Nicaragua, and their children. I had never met Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the murdered man.

As a chief of mission Ambassador Solaun handled himself very well, I have to tell you. He would include people in the Embassy, and not just section chiefs, at social events. He would invite political figures to breakfast. One time he'd have a Political Officer. Another day he'd have an Economic Officer. He'd ask the Consular Officer. He'd ask me to come. Maybe he'd have a couple of us. He'd have a working dinner. He would include people from the Embassy in his guest lists all the time, so we all got to know the cream of the cream of Nicaraguan society, directly through Ambassador Solaun or on our own.

We were trying to sell this House on the Hill. FBO (Office of Foreign Building Operations) had decided that it would be a good idea. One of my constant jobs was whether we could market it. Would anybody buy it? Was it saleable? It was bigger than we needed. There were all kinds of considerations like that.

So Pedro Joaquin Chamorro was assassinated, and that changed the whole complexion of the Nicaraguan political and social scene. This was something that had NOT happened before. And there was Somoza's heart attack the previous year, in 1977. Everything was changing. The Sandinistas were becoming stronger in the North. Municipal elections were scheduled for March, 1978. All of a sudden it sounded as if there might be some kind of political competition for these mayoral and municipal council jobs. In the past Somoza's supporters would just kind of win these elections, mainly because nobody would run against them. So these elections had been half-hearted.

We worked out a way of covering these elections, which were of interest to everybody. It turned out that I was appointed to cover the municipal election in a town called Rivas on the western shore of Lake Nicaragua in the southern part of the country. So one of the FSOs who was doing visa work, one of the military officers from the Military Group, and I went down to Rivas, where we spent about three days - the day before, election day, and the day after the election. We collected views on everything we could on the atmosphere and how the elections had gone. It was fun for me, because I had not done much of that before. I was the senior guy, so I was in charge of this team of three people. We went back to the Embassy and reported that the elections had taken place but that there probably had been some hanky panky. The Somocista candidate

won, as almost everyone had expected. However, it seemed that some fairly strong opposition to the Somoza government was building in Rivas.

It wasn't much later than that, perhaps in May, 1978, that a terrible incident occurred in the town of Masaya, just South of Managua. A detachment of the Guardia Nacional, claiming that it was going after Sandinistas, really shot up one whole, poor section of the town. Ambassador Solaun and DCM Asencio asked me to go out to Masaya with the Political Officer to see what was going on. We got there within hours of the time this had happened. I can remember vividly walking down the street and seeing a child's foot in the middle of the street. We looked into the huts lining the street and found blood splattered around and cartridge casings from the M-14 assault rifles. The bullets had clearly gone through the thin walls and killed anybody who was inside. They had hardly expended any energy getting through those walls. It was really gory. We talked to the people there, the local priest, political people, and residents of the town.

We described this clearly unprovoked incident in a report to the Department which Washington was bound to react to. Things were going bad in Nicaragua. The Chamorro assassination seems to have triggered this deterioration. There had been the show election and then the Masaya incident. The question began to be asked whether the Somoza government could survive. What was really going on? The Sandinistas who had been in northern Nicaragua had promoted the establishment of a group of 12 non-Sandinista members of the National Assembly who were opposed to the Somoza government. It was now no longer just the Sandinistas opposed to the government. There was a non-Sandinista opposition to Somoza, operating in Costa Rica.

One of the political leaders whom I had gotten to know fairly well, thanks to Ambassador Solaun, was a businessman who was also interested in purchasing the House on the Hill. He was now a member of this group of 12 down in Costa Rica. He had, in effect, exiled himself from Nicaragua. There was growing pressure against the Somoza government. The town of Rivas, where I had gone to observe the elections, was attacked by an armed group from across the Costa Rican border. Rivas was on the main road, about 30 miles North of the Costa Rican border. This armed group used rocket launchers to shoot up the military garrison in Rivas. The Army officer from the Military Group went down to Rivas, talked to the garrison, returned, and prepared a report on what had happened. A lot of that kind of thing was going on.

The next incident which I recall must have happened in May or June, 1978, soon after the Masaya incident. Jay Freres, the Economic Officer, and his wife, who was originally German, had a couple of sons, one of them the same age as my son, and a couple of daughters. We were pretty close friends. Marie Freres told her husband that she had been to the dentist, a Nicaraguan bearing a U.S. passport who was living in Nicaragua. I assume that the dentist and his family were dual nationals, with both Nicaraguan and U.S. citizenship. The dentist told Mrs. Freres that his sister, who was also a U.S. citizen, had a son who, with a friend of his who may have had a Mexican connection, were fugitives from the Guardia Nacional in Nicaragua. They had been with the Sandinista Liberation Front up in the northern mountains of Nicaragua. The Guardia

Nacional was reportedly getting close to them. These two young men were staying at the dentist's house. The dentist wanted to know if the Embassy could help them.

So Jay and I went to see Ambassador Solaun and a recently-arrived DCM named Frank, whose last name I can't remember. He was a big, red-haired guy who had been DCM in Malta. Frank was a chain-smoking, heavy drinking, professional Political Officer, an FSO. He was a no nonsense type of person. Mary Daniels, the chief of the Consular Section, was also present at this meeting. We asked the Ambassador and DCM what we could or should do about this. These kids were fugitives, and the Guardia Nacional was after them. Quite frankly, Stu, I don't think that we ever reported this case to the Department. We decided to do what we could to help these young men escape the Guardia Nacional. Jay Freres and I, with me driving, took the Ambassador's Cadillac at night and picked up these two kids at the dentist's house. Meanwhile, I had contacted the Mexican Ambassador and discussed the case with him. With the agreement of the Mexican Ambassador we took the two kids, had them lie down in the back seat, and took them to the Mexican Ambassador's house. They got of the car, ran inside, and had asylum from the Mexican Ambassador, as Nicaraguans, not as U.S. citizens. They were moved out of Nicaragua the next day. I don't know whether this was ever a matter of official record.

Q: Did you see any effort to put the screws on the Somoza regime on human rights, using the AID program?

GILLESPIE: There began to be talk about using the AID program in this way. I would take January, 1978, as a watershed date in this respect, because of the assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. This showed the fragility of the Somoza regime and, I think, gave a lot of life to the Sandinista movement. However, I think that our efforts to affect that situation were not focused or coherent. There was talk of cutting off AID money. Then we found out that you can't easily cut off AID money, in the sense of money in the pipeline. In fact, the way it is set up, we have an obligation to pay for certain things and to do certain things which are now going on. It is not easy. You can't just turn a key and stop it. You have to be very careful how you do that. Payments are scheduled and fall due. Money is available. I learned that stopping an AID program is complicated, once it gets started. I don't recall all of the details.

On the military side I mentioned the military sales transactions which had been started. Basically, and for human rights reasons there was the question of whether we should sell these sling swivels to replace other, defective swivels on rifles sold to the Nicaraguans. There was more to it than that - grenades, ammunition, and so forth.

All of those issues were coming up for decision. However, remember that this happened during the first year or two of the Carter administration. Prior to that the issue of human rights existed conceptually, and, I think, there was legitimate concern about human rights in our government. It was not as if everything started with a blank piece of paper during the administration of President

Jimmy Carter. The fact is, however, that the emphasis on human rights really began under President Carter. This gets into the question of why there was confusion about what our policy ought to be toward the Somoza Government and the transition, as it turned out, to something else in Nicaragua. So there was talk about what to do with assistance to the Somoza Government.

Then you could see the difficulty that arises if the Ambassador and the AID Mission Director are not pretty close in the sense of what U.S. policy is and where it is going. You can find operations in support of policy diverging or you lose the possibility of a coherent approach to the issue of what to do about aid policy toward the Somoza Government. If, as I'm afraid was the case, Ambassador Solaun's ability to walk the halls in Washington and to get things done was not very great, that compounded the problem. I think that, when I returned to Washington from Managua, I saw all of that more clearly than I saw it from the viewpoint of Managua. There was a sort of disconnect between the Embassy, the AID Mission Director and his staff, and the Washington establishment on what was going on in Nicaragua. And there were also differences within the Washington establishment.

DAVID JICKLING

USAID

Nicaragua (1977-1978)

David Jickling was born in Michigan in 1927. He received a B.A., and M.A., and a PhD from the University of Chicago and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1963 to 1965. His postings abroad included Guatemala, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador. Mr. Jickling was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

Q: What year was this?

JICKLING: It would have been in '77.

Q: What was the situation in Nicaragua at that time?

JICKLING: Terrible. It had gone from bad to worse. There had been 30-40 years of Somozas, father, son, brother. Absolute dictatorship, little concern for development other than private aggrandizement, just profiteering, greed of the worst sort. We put up with it. Somoza who was president at the time had supporters in Congress like I had never seen before with any foreign government. He was an anti-communist. This was during Carter's regime when anti-communism wasn't a great thing, but he still thought of himself as a Cold War warrior. He had support from individual members of Congress. One was Congressman Wilson from Texas who kept coming to Nicaragua because Somoza wanted him there for this or that. Then there was Congressman

Murphy from New York that also was a major supporter. He had been a classmate of Somoza. Anyway, we went into a situation where Somoza was doing his thing. He had very close relationships with the American embassy all during the Cold War.

Carter wanted to commit his foreign policy to support for human rights. Warren Christopher, who was number two in the State Department, became head of a committee to review foreign aid in relation to human rights. We would use foreign aid as an implement to improve the human rights situation, and Nicaragua would be our case in point. I was there for two years in Nicaragua as Program Officer, and during that time we didn't get one project approved. We went through all the motions and every time we came up, the Christopher committee and their people said no. We were not going to cooperate with this SOB. For example, in '72, about five years before I got there, there had been a horrendous earthquake. Managua was leveled. We gave 40 million dollars to restore Managua. We found out in the course of administering this money that Somoza is profiteering from almost all of it. He has the factories that are making the blocks that are being used in the reconstruction of the city streets. He owned the areas where the new commercial development was taking place; where roads were being built. He took advantage of the earthquake reconstruction money hand over fist. We are told that we cannot go forward with that. So, we got in a complete bind on the most important project in Nicaragua at the time. At the same time we were coming up with agricultural projects and education projects. We were a fully staffed little mission and each one of these technicians wanted to create his own little project while he was there and make a contribution, to have a project that works and makes a difference and gives him the basis to go on to bigger things in AID. Meanwhile, Washington is saying you can have no project unless you show that you are bypassing the government and are not helping Somoza. He won't profit from it, and that you are helping the poorest of the poor. We got no projects approved at all while I was there, so it was a case study in frustration.

I sat at the Ambassador's table and during all that time, and I since have seen the Ambassador, Mauricio Solaun, a Cuban-American, an academic out of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, a specialist in coups d'état, overthrow of governments in Latin America. Behind the scenes he was told let's get rid of Somoza. The Assistant Secretary of State, Peter Vaky, said, "Let's get rid of Somoza." This story has been told in two or three major accounts publicly in the last 10 years. The "Last days of Somoza" is one of them and the others have to do with the same period. Vaky was unable to get the movement in Nicaragua that the State Department wanted. Solaun was there, if not to overthrow the regime, at least to nudge and let Somoza know that now is the time to leave. The Sandinistas were in the wings, coming up. One of the most popular newspaper publishers was murdered on the streets and the finger pointed to Somoza. In fact, he didn't order the killing, but one of his friends did. The fact is we were trying to distance ourselves because of human rights, because of Somoza's greed, and all the rest. I sat at Solaun's staff table, it was so sad for him. It ended up that the State Department ignored and abandoned him, and he quit. The whole transition to the Sandinista government is a great

misadventure. America's role in that process, whether we could have done it better is a story which will be studied for years to come.

LAWRENCE A. PEZZULLO

Ambassador

Nicaragua (1979-1981)

Ambassador Lawrence A. Pezzullo was born in New York, New York in 1926. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Colombia in 1951. He served in the U.S. Army from 1944-1946 and joined the Foreign Service in 1957. Ambassador Pezzullo's career included positions in Uruguay and Nicaragua. He was interviewed by Arthur R. Day on February 24, 1989.

PEZZULLO: What happened was that Nicaragua was starting to get ugly, and I got a call one day, and they said, "We'd like you to go to Nicaragua." Harry Barnes called me one morning, and said, "Can you give me your answer?" And I said, you know, "Let me at least talk to my wife."

Q: *He was the Director General?*

PEZZULLO: He was the Director General. And I agreed. I left shortly thereafter. And went up to Washington, and off to Nicaragua.

Q: *You were called back before Somoza actually left, to participate in a meeting in the White House?*

PEZZULLO: I was back twice.

Q: *Twice?*

PEZZULLO: I was back twice.

Q: *July 1 and 2.*

PEZZULLO: Yes, the first time was because one of these ideas about forming this wise men's group had reached the point where people thought that it should be considered again. And I went back to tell them it's no go -- this thing is not going to fly, and to forget it. So that was one crucial point.

Then there was another meeting, shortly thereafter that -- I'm not sure of the date -- which had to do with the expansion of the junta. The junta was announced in San José -- a five-member junta. And the concept began to develop within Washington circles, that we should expand it to include more moderates. And I was called up to take part in those discussions.

I found it, again, to be sort of a nothing discussion. I mean, what's the difference if you have five or seven? Anyway, this is the kind of thing that Washington was putting a lot of attention into. So they talked and talked and talked.

Q: This was Carter, and Vance, and Brzezinski?

PEZZULLO: Vance and Carter were really outside of this. It really came out of the NSC.

Q: I see.

PEZZULLO: It was Brzezinski and his staff that really were very hot to trot.

The second visit was for the purpose of discussing the enlarging of the junta, from the five that they had begun with -- to a larger number, to include more moderates. And again, I felt that this was, sort of, a marginal issue of no great consequence, because the key was going to be that the people with the guns were going to have the power, and whether you now had five people in the junta, or seven people, or all moderates, or all leftists -- you know, I didn't see that this was a major issue. But again, there was a sense of a great deal of urgency about this.

When I went up on it, there was a long discussion, and Carter then addressed it to Torrijos, who had come in to meet on this particular issue.

Q: Who was that?

PEZZULLO: Torrijos, the President -- well, the dictator from Panama, who had been in and out of this issue all along; conferring with us, and doing some of the negotiating, and some of the helpful work, at the same time that he was supporting the Sandinistas in military assistance.

And what happened out of the whole thing is that we did recommend that some -- I know I, myself, Pete Vaky, were not all that hot on it, but it was recommended to Carter. He recommended it to Torrijos. Torrijos raised it with the Sandinistas, and they turned it down. And then when they turned it down, he told them it was an American plan. So the whole thing was a bust.

Q: End of . . .

PEZZULLO: End of episode, yes. In the meantime we had put together, basically, the scenario for Somoza leaving. And the scenario was, fundamentally, that he would turn over power, constitutionally, to a senator. He selected a fellow named Urcuyo, who was an unknown sort of hanger-on, with no great consequence.

But Urcuyo, then, was to go through the process that we had laid out; he was to invite the junta from San José to come to Managua. The junta was going to come in, accompanied by the archbishop of Managua, as well as members of the international community. Which were going to include Ambassador Bowdler, the foreign ministers of Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica, and whomever else.

The idea was to have a goodly number of people present from the international community, to give it a -- make it a moment in history. At that point there would be a press conference right at the airport, and they would discuss the process of transition, which would take place over the next several days; where Urcuyo would hand over power to this transitional government -- the junta in San José.

And then they would follow through on the promises they had made to the OAS, that they would begin -- they would take power, and then call for early elections, and so on, which they of course failed to do. In the meantime, the military commanders would meet, and talk about stand-down, merging the forces, and so on.

Well, this was explained to Somoza in a very detailed way. By this point in time, the commander had -- the new Guard commander had been selected by us, with Somoza's concurrence, and the concurrence of the Sandinistas, through the junta in San José. The new Guard commander was a lieutenant colonel, unknown to anybody -- a fellow named Mejia. All the Guard officers who were tainted by Somoza, which included most all the lieutenant colonels, and colonels, were all retired in one official act, and Mejia was made commander of the National Guard. So that was taken care of.

So Urcuyo was to take charge of the country; have it turned over to him. He was then to invite the junta from San José, and a whole series of things were to happen. Somoza left at three o'clock in the morning -- the morning of the 17th.

Q: Did you see him off?

PEZZULLO: No. Before that he had had the ceremony in which he had passed the baton to Urcuyo. Urcuyo, then, was supposed to do a series of things. By about six-thirty in the morning - - or six o'clock in the morning, we saw the thing unraveling. I got to him. And he had been through two meetings, where we went through every one of these issues. He claimed to be ignorant of all these things, and said, "I don't understand this. I'm the President of Nicaragua."

I said, "Well, that's understood . . ." Well, anyway, it was then that I made that -- told Washington that Somoza had backed away from the agreement, and this triggered the call from Christopher to Somoza in Miami. Somoza then quickly chartered two yachts, and got out of the United States. But he had clearly given Urcuyo the other message, that you know, he was to stay on; not let the Communists come in, and goodness knows what.

My theory is that Somoza was afraid that if he ever went to the Guard and said he was leaving, and they were going to turn over power to the Sandinistas, they would have killed him. And he lied to Urcuyo. Now, Urcuyo was just a plain liar, because he sat in on two meetings when I explained the scenario step by step to him, and then I had my DCM -- Tom O'Donnell -- go over to his hotel, and go through it with him again, minutely. And he was just a plain, bald-faced liar. Mejia was duped. I went to tell him that very day. Then I went up to see the President with him, and we had a pretty stormy session. This was the second meeting.

Q: You and Mejia went to see Urcuyo -- the President?

PEZZULLO: Yes, and he denied all of this, and said he was insulted, that I was telling him what to do, and all this kind of nonsense. By this time I think Mejia was starting to smell a rat, plus the National Guard was starting to collapse. I told Urcuyo. I said, "My friend, you're going to be a president without a country. What are you talking about? This thing will not hold. It will only hold under the scenario we set up. That's all agreed -- with the Sandinistas, with everybody. You can't do this."

So it began to collapse. A day later he ran out of the country. Then because it was collapsing, I made the recommendation to Washington that I had to be pulled out right away, with some part of the embassy, accompanied by a public statement, criticizing Somoza for having broken the pact. Because if we didn't do that, it would look as if this was our plan all along. They agreed, and I left on the morning of the 18th.

Q: That's the next morning.

PEZZULLO: That's right, the next morning -- afternoon actually -- well, it was about eleven o'clock. Tom, then, was there to just hold this little group together. He met with Mejia -- by this time Urcuyo had fled the country -- Mejia said, you know, "Can I meet with Humberto Ortega, to see if we can work this out?"

Q: Ortega was considered, even then, to be the head of . . .

PEZZULLO: The head of the forces.

Q: The head of the junta military.

PEZZULLO: The military arm. But it was too late, and Mejia had nothing to deal with; he had no armed forces left. His air force had run away, his infantry had run out to Honduras, and the poor devil was stuck. So he eventually got on a plane and flew to Guatemala. It was over. I mean, there was no -- the National Guard had disappeared. And then you had the Sandinistas just drive into the country, and drive up to the capital on the 17th, and take over.

Q: What were you doing at that time?

PEZZULLO: I went to Panama. I took part of the embassy to Panama.

Q: As a demonstration of . . .

PEZZULLO: That we had been betrayed by Somoza. We put out a public announcement stating that the plan that we had put together with Somoza, and had coordinated with the Sandinistas, had been aborted by Somoza. That was clear.

Then they asked me to come to Washington. And when I got to Washington, I asked Pete to request agreement from the new government in Managua. Because I never submitted my credentials to Somoza; I went down there without anything. That was Bill Bowdler's idea. He said, "You shouldn't be dealing with him as ambassador; you should be dealing with him as a special . . .

Q: Envoy from Washington.

PEZZULLO: Special envoy. So I went without the courtesy of any presentation of credentials, even though I had bought a white suit. You used to want to present -- I still have the damn white suit. (Laughs)

So I demanded that we get approval from the new government, because I didn't know what their attitude would be, and I felt -- you know -- since we're going to start anew, we'd better get this clear right from the outset. And they accepted right away. And I went down.

In fact, I flew down on a C-141, out of Andrews, that was filled with food. Because there was a food deficit, and we began flying food in right toward the end, and kept flying in. So it was sort of a dramatic act to go back in with a plane-load of food. So I flew in with a C-141. Landed. Met at the airport by Tomas Borge, of all people.

We had a conversation at the airport. And I presented my credentials, I think, two days later. They had a date for me right away. And I told the junta -- they were all there, except one -- that we looked to a period where we could develop a relationship. The United States understood the trauma the country had gone through. We thought we had played a role in trying to prevent any further bloodshed. We took it upon ourselves to feel a certain amount of pride in that. But we want to help, in a meaningful way, the new administration. And we were prepared to look at aid packages, and so on and so on.

And shortly thereafter, we gave them some money. Their treasury was bare; we gave them some hard cash right away. And we started opening up some programs that had been frozen during the Somoza period. And slowly began . . . Well, the food was coming in all the time, by the way. And then we began working on the longer-term programs.

You're right, in the sense that what was portrayed in the press was exactly what people were saying. "What are these? Aren't they Communists? How do we deal with them?" In fact, when I came back to Washington shortly after the fall of Somoza, they put me downstairs with the spokesman. The first question was, "Are these people Communists?" And the position we were

taking at the time was, "Look, we don't want to prejudge something like this. Let their actions speak for what they are. These people have gone through a terribly painful period. The Nicaraguan people have suffered. And we're going to take them at their word, that they're going to put a democratic administration into being. But during this period of need we're going to be as helpful as we can. And we're not going to be driven to make judgments about it."

And we held to that. Pete [Vaky] and I were up in the Congress, shortly thereafter, giving testimony. And this is basically the line Pete took, and I took.

Now, confidentially, when we talked to people, and what I was reporting back was: first of all there was no question there was deep-seeded animosity toward the United States in this group. I started getting around to see all the commanders -- nine commanders -- and the foreign minister, who was a former Maryknoll -- well, he was a Maryknoll at the time. Escoto, who bore a tremendous amount of resentment against the United States, even though he was born in the United States, and speaks English as well as anybody. Viscerally anti-American, in almost an emotional way. Interestingly, because his father was a Somoza diplomat, and a slavish Somoza diplomat.

You felt it all through this, this rebellious quality. A young man resenting the failings of his parents. And what I tried to do was to show that, you know, a mature power -- a major power can understand change, can understand young people wanting to transform a country. That we thought we were not the ones to judge that. But there were certain things that had to be understood, in terms of a relationship.

So I kept the tough issues to a very bilateral kind of thing. And in public we were supportive, and we were trying our best to give whatever assistance was needed. They responded, I thought, quite well, given what they thought we were; you know, suddenly finding themselves in a governing role. They were -- and Nicaraguans in general -- are very gracious people; they happen to be that kind of people. So you can meet with them, and the conversations will always be at least civilized. Even though they got heated, they were civilized. And they really respected the fact that we had done some of the things we did; they respected that. But they resented, very much, the long-term support of Somoza, and so on. So you'd have to go through that.

And the questions that arose early were, you know, what are these bunch of guys? I mean, are they going to work themselves into a lather? Are they going to ever turn over power to anybody? And what's the role going to be of the Cubans, and so on.

Well, it wasn't too long before it became clear that the Cubans had an in that nobody was going to compete with. The Cubans had fought with them; the Cubans were their military advisors. The Cubans are very good at ingratiating themselves because they know the culture. And Castro was bigger than life to them. To them there were very few heroes that they could think of that would supersede Castro. So that quality was there. And I think all of them, sort of, aspired to be pint-sized Castros.

So you saw that at the same time you were hoping that there was a learning curve here, and that these people would understand that governing is not just a question of, you know, making speeches, and acting like a popinjay. But the chances of this thing ever moving democratic were very slim. And that I reported early, even though I thought we should constantly push on it, constantly remind them what they promised, constantly talk about the human rights, and free press, and so on. And we made a big fetish of that. I mean, I never had anybody come into that country that we didn't go past La Prensa and visit. And they knew exactly what that meant.

And we made a big to-do about human rights. I went to their independent human rights commission, which was investigating every abuse, and so on. I went out to their jails early, to look at them. You know, I just made a big, major effort to have them understand that we didn't have our eyes closed. And when we spoke, I used to speak quite honestly about it. That they made a hell of a mistake by having so many people in jail. That they'd taken on a burden that was going to leech them for no good reason. And over the long term, it was going to cost them more than they'd ever be able to recover from -- whatever security concerns it addressed.

I lectured them about security. I said, you know, "I've been around enough security people to tell you they give you bad advice almost all the time." And I said, "Watch the intelligence people that you're getting from Cuba. Because you think they're wiring for you; I'm telling you, they're wiring you for sound." And you get some interesting responses back.

I found two things that we had to worry about. One was their export of revolution. Because they were fascinated by the romantic idea that they were the new revolutionaries. Castro told them, "You're the new generation." This guy is a -- you know, he's a world-class snake oil salesman. He really is a mesmerizer.

JOHN A. BUSHNELL

Deputy Assistant Secretary, ARA

Washington, DC (1977-1982)

Mr. Bushnell was born in New York State and educated at Yale University and McMurray College. An Economic Specialist, he served primarily in senior level positions at Latin American posts, including Bogota, Santo Domingo, San Jose and Buenos Aires, dealing primarily with Economic and International Trade issues. An assignment to the Staff of the National Security Council was followed by tours as Deputy Chief of Mission at Buenos Aires, Chargé d'Affaires at Panama City, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American

Affairs. Mr. Bushnell was the recipient of several awards for outstanding service. Mr. Bushnell was interviewed by John Harter in 1997.

Q: Habib had a massive and crippling heart attack in March '78 just as a lot of these issues were heating up. He was pretty quickly replaced with David Newsome. Did that make any substantial difference? Newsome said in his interview for the Association for Diplomatic Studies that he spent a great deal of time on these issues, especially on Nicaragua.

BUSHNELL: I don't recall that Newsome was any more active on the Christopher committee than Habib had been. But Nicaragua became a major political issue after the middle of 1978 and continued to be a major issue through the rest of my time in ARA. There was a major intelligence side to Nicaragua even under the Carter Administration, and Newsome was the senior State person for these matters. I was not the action officer for political matters in Nicaragua as both Vaky and Bowdler were the prime movers in ARA and devoted a great deal of their time to Nicaragua. Once the negotiations started soon after the arrival of Vaky in mid-1978, human rights issues in Nicaragua got little attention. Even before that economic assistance was removed from the Christopher Committee agenda. HA and ARA had been in agreement on cutting back bilateral aid and opposing many IFI loans, but the Congressional pressure I mentioned earlier caused the White House and the Secretary to continue most of this assistance.

The only human rights issues I can recall in which Habib was involved were military assistance issues, not economic assistance. Phil came back to work after his heart attack; I remember going up to his office more than once, probably three or four times, when he'd want to see me and he'd say, "Come up when you finish lunch." He'd apologize because he was laying down on his couch, and he'd say, "You know, the doctors tell me I have to lay here for so many hours a day, so come over here and talk to me." That I think went on for several months before Newsome came in.

Q: This is Tuesday, July 21st, 1998. John, during our last session we discussed the approach of the Carter Administration to human rights as a foreign policy issue. Would you say perhaps a corollary of that was the departure from a more traditional tolerance, if not support, by the United States for anti-communists dictators.

BUSHNELL: Yes, this trend away from dictators was not new in the Carter Administration, but Vance and Christopher accelerated it. We had been gradually focusing our diminishing bilateral resources of foreign assistance on more democratic regimes or regimes that were moving to become democratic. In part this was driven by the 1974 amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act and the views of Congress. Perhaps the change in the role of our intelligence agencies in the wake of the Church and other reports was most dramatic. In Latin America intelligence operators had usually been the Americans most supportive of anti-communist dictators, and many of these dictators were past masters at using the intelligence folks. By 1997 our intelligence presence and

its role in Latin America was greatly reduced. Stations were even completely closed in places like El Salvador. The Linowitz Commission report and the Vance November 1976 letter to Carter emphasized moving away from dictators in general more than economic and other sanctions on them. Certainly the establishment of the Human Rights Bureau also accelerated this trend. However, I understood our policy not as just distancing from the dictators but as trying to work for a return to democracy in all of Latin America. Sometimes, too much distancing was the enemy of getting movement to democracy.

Quite independent of anything we were doing or not doing, most Latin American countries were moving rapidly back to democracy for their own reasons in 1977-80. In the Kennedy Administration just the opposite trend was underway, not because of our policies or actions but because of the internal dynamics of the Latin countries. Under Kennedy one after another Latin country had a military coup or takeover. Often the military justified their actions as anti-communist, but in most cases this was just an excuse for the more conservative right and its military friends. As I mentioned earlier, there was much frustration in the Kennedy Administration with the trend to military governments in Latin America beginning with the coup against Frondizi in Argentina. Statements were made, but the bully pulpit then, as now, had limited effect. Moreover, the big issue in Latin America in the Kennedy Administration was Cuba and Castro's efforts to expand his influence and communism through insurgency in Latin America. Although there were many of us in the Kennedy Administration who certainly didn't want to welcome with open arms the human rights violating military governments that were taking over, policy was restrained by concern about what was seen as a bigger menace to long-term US security – expansion of communism and Cuban influence in the Hemisphere. Also the coups in the 1960's generally did not result in people being killed, tortured, or imprisoned. On the one hand the lack of widespread individual rights violations suggests that in fact the Cuban-supported insurgents and communists were weaker than we thought. On the other hand the Kennedy Administration stressed the importance of economic and social development through the Alliance for Progress as the route to stable democracy, and this strategy often could be implemented with military regimes as well as with democratic ones.

By 1977 when Carter came in, Castro's expansionary efforts in the hemisphere had mainly failed, partly because of policies the U.S. adopted but mainly because of the natural resistance to communism in most of these countries. Castro was turning his efforts more to Africa, which was a big policy problem for the Administration, but not a Latin American problem. In 1980 candidate Reagan criticized the Carter Administration for allowing Castro to expand his influence greatly, or, as he put it, to take over Nicaragua and Grenada as well as influencing events in several African countries. I would agree we were very slow to see the extent of Cuban influence with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The curtailment of intelligence collection and its diversion away from Cuban targets to less important internal gossip undermined the ability of the Carter Administration to see what was coming. We did try very hard to build a non-Cuban alternative to Somoza; he continued his claim that there were only two alternatives in

Nicaragua – Somoza and Castro, but we did not believe these were the only alternatives, and they weren't. However, as the guerrilla warfare in Nicaragua spread in late 1978 and 1979, none of us pressed the point that the longer Somoza held on the more likely the Cuban elements of the Sandinistas would take over.

One of the ironies of human rights policies in the Carter Administration was that much of the sanction focus was on those countries where progress in improving human rights was being made. There was only a delayed focus on what might be called the hopeless cases. For example, in Central America, Somoza's Nicaragua had already responded to earlier US pressures to reestablish a quite free press. Somoza had elections; they were stacked in his favor, but his control was subtle not brutal. He preferred to buy support rather than force it by human rights violations. There were not many political prisoners. People were sent or encouraged into exile but not imprisoned; there was not much torture except in response to violent attacks on the government. In other words, the trend was toward improvement. In Nicaragua, this trend was helped by a basically vigorous economy recovering from a devastating earthquake with a good investment climate and a frontier to which the poor could move and open up their own land. When the Nicaraguan newspaper editor and Somoza enemy Pedro Chamorro was assassinated in January 1978, the Nicaraguan climate was sufficiently free that a general strike and massive demonstrations went on for a week or so with little or no repression by Somoza and few people injured. In El Salvador next door there was little movement to improve human rights, and killing and torture were a continual part of the landscape to a degree not found in Nicaragua. In Guatemala the military and what we might call the economic oligarchy had been in control for a long time, and they maintained absolute power by brutal methods, killing labor union leaders and students in the cities and peasants who caused any trouble in rural areas. HA, ARA, and the 7th floor principals focused on such countries as Nicaragua, Chile, and Argentina where there were domestic political pressures driven principally by the NGOs and exiles instead of on the countries with the worse human rights and much less sign of improvement.

Q: How about the Congressional influence? Sally Shelton, for example, in her interview for the ADS, said John Murphy and Charles Wilson – we've already referred to this – were among those who made critical comments about remarks she made in Congressional testimony about Somoza, and they were both very influential members of Congress. But to your knowledge, did that strong Congressional interest have significant impact on the thinking in the White House or State?

BUSHNELL: Yes. Murphy, Wilson, and a few others had strong views on Nicaragua, and they were basically the opposite of the views of the human rights NGOs and activists. Moreover, Murphy and Wilson were also Democrats. Murphy said he had known Somoza since they were both at West Point, and Murphy was close to Somoza. I wondered if Somoza had not over the years provided some friendly funding of Murphy campaigns in New York. Murphy thought Somoza was doing a great job for the people of Nicaragua expanding the economy and providing

jobs and education. He could not understand why the human rights activists picked on his friend when other rulers in Latin America and elsewhere were so much more brutal and were often destroying their countries economically as well. Wilson saw Somoza as the block to communism to which he was strongly opposed. Wilson even infiltrated Afghanistan after the Russian invasion to take money and supplies to the resistance. He was a strong supporter of Carter's Afghanistan policy, but he thought Carter was being deceived by the human rights gang at the State Department which wanted to give Nicaragua, in our own hemisphere and close to the Panama Canal, to the Russians and Cubans.

Q: How did they work?

BUSHNELL: They did all the standard things to influence policy: they wrote letters to the President and to Secretary Vance [ARA was often drafting replies]; they called or attended Congressional hearings where Nicaragua could be raised; they made their views known to the press [although neither had a strong carry with the Washington press corp, I would see them quoted in stories or op- ed pieces from around the country, not just from their states of New York and Texas]; they lobbied their colleagues on the Hill; they lobbied the Administration; finally they threatened and used their power as committee or subcommittee chairmen and as Congressional leaders who could move the votes of many colleagues who might not care about an issue. Murphy met at least once, I think more than once, with President Carter to try to change Carter's view of Nicaragua and of Somoza – unsuccessfully. Finally they threatened to reduce overall AID appropriations substantially if aid to Nicaragua were cut. As two conservative Democrat leaders, they could move quite a few essential Democratic votes; in short their threat was credible; they could disrupt the worldwide AID program, and their feelings about Nicaragua were so strong that most of us thought they were not bluffing. In 1978 the White House agreed to make new AID loans in Nicaragua even though ARA, HA, and AID all favored curtailing such lending. Of course this AID loan approval signaled Somoza that his Congressional friends had more clout than the Christopher gang, as he thought of us.

Early in 1978, the Administration made a decision to cut off military loans to Nicaragua. I was still new in ARA, and this did not strike me as a very interesting or important issue. As I recall, Wade Matthews, the Central American country director had argued for military assistance primarily because we were not stopping it for countries with worse human rights. Todman supported him, and that was the ARA position although Sally Shelton favored cutting military aid. Nicaragua's economy was not in bad shape, and the proposed military assistance loan amount was tiny. It was important to our military because, they claimed, it gave them influence over what weapons Nicaragua bought. I was worrying about needs for military assistance throughout Latin America, and we were very short. Thus stopping the Nicaragua program meant I could reprogram those small amounts to start small programs in the Caribbean. The close relationship of the Somoza National Guard to our military seemed to me excessive. We had one of our closest military relationships, maybe the closest military relationship in Latin America, with Nicaragua where the main role of the Guard was to assure Somoza's power. Such a

military-to-military relationship didn't make any sense. Only later did I begin to understand how hard Somoza had worked to build his relationship with the US military and how easily our military could be used by a cagy military strongman.

Once the decision to stop military assistance loans was made, we were at war with these friends of Somoza on the Hill, who went all out to reverse any policy negative to Somoza. Intelligence suggested that Somoza thought he was caught in the middle between the Administration and his Congressional friends. These friends visited Managua even more frequently. Somoza seems to have believed that only State with Christopher and Derian were against him; the military, Congress, and perhaps CIA were with him. He intensified his lobbying efforts. Ambassador Sevilla-Sacasa told me this rough spot in the road would pass as had others before. He probably told Somoza that, if they played their cards right, Somoza would survive and the Christopher gang would be relegated to the dustbin of history given the influence of Murphy, Wilson, and other friends.

Q: With the Carter Administration, from the beginning, whatever differences in concepts of intervention and nonintervention, etc., they had a conspicuous distaste for Somoza from the beginning across the board, right?

BUSHNELL: Yes, I have hypothesized that Somoza's main problem was that the military dominance in Nicaragua was personified, that it was seen as the Somoza dynasty. The military were more brutal and more corrupt and had much worse human rights records in Guatemala and El Salvador, but these militaries weren't personified. Generals moved up and moved on. Presidents came and went. There was no single person or family associated with the right wing rule in these countries. Personification of the authoritarianism in Nicaragua in the person of Somoza made him more of a target. Moreover, it was precisely the Somoza families' close ties with the United States which, in my view, made it impossible for us not to intervene because we had been so close to the Somozas for so long in so many ways. These historical ties particularly stirred up people like Patt Derian. The facts that Somoza himself was a graduate of West Point, that he regularly supported the United States, even that several US Congressmen traveled frequently to see Somoza made it appear that the U.S. was involved in maintaining authoritarian rule in Nicaragua.

There was much talk in the Carter Administration about whether or not we should intervene in Nicaragua. This intervention discussion did not make sense to me. The United States and various parts of its government and society were involved in Nicaragua and had been involved for many years. Somoza had friends on the Hill; he worked the Hill; he worked the US society; he had lobbyists; he had the dean of the diplomatic corps. All of these Somoza interventions, if you will, in the U.S. were a challenge, you might say, to the Human Rights activists. Here was an authoritarian ruler who personified human rights abuses and was also tied to the United States.

There's one other wrinkle in this Nicaragua situation, however, that I think should be given much more attention than what I've seen written in hindsight, and that is the role of Carlos Andres Perez (CAP), the President of Venezuela.

Q: Look, can you hold Perez for a minute, because I have some other questions getting at why Carter's people had this...

BUSHNELL: That's what I want to come to, because that's where CAP played a big role.

Q: Oh, okay. Because you've got a lot to say about Perez later.

BUSHNELL: We'll also talk about Perez later. Perez had a particular link to Pedro Chamorro, the newspaper editor that was killed in 1978. Chamorro had lived in Venezuela, and they had been close, and when Chamorro was killed, Perez...

Q: That was January 10th, 1978.

BUSHNELL: That's right. It was very early in my time in ARA.

Q: As Tony Lake says in his book, that was the point from which Somoza's slide was apparent. Everything was downhill from there.

BUSHNELL: I think that's right, but let's take just the US side of the Nicaragua issue for the moment. CAP was the president, the leader, in Latin America with whom President Carter created the firmest connections.

Q: CAP? This is Carlos...

BUSHNELL: Carlos Andres Perez. We call him CAP; that's his nickname. CAP, of course, was a democratic ruler. Some of us remember earlier times when, as attorney general, he had overseen and even participated in torture in Venezuela, but those days were past, and Venezuela was a fine, upstanding democracy selling us lots of oil and playing an expanding role in the world. CAP, by his personality – I don't know just why – captivated President Carter, and especially Bob Pastor. The President saw him as the sort of political leader in Latin America he could really relate to, and the President respected his views. Remember at the beginning of the Carter Administration there were very few democratic heads of state on the mainland of Latin America. CAP helped convince the President to conclude the Panama Canal treaties and then played a role in helping them get through the Senate. He was also influential in getting Panama strongman Torrijos to do some things that he needed to do to help us get the Treaties through. Thus CAP was perhaps our biggest ally at that moment in the hemisphere. There was a lot of Presidential correspondence that went back and forth. There were visits back and forth. Chamorro's assassination was a traumatic event for CAP. People that are close to him have told me that it was like losing his wife or his mistress. This was CAP's friend and buddy that had been killed, and CAP thought Somoza was responsible. It now appears that Somoza was not

responsible, but most people thought at the time he was. CAP at that point wanted to make a major effort to get Somoza. CAP wasn't comparing anything in Nicaragua to El Salvador or Colombia or anywhere else. This was a personal thing, a personal vendetta. Do it at almost any price! And he played a gigantic role because in addition to influencing President Carter he made an alliance with Castro, something none of us thought he would ever do.

Q: With Castro?

BUSHNELL: With Castro in Cuba. None of us ever thought that CAP, who was totally opposed to communism, would ever do such a thing, but he did. And this CAP/Castro cooperation not only greatly speeded the fall of Somoza but also established the base for the Castro/communist domination of Nicaragua thereafter.

Q: Let me back up just a little. Before Carter came into the White House. Saul Linowitz had headed a commission of Latin American experts that submitted a report a few months before Carter was inaugurated that presumably had some impact on the Carterites' thinking.

BUSHNELL: Especially since Bob Pastor was the man who authored much of the report.

Q: Exactly. Do you recall what its recommendations were, and were they relevant to the early attitudes -- this is a couple of years before what we're talking about here now?

BUSHNELL: I haven't read that report for a long time, but I read it at the time. I don't remember that it was particularly focused on Nicaragua. Remember, I started in ARA at the end of 1977, so the Carter Administration had already been in office for nearly a year. I think the Linowitz report probably did play a role early on in a number of ways, including endorsing an emphasis on human rights and democracy although not in the rhetoric-heavy way the Administration proceeded. It did endorse paying a lot more attention to Latin America – it was a report jointly written by Latins and Americans. It supported concluding the Panama Treaties and turning the canal over to Panama. I don't identify that it played a major role in policy formulation in 1978 and thereafter.

Q: Well, the nonintervention angle, I think, was...

BUSHNELL: ...was an angle of it, yes.

Q: And the fact that Pastor was the principal author of the report.

BUSHNELL: The report reflected Pastor's views, and he then tended to try to carry out the recommendations.

Q: Was it Pastor who always wanted to make sure the recommendations of the Linowitz commission were high on the agenda for the Carter Administration for Latin America? That was the way I understood it.

BUSHNELL: I think that was true in the first year. I don't know that it had much carry beyond the first year. Most policies were already established by 1978 and had their own momentum one way or another.

Q: Who else were the principal advisors for Vaky on Nicaragua and related phenomena?

BUSHNELL: Brandon Grove came on as the Deputy Assistant Secretary covering Central America, replacing Sally Selton, and he was Vaky's principal backstopper. Wade Matthews was the country director through most of the mediation period. At some point, probably in late 1978, he was replaced by Brewster Hemenway

Q: Apparently Vaky, according to Lake's book, got rid of Matthews. Todman had brought him in, because, according to Lake, Todman had been much impressed with a memo that Matthews had written on Nicaragua when he was in the mission to the OAS.

BUSHNELL: I don't know anything about how Wade came into the job. My recollection was that Wade's tour was up. He had been there for about two years by the end of 1978. I don't remember that his tour was curtailed.

Q: What could you say about Matthews? Was he influential?

BUSHNELL: He was a strong country director, which is what we needed on Central America because, these being small countries, we got quite junior officers as country officers, often on their second or third tour, their first Washington tour. Thus the country director had to do the heavy lifting and at the same time train and develop the junior officers. Wade disagreed with the extent of our human rights emphasis, and he also was offended by the efforts of the political appointees in HA to micro-manage relations with his countries, for example by insisting on clearing every letter to Congress and every piece of press guidance [matters usually handled in the regional bureaus within the context of established policy]. Moreover, HA tried to make policy by inserting things in these routine communications that went beyond established policy.

Q: Matthews was fairly influential during this period. But he's handicapped by not having a strong Nicaragua desk officer or someone with experience in Nicaragua.

BUSHNELL: I don't think he was very handicapped by lack of country experience. Wade studied Nicaraguan history and knew more about the history of the Somozas and about current developments than most who had served in Managua, certainly more than the officers in HA who mainly brought to the table the stories they were fed by the NGOs and activists. During 1977 and 1978 there was a perception that ARA was continually fighting with HA. Wade was the ARA officer most associated with this fighting, perhaps other than myself because of our debates in the Christopher Committee. Wade seemed to enjoy this role. He was determined not to let HA exaggerate or state anything they couldn't prove. He worked hours and hours on reports, memos,

and cables which required HA clearance. It was guerrilla warfare. I didn't become involved until the bureaucratic/policy struggle had gone on for a long time and the Central American deputy, Shelton or Grove, had not been able to find a compromise. Finally, when something had to get done, I had to get involved.

However, Patt Derian and Mark Schneider usually became involved much earlier and did much of the HA negotiating with Wade. Despite his lower rank, Wade negotiated firmly with them although they would attack him personally and accuse him of not supporting human rights. He was not against human rights; he just thought that the HA's public approach was not the best way to improve human rights and that Central American policy was being hijacked by the human rights activists at the expense of our national security interests. Whether he was influential or not is hard to say, because he would seldom go to the Christopher Committee or other meetings where policies were decided. He was highly respected by Todman, but I think Vaky saw that Wade had become too confrontational and too enmeshed in the details to play a strong policy role.

Q: I guess we can talk about Bowdler later too. Somoza went to Florida with his retinue. What happened to him?

BUSHNELL: Somoza was in Florida a short time, but we refused to give him permanent residency and made it clear we would not block an extradition request from the Sandinistas. Christopher dealt with his lawyers and, I think, made clear we preferred for him to leave. He went to Panama and then to Paraguay. Stroessner, the dictator in Paraguay, gave him refuge there but did not provide much protection. It was only a little over a year before he and his American financial advisor were assassinated, September 17, 1980, by some of the Argentine Montoneros, led by Enrique Gorriaran Merlo, who had fled to Cuba and then moved into Managua with the Sandinistas. Among the many non-Nicaraguan Sandinistas were Argentine guerrillas who set up their headquarters near the Managua airport. They knew the southern cone area and agreed to do the Sandinistas the great favor of ending Somoza's life to avoid him ever becoming a rallying point for resistance to the Sandinistas. Even nearly 20 years later Sandinista ex-president Ortega is still working actively to get Gorriaran out of an Argentine jail; he was sentenced after involvement nearly a decade later in an attempted coup in Argentina in which many were killed.

People are puzzled why the Argentine military was the first to train and support anti-Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua. Some even seem to think this was an Argentine favor for the Reagan Administration. The first anti-Sandinistas were trained and supported by the Argentines well before Reagan was elected. The sworn enemies of the Argentine military were the Argentine Montoneros. When they moved their headquarters from Cuba, where the Argentines could do nothing but try to watch them, to Managua, the Argentine military said, "There's our enemy, part of the Sandinistas." So the Argentine military began to help those in Nicaragua who were

actively against the Sandinistas and might kill a few, especially the Montoneros. There were even more Chileans than Argentines, many of whom have been given Nicaraguan citizenship. We found later that there were whole brigades of Salvadorans. There was a real multinational effort with the Sandinistas, but the majority of the fighters were Nicaraguans.

The days just before and after the Sandinista take-over were traumatic in the operations center where I had set up a command center. Then the immediate question was how do we relate to the new Sandinista Government. My proposal was that we do the best we can, no matter what happens in the long run, to work with the new government and move it in democratic directions. We shouldn't be accused of forcing or pushing the Sandinistas into the communists' hands. We should make it clear that, as long as they play by something resembling the rules of the western world, we'll work with them. That approach was, of course, strongly supported by Pezzullo and approved by everybody. My workload on Nicaragua increased greatly because it was not easy to gear up economic and even potential military assistance for the Sandinistas.

Q: This was during the last six months of 1979?

BUSHNELL: From the middle of July through the rest of the year and well into 1980 I was trying to manage a policy of openness to the Sandinistas. Initially we had planes flying food and medical supplies to Managua to help restore life to near normal after the fighting and other disruptions. The relief efforts were relatively easy to organize because we have emergency relief programs at alert and the US military can do the logistics well if someone has the funding to pay for it. But then things became much more dicey. The human rights situation became dicey, as the Sandinistas had kangaroo courts with no defense lawyers or even regular procedures trying and executing Somoza's followers. Many properties were expropriated including many businesses and farms owned by Americans. The Sandinistas introduced a national anthem which condemned the United States. The number of Cubans and before long even Russian advisors grew continually while the Sandinistas made it clear they did not want American technical advisors and even threw out the Panamanians and most of the Venezuelans. In big and little ways the strongly anti-U.S. views of the Sandinistas were becoming clearer, as was the immense Cuba influence.

Q: What lessons do you think we should draw from the whole Carter experience with Somoza?

BUSHNELL: I don't think we'll ever confront anything analogous to this situation again, but the key lessons are: (1) it's dangerous to focus on only one aspect of our relations with a country – in this case human rights – when we have numerous interests and objectives, and (2) it is counterproductive to allow a general principle however good it may be – in this case nonintervention – to limit our options such that we cannot attain key objectives. The U.S. is a diverse country with very diverse interests and interest groups; there are many interfaces between the United States and most other countries that have nothing or little to do with the

government. When a lot of these other interests pull in the opposite way from the government, not only is there going to be a domestic political battle, but the other country is going to have its eye on and its hand in this battle to move US policy as it wants. If the Administration had been perceived as unified and speaking for all American interests, Somoza would have seen the writing on the wall, but he had good reason to believe his many friends in the United States, including in the Congress and the military, would change the direction of US policy. Similarly, the very complexity of US interests and voices convinced such Latin leaders as CAP and Torrijos that the Carter Administration was not a reliable ally against Somoza and extreme measures were needed. Somoza said frequently Nicaragua would be controlled by him or by Castro. We tended just to disregard that point, which was a mistake by those of us who were being paid to be more cautious. We probably would have been laughed out of court if, in the early stages, we had raised that possibility. Ironically Somoza was Castro's best asset; much of Nicaragua could agree on getting rid of Somoza even though his opposition could agree on little else; the hatred of Somoza pulled the opposition together to support the Sandinistas. Getting rid of Somoza was also the focus for many in the Carter Administration. The difference was that Castro prepared his actors for their post-Somoza take-over. Vaky and Bowdler tried to do the same through the mediation, but when Somoza stayed longer, these efforts became mute.

Q: Wasn't much of the problem earlier: so much US support for people like Somoza and Batista in Cuba and the Shah in Iran and Marcos in the Philippines. All these people were anticommunist, but we gave them so much support.

BUSHNELL: This is the same point of not focusing on a single interest. When national security was the issue and we gave no attention to improving human rights, we set ourselves up for trouble. You put all your eggs in one basket, and, if that basket springs a hole, you're in bad trouble.

The blind spot of my colleagues who desperately wanted to get rid of Somoza is that they were focused just on getting rid of Somoza. The real objective should have been a democratic government in Nicaragua. Getting rid of Somoza may be necessary to get there, but let's focus on where we want to get, not just on the first step.

Q: Were there any interactions between El Salvador and Nicaragua, or totally separate situations?

BUSHNELL: We didn't see any particular interaction before the departure of Somoza except that the Salvadoran military provided some supplies to Somoza when he desperately needed them. Only later did we learn that full units of Salvadoran guerrillas had gained considerable battle experience fighting and training with the Sandinistas.

Finally the first crack in the Salvadoran iceberg, and a big one, came in October of 1979, three months after Somoza fell. A group of officers led by lieutenant colonels staged a coup. They claimed they saw what had happened in Nicaragua with the complete destruction of the Guard and the execution or jailing on most officers that were caught. They said El Salvador was on a route which was inevitably leading the same way. Thus they said they had to open up the political and economic situation. Although I don't recall them ever saying it to me – they may have – what they also saw was an enemy emerging nearby in communist Nicaragua that was going to be a base, a supply and training base, for insurgents in El Salvador. In short the recent example of Nicaragua and the nearby support base in Nicaragua made the next revolt in El Salvador look life-threatening to many Salvadoran military. Any earlier beliefs that the U.S. would assure a communist takeover did not happen were erased by the Sandinista takeover. The coup was followed by a major shakeup in the military with the exile, retirement, or reassignment of some 10% of the officer corp.

Q: Was this the first time you interacted with him?

BUSHNELL: No. I testified before Helms when I was at Treasury and for ARA in 1978 and/or 1979, but the issues had never been terribly contentious. In some respects I set myself up by taking the position that the land reform and the banking reform were needed to change the explosive trajectory of Salvadoran history and avoid a social explosion that would give the communists just the opening they were seeking. Of course, I also defended the AID programs that we were setting up to make the precipitous reforms work better; the prominent role of the AFL/CIO in these programs was a red flag for Helms. He launched several attacks on me and the program. He argued that it was grossly unfair to take away the land that families had worked hard for generations to develop and that the new cooperatives were destroying the coffee trees and undermining the economy. He said idiots like me in the State Department had no idea of what it took to produce things, and we also could not even identify communists before our nose as proven in Nicaragua. He went on at great length. Finally he said the people of North Carolina could never understand taking land away from the people that owned it; that was just against what America stood for. I was not being as cautious as I might have been, although I don't regret it, but I responded that, if almost all the good land in North Carolina were owned by 14 families, things might look very different to the people of North Carolina. This really set him off. How could I say all the land in North Carolina was owned by 14 families? How dare I suggest that land be taken away from any hard working and under-paid farmer in North Carolina? Of course, that isn't what I said at all. Over the next couple years he would mention that I was the first to favor land reform in El Salvador. I took it as a merit given the way El Salvador has progressed, but that is not the way he meant it.

In December 1979 after the icebreaker coup but before Duarte and land reform, there was a negative development which we knew about, although we did not know how to assess it. The far

left in El Salvador consisted of both urban and rural guerrillas and a more traditional urban Communist Party, which often had to operate secretly, and several small Maoist parties. All these groups were against the government, the oligarchy, and the United States, but on many issues they had been quite divided. At times there were even gun fights among the groups. Some people thought the oligarchy employed good tactics to keep the left divided. I don't think the Right had anything to do with it. There was a natural division between the guerrilla street and field fighters and the more intellectual and doctrinaire political Marxists. There were leaders such as Communist Party Secretary General Shafik Handal who were basically communist intellectual professorial types. They were quite different from the rural guerrillas who were like some of the military and just wanted to go out and kill somebody. There seemed to be little cooperation or coordination among these groups. Then in December of 1979 the Cubans, Castro and his Department of the Americas, got the leaders of these far left groups together for a long session in Cuba. Following his pattern with the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, Castro urged and pressed these groups to agree to cooperate and form a common front. It wasn't clear at the time what leverage Castro had. Certainly he could offer training and some supplies. Little did we know at the time how much he was offering. Up to this time I saw the Salvadoran left as being indigenous to El Salvador and not really dependent on Castro or the Soviets. But I had to be concerned that Castro's success in Nicaragua would encourage him to follow the same pattern in El Salvador and that the Russians, with their build-up of military materiel in Nicaragua, would bank-roll Castro and help supply the Salvadoran guerrillas.

With the advantage of hindsight we see that Castro followed basically the same tactics in Nicaragua and El Salvador, uniting and supplying the far left. The U.S. coincidentally followed completely different tactics. In Nicaragua we played a major mediating role to bring the democratic groups together, and we used distancing to urge Somoza out. In El Salvador we did little to organize a democratic alternative, but one arose. Then until January 1981 we did relatively little to support it. Yet the indigenous reformers in El Salvador beat the Castro-supported far left, while the democratic groups in Nicaragua tried unsuccessfully to change the nature of the Sandinistas. At the end of 1979 and through most of 1980 the intelligence was not very plentiful on the Salvadoran left and on their relations with Cuba and Nicaragua. I recall actually having the embassy inquire with the Salvadoran military to try to find out more about these various leftish groups. The military in El Salvador didn't seem to know much about them either, although they were their everyday enemy.

The security situation deteriorated and violence increased through 1980. The guerrillas began attacking individual military officers. In one case the guerrillas burned an officer's house with him and his family inside. The attacks on uniformed personnel provoked harsh counter-measures by the uniformed services with numerous serious human rights violations. The Treasury Police and the National Guard were the most frequent abusers. Because they operated throughout the country in small units, they were also most subject to guerrilla attack. It was becoming a desperate situation. In discussions various people from Washington and the embassy had with

Christian Democrats we learned many Christian Democrats were afraid to go into the government because they would likely be killed. In fact, a substantial number were killed. The seizure of factories continued; the extortion of funds by right and left increased. The economy, affected by the land and banking reforms as well as the increasing violence, went into a free fall despite the fact that we cranked up AID spending. We were building streets, sewers, and such things all over in order to provide employment as well as building needed infrastructure. HA began arguing for human rights sanctions. We did press the military to take a number of constructive human rights steps such as adopting a good military code of conduct and strengthening military justice. The civilian government did not seem to be responsible for human rights violations; members of the government were among the main victims. The military, or more correctly people in the military acting on their own, committed a small part of the violations. The press in the U.S. was giving much more coverage to the human rights abuses under the moderate reformist government than it ever had to the abuses of previous right-wing governments. Some abuses committed by the guerrillas were made to look like government abuses, for example the guerrillas frequently wore military uniforms particularly for urban operations.

Q: Apparently another factor strongly influencing the Reagan people was the article Jean Kirkpatrick wrote about the presumed double standards applied to dictators. Do you think her thesis was valid, and was it influential with the Reagan people?

BUSHNELL: Yes on both counts. As with most short popular analyses, Kirkpatrick's famous article was an oversimplification, but it was certainly true that the Carter Administration pressed authoritarian governments much harder on human rights when there was not another major issue such as oil supply or defending against communism. Reagan emphasized this inconsistency as a flaw in Carter's policy. One shouldn't treat this debate as completely black and white. Reagan was not saying we should have no human rights element in our foreign policy, although he did believe we should mind our mouth and stay off the bully pulpit. He was saying it was overdone by the Carter Administration. Certainly an argument which I made often in the Christopher Committee and with Christopher himself was that we didn't have a comparable worldwide policy, that we were a lot tougher with some governments in Latin America than we were elsewhere. El Salvador was a very brutal place. A lot of people were killed. It was a dictatorship. So was Romania, but we activated our aid program in Romania. We turned human rights to the side because this was a communist country that was disagreeing a bit with the Russians. There were many places around the world where human rights abuses were much worse than in Somoza's Nicaragua. He wasn't killing many people, and the press and opposition were even outspoken. The military in Nicaragua didn't decide on Saturday night to go out and kill somebody just for the hell of it. Ironically one of the best examples of the inconsistent and unintended double standard was the Carter Administration treatment of the Somoza and then the Sandinista governments in Nicaragua. We stopped military aid and tried to cut back economic

aid to Somoza, but we started a new military aid program and offered massive economic aid to the Sandinistas even though in almost every respect human rights in Nicaragua were worse under the Sandinistas than under Somoza. I favored the aid to the Sandinistas, only because I did not want them to claim we pushed them into the arms of the Cubans and the Russians. However, while HA pressed for some human rights sanction against Somoza on a weekly basis, HA hardly even wanted to mention in the annual report the many summary executions or the repressive measures against the press and even the church under the Sandinistas.

Q: What were your discussions with Haig about?

BUSHNELL: They were about Central America, primarily about El Salvador at first and then about Nicaragua. Carter had made the decision on January 16 to resume arms sales for the first time in three years with munitions sent right away to replace what the Salvadoran military had used up during the guerrillas' all-out offensive. But this initial supply was an emergency measure. The new Administration would have to address what, if anything, it would do in the longer term to help the military of El Salvador counter what was now for the first time seen clearly as a much expanded insurgent threat with substantial support from outside El Salvador, including Nicaragua and Cuba at least. There was a more moderate military in charge in El Salvador than at the beginning of the Carter Administration, but the level of violence and killing on all sides was considerably greater, reflecting the revolutionary changes taking place in El Salvador. The Salvadoran military had just confronted a guerrilla offensive far stronger than they had thought possible, and they had come close to losing it all. They were probably willing to play just about any game we put in front of them.

The question was what that game should be. It had to have a major military component to strengthen the military against future such offensives, made much easier because the guerrillas were supplied and trained out of Nicaragua nearly next door. Directly related to the military readiness questions were the issues of how we would deal with the deteriorated human rights situation and the lack of action on the American nuns' killers; also there were many issues on how we would deal with continued support from Nicaragua and Cuba or beyond. Related to all these issues was what might be called the public diplomacy crisis. Few people in the United States or around the world had been paying any attention to El Salvador. If the typical citizen knew anything about recent events in El Salvador, it was that the military or someone had killed American nuns. Without a greater public understanding of the situation there was no way any Administration could provide the type of lasting support that was needed. When I reviewed the situation with Haig, he agreed and said people must see El Salvador as the place we are stopping communism and beginning its rollback. He said President Reagan was the perfect person to educate the public on this. He got the White House fully engaged; ARA prepared an endless stream of briefing papers and talking points.

Haig said it is our job in the State Department to educate the rest of the world and get support from all our friends. It was important to get support from the NATO countries, from Japan, from other Latin American countries for our policy of stopping the communists in Central America. Probably for the first time in modern history other bureaus, especially EUR, were told their first priority was to support ARA on El Salvador. Also in these early conversations, as I said earlier, Haig came up with the idea of training whole units of Salvadoran military at Fort Benning and including human rights training. Also within the first two weeks we had the visit of Seaga, in which Haig played a major part.

Also, as I mentioned, on the day Seaga arrived, the President gave the traditional reception for the Diplomatic Corps. After I got the Seagas and their delegation settled at Blair House, my wife and I walked across the street to the White House. We were somewhat late, but our rank would have put us at the end of the reception line anyway. Not far ahead of us was the chargé from Nicaragua, also toward the end of the line because she was not an ambassador. Haig was greeting the guests and introducing them to the Reagans. I remember him really sending a message to the chargé from Nicaragua. She was a Sandinista revolutionary leader, and during the early 1970's her role had been to befriend, let's call it, one of Somoza's senior officers so that the Sandinistas could execute him in the bedroom. Haig greeted her as the military world's most dangerous girlfriend and went on to warn her that, if her government continued to support the Salvadoran guerrillas, it would become the biggest enemy of the U.S. in Latin America. When I spoke with her later, she said she had been hit with an atomic bomb. I commented that the message seemed to have gotten through.

I remember that William Clark, who was the deputy Secretary early on, was given the job of having lunch with the Latin American ambassadors to make our pitch on El Salvador. I arranged for one of the ambassadors to host the lunch, and I introduced him. Then he had me make the presentation because he was brand new to all these issues and hadn't really mastered the brief.

Q: What lessons did you learn from your experience in ARA, your experience as a Principal DAS under four assistant secretaries, as overseer of regional economic policy in the hemisphere, as a key participant in the transition process, and as Acting Assistant Secretary during the early Reagan period? What do you know now that you never would have known if you hadn't done it? Not just the facts but about overall how the State Department works, how foreign policy is made, how we do things right and we do things wrong, not specific issues.

BUSHNELL: It's certainly a general perception that the differences between administrations were greatest on this set of Latin American issues, human rights and other things to do with Latin America. If you were to pick areas where the Carter Administration and the Reagan Administration were different, these Latin American issues would certainly be one area that one would pick. However, sitting with an exceptional view on both sides of that fence, I would say

the actual differences in policy were much less than the public thinks or that the literature makes out. There was a lag at the end of the Carter Administration in catching up with the progress that Latin America was making on human rights. A number of Latin American countries such as Chile and Argentina had stopped major human rights abuses. Some might see this improvement as a credit to the Carter human rights policies, but I think it was largely the result of the internal dynamics in these countries. The end of an administration is not the time people focus on policy changes. It's easy to leave an issue to the next administration whether it's the same people or different people. Thus I think a second Carter Administration would have done most of the things the Reagan Administration did, at least during the first six months. Of course, the turnaround on El Salvador in terms of supplying the Salvadoran military with lethal material came in the last week of the Carter Administration. The Reagan Administration would have done the same thing, and a second Carter Administration would have come up with a follow-up package to strengthen the Salvador military and improve its human rights performance probably not much different from the Haig package, although whole units would not have been trained in the States. If the Carter Administration had gotten the captured documents on Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Russian involvement in El Salvador, it would have stopped aid to Nicaragua as the Reagan Administration did. It might also have cast Central America in the worldwide anti-communist light although probably not as quickly and decisively as the Reagan Administration did.

I came away from that transition, which is seen generally as about as big a policy swing as the pendulum takes, understanding that the pendulum doesn't swing very far in US foreign policy. In fact our policy on most things is pretty much the same regardless of who wins elections. The biggest differences are in rhetoric – what you say about it rather than what you do. The rhetoric emphasis in Latin America was in terms of stopping Communism and Castro in the Reagan Administration while it was on the improvement of human rights in the Carter Administration. In both cases rhetoric was exaggerated. I participated in that exaggeration, probably more on the anti-communist side because I was then Acting Assistant Secretary while I had been trying to moderate the human rights extremists during the Carter years.

RICHARD MELTON

Office of Central American Affairs, Director

Washington, DC (1985-1988)

Richard H. Melton was born on August 8, 1935 in Rockville, Maryland. He received his BA from Cornell University in 1958. He later attended Wisconsin University where he received his MA in 1971. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961 and served in many countries throughout his career including Nicaragua,

*the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Portugal, England, Uruguay, and Costa Rica.
Mr. Melton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 27, 1997.*

Q: Then in 1985, you were assigned to the Department as the Director of the Office of Central American Affairs. That was a quiet time--only a civil war and a counter-revolution simultaneously.

MELTON: When I was in Uruguay, I received a message asking me to return to the Department for consultations. It was a period of turmoil for ARA personnel with five DCM vacancies and other senior positions still to be filled after Reagan's re-election of 1984. So the Bureau decided to bring to Washington as many candidates for these jobs as it could identify and to conduct a mini job fair, with the DCM candidates being interviewed at the same time by the ambassadors to those five countries. These chiefs of mission were to select their DCMs through this round-robin interview process--it was a unique approach to senior personnel decisions. I was interviewed by all five ambassadors, although I had some reservations about taking another DCM position. It was an interesting experience; I was offered several of those vacant DCM jobs, including Honduras and Peru, but in the final analysis, I thought I had already served as a DCM and I would gain greater experience in an executive position in the Department--as an office director.

Now let me turn to Honduras. Of all of the Central American countries, Honduras would be in the second tier. It was traditionally the poorest country in the region. There had been an effort in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Central America to break away from dependence on a single agricultural product--sugar cane, bananas, coffee, pineapples, timber. Honduras never made the break. There were efforts, but they were modest indeed. El Salvador was the most successful in this effort. It was the smallest country, but it had attracted enough investment in industry to have built a respectable base. A simultaneous effort to achieve economic integration in Central America essentially benefited established industries--those that were already dominant in one or more countries of the region. So countries like Honduras, with no industries, fell farther behind. El Salvador did achieve significant benefits from economic integration as did Guatemala. Benefits elsewhere were modest.

Honduras was left largely behind. There was a separation between inland Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, on the coast. San Pedro Sula was doing much better. Honduras was traditionally controlled by conservative military leaders, regardless of the form of government. Honduras had not been friendly towards either El Salvador or Nicaragua--wary of the latter and in frequent conflict with the former. Much of the tension resulted from population spill over from fast growing, but tiny El Salvador. The famous "soccer war" between the two countries reflected these tensions. Animosity between Honduras and El Salvador had existed for many years. We

had tried in the 1970s to balance our military assistance between the two countries--at low level. By the mid-1980s, the situation had changed; El Salvador and Nicaragua had risen to the top of our agenda; Honduras had become a partner in our policy; El Salvador was a zone of conflict between the Duarte government and the Marxist insurgents, the FMLN.

Honduras had gone through a political transformation; it had held democratic elections which resulted in a civilian President. But democratic institutions were non-existent or very weak, so that the military remained in *de facto* control. Our policy to build democratic institutions in the region first had to deal with ongoing conflict both in Nicaragua and El Salvador; Honduras took lower priority once again.

The Salvadoran guerrillas established training and rest and recuperation facilities in UN-run refugee camps just over the Honduran border, which the Honduran military viewed as a threat to the security of their country. On their other border, the Salvadorans saw the major build up by the Sandinista armed forces. So they obviously supported all our efforts to reduce the power of the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran guerrillas. When the Nicaraguan Resistance or Contras were formed, the Honduran military were quite sympathetic because they viewed this force as a buffer between themselves and the Sandinistas. So the Hondurans cooperated in our efforts to support the Contras.

Guatemala was a terrible story. It had long endured low-level indigenous guerrilla warfare. The population was heavily Indian--the most in the region. The guerrilla movement had started with the Indians. The regime's response was ruthless and much bloodshed ensued. The country had always suffered from violence--individuals were personally armed. That was true in much of Central America; they were violent societies and the shedding of blood seemed to come much too easily. The guerrilla warfare in Guatemala was low level, but persistent. It had not captured much attention, except from some US groups--which highlighted the human rights abuses taking place in the region. These groups quite properly were applying pressure to reduce the level of the abuses and the violence.

Many of these groups blamed the abuses and violence on US policy. That was a problem; most of those involved in the policy, on all sides, would agree that the abuses were taking place, but differences would appear when it came to assessing blame. The critics maintained that US policy was at the root of the problems; some even suggested that the U.S. itself was guilty of some of the abuses. The policy makers focused on how the abuses could be mitigated while keeping the focus on other policy issues, including economic development and democratization. So efforts at dialogue between policy-makers and critics quickly broke down with each side accusing the other of bad faith.

In one case I recall, one of the critics was calling attention to some human rights abuses in

Guatemala and holding US policies responsible. One of my staff said, "That is factually wrong. We should answer that allegation." It was not the specific case that was at the issue; it was overall U.S. policy that was being challenged. In retrospect, by publicly responding to specific allegations, we may have actually heightened the level of the polemics. That might have been inevitable, but I look back with some regret on that episode, which appeared to pit us against the human rights advocates. People who were calling attention to the abuses were correct to do so, as were we in defending US policy. It was unfortunate that the two sides could never have a meeting of minds. If we could have, we might have made more progress quicker.

As I have said, one of our principal goals in the region was to foster democratic development. Progress was hindered by endemic human rights abuses and violence. Add to that mix the guerrilla movements which perpetuated the violence. Our challenge was to find means to change this situation over the long run. The policy makers viewed the Salvadoran guerrillas and the Sandinistas as essentially anti-democratic. They were authoritarian and based on a Marxist philosophy which certainly was not democratic. In addition, these insurgents were guilty of extensive human rights abuses. They were certainly not the democratic answer for the region. So our priority was to find democratic alternatives to these guerrilla movements.

RICHARD T. McCORMACK

US 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: Did you get any feel for the Senator's policy towards Latin America? We said at least at some point, around the time you were there when Reagan came in, he seemed to be a great supporter of what we call the right-wing dictatorships and all that.

McCORMACK: Remember this: 1980 was the height of the Cold War. You had active Cuban and Russian attempts to destabilize and communize Central America. When I was on the Senator's staff, I went to Nicaragua in 1980. I got to know all the Sandinista leadership,

including Borge, Ortega, and all those people. The message I had for them was this. “We don’t particularly like the government of Mr. Tito in Yugoslavia. We know he runs an authoritarian or a quasi-communist government. If you refrain from exporting your revolution and treat your own people halfway decently, you, like Tito, will not have problems with the U.S. government. But if you start exporting guns and revolution to the neighborhood, we will be on you like a frog on a June bug.” They assured me that they would not export revolution and guns or attempt to subvert the region. But in fact they did. The rest is history. The third world counter attacks by the Reagan administration and other measures increased the cost to the Soviet Union. Eventually the Soviet Union’s economy cracked under financial pressure. The defeat in Afghanistan in particular also helped break the morale of the muscular side of the Soviet security services.

Q: Well let’s talk about 1985 when you came in. What was the status of Central America and talk about how you viewed it and what you were doing.

McCORMACK: Problems in Central America began when Nicaraguan Sandinistas abused human rights and began killing and jailing people. Ortega and Borge also began looting the country with their colleagues. A disgruntled former Yugoslavian comrade of Tito, Milovan Djilas, wrote a wonderful book called *The New Class*, which described what happens when communist rulers come to power. The big houses of the rich men have new occupants. Mercedes cars are driven by other people: a new class. The Sandinistas became the new class. They started getting kickbacks on every imaginable business angle. That was not the worst part. The worst part was they began serving as a conduit of weapons to the communists, who were fighting in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. This is what brought the United States down on them hard.

Q: What was driving them do you think? I mean was this ideology?

McCORMACK: It was ideology. Remember the Brezhnev Doctrine about communism marching in only one direction? Remember the KGB? Remember Che Guevara in Bolivia? This ideology of spreading communism backed by a forceful KGB was a real and a grave threat. The world was different in those days. Our friends had lost in Southeast Asia and in Afghanistan. We had serious problems in Angola and elsewhere. Things were going badly for us in Ethiopia. At this time, you had this group of Central American communists who thought they were the wave of the future. They were given weapons, money, and assistance by the Soviets, from the KGB, and from Cubans who were the conduits. That was a strategy that went back to the 1920s. So we were anxious not to let that unfold without challenge in our hemisphere.

Of course the CIA was involved in this struggle, and there was some tension in the administration on overall strategy with regard to dealing with communist insurgencies. Central America was part of a larger effort that was being made to confront the Soviets anywhere they were supporting insurgencies, so there would be no more cheap victories for them.

PANAMA

CLYDE DONALD TAYLOR

Consular Officer

Panama City (1964-1966)

Ambassador Clyde Donald Taylor was born in Columbia in 1937. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Wheaton College in 1959 he received his master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from American University in 1961. His career has included positions in Panama City, Canberra, San Salvador, Teheran, and an ambassadorship to Paraguay. Ambassador Taylor was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in January 1996.

TAYLOR: In Spring of 1964, I was assigned to Panama as Vice Consul.

Q: Being born in Colombia and having this background, had you had Latin America as something you were going to point yourself towards?

TAYLOR: Well, it was the language that I had, not real well, but I had some Spanish. And I had taken several courses at the graduate level in Latin American regional studies. So I remember that my first preferences in the assignment processes were in Latin America, and my first assignment was to have been in Caracas. That was an interesting introduction into the Foreign Service assignment process, because on the day we were being moved, I was told that the position I was going to was being filled by someone from Maracaibo because they shouldn't have assigned that person to Maracaibo. And so here we were the day of the move, and my assignment was canceled, and my in-laws were already in New York to see us off on the boat, and we had known about that assignment for nine months.

Q: You got to Panama when?

TAYLOR: In April of 1964.

Q: You were there from April '64 until when?

TAYLOR: Until, I think it was June of '66.

Q: What was your job in Panama?

TAYLOR: I was the Vice Consul for everything except visas. I handled citizenship services, a very big Federal benefits program, a lot of relations that involved the Republic of Panama, with

the government of the Canal Zone, and with the military in the Canal Zone, so I often said I worked with three governments. It was a fascinating job.

Q: We have some of the same problems, don't we, in Tijuana even today, where you have people, consular officers and families and all, living in the San Diego area, and commuting on a daily basis. Maybe that's stopped, I don't know. We have this a lot, of course, in Europe, where our people do their shopping in major commissaries and PXs, including those out of country. And to the extent that they do that, they're not getting to know the local shopkeepers, and walking the local streets, and it's an economic determination but it's unfortunate to the role of a diplomat, which should be to try and mix and get to know people. By the way, I can't remember exactly when the Dominican intervention came - was that while you were in Panama, or not?

TAYLOR: I think I was in Australia at that point.

Q: Okay, fine, if you don't remember, I was just wondering... Then you left there in '66. Oh, by the way, how about consular cases? Arrest cases.

TAYLOR: The workload in Panama was fascinating, each aspect of it. I worked with the military to develop arrangements and information on how we could encourage our residents in the Canal Zone, military and civilians, to drive the Inter-American Highway to Central America and to the States when they went on their transfers and holidays. We thought that that would be good for diplomacy and good for their personal growth. So we developed maps and booklets and through our embassies tried to facilitate such travel. That was a fun exercise.

I was interview for a five-part series in the Los Angeles Times, that was called "The End of the Road," referring to Panama City as (save 38 miles) the end of the Inter-American Highway until it resumed in Colombia. It consisted of anecdotal stories I gave the reporter each representing a case where people did not know we were the end of the road.

And this responds to your question about my workload, because I averaged in each of those two years some 300 welfare and protection cases, defining a case as that which took at least an hour. And the bulk of those were young people who would come down as far as Panama and would assume that they could easily get on a ship back to the States. What they did not know was that there was a huge resident seaman's community in Panama, and a lot of these people didn't want to work full-time, so they were available. There were a lot of them, and they had their seamen's cards. So the typical case was two to four students would show up in the office in the morning, and they'd be down to their last few dollars, and they would want that repatriation loan from the State Department that had been made famous by Lee Harvey Oswald. They'd say, "Hi, Cons, where's my money?" That's the way the conversation would start. I inherited a small fund from the local American Society, and to this day I'm proud of the fact that that fund was diminished by, I think, \$50 during my two years. I managed to get money from everybody's family, get

some old loans repaid, and only take one loan out of that repatriation, and that was for a large Puerto Rican family of eight.

But we had peculiar cases: we had those who tried to breach the Darien Gap (where the Inter-American Highway becomes a swampy, jungle stretch) in an amphibious jeep and got stuck. We had people who would assume they could just drive from Panama to South America. I remember two Jehovah's Witnesses out of New York who drove all the way down to Panama on their way to Belem, Brazil. They walked into my office, pointed to strip maps and other maps from AAA, and said, "AAA told us to go into the Embassy in Panama, and you would give us the rest of the strip map." When I explained to them that they could not drive from Panama to the east coast of South America, they were appalled, and likewise, that they couldn't drive to South America at all.

Q: Particularly during the '30s and up to the '60s, there was great talk about the Pan American Highway, where you could go...

TAYLOR: You could go 38 miles from Panama south to Chepo, and then it ended. And then you hit swamp. But a number of folk would come to Panama by road or otherwise and think it was easy for them to go by road from there on.

Q: Well, how did the Panamanians deal with, I mean, how did you find the Panamanian police and authorities dealing with Americans who got in trouble there?

TAYLOR: Well, they were quite cooperative, because basically, what we wanted to do was get them out of our jurisdiction, and they didn't want them in their jails if they didn't have to be. A lot of the incidents related to the military, and of course, the military had people that worked those, and I worked with the military enforcement and judicial folk. We had a community of pensioners, a large community of West Indian pensioners, that was our Federal Benefits Program, and that's another story of service. But we had a small community of Americans that would find it inexpensive to live in rural parts of Panama, and they created difficulties, because they often died intestate families or their U.S. Relatives couldn't reach them. And then we also had a small workload, small in number but large in difficulties, of people who would fly from Miami to Panama - it was about \$63 in those days - and it seemed that there was a high number of people with mental problems, people who were under U.S. Veterans Administration or other U.S. Governmental care, who weren't mentally well, and they would come to our attention because they were doing peculiar things in some small town in Panama, and we had to deal with those, and try to repatriate them by a return flight to Miami.

Q: In those days, though, you could kind of, with cooperation, really get somebody to get a tranquilizing shot and get them on the plane.

TAYLOR: Well, this confesses almost a breach of human rights here, but on several occasions, we would arrange with authorities in the Canal Zone to drive one of these unwell folk into the Canal Zone and have them arrested, and then during that period of detention without charges,

transport would be arranged to send them back to Miami, and it would be covered by the old HEW. And so, it would move into domestic resources of the U.S. Government, and all the arrangements would be handled by the Canal Zone. That's because we developed good cooperation there.

And same on deaths. The Canal Zone had a crematorium, and a mortuary that we were able to use. This worked well through the first year of my tour, and then we hit another manifestation of Panama's exercise of sovereignty. They caught on to this use of the Canal Zone, and realized that there was money in the mortician business, and so they prohibited any transfer of American bodies into the Canal Zone. Not surprisingly, my second year witnessed some very messy and contentious death and returned bodies cases.

Q: The drug culture hadn't really hit at that point.

TAYLOR: No, I had never heard of drugs at that point. We had a lot of contraband activity.

Q: Contraband being what?

TAYLOR: Well, it was tobacco, liquor, and electronic appliances, because Panama had duty free zones in both ends of the Canal. There was a heavy trans shipment business and things would somehow (local corruption) leak out; goods would go from the duty free zone and be flown to Curacao or to other islands, other parts of Latin America, and enter illegally.

The odd kind of thing is you'd have contrabandists come to the Embassy with complaints that their plane was stolen, or complaints that were over some civil air issue when they were in the contraband business. Clearly, the business was so well established that they felt comfortable in pursuing rights they might otherwise have had. Those were interesting cases.

BRANDON GROVE

Director, Office of Panamanian Affairs

Washington, DC (1969-1971)

Brandon Grove Jr. was born in Chicago in 1929 and lived in Hamburg, Germany at the time of Hitler's rise to power. Before Germany invaded Poland, his father was transferred to Holland and later to Madrid in 1940. He attended Fordham University and later Bard College and Princeton University. He has served in numerous countries including Ivory Coast, India, East and West Germany and Israel. In 1984 he was named ambassador to Zaire. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1994.

GROVE: The executive director of the Bureau of American Republics Affairs (ARA), Findley Burns, called me in Berlin. I met this urbane Baltimorean with a dry sense of humor when he was in charge of administering our London embassy, and have encountered few others who understood bureaucratic politics better. Findley's job was to manage the bureau's resources, including personnel. Charles A. Meyer, the assistant secretary, had been newly appointed by the incoming Nixon administration. Charlie had previously been a Sears, Roebuck executive, and wanted fresh blood in his bureau. Cheerful and a dapper man, his talents were in management.

The State Department had decided to make its country director positions pivotal in bilateral relations. Country directors usually supervise clusters of desk officers, who deal with individual countries in larger regional groupings, such as the offices of Andean, or Central America affairs. Three or four of us, without previous experience in Latin America, were asked whether we would be interested in becoming country directors in ARA. Findley wanted me to be Coordinator for Cuban Affairs and I readily agreed, believing my Berlin experience might help.

By the time I returned to Washington, however, a decision was made to manage Cuban Affairs through Robert A. Hurwitch, a deputy assistant secretary in ARA. The Panama directorate opened up in the meantime and was offered to me. This assignment brought me to a new continent, the fourth in four assignments. I probably should have been concerned by my lack of a home bureau and regional specialization, which are important in the politics of the Department's assignment process, but was either too new or unaware to care. I welcomed this opportunity to learn about another part of the world. Given the same choice, I would again opt for wide-ranging geographic assignments. My regret is that I never served in the Asian bureau.

Torrijos was a charismatic leader, popular among his people. He favored the common man and took every opportunity to make that known. The gap between rich and poor in Panama was wide, and Torrijos' populist message resonated with a lot of Panamanians. The oligarchs hated him and distrusted his motives. He was a handsome man with a drinker's belly, who liked women--and they liked him. He was an effective leader of the National Guard, esteemed by his men. Manuel Noriega, in charge of intelligence, was then one of his chief lieutenants and a principal contact for our civilian and military intelligence people. Torrijos had a reputation for being comparatively free of corruption, but I could not vouch for that. He was straight-forward in what he said and did, and led a modest life without the trappings of wealth and power of many of his Latin American counterparts, although he worked closely with the business community.

While Torrijos was critical and outspoken about the US role in Panama, which he accurately described as colonial in many respects, he was capable of listening as well as making populist speeches. One could have a rational discussion with Torrijos. He quickly understood where you were coming from, a necessary quality in his relations with Ambassador Sayre, who could be equally tough, blunt, and persistent, in fluent Spanish. As we engaged in efforts to change the

fundamental relationships over the canal between our two countries, Torrijos became immersed in the treaty negotiation process. Decisions of any consequence needed his approval.

My view of Torrijos was not popular in Washington, at least initially. People felt uneasy about this military officer, leader of a National Guard known for its corruption and blatant disregard for human rights, and a rumored narcotics trafficker. He became a convenient scapegoat for treaty renegotiation opponents in congress, who insisted we knew too little about Torrijos to make him a trustworthy negotiating partner, and that what we did know was not encouraging. Sayre and I never tried to portray him as a saint; that was hardly the issue. The question was whether Torrijos was pragmatic, consistent, and above all reliable. Could we work with him?

Our official attitude towards Torrijos changed markedly by the end of my tour in 1971. We had serious differences with Panama and problems in our relations, but we got past the hurdle of attributing bad faith and hidden motives to Torrijos as an individual. Bob Sayre and succeeding ambassadors came to have workable relations with him. From the outset the White House under Nixon and Carter never wavered.

In the end, we reached an agreement in 1978 which was fair and honorable for both sides. Then Torrijos was killed in an unexplained plane crash in 1981. He was one of a kind, and deserves a biography that displays his strong points, not just the negative ones.

We were deeply engaged in obtaining Panama Canal Treaty implementation legislation in the House of Representatives. The treaty had been ratified by the Senate in April of 1978, and was therefore the law of the land. The canal would be owned by Panama at the turn of the century. Congress now needed to implement and fund the treaty's provisions. This required us to meet often with members and staffs of the engaged committees, and testify before them. There remained strong resistance to the treaty itself in the House, led by Congressman John Murphy, a Democrat from Staten Island, NY.

The Department's efforts to obtain this necessary legislation were headed by Ambassador David H. Popper, whose small staff was entirely devoted to treaty implementation. David was a solid professional. We got along well in areas where our responsibilities overlapped. Congressional relations were in the deft hands of Elizabeth Frawley in the Office of Legislative Affairs (H), who had worked on the Hill, and spent nearly all of her time there promoting implementation legislation. Too few in H were willing to walk the corridors day in and day out, as she did. Politics seemed in her blood. Our views not only gained support, but we were well informed about what the members were thinking.

This was my first opportunity to testify before a congressional committee. It is an intimidating experience at best. To prepare, I learned everything I could about treaty implementation

requirements. Most of the hearings were held by the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee because they concerned the Panama Canal itself. Since treaty implementation legislation was a politically charged issue, these hearings were well attended by the media. One could expect a crowd and klieg lights.

On one occasion, the committee stayed in session for nearly a whole day. The witnesses were General McAuliffe, of the Southern Command, and myself. We did not have lunch and were not offered water. Committee members strolled in and out of the hearings as the spirit moved them. We sweated under hot lights, listening to members on the high dais make long statements, pro and con, and parried hostile questions. I was physically drained but believed, as did McAuliffe, that we had held our ground. He was a forceful and impressive witness. His military record, four stars and bearing gave his words special weight with the committee.

In addition to understanding the subject matter and policy objectives of his testimony, a government witness before a congressional committee needs to be aware of the makeup of the audiences. These are, first, the committee members themselves and the domestic and foreign media. An interested country will have its embassy's officials at the hearing. Reporting by the media can be instantaneous for a wide audience. An offhand comment that seems of little consequence in Washington can assume major proportions in another capital and provoke strong reactions, particularly if national pride is offended. This becomes a damage control headache for the local American ambassador.

Transcripts of hearings are printed several weeks after they occur. An opening statement by the witness provides an important opportunity to shape the record. Texts of opening statements are usually sent to committees, at the insistence of their staffs, 48 hours before hearings are scheduled to provide staffers time to develop committee strategy. Skilled witnesses know how to make their main points at any opportunity, offering only a perfunctory reply to the question put to them and continuing with their own agenda.

The public impact of hearings dissipates. It is gone after the chairman closes the session, the scruffily dressed camera crews pack up, television reporters expound on the evening news, and the print press files its stories. If media coverage has been heavy, a vague impression of the hearing may be left with the public. What remains for those seriously concerned with legislative history is the enduring record itself.

In the end, adequate implementation legislation for the Panama Canal Treaties of 1978 was passed by the congress, for which much credit goes to David Popper.

LAWRENCE I. PLOTKIN

USIA Program Officer

Panama City (1977-1980)

Lawrence I. Plotkin was born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in Southern California. He attended the University of California at Los Angeles and joined USIA in 1973. His posts included Poland, Panama, Washington, DC, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. Plotkin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

PLOTKIN: I was due to leave Poland in September, 1977; Ruth's year of leave-without-pay ended in mid-July. We needed tandem onward assignments. Because Ruth was a political officer who had, as was the norm, spent her first tour doing consular work, our main goal for our first assignment together was to get her into a political officer's slot that didn't require a new language for her. Since the only foreign language in which she was fluent was Spanish - she was 4/4 at least in Spanish - we only looked at English and Spanish speaking posts. That's how we ended up in Panama where there were jobs for both of us. We were there from 1977 to '80 and participated in giving away the canal.

Q: What was it like in Panama in '77?

PLOTKIN: We were there at a very good time in U.S.-Panamanian relations. We arrived shortly after General Torrijos and President Carter signed the Panama Canal Treaties, but before either country had ratified them. Panama held a plebiscite on the treaty in October 1997. There was never much doubt about the outcome. What was most significant was that Torrijos, probably under pressure from President Carter, legalized the political parties historically active in Panama, but suppressed earlier under his rule. They were invited to participate in the debate on the treaty. We helped monitor the plebiscite which went smoothly. Panamanians overwhelmingly voted in favor of the treaty.

There was real doubt as to whether the U.S. Senate would ratify it. The first six months we were in Panama, 44 members of the U.S. Senate, assorted members of the House, veterans of foreign wars and John Wayne, a buddy of Torrijos, all appeared on the Embassy's doorstep. We developed a very well organized dog and pony show for our visitors. They met Panamanians for and against and Americans for and against. They met the heads of the Canal Zone and of SOUTHCOM, our Canal Zone military. They often met Torrijos and the head of the Archbishop of Panama. They all got a helicopter tour of the canal. We took turns acting as their escorts. Ruth and I had no children yet, so were able to enjoy the excitement. It's impossible to know whether the Embassy had any influence on the Senate vote, but the treaty barely got the two-thirds majority it needed to pass the Senate. If we changed one vote to yes, we did make a difference.

Q: Who was our ambassador?

PLOTKIN: We served two political appointees: William Jordan and Ambler Moss.

Q: Was there concern on the part of the officers at the embassy about whether the Panamanians would be able to run the canal?

PLOTKIN: Most of us were convinced they could. We all knew Panamanians in a variety of professions, knew they were well qualified, and knew that Panama had many people capable of running a complex institution. We also knew that they had the will to do so, an interest in proving themselves, and of course a huge economic interest in the Canal. It remains, after all, the country's main source of foreign currency. By and large it was my impression that we could honestly tell the visiting Senators, many of whom were concerned about this, that the transfer could take place successfully and the U.S. shipping would not be at risk. The Panamanians have succeeded. The issue now is whether to try to widen the canal to accommodate modern larger ships.

Q: How was Torrijos?

PLOTKIN: He was interesting man. The consensus at the embassy was that if he held free and fair elections and ran for the presidency he would win. He wasn't, of course, popular among the old oligarchy that had run the country before him and has run it since Noriega's departure. However, he had a deep political base among the people in general. Economically, Panama was doing well and Torrijos did a lot to integrate government, bringing in people who were not from the European-ancestry elite. Indians, Blacks and Asians were able to compete for important jobs in government for the first time. It was a terrible shock to Panama when his airplane flew into a mountainside a couple of years after we left Panama.

Q: What was your job in Panama?

PLOTKIN: I was a jack of all trades. There were four USIS officers: a PAO, CAO, IO, and a program officer. I was the most junior of the gang and served as program officer. I ran the professional and academic exchange programs; managed the speaker programs, and dealt with human rights issues. I also backed-up everybody else and, for example, was acting CAO for six months of my tour.

Q: Was there much academic exchanges?

PLOTKIN: We didn't fund many academic exchanges, but a lot of Panamanians went to the States for college educations at their own expense. Notre Dame and LSU were high on the list of schools attended. Accordingly, we did a lot of academic advising, helping Panamanians find the best fit among American universities, helping them with admission and scholarship applications, etc. Our major problem, which we never solved, was that the best of those who couldn't afford a

U.S. education were often offered and accepted scholarships to study in Cuba. The U.S. government had decided not to compete for these people, to our regret.

Q: I would have thought relations between the embassy and the Zone were rather tense since many Zonians believed the State Department was giving away their country.

PLOTKIN: There were three centers of American authority in Panama: SOUTHCOM, the military command; the Canal Zone and its government; and the Embassy. On paper, the Embassy had the lead. There were regular meetings at a variety of levels of representatives of the three organizations, including a meeting at least once a month among the three public affairs officers, working to make sure that the messages we were giving the Panamanians weren't contradictory and were at least complimentary. We did not always succeed, but by and large it worked out pretty well.

Obviously, the Americans in the Canal Zone did not want to give up control of that strip of land and water and made that clear to anyone who would listen, directly to the Senators who came to Panama and to the U.S.G., working through their families in the U.S.

Q: Did you have to beat off attacks by American conservatives about the treaty?

PLOTKIN: Of course. Ronald Reagan said something like, "We built it, we own it, it is ours." Certainly the American right was among the most vocally opposed to giving away the canal. It was a hot issue, but it didn't survive the reality of the transfer. As you know, President Reagan died recently. I watched a lot of the TV coverage and in the media I saw there was never a mention of the Panama Canal treaty, pro or con. I think that's because once the battle over ratification was over, and the treaties went into effect and it was clear that ships would continue to transit the canal without problem, the American right and everyone else forgot about it. It became non-issue almost immediately.

Q: Were you running into what later got to be a rather septic situation with Noriega, anti-Americanism and all that?

PLOTKIN: We did see anti-Americanism on the Panamanian far left, centered largely at the University of Panama which harbored a hard core of communist students. Every once in a while, students would spot an outsider's car on the campus, burn it, and dance the usual 'Yankees Go Home' ritual. It happened to our DCM's car. All this would upset my mother who would see it on television in Los Angeles, call and ask whether we were okay. At least on one such occasion we didn't even know there had been a demonstration at the university. The demonstrations typically involved no more than a few hundred students, but the television cameras would zoom in and could make it look like thousands. It was so much a local, University of Panama event that it had almost no impact on anyone other than the car's owner. Soccer games were more significant.

Another aspect of U.S.-Panamanian relations we frequently encountered involved the human rights. Panamanian activists, encouraged by President Carter's human rights policies, were pressing Torrijos for greater democracy. Torrijos was, after all, a military dictator even if, by 1977, he was about as benign a military dictator as you can imagine. The Embassy was often put in a situation that can only be called ironic. Activists were saying in the same breath, we don't want the United States to interfere in Panama, but can you please help us get rid of Torrijos.

Anti-Americanism surged with the U.S. invasion and imprisonment of Noriega, but the relationship is improving under the current Panamanian government.

Q: What was going on in the rest of Central America at that time? Later, during the Reagan's tenure in the early '80s it became quite nasty.

PLOTKIN: It was a dramatic time in the region with problems ranging from the Jim Jones mass suicide in Guyana - people from our embassy ended up going there to help clean up the mess - to the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua which drove Somoza from office. We were also aware of events brewing in Guatemala and El Salvador. At one point, Ruth and I briefly hosted Malcolm Barnebey, later our first ambassador to Belize. He was on his way through Panama to Nicaragua to convince Somoza that it was time for him to leave.

Although it was not directly related to U.S. relations with Central American, we also had the Shah of Iran in residence while we were in Panama. After the Shah visited the United States for cancer treatment, he was invited by Torrijos to come to Panama for sanctuary. He ended up spending several months on a resort island in the Bay of Panama, continuing medical treatment for the cancer that ultimately killed him after he went to Cairo. One night when I was acting information officer, I got a phone call at about 2200 from a radio station in Chicago asking whether it was true that the Panamanians were about to extradite the Shah back to Iran. Of course I had heard nothing of this and all I could do was to claim ignorance and say that I would inquire and I call back.

I called Ambassador Moss who said there was nothing to the story. I called the Panamanian president's spokesperson; he, too, said nothing's happening. I called the Shah's press attaché who also said there's nothing to it. Meanwhile, my phone rang nonstop from 10:00 that evening until 10:00 the next morning with calls from all around the United States, from Ireland and beyond. All I could tell them was that as far as I could determine from talking to the responsible offices in Panama, nothing was going on. "How do we know you're telling the truth?" I could only respond that, "If Panama extradites him, you'll know I'm either misinformed or lying. If they don't extradite him, you'll know I'm telling the truth. All I can tell you is what these people have told me."

It turned out not to be so simple. A year later, I think it was in 1981, after we returned to Washington, Pierre Salinger had a television special in which he reported that the Panamanians had been very close to extraditing the Shah. Apparently, the Iranians' side blew it. Iran and

Panama had an agreement that would have sent the extradition request to the Panamanian courts. Their decision could have led to the Shah's extradition to Iran. But part of the agreement was that the two governments were to make simultaneous announcements of the agreement. The Iranians jumped the gun and the Panamanians told them to stuff it. At least that's the story as I understand it.

Q: Although it wasn't your particular bailiwick I assume working with the media in Panama was very different than in Warsaw. Was there a free press?

PLOTKIN: It was a free press and an often undisciplined and irresponsible press. We spent a lot of time deciding whether to ignore stories and let them just die of their own lack of substance or whether to craft a response. President Carter's human rights policies led, in part, to the freedom enjoyed by the Panamanian media. Part of what Torrijos promised in return for the treaties was reinstatement of the political parties and a greater freedom of the media. It created an opportunity for both Ruth and me because our responsibilities overlapped. Within the political section, she was responsible for dealing with the newly liberated political parties and the human rights activists. As part of my USIS portfolio I covered the same territory.

Q: Was there much in the way of human rights problems?

PLOTKIN: Not dramatic ones, but when you live under a military dictatorship, however mild, there are limits on what you think you can say and do without risk. There weren't lots of political prisoners or overt instances of repression.

Q: One thinks of Latin America and liberation theology. Was that an active force there?

PLOTKIN: It had no significant presence, because unlike most of the countries where it was a vital factor, Panama was becoming increasingly democratic and there was no Panamanian insurgency. The country is, of course, largely Catholic. The Archbishop was a very good contact of the Embassy and was highly admired by most Panamanians. There was real freedom of religion in Panama; its Protestant and Jewish communities were thriving. Basically it was a very tolerant society. I remember being in the mountain town of El Valle, a place we would retreat to for a cool breeze. At a restaurant there was a large extended family at lunch. There must have been 20 people. Among them were people of Asian, African and European descent. When the family's grandfather stood up, he looked like my grandfather. There was a lot of intermarriage. As I said, a liberal and tolerant society.

Q: Were the Soviets and Cubans messing around there?

PLOTKIN: It was a time when they were active in many places in the region and they had a presence in Panama. There was a degree of contact and cooperation between Torrijos and Castro, but it was nothing compared to the Soviet and Cuban involvement in Nicaragua and some other

Latin American countries. As I mentioned earlier, the Cubans were a real presence on the educational scene.

Q: Anything else we should cover on your time in Panama?

PLOTKIN: The main event of our personal lives was the birth there of our older daughter, Anya. She has the right to run for the Panamanian presidency if she likes, but she hasn't been back since we left when she was eleven months old.

FREDERICK A. BECKER

Regional Labor Officer

Panama City (1985-1988)

Frederick A. Becker was born in Missouri. He graduated from Washington College in St. Louis, and Berkeley and Claremont Graduate Schools. After entering the Foreign Service in 1975, his postings abroad included Bucharest, Brasilia, Quito, Panama City, and Managua. He was interviewed in 2004 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: One last question on this period, more out of pure curiosity. How stood the Panama hat business?

BECKER: It was wonderful. There's a town on the coast called Montecristo and its claim to fame is that they grow a particularly supple kind of bamboo in the nearby swamps that produced wonderful Panama hats. Of course, the origin of the Panama hat was that *sombreros* produced in Ecuador found their way to Panama at the time of the building of the Panama Canal. They were quite prized and practical and popular there, and they became known as Panama hats even though the highest quality ones are still produced in Ecuador.

Q: I read a book called I think The Panama Hat Trail or something like that?

BECKER: Really!

Q: A very good account of this. Well, then Rick you left there in 1985? What happened?

BECKER: I was well established as a labor officer, had a good reputation for my labor work in Ecuador and Brazil. I was asked if I wanted to be the regional labor officer for Panama and Costa Rica. Panama was not my top choice of countries to go to. I had managed to spend a fair amount of time in Latin America without ever having served in the tropics. As a Californian, I don't like hot, humid weather, but that's where the assignment process led me. So my family and I took home leave and arrived in our embassy in Panama City in the fall of 1985.

Q: You were there for how long?

BECKER: I was in Panama for three years, until 1988.

Q: Did you get any feel for the labor attaché business per se particularly after World War II? This is a big deal, I mean we were particularly in Europe and all I mean really pushing labor movements and all, but by the time you got to the Reagan administration did you have the feeling that sort of American overall interest in the labor movement was dying down?

BECKER: I think the Republicans may have had more appreciation of the overseas role of the U.S. trade union movement than the Democrats.

Q: That's interesting.

BECKER: They looked at the projection of U.S. labor interests abroad as an important tool in the fight against communism and far-left political influence. There was a recognition that labor unions, even though they didn't represent a large percent of the local population, had the capacity to do serious mischief against fledgling democratic or pro-U.S. governments, or against U.S. overseas investors, who were just really getting off the ground in a number of Latin American countries. The Democrats may have looked at the trade union movement as an outgrowth of civil and human rights in the U.S. and the global humanitarian interest of U.S. foreign policy. The Republicans never shirked their financial support for overseas labor programs, and some of the most politically conservative representatives of U.S. labor were involved in international affairs. They were stridently anti-communist, and they tended to look at the world in black and white terms. The fact that 99% of U.S. labor disputes are resolved without strikes and through negotiation is something that was frequently lost on people overseas. Labor and business leaders abroad tended to be much more confrontational and less forgiving of who might be sitting on the other side of the table than maybe they would be if they were in the U.S.

Q: One always thinks of our cousins the British where you know you're sort of a laborite or a conservative and they really think in confrontational terms. It's changed now, but certainly up to the well, 1980s or so.

BECKER: The first generation, probably the first two generations of labor attachés in the State Department were in fact veterans of the U.S. labor movement, and there was an insidious and even incestuous relationship between 16th Street and Foggy Bottom.

Q: That's where.

BECKER: Yes, that's where AFL-CIO is headquartered -- 16th and Connecticut. The problem for these attachés arose when directives from AFL-CIO headquarters did not mesh with the policies developed in the State Department and the rest of the U.S. government. In the end, you can't serve two masters. The AFL-CIO wisely found that support for a professional labor diplomat, a labor attaché corps within the State Department, was an important U.S. labor objective. They fought very hard and successfully for many years to establish the credibility of the attaché corps and to expand promotion and assignment opportunities that would get good officers into the

labor field. That said, I discovered when I got into it, almost by accident in Brazil, that it was an aging corps. It was not a corps that was renewing itself. There were probably fewer and fewer of us who wanted to go back and do more than one or two tours as a labor officer. When I showed interest in continuing as a labor officer, in a way I had my pick of labor assignments. However, within embassies you were buried in a political or economic section, and often didn't rate a seat on the country team. It was difficult to maintain credibility as a labor officer when 50% of your workload, in Latin America at least, was not labor-related. I was a labor-political officer during all my labor tours of duty. In our larger embassies in Europe, there are a few senior FSOs who spend full time doing labor work. In Latin America, with the exception of Mexico, it was always a mixed bag, but I enjoyed it.

Q: Were the labor and human rights sort of melded together?

BECKER: In some respects, yes, but it was more often labor and internal politics. You followed the political parties because the structure of the labor movement frequently paralleled or mirrored the structure of the political party system. There was a flow of leaders between the parties and the unions, even though the labor leaders tended to have dirtier fingernails and did not always rub shoulders easily with the patricians who ran some of the large political parties and who may have owned large businesses. Politics does make for strange bedfellows on occasion.

Q: Well, then Panama. When you got there in '85, what was the situation in Panama and Costa Rica?

BECKER: Panama was a country that was struggling to find an identity. The military coup headed by Omar Torrijos that took place in '68 persisted through the '70s and into the '80s. Torrijos had died in a plane accident in '81, and a Panamanian urban legend continues to attribute his death to the CIA having blown up the plane. Interestingly, the first democratic president of Ecuador after the military ceded power in 1979, Jaime Roldos, also died in a plane crash around '81. That too was attributed by some to a CIA plot. One supposes that the CIA wanted the military regime back in Ecuador and the regime to fall in Panama. There was never any evidence of that, just people wanting to believe the worst of the U.S. Torrijos' death was an avenue for his security chief, Manuel Noriega, to rise to power. He didn't have any of the charm that Torrijos did, but he became the principal vehicle through which we had to rely to ensure that the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 was faithfully carried out. I arrived in Panama shortly after national elections in '85, which had literally been engineered by Noriega to ensure the victory of the candidate of the political party Torrijos had created, the PRD. What was seen at that time by public and foreign observers alike as massive manipulation of the election was largely downplayed by the U.S. embassy and government. It was an exceedingly tense time. Noriega, who was never chief of state and never held a position other than chief of the Panama Defense Forces, was acknowledged as the country's strongman but also as the only person who could guarantee the security of the canal in a time of transition. The individual who was elected president at that time had all the right credentials. He was a World Bank economist, U.S. educated, and spoke English almost without an accent, which is not unusual in Panama. Nicolas

("Nicky") Barletta was a very charming, intelligent man. Although I didn't know him at the time, I got to know him quite well during my second tour of duty there, and he's still writes very good economic and political commentaries. I'm not sure he's all that good an economist, but in any event, he became the mouthpiece of the Noriega dictatorship for a time. He was the fresh front for what was an increasingly brutal and repressive government.

Q: When you got there, in the first place, who was the ambassador?

BECKER: The ambassador was the very professional Ted Briggs.

PARAGUAY

THOMAS F. JOHNSON
Rotation Officer/ Student Affairs Officer
Asuncion (1968-1971)

Thomas F. Johnson was born in Illinois and was educated at Union College and the Free University of Berlin. He entered the Foreign Service in 1967 and has served in various posts in Paraguay, Germany, Liberia, Mexico and Singapore. In Washington, DC, Johnson served in the USIA as Inspector, Deputy Director of Acquisitions and Area Personnel Officer for Europe. Mr. Johnson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: What was Paraguay like when you arrived there?

JOHNSON: It was rustic and provincial. The country and system were very much under the influence of General Alfredo Stroessner. I got there just before his inauguration, for I believe his third term. The city was very safe and quite clean. Trash pickup was accomplished by a fleet of small trucks. However cows who wandered around town got first crack at the garbage. I have a wonderful photo of a cow eating slop from bucket in front of the national executive mansion.

When I arrived in Asuncion I was put up in the Grand Hotel del Paraguay. It had a lovely garden full of squawking parrots. "Contrabandistas" met in the spacious bar to conspire leisurely over expensive Scotch. On my first Sunday I walked down along the river into the humblest neighborhood of Asuncion and felt no fear at all.

My boss was Gene Karst, who had been spokesman for the St. Louis Cardinals, and I did my best to mask my ignorance of baseball. He and I got along just fine. I did the usual rotation through the various sections of the embassy. I spent several months as commercial officer, a short time in the consular section. It was a great JOT year. Gene Karst was replaced by Dick Wooton, and we had an inspection. In the inspection, the post did very poorly on the cultural side and the CAO (Cultural Affairs Officer) finished her assignment. I had an onward assignment to go to Cuzco as Bi-national Center Director, but I was asked to stay in Asuncion as the Student Affairs Officer, which was a wonderful assignment.

Shortly after I arrived, I suppose I came close to terminating my own assignment through my own ignorance. Stroessner was being inaugurated, and we had a delegation of modest caliber from Washington because President Johnson didn't want to be associated with the man. The

Peace Corps Director called me and said, "I've got someone coming over to dinner and I wish you would join us." It turned out that it was Graham Greene. He and I seemed to hit it off, and in my total naivety I said, "Tomorrow we are going out to the Iguazu Falls. We have a plane, and I'm sure there is an extra seat on it. Would you like to join us?" Greene replied, "I'd love to." Well, I did this without calling or consulting anybody. Early in the morning, we showed up at the airfield, and the ambassador looked at me and said, "Who's the hell is that?" I said, "Graham Greene, I hope you don't mind if I bring him along." Well, the ambassador was a very conservative Republican judge from New Mexico, Benigno Carlos Hernandez. There was this long silence (and I realized I could be screwed) and he drawled, "You know, I always wanted to meet the bastard." The two got along famously. I have wonderful pictures of Ben Hernandez and Graham Greene. And that went into my efficiency report as a particularly shrewd move on my part, but of course it was simply a mindless blunder that turned out well.

Q: I was Consul General in Naples and they used to have smuggling boats come in. There was a game they would play. Ships would be offshore, and motorboats, all painted alike. They would have dummy packages and the Guardia de Finance would come out and try to stop them. I remember members of the authority were having a dinner party, and after dinner in those days we all picked up a cigarette to smoke and they were talking about this. I asked how many of you have a tax stamp on your cigarettes and not one of them did.

JOHNSON: At least the Paraguayans had tax stamps. As far as the government was concerned, it was the other country's problem for having too high taxes.

Q: You can't ask for a South American country more remote, but this was a time of great protests about our involvement in Vietnam. Did this cause a ripple in Paraguay?

JOHNSON: It did. In fact, not long after news got out about the My Lai massacre, one of my employees quit. He said to me, "I love my work but I can't be associated with a country that committed My Lai." Human rights played a key role in our foreign policy toward Paraguay. We were the number one aid donor to Paraguay. We tied the release of political prisoners to continued aid. We persuaded the government to permit exiles to return to Paraguay and we cajoled the regime to release political prisoners and allow them to leave the republic. When I arrived in Paraguay in 1968 there were an estimated 200 to 250 political prisoners behind bars. Three years later the number was down to less than eighty. Of those eighty, some may not have even been genuine political prisoners.

We had one terrorist attack while we were there. It was against the Israeli embassy. PLO assassins killed one Israeli and wounded several more, including my neighbor, a second secretary. The three gunmen were reportedly quickly captured and interrogated for a few hours and then shot.

My main security concern was not terrorists but rabies which was rampant in the country and spread by vampire bats. Sometimes vaccinated animals got rabies because corrupt importers of medicines sold outdated or diluted vaccine. One evening we learned that a neighbor's dog had been diagnosed as rabid. During the next several hours I counted more than 50 shots. Any dog running free was cut down. The following morning the streets around our house were littered with the bullet-ridden corpses of dogs and cats. Paraguayans have an admirable sense of community activism.

Q: I'm told that you had to be careful at night because of packs of dogs.

JOHNSON: One night my wife and I were out walking. I usually carried a gun for that reason. We came over a hill and there were about ten dogs coming right at us. I stuck my hand in my pocket and no gun. It was a nightmare. Fortunately there was a rock at my feet. I threw it. My aim was perfect. I hit the lead dog. The pack swerved and was gone. Then I realized that the pack was not coming at us, but was composed of a couple of bitches in heat and their suitors coming behind them. If I had reached in my pocket and pulled out my 25 caliber pistol and shot a few of these dogs, the life insurance policy on my own dog would have been canceled that night. I'm glad I didn't have a gun. Except in rare instances, I don't believe diplomats should be armed.

Q: Was there any spillover from world terrorism other than the PLO? I'm not sure of my time, but in Uruguay the Tupamaros, were doing their thing? Was there any reflection of this?

JOHNSON: No, Uruguay was very distant. Carolyn and I transited Montevideo shortly after Don Mitrione, an AID officer, was killed. The streets were empty. We registered at the hotel as "Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Smith." No one asked to see our passports and we ate in the hotel.

About a year later we were in Santa Cruz in eastern Bolivia, when we were told that there was a rumor that someone was going to kill a gringo that evening and that we should leave our hotel for the relative safety of the consul's residence. Our colleague had a revolver in one hand and a glass of booze in the other. He assured us in slurred speech that we were quite safe. Carolyn and I retired unusually early that evening. The next morning the Bolivian government provided us with a very professional bodyguard who stayed with us until our plane departed for Asuncion.

Q: Did anyone ever try to seek political refuge in the embassy while you were there?

JOHNSON: Late one night a Paraguayan employee arrived at our house and awakened us. She told me that a cousin was apparently being sought by the "piribui" (those who walk on hair) e.g. secret police. She wanted to know if I could help him. I agreed to talk to her cousin who was waiting outside. I don't recall what his problem was but I suggested that he remain in my living room while I consulted with the embassy political counselor, Dan Arzac. I drove over to Dan's house and related what had happened. Dan agreed that while the man's concerns were credible, it was probably not necessary for him to try to flee the country. Early the next morning, Dan made called some contacts in the ministry of interior and arranged for an official to interview my

employee's cousin. No American attended the meeting, but the matter was quietly settled and the man was not arrested.

Q: Did attacks on American diplomats elsewhere in the world have any effect on your life in Asuncion?

JOHNSON: Ambassador Gordon Mein was shot to death in Guatemala in 1968, but that was regarded as too far away to change our tranquil lives in Paraguay. However the kidnapping of our ambassador in Brazil changed things. That evening Carolyn and I had a gathering at our house for student leaders and a number of young Americans, including the two daughters of Ambassador Ylitalo, who showed up with two burly Paraguayan escorts. One of the student leaders promptly asked me why I allowed members of the hated secret police in my home. I pleaded ignorance and asked one of the sisters what was up. She explained that Ambassador Elbrick in Brazil had been kidnapped and that they had been assigned bodyguards. I had to act quickly to prevent my guests, most of whom were members of the opposition, from leaving, so I ordered the bodyguards to wait outside. At first the cops refused to leave, but then I invoked diplomatic immunity for my household and gave each a glass of Scotch. They sat on the low wall in front of our house and enjoyed their drinks.

A few weeks later Ed Costello and I were bird hunting with Ambassador Ylitalo on a large ranch. Ylitalo had refused police protection. Suddenly four horsemen approached us. Perhaps foolishly, I had secretly appointed myself the ambassador's bodyguard. I reached in my game bag and dropped off the safety of my 9 mm pistol. Ylitalo heard the click and asked me what I was doing. I smiled dumbly as the horsemen drew closer. The Paraguayans rode up to the other side of a fence and stared down at us from a distance of about ten yards. Apparently their curiosity satisfied, they nodded silently and rode away.

The muzzle of my gun followed their departure. Perhaps my actions that day were ill advised. On the other hand, I figured that in a hostage taking situation, junior officers are expendable.

Q: So was security at the embassy tight?

JOHNSON: I recall being called in at 3:00 a.m. to handle an urgent message. I put on my bathrobe and drove up to the chancellery. The gate to the compound was open. The door to the chancellery was open. The Marine guard handed me the urgent cable which of course was not so urgent. I noted "no action required" and was back in bed ten minutes.

GEORGE W. LANDAU

Ambassador

Paraguay (1972-1977)

Ambassador George W. Landau was born on March 4, 1920. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942-1947. He joined the Foreign Service in 1957. Ambassador Landau's career included positions in Uruguay, Spain, and Venezuela, and ambassadorships to Paraguay and Chile. He was interviewed by Arthur Day on March 11, 1991.

LANDAU: I remember when I was nominated to Paraguay a very senior officer told me, "I understand you are a reserve officer" and I said, "Yes, I am a colonel in the reserve and I might even get a promotion later on." He said, "You know, Congress takes a very dim view of that; they will think you will mix military with civilian matters." I said, "Well, I hardly think that could have been the case." But he said, "If I were you, I would resign so that if any Congressman or any Senator should ask you at the hearings you could say, 'Yes I was in the reserve, but have resigned my commission.'" I did just that. I sent a letter to the Assistant Chief of Intelligence (ACSI) where I had my mobilization assignment in the Pentagon, and said that I would go off to Paraguay as chief of mission so therefore I regretfully had to resign my commission. That was in 1972. After I got to Paraguay I kept getting news bulletins from ACSI and so finally I wrote them a letter. I said, "I still get your correspondence and you know I have resigned my commission." I got a letter back saying, "No, that letter is not on record, we chose to disregard it". So I stayed in the reserve until 1975 when my mandatory time was up. It goes to show that being in the reserve can sometimes come in very handy as it turned out in my career.

Really everything, as you so well know, is pure chance and not career planning. Career planning simply does not exist except in the minds of the excessive number of personnel people. What happened was that I was in Montevideo for five years first as commercial attaché and then chief of the economic section. During that time Bob Woodward was chief of mission.

Q: What years were those?

LANDAU: 1957-62. Bob went on; he left in 1961 to go to Chile for seven weeks and then became assistant secretary, and eventually wound up in Madrid. He liked my style and I certainly liked him very much and admired him, and his wife Virginia. So he told me one day, "If you want to come to Madrid I might have an opening." I immediately agreed and after Bob got to Madrid he dropped me a note saying that much to his surprise he thought he had an opening in the economic section but this did not turn out to be true. The only position was the third one in a six man political section. I immediately told him that I would take it although I had been chief of a section before.

Q: So you had been chief of a section but you were prepared to take this post?

LANDAU: Right, I spent three wonderful years in Spain with Bob, in the political section and I advanced from the number three position to the number two position, which was very interesting.

I dealt with the opposition and the Foreign Office. I learned a great deal. From there I went to the Canadian National Defense College and again I had quite a lot to do with the military. I had fully expected after the Canadian Defense College to be assigned to Ottawa, which I should have with the knowledge and contacts I had acquired, but Secretary Rusk in 1966 reorganized the Department and did away with the unnecessary layer of deputy assistant secretary. Of course you never 'do away' with these, like certain insects they just burrow in the ground and survive. He cut out the idea of another layer. What he wanted to have was the Secretary, the assistant secretaries and the country directors. He started the idea of the country directors. At the time he was concerned with upcoming base negotiations with Spain and Portugal and so he decided to take out those two countries from the Office of Western European Affairs and make it into a new country directorate. I was tapped for that job and came to Washington and became the country director for Spain and Portugal.

Of course I merrily dealt with two military governments. Nobody wanted to go to lunch with me other than the country director from Greece, Mr. [Daniel] Brewster, or of course my friend who handled South Africa. The latter was very actively working against his clients while I tried, not necessarily to take the side of my clients, but to see that they got at least a fair shake. I was on the job for six years, which is somewhat of a record in the Department, but I enjoyed it very much and was able to get a base agreement under Nixon, after the Democrats had failed, in their efforts. This was unfortunate because Secretary Rusk had tried very hard, but we had known from an unimpeachable source that one former ambassador, a political appointee, had told the Spanish government that it did not make any sense for them to negotiate with the Democrats, that they could get a better deal from the Republicans. So therefore when we went for the last trip with Rusk to Spain, we were treated somewhat shabbily. Which was so unlike the normal way the Spanish react, but they were so absolutely sure that they would do better with the Republicans. Of course it showed that this particular political ambassador did not possess any wisdom -- I had always suspected that. It was very clear that the Republicans who became aware of what he had said were chagrined about it because neither the Republicans or the Democrats can set the terms of a base agreement. The money has to come from somewhere and Congress was just equally unimpressed to make a deal with Spain under the Republicans as it was under the Democrats. Senator Fulbright and Senator Symington wanted a treaty and not an executive agreement so the same onus was borne by both parties. It was a very difficult thing. Anyway somewhat with mirrors we were able to stitch together an agreement with Spain and then a base agreement with Portugal. I was not the negotiator, it was Under Secretary Johnson, Alex Johnson, who did a marvelous job; I was the action officer and was very much involved. And suddenly I got well known in the Seventh Floor because I dealt with them, keeping of course my assistant secretary well informed. At the end of the arduous six years with both agreements signed and delivered I was given my first embassy.

The first time I got a call from Secretary Rogers whom I knew quite well from our trips to Lisbon to deal with the Portuguese, not an easy feat. Whatever you agree with them in one

meeting is forgotten in the next one and one starts all over again. This annoyed Rogers, who is an excellent lawyer. He looked at it from the legal point of view more than from a diplomatic point of view. He was quite unhappy with the Portuguese. Anyway, Rogers called me in and said that he had just forwarded my name to the White House, to open an embassy in Bangladesh. When I heard that my heart sank, because while I was at the Canadian Defense College we visited Dacca, which was still East Pakistan.

Q: This would have been the first embassy since the break?

LANDAU: That is right, we had a chargé, and I would have been the first ambassador. I wrote my wife from the Defense College trip that there were only two places that I would rather resign than go, one was Dacca and the other was Calcutta, and here I get this offer. So I came home and told my wife about the great honor that was bestowed on us -- tentatively -- and she pulled out the postcard I wrote to her. I said "Well, I will just have to swallow my statement because you don't turn it down if you get it offered." As it turned out the White House did not look with favor on this for reasons which had nothing to do with me, it had to do with that Bangladesh and Pakistan had to be filled at the same time and the White House did not like the man who was recommended for Pakistan so the deal fell through. I was not all that unhappy because about one month or six weeks later I was nominated for Paraguay where I spent five years. It was an interesting post. There my former military relations came in good stead. I had a good relation with President Stroessner. This is one of the basic things that people do not seem to understand. When you are assigned somewhere you may not like the government, you may not like the person you deal with, nevertheless you must have a solid relationship if you want them to do things for you. All I wanted to do, all I was instructed to do was either deal on narcotics matters or deal with human rights violations.

Q: That is one of the questions I wanted to ask you about your assignment there. What instructions were you given before you went?

LANDAU: When I left for Asuncion in 1972 I was sent there because the Department was unhappy with my predecessor who had not wanted to go there. He was an excellent Finnish speaker, but Finland was filled with a political appointee so they gave him the next available post. Paraguay was the hub of drug traffic, but not the drug traffic that we know now, it was still the European-Corsican connection. There was a Corsican drug smuggler by the name of Ricord whom we wanted extradited. It was very difficult. My predecessor got him extradited, but at great cost and the Department decided to change him and I was sent instead. The only instruction I got in 1972, and I went over to the White House had to do with cleaning up the drug traffic. In 1972 the words human rights were never mentioned. When I got to Paraguay I found out that a lot of people were in jail without charges and some had been there for fifteen or twenty years, but I must say I did not get a single inquiry from the Department or Congress for the first year and a half. Then all of a sudden it became very, very much the new thing.

Q: What was the occasion for that?

LANDAU: What had changed, of course, was that Nixon had left. It started under Ford, not under Carter. There were some Congressmen who were interested in specific countries, and it was our great mayor (of New York) Ed Koch [who was a Congressman at the time] who was interested in Uruguay and it was a man who is now the mayor of Minneapolis, Fraser, who was interested in Paraguay. I got a slew of letters from Fraser about the human rights violations and the prisoners. I was able to do a number of good things because most of the people were really arrested mindlessly because a middle level government functionary had problems with the person. When you brought it to the top, to the Foreign Minister or to some other ministers, they all told me that this was not an important case, but they never did anything about it. They just told me that it was a manageable thing for me to talk to Stroessner, that everything had to be decided by Stroessner.

I saw Stroessner every day, as did everyone else because at the time Stroessner either inaugurated a school, or there was a parade, or a new highway, but there was a public function every day -- usually at 8 o'clock in the morning. All the cabinet and all the ambassadors were invited. Usually my colleagues went sporadically. I went whenever I needed to see someone because it was the easiest way to do business in Paraguay. The phones did not work too well, moreover the office hours are from seven to eleven and after that everyone disappears. So I could talk to the Minister of Education, the Foreign Minister or to the President himself, and get matters settled. Then of course you had to rush back and immediately write a letter because they would forget what they told you on the dusty road.

I used all those outings to tell Stroessner about X, Y and Z and how there was great interest and how it would affect relations with the United States. There usually was no great problem; he said, "Sure, sure". Then I had to negotiate his approval to me with the Minister of Interior who did not believe me and had to check back but eventually we got a lot of people out. And so that was very handy. Now, after President Carter came in the emphasis shifted tremendously. The Paraguayans understood this change -- I would not say they cleaned up their act, I would say they were more forthcoming. The only thing they were not forthcoming on was the fact that the U.S. wanted very much for the OAS human rights commission to visit Paraguay. I must have made innumerable demarches, talked to everybody under the sun, including Stroessner, and he said, "Well, yes, we will have to find the right date" etc., etc. It went on but the commission never got there.

I remember still vividly how poorly top level meetings are structured. Because as you will recall in 1977 we signed the Panama Canal treaty and all Latin American presidents were invited and all U.S. chiefs of mission accompanied their presidents, and every one had a bilateral with President Carter, including Stroessner. Of course President Carter was briefed of the main problem that we had not been able to achieve to get the OAS human rights commission in. So we got to the White House and Stroessner was very pleased and he told the president how he had done many things and how he had built schools and that there were no real problems in Paraguay,

no social inequities. Mostly it was not true, but it sounded good. Carter listened very attentively and asked some interesting questions. Then Stroessner as a throwaway line said, "Of course Ambassador Landau talked to me about the human rights commission and we are very willing to find a mutual agreeable date". Carter said, "That's good". That is all he said. Stroessner went home and since he was expecting big pressure from Carter, on this matter, the commission never went.

My reputation of being able to handle the Paraguayans and get something we wanted, namely the individuals who were in jail, etc., eventually gave the White House the idea that I would be a good man to go to Chile where the human rights violations were really very severe.

ROBERT E. WHITE

Ambassador

Paraguay (1975-1980)

Ambassador Robert E. White was born in Massachusetts on September 21st, 1926. He received a bachelor's degree from St. Michael's College in 1952 and a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1954. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944-1946. He entered the Foreign Service in 1955. His career included positions in Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, and ambassadorships to Paraguay and El Salvador. Ambassador White was interviewed by Bill Knight in 1992.

WHITE: When the Carter administration came in I was made ambassador to Paraguay. I was in Paraguay from '77 to '79. That was a fascinating tour because the human rights policy was given great emphasis under President Carter. If there was ever a country that needed some pressure on human rights it was the government of Alfredo Stroessner.

There was some truly wonderful and exciting things that happened as a result of the Carter human rights policy and the way we applied it in Paraguay. Far too many incidents to recount.

Q: Please give us some examples of the kinds of things that were done.

WHITE: Two incidents. The first involved a prominent opposition politician, Domingo Laino, who went to Washington in 1978 under a grant from the State Department. While he was there the Acting Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, received him and he told Secretary Christopher and the press that Paraguay was a repressive dictatorship that violated human rights. This action violated the rules of the Stroessner regime which said that one could, within limits, criticize the government inside Paraguay. But on the outside, and particularly in Washington,

that was forbidden. So when he came back he was only home a day when the military kidnapped him. I sent an urgent telegram to the Department and I got instructions saying this is totally unacceptable. So, under instructions, I spoke to the Foreign Minister who adopted the line that even in the best regulated countries robberies, murders and kidnappings take place and that the government had absolutely nothing to do with this. Of course, everyone knew better. So the opposition came in to see me and said that the government intended to kill Laino. I said I didn't know exactly how to handle this but that I would go that evening to call on Domingo Laino's family, and if you want to tell anyone that I'm going to be there, that's fine. So I went and the next day all of the newspapers had photographs of me with the Laino family. I was in effect giving condolences on the disappearance and in effect expressing concern.

The next day I got a rocket from the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Minister told me I was interfering in the internal affairs of Paraguay. I said the obvious thing: that, as the government bore no responsibility for this incident, it was just one friend calling on another friend and expressing concern. But I then handed over a very stiff note from the State Department. I said you have to understand that nobody in Washington believes the government's disclaimers and unless Domingo Laino reappeared rapidly and unharmed, there were going to be serious consequences for relations with the United States.

Later on, according to people within the government who became friends, it became clear that this was only the second time that Stroessner had ever reversed himself. The death warrant of Domingo Laino had already been signed. He's now the vice president of the senate and a leading candidate for the presidency -- a leader I am proud to say who had a good experience with United States officials.

The Stroessner regime was in essence a military mafia. Shortly after the Laino incident a group of campesino and labor leaders met in a rural monastery -- a perfectly legal, peaceful get together. The military came in and tortured them and threw them in prison.

I recommended in a telegram to the Department that we take a very serious view of this outrage. I recommended that we consider taking the AIFLD (American Institute for Free Labor Development) office out of the country. I recommended that an AIFLD team come down and that the probable result should be to move out the AIFLD. entirely.

Well, there was nothing that could have galvanized the AIFLD. like the prospect they would lose a country office. Within two days the head of AIFLD and a high level group from the AFL/CIO came to Paraguay. We mounted a serious and effective effort and in the end all of these labor and campesino leaders were tried and found innocent and the soldiers who were guilty of the torture were given a minimal slap on the wrist. In the context of Stroessner's Paraguay this was heady stuff.

There was a steady series of encounters with the Stroessner regime that resulted in a great improvement in the human rights situation -- to the point that Paraguayans refer to this time as

the "Paraguayan Spring" when they had an umbrella of U.S. and international human rights concern.

One of the things I tried to do, with considerable success, was to involve Europeans in this effort. I had regular meetings with the European ambassadors to discuss the human rights situation and what we could do about it.

Q: Before we move on, what happened on some of these issues?

WHITE: Well, what happened was a continuing struggle by the opposition to change the Paraguayan reality. Every ambassador that succeeded me took a strong stand against human rights abuses. I think this was one of the real strengths -- the fact that there was consistency in U.S. policy. I think, through four ambassadors. Finally, in 1989, I believe, Stroessner was ousted by his own people. A transitional president came in and, in effect, the whole Paraguayan political system has since been overhauled, democratized. They'll have their first serious contested election for the presidency next year. But for the last few years there have been no serious violations of human rights. There have been some problems over the rights of peasants and their land but otherwise a steady improvement in the human rights picture.

In Paraguay, there wasn't all that interest and properly so. It is a small, out of the way country. On the other hand, I have to say that the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary were very interested that the human rights policies worked in that country. That there was measurable progress. The reports that came out of Embassy Asuncion demonstrated that if you applied human rights in an intelligent, sensible way you got results. I had trouble with AID because I said we should cancel the AID program in Paraguay. It serves no purpose in a corrupt country like Paraguay except to demonstrate to the people that we are supporting the regime. The money is largely stolen or wasted. I realized then how you come up against an entrenched bureaucracy. There was deep anger at my advocating an end to assistance programs.

JAMES J. GORMLEY

Chief, Economic Section

Asuncion (1978-1981)

James J. Gormley was born in New York, New York in 1932. He received a bachelor's degree in management from Fordham College School of Business in 1954. Mr. Gormley served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956. He entered the Foreign Service in 1964. In addition to serving in Paraguay, Mr. Gormley served

in Mexico, Vietnam, and Thailand. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 20, 1992.

Q: You then left Bangkok in 1978 and you were off to Asunción, to Paraguay, was that it?

GORMLEY: Yes.

Q: How did you feel about going to Asunción?

GORMLEY: Well I didn't want to go. The job I had wanted was the political-econ job in Singapore, which would have been a very nice job and a logical one to take and Personnel had said that they would arrange it and they didn't come through. You were in a time of what was called by the acronym GOP, which I think was Global Outlook Program or something like that. Kissinger had gone, I think, on a trip to Latin America and found the Ambassadors he was talking to knew nothing about arms control or European affairs and he was furious. He said what you need is to shake up people and send them to different areas of the world. So as it turned out I was assigned to Asunción as head of the economics section and the head of the political section was someone who had spent his entire career in south Asia.

Q: Just one question before we move to that, since you were in the economic section what was our impression during the time you were there of the development of ASEAN, because it was essentially an economic alliance.

GORMLEY: Well I don't know that it was essentially an economic alliance; to the extent that it was anything it was more political than economic. These people are more natural competitors than customers for each other and I never took ASEAN that seriously. I don't know what it is today, it seems to be an occasion for the Foreign Ministers to get together and have their parties. I do remember one occasion -- I went through so many Prime Ministers when I was there -- after the military came back in 1976 they put in a dreadful incompetent little man called Thanin as Prime Minister, a puppet; unguided he would do the weirdest things which even the military didn't want. He had gone down on some trade mission to Singapore and been completely flummoxed by Lee Kuan Yew. Lee Kuan Yew had gotten him to make all sorts of concessions that certainly the bureaucrats had not wanted. I had a friend in the Finance Ministry and I said, "How can you allow this guy to be in the room alone with Lee Kuan Yew?" And he said, "God, we can't even trust him with Suharto." Before we leave Thailand -- certainly there was an awful lot of pessimism around 1975 about being the next domino, by the press, by a lot of casual observers. And certainly the US Commerce Department wrote a very negative report on doing business in Thailand. I happened to be back at the time and they looked at my report on economic trends in Thailand at the time which I think started out with "Thailand is not a teetering domino." They said, "your report completely contradicts what we have in this report, how do you account for that?" I said, "I account for that because you are wrong." I remember a Memcom, which I still have, of a conversation with a group of Thai economists in the summer of

1975 in which the whole conversation was basically so upbeat on long term, at the same time there was this panic in the streets and in the reporting going on in the states.

Q: It shows an inability to understand the situation.

GORMLEY: And Solarz came out and Solarz...

Q: This is Stephen Solarz who was a very influential Congressman in dealing with Asia.

GORMLEY: He was a freshman at the time and he knew everything, of course, that's the way most freshman Congressmen do, and he insisted that he have a meeting with the lower level officers of the Embassy as he didn't want to be brainwashed by the Ambassador. So he came in and his general thesis was that this country was on its way to the same thing that Vietnam was, including the Vietnamese Army. And we said "this is nonsense, this is not going to happen, this country is not militarily strong but it is a terribly strong country culturally and the Vietnamese will never make a foothold." And he said, "Tell me why it is different." And I must admit Solarz is very educable because at the end of that meeting I think he went out and realized that he was not in another Vietnam. Solarz also became one of the leading champions against the Khmer Rouge later on; Solarz was a very knowledgeable guy by the middle of his Congressional tenure, which I guess is now ended.

Q: And then you went to Asunción where you served from 1978 to 1981 as economic and commercial counselor. What was the situation in Paraguay in those days?

GORMLEY: This was the Carter administration and one of the Carter administration's basic tenets was human rights and we had a marvelous opportunity for enforcing this in Paraguay. One, it had a certain notoriety as a human rights abuser and two, it wasn't an important country and therefore subject to being beaten up on. And it happened! It was somewhat ill-timed from the point of view of our economic interests since for the first time in Paraguay's history it was economically important in one respect, they were in the midst of building the biggest dam in the world which had enormous contracts for construction, for turbines, for generators, for all sorts of things. Both Allis Chalmers and Westinghouse were salivating, and General Electric, over these contracts. Both of these dam projects were not carried on by Paraguay alone but mainly by their bigger neighbors, one by the Brazilians and one by the Argentines. We gave a tremendous amount of support to the effort by Allis Chalmers and Westinghouse to very little avail because our competitors, mainly the Europeans, had no such qualms about human rights.

I think one of the reasons our human rights policy was successful there, our economic policy was not, was partly that Stroessner was no dummy, far from it, and he realized from our pounding on him that he no longer needed to be as authoritarian as he had been in the past. In the course of the time that the principal Ambassador, Bob White, was in Paraguay, you went from a few hundred political prisoners down to about three, which was a major accomplishment. I suppose feeling good is something we like to do. My job was economic and I did try to promote our economic

interests, but without great success. I also had to fill in for the political officer when he was out and I became very friendly with the major elements in the human rights movement in Paraguay, which had some very, very good people. I remember having someone say to me "The hall of justice in this country is centered in this Embassy." That makes you feel good.

Q: What was your feeling about Robert E. White, a career Ambassador, who became when the Reagan administration took over a very controversial figure? They claimed he was too strong on human rights. What was your impression of his style of operation and effectiveness?

GORMLEY: White was sort of a cowboy, but a tremendously personable guy. I know of no Ambassador that I liked more. He did have a fairly wild style and he certainly did everything to get himself PNGed. I think one of the reasons he never was was that Stroessner realized that it would not hurt him but help him. I liked White a lot; of course he went on to El Salvador, where he really got into trouble. He was in trouble with the right wing long before that, I guess based on what he did in Paraguay because Helms violently fought him getting the El Salvador position. He was certainly a practitioner of strong, public diplomacy.

ARTHUR H. DAVIS, JR.

Ambassador

Paraguay (1982-1985)

Arthur H. Davis, Jr. was born in Brockton, Massachusetts. He served in WWII where he received training as a meteorologist leaving the service as a warrant officer and weather forecaster. Later he was elected county chairman of the Republican Party in Jefferson Count. Davis served as the Ambassador to Paraguay in 1982 and later served in Panama. Mr. Davis was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: What was the political-economic situation in Paraguay? You got there in 1982.

DAVIS: I got there in July of 1982.

Q: And you were there until 1985.

DAVIS: Nineteen eighty-five. When I arrived, of course, the only thing the United States was doing for Paraguay was fifty thousand dollars a year on the military education and training

program, because there still was its human rights record. The main thing was that Paraguay was rated high on the list, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, among those violating the human rights of their citizens. And we did have a confrontation, from 1977 on, when Robert White was there, where he had no real rapport with the president of Paraguay. And we still continued that.

In fact, my first meeting, it was quite interesting, I went down there, and when I was received by President Stroessner (I always like to tell this story because it developed into something later on), I presented my credentials, he asked me to come and sit with him, I sat down, and, after exchanging greetings from President Reagan to him personally and so forth, he turned to me and said, "I'm so glad you got rid of that Carter gang. You know, they almost wrecked our relations with all that stuff about human rights."

I didn't realize he was going to bring it up that early, so I said to him, "Well, Mr. President, the human rights policy of the United States government has not changed with the President. That is something that all of the people--Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and the conservatives--believe that each and every citizen of this world has basic human rights."

And he turned to his foreign minister (this was on a Friday) and said, "Benisto, I want you to meet with this man Monday morning. Meet with this man Monday morning!"

So we wasted no time in letting them know that the human rights program started by Jimmy Carter would be continued, even though we might not do it in such a confrontational manner.

Q: You were there in sort of the waning days of Stroessner, weren't you?

DAVIS: Well, he lasted until 1989. I would say that the human rights situation had greatly improved.

You have to remember that when Robert White went down there in 1977, it was estimated that sixteen hundred to seventeen hundred political prisoners--people like you and I and our wives and children and other friends--who had gone against Stroessner had been thrown in jail for three months, four months, five months, some up to four to five years, with no trial, just badly treated, tortured, thrown into filthy pits, and kept up all night so they wouldn't get enough rest. That was in 1977, when the Carter ambassador arrived.

When I arrived in 1982, just five years later, there were thirty-two political prisoners. And when I left, there were only two.

Q: Well, looking at this objectively and at some distance, was this because of a change within Paraguay, or was it because of our interest in human rights and pressure?

DAVIS: Oh, no. No, it was definitely the work of the State Department in human rights. First of all, when he had acted strongly, which I believe finally took effect '77 to '80, all aid to Paraguay was cut off. The only thing that kept on was that training program, which was of benefit to us because it was the only way we could get the young officers out of Paraguay and up to the United States to realize what democracy was. Of course, the USIA kept going, but a scholarship program, whether it's military or civilian, I think is a good one, because it gets these officers up there to find out that things are not done like that anymore, and that the police force does not represent a military government but the people.

We got our message across clearly. And the next Monday, when the foreign minister called me in, he said, "Mr. Ambassador, the president was very disturbed that on your first meeting you had a conflict about human rights. What is your problem?"

And I said, "Well, human rights is not my problem, it's your problem. You know, until the human rights situation that exists in Paraguay today is corrected, the relationship between the United States and Paraguay will be very tense. The United States Congress will never give any money or give any help as long as there are violations of human rights."

And we kept that theme up. That just came to me at the time, and after that, myself and the deputy chief of mission/political officer, that was the argument we used: "Look, human rights is not our problem, it's your problem."

Q: Well, how do you work on this? We had basically cut off all aid and major contact, probably major visits, and everything else since '77, I would have thought that Paraguay would have learned to adjust, and Stroessner had his own agenda. Why was he...?

DAVIS: Well, see, along with that, the United States Embassy, whether it started in the '70s or whether it had been going on, but it was very well-handled in Paraguay. George White would invite all the opposition to his parties, and some of the senators and congressmen did not like that, particularly. When I got there, I invited both. The American Embassy, I would say from '82 to '85 and continuing on after that, probably, was the only place where you could get the opposition and the government officials there together--in a very tense situation, but at least they could talk and converse.

It was amazing. It's a small country, everybody knew one another, you knew one another from school. I remember I was in Paraguay last year, and I was talking to one of the Mapocos who had been exiled for twenty-five years and then brought back, he was saying that he'd never forget the night he went to my residence. One of the men brought back had been picked up and badly treated for three or four days, and, finally, through the efforts of the embassy, we got him out.

And on the day we got him out, we had a reception at the residence. And so Mr. Casabianca asked me if he could bring this gentleman along. And I said, "Be sure to. I'm glad he's out, bring him over." And when he came in, the man who threw him in jail, Ministro Montenegro, who was minister of interior, a very vicious, very tough, cruel man, when he walked in, he greeted him and said, "Oh, (whatever his name was) Carlos, how are you, I'm so glad to see you," as if nothing had ever happened.

And that happened not only here, but it happened in Eastern Europe. When I was in Czechoslovakia, I was talking to the foreign minister, a man who had been shoveling coal three months before and was now foreign minister when Havel went in. He was saying, "I will never forget that, ten years ago, the American Embassy invited us into their residence. That was the only way we got to talk to reporters and talk to other diplomats. Gradually other countries followed suit, but you were the people that came and gave the opposition faith."

And that's what we did in Paraguay. The opposition finally felt they had somebody.

Q: When you went out there, obviously, in Paraguay, I'm sure human rights was at the very top of your list, wasn't it?

DAVIS: Yes.

Q: But were you under any either instructions or constraints? For example, one thinks of the right wing of the Republican Party with Senator Helms of North Carolina saying we're putting too much worry about human rights, we've got other things and all that. What was sort of the atmosphere from Washington that you were getting on this?

DAVIS: Well, I tell you. First of all, the State Department backed me up a hundred percent. I remember I went back one time and I met with Senator Dodd, and some Democrats who you might classify as liberal to moderate, and Jesse Helms, and Armstrong. And every one of them, the first thing they did when I walked in was to congratulate me on what I was doing in Paraguay. Whether it was conservative Republican, or liberal Democrat, or moderate both, they were a hundred percent behind me.

And then Tony Motley and I...

Q: Tony Motley at that time was...?

DAVIS: Was the assistant secretary of Latin American Affairs. We decided that you don't get much done if you have conflict with the man making the decisions. And when you talk about executive authority, that's what you have in Paraguay. I remember one day I was in President Stroessner's office and he was signing the permissions for people to bring their diplomatic cars

in. No decisions are made without Stroessner knowing about it. So you were not going to get anything done. For instance, the people in jail that we got out would never have got out if I didn't have a rapport with President Stroessner. In fact, in spite of our conflicts, every time I called him, If I called him Monday or Tuesday, I went in to see him Thursday or Friday. And we established very early it would be one-on-one. We met alone, so we could talk frankly.

Q: Obviously, you speak Spanish.

DAVIS: Sí. And he always kidded me about my accent. I used to tell him, "If you think my accent's bad in Spanish, you ought to hear in English."

Q: Yeah, well you've got a good New England accent.

DAVIS: Yes, but it doesn't help me in Spanish. When I first went down, it was very difficult because I hadn't spoken it for about twenty-six years. But Stroessner had a great sense of humor.

Another story about Stroessner. When I first got in, of course I had traveled many hours, I think it was twenty hours or so, to arrive. And when I arrived, of course my whole contingent was waiting there to greet me, and they grabbed me to go on television. And so I went on the air with my speech, no matter how tired I was, but somehow that just came out, and it went very smoothly.

But, about three months later, he said, "You know, I was down in Villarrica, and one of the ladies down there said she heard you speak when you arrived at the airport. And she was saying you spoke with so much warmth. You mentioned how your son had been down there with the amigos, and how you had always looked forward to coming back and thanking the people for treating your son so well, and you had never expected you would come back as the ambassador of the United States. She thought that was very warm."

And so I'm beaming all over.

And he looked me in the eye and said, "Then she said, 'What kind of Spanish is that he was speaking?'"

But we kept it up. We kept fighting. We did it with Paraguayans, too.

Q: Let's talk about this one-on-one with Stroessner, a very important figure. He was the head of government, in one form or another, for how long?

DAVIS: Since 1954.

Q: *Fifty-four to '89.*

DAVIS: When I arrived, he had been there over thirty years.

Q: *Well, looking at this as an exercise in diplomacy, here you are, you have something that he probably doesn't want to hear, how did you maintain relations? Say, somebody would be thrown into jail, a Paraguayan, you want to get him out, how could you get somebody out of jail?*

DAVIS: Well, it was kind of interesting. Usually something would come up coincidental at that time. And I remember one time they printed a document, which they claimed came from the Agency, and it had...

Q: *You're talking about the Central Intelligence Agency.*

DAVIS: Yes. And they printed that to prove that Raul Bastos, one of their famous authors, had gone to Cuba during the '60s. What this was, was a list of people who had traveled to Cuba during that period. I was furious that that document was exposed and they claimed it came from the US government. So I went in to see Minister Montenaro, the minister of interior, and we really went back and forth about this trying to bring the United States into their problems, that the United States was not involved in this, and that Raul Bastos had not gone to Cuba. We knew that, wherever they got this document, it was just a list of people who had made inquiries about going to Cuba, and that, whether he had gotten a visa or not, he hadn't gone. So, when we were walking out, he said, "Well, the president is very sad that you are so concerned about this, and he wants to know what you can do."

And I said, "Well, I would like you to tell the president that I would like to see..." and I listed seven men. I said, "These men have been thrown in jail. Their wives and families are waiting. One of them has a son who is supposed to return to go back to his third year of medical school. He can't leave because his father was thrown in jail. And I wish you would tell the president that it would make a good impression on the United States, who I represent, if those men were let out."

And, within days, the president's secretary called me and gave me the dates when these men would be let out--except for one man. I tried to push that, and I always felt that maybe I just went too far on this, because, sometimes in the first days of...this was in my first year, in '82. I said to the president, "You know, you let out the other man involved in this same land dispute. Malgarejo" (and I forget the other guy's name), "you didn't let him out. You know, Christmas is coming, wouldn't it be a nice thing to show a little amnesty over Christmas and let him out so he can spend time with his family?"

So he said, "I make those decisions. When I think he should get out, he'll get out."

He let him out right after New Year's. I think he did it to show me I could not tell him when the man should get out. So I never made a deadline and never mentioned a date again. (I made one exception to that while I was down...) But he took it. And maybe, I think, it was because we were really very frank with one another.

In November, sometime around the 10th or 11th of November, he came to my house for lunch. And he had never done that with an ambassador for many, many years. He got there about 12:00 and we finally broke up about 3:00, and we went over all these different things. He was an amazing student of the military. We developed a very close rapport, because one thing, no matter what happened, many people came to the embassy... I remember there was a Venezuelan woman, married to Hugo Sagayere, who was a real radical, but he was badly treated and thrown in jail. And when he got to Argentina, he was a very good friend of Alphonsine. Because a lot of the Paraguayans, you know, at one time they claimed there were a million Paraguayans in exile. A lot of them did work for the Paraguayan government and got to know the people over there. But he sent me a very lovely letter, sent a letter to the State Department and thanked them for his release. And yet, at that same time, she was Venezuelan, but she got no help from her own embassy. But I went in and said, "Look, what is going on with Sagayere? You know, his wife comes in to see me." And that happened with several others. But, whenever they called me afterwards, I would say, "Talk to the president's secretary. The president made that decision." I would never claim credit. The United States never claimed credit for anything we did.

Q: Well, the president never would get after you and say, "What business is it of yours?"

DAVIS: Oh, yes. Yes. We got to the point that, when they closed the *ABC* newspaper, I made a very...

Q: ABC newspaper being what?

DAVIS: The biggest newspaper of the opposition was run by a gentleman called Aldo Zucoleo. First of all, in 1983, I was going to go to Mexico, and I heard rumors that they were going to close the *ABC* newspaper, so I asked for an audience with the president. And I said, "Mr. President, I've heard these rumors. I hope they're not true. But, you know, nothing will get more bad reaction from the United States Congress than the closing of the newspaper. Freedom of speech and freedom of press is something we all believe very much in the United States. And if you ever expect me to get any way to help you, either military help or any aid to help your followers [?], I can't do it if you close that newspaper." And I asked him probably at least five times not to close the newspaper. He would not give me an answer. We went on for probably

forty-five minutes to an hour, back and forth, and he kept saying, "Don't mention it again!" And I kept mentioning it. After a while, he would grin when I mentioned it instead of getting mad. But he finally said, "I tell you what. I will not close the newspaper unless I talk to you first. I know you're going on a trip, but I will find you someplace, and I will not close it until I have talked to you."

And that's when he and I had an interesting time after that, because then we both wanted to get back on a level keel again. And so we talked about Martin McMahon, one of the American ministers who stayed with Paraguay all through the war that took Biley Arnsen.

The president said, "I tell you, Mr. Ambassador, the State Department asked all their ambassadors to find out what's going to happen after Stroessner. Yesterday afternoon, I was sitting in my garden, you know what a beautiful day it was, and I was thinking, you know, I'm seventy..." (at that time I think he was about seventy-four or seventy-five) "I'm seventy-four years old and I like this job. The ministers bother me and a lot of the people bother me, but I like talking to my people that come in and things like that. I'm going to stay on this job, and I plan on living for a hundred years. So you tell the State Department that they don't have to worry about that question for twenty-five or thirty years."

So I wrote that back to Tony Motley and he got the biggest kick out of it.

See, another thing. When I first went down there, anything the ministers heard, they would repeat to the president. So I would say things. For instance, when I first got there, Montenegro said, "Mr. Ambassador, we have only twelve political prisoners."

And I said, "Minister, if you or the president were one of those twelve, I don't think you would say 'only.'"

And the president got a kick out of that. He said, "You know, I told Montenegro that was a wise thing to say. You say 'only twelve,' or 'only two,' or 'only one.' If you're that one, we don't say 'only.'" So he kidded me about that.

And so, when we made our strong stand against the *ABC* newspaper closing, that created a big tension between us. That was a very tense time. First of all, I made that whole statement. Jack Landon, who is now the ambassador to Suriname, was my political officer, and he practically had it ready anyway, because he knew the night before, they were going to do it. So we had it all ready when they did it, we put it out, and then we sent it up to the State Department for them to use in the noon brief. We never had that cleared with anybody; we did it on our own. And we started out: "The Embassy of the United States in Paraguay deplores..." We used the word "deploro," and I guess they don't use that much in Paraguay, because, after that, every time

Stroessner got mad, he'd say, "Mr. Ambassador, yo deploro!"

But that was a tense time, and we carried it out. He had been doing very well, and so we had agreed that the military unit, the parachute jumpers and the band from the US Southern Command, would come down on May 15th and march in their parade. And he had evidently notified his military friends in Argentina and Bolivia and everything else that we were coming down. So, when he closed the newspaper, I immediately got an audience with him and we went back and forth. First, Montenaro wanted to meet with me, he didn't want me to meet with the president. But I met with the president, and I said, "Mr. President, I want to tell you, if you do not open that newspaper, the band and the parachute troopers will never come to Paraguay as long as that paper is closed."

And that bothered him more than anything I did in the over three years I was there. He couldn't understand. "Why would you do that? This is a military thing. They're coming down. Well, I will go over your head."

And I said, "You don't understand. You don't go over an ambassador's head. I report to the President of the United States, and nobody goes over my head."

And he said, "If you cancel that, I will be very... It will wreck our friendship."

I said, "Well, you have hurt our friendship by closing the *ABC*."

But he never opened it. He never opened that paper. But he was mad. He told that story many times about how the ambassador canceled out the military unit.

Q: As time went on and you were able to get more people released, were there other things flowing from the United States? Were you able to get certain things? For example, that troop presentation, which would have been fine, but something happened to cancel it.

DAVIS: Well, we did... In one year, '83, I had been there about a year, he was inaugurated, and they had gone for quite a while. In fact, the *ABC* newspaper, Zucoleo, remarked on how human rights had improved. But he said, see, what still is I can't... He can't go too long, he feels he has to do this periodically. At one time he said to me, before I brought it up, "Mr. Ambassador, don't talk to me about lifting the state of siege."

I said, "Well, Mr. President, you knew I was going to bring that up, because the United States cannot imagine why anyone would have a permanent state of martial law."

He said, "But, you know, Mr. Ambassador, I've been in for over thirty years and I'm in my '70s.

If I lifted that thing now and let people go around and do what they wanted to do, they would say the old man's getting soft, he doesn't have the strong hand. First thing you know, we'd have Communists all over my country."

I laughed and said, "I don't think you're going to get many Communists in Paraguay; I think the feeling here has been brought up so long it won't happen. But it really would help your position if you did it."

See, this is one thing I think sometimes people don't realize, that no matter what the country is, it's very important to a dictator, a president, a prime minister, or anybody to have the people think the United States gets along with them. Even Stroessner, who once told me about an article on Switzerland, "Look, I don't care. What do you think I care what Switzerland thinks? I don't care what Germany thinks. I don't care what England thinks. I don't care what the United States thinks." But he did. There was nothing to force him to let those people out of jail when Carter's human rights started. There was nothing to force him to agree with me. He could kick me out of the office if he wanted to. But he wanted...

One of the big thrills he had...Tom Andrews was finally going to come down and visit Paraguay. Can you imagine what happened? That was the highest-ranking State Department...

Q: Tom Andrews being the...

DAVIS: Assistant secretary of Latin American Affairs. He would have been the highest-ranking member of the United States government to visit Paraguay other than military. And he canceled out on me on Saturday, when he was supposed to come in on Monday.

Q: Oh, God.

DAVIS: But let me tell you how Stroessner was. So I said, "Fine, the only way you can cover this up is by having President Reagan send a cable down to Stroessner saying that a very important event is taking place and Tom Andrews is involved, he has to be in Washington." That cable was on the front page of every newspaper, and it was better than Andrews's trip, because it showed that he got a message from President Reagan.

CLYDE DONALD TAYLOR
Ambassador
Paraguay (1985-1988)

Ambassador Clyde Donald Taylor was born in Columbia in 1937. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Wheaton College in 1959 he received his master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from American University in 1961. His career has included positions in Panama City, Canberra, San Salvador, Teheran, and an ambassadorship to Paraguay. Ambassador Taylor was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in January 1996.

Q: Today is March 21, 1996. All right, so Paraguay, 1986?

TAYLOR: 1985. I arrived in the first days of November. Stroessner's birthday was imminent and the Palace wanted to schedule my presentation of credentials quickly so I could participate in the birthday events.

Q: Stroessner being...

TAYLOR: Alfredo Stroessner was, I think, completing his 32nd year as El Maximo, the military-political president of Paraguay. I presented my credentials with a lot of ceremony and protocol, which is customary in small countries that compensate for other things by emphasizing formalities. I had already been told that I had the largest pictures to date of an arrival on the front pages of the newspapers. Again, that had a lot to do with the Palace, because although there was limited free press, there was a strong influence from the Palace. They were determined they were going to have an Ambassador they could gain approbation from. I, of course, believe that in the course of representing one's country's interests, if you can develop good relations, that's a nice byproduct, but that is a byproduct, that's not the primary purpose.

Of interest is that I was told very clearly that in the course of presentation of credentials, there would be about a maximum five minute period where you sat next to the President, and this conversation should be limited to pleasantries; and the President would not bring up policy, and neither should I. At the actual event it was not a matter of seconds before the President was complaining about our assistance programs to Bolivia. Bolivia represents their most recent adversary from the War of the Chaco in the '30s, also called the War of Standard Oil. And I tried to not answer, to put that off for another time, and said I'd be glad to discuss it, but he fussed at that point about that aid.

Anyway, I started off on a good footing, and that was in the summertime of Paraguay in the Southern Cone. I adopted an approach to establish a footing that had served me well as an Economic Officer. In advance of coming, I'd asked my deputy, the DCM, to identify key interest groups, key personalities, associations, that I should call on. During that summer I would dedicate myself probably half time to doing these calls to establish contacts, understand the lay of the land, and give people a chance to get to know me, but also to take whatever measure of me they wanted to make. Well, apparently nothing like this had ever happened before in Paraguay. I would make an appointment, let's say with the manufacturers' association, and I'd ask to call on

the General Director or the President. I would explain very carefully, or my Social Secretary would, that this was not just a protocollary call, but I didn't have an agenda. After about the first day of this, I started finding the entire Board of Directors of these organizations there, and a healthy representation of the press. While I never encouraged this, it became somewhat of a media event. I kept trying to make it low-key, and I didn't want to build expectations that I was coming there with some new largesse or what have you. But this went on for about six weeks.

The time came to face the question of meeting with either the patsy opposition parties, which I did, and then to meet with the one party that was truly opposition, that served purposes of the government because they could say, "We really have an opposition party." That party used its legal status to associate itself with three other parties that were not legal, but whose leadership was not rounded up unless they crossed some ill-defined line by the government. This group was called the Acuerdo Nacional (National Accord.) So I said, as I did to other parties, "You are welcomed to come to my office, or I'll go to your office." And they said, "Well, why don't you come to our place?" It was called the Casa del Pueblo (House of the People.) And so while I was meeting with the legal opposition party, I was meeting also with this group in the National Accord.

I happened to have met that morning with General (and future President) Rodriguez, head of the Army's Corps One. It happened to come up that I was having that meeting with the Acuerdo that day; there was nothing secret about it. Well, a firestorm broke out after I'd had that meeting, and some things began to turn. This was a country that had never enjoyed democracy, a country similar to many in the Third World where you are known by your family's political affiliation, e.g. whether or not you're a Liberal or a Colorado/Red Party, which was President Stroessner's party. You were either known as being for the government or against the government, which made the role of a diplomat like that of journalist, politicized, since there is no room in the middle for an objective stance. Despite efforts to convince people it was part of my writ, part of my instruction, to meet with opposition parties, and that my predecessors had also done that, it was a constant basis for irritation, at least as the government saw it.

U.S. policies toward Paraguay and Chile in those years, in the mid-'80s, played out a purpose for the Administration of President Reagan. The Administration was under criticism for its policies toward Central America. Some, certainly some in the Democrat Party, faulted the White House for not being as strong on human rights as it should be, rather that it was reinforcing some military regimes in Central America. Remember, that was the period of the mining of the harbors off of Nicaragua.

Q: Were there human rights issues which you could make... In the first place, were you getting information on people who were incarcerated for political purposes, and did you make any effort or were you instructed to make any effort to try to get them out?

TAYLOR: When my predecessor three times removed, Bob White, took up residence in Paraguay, there were said to be 1200 political prisoners. When he left, the figure was 20. There were several when I was there, but that's all, it was way down. The human rights violations were much more in the area of political association, free press/media, and the judicial process. The latter is still widespread in Latin America were, even apart from police abuse of power/torture, you hold people for years before you bring them to trial. There was torture in Paraguay, but not like there had been, dropping them from planes and putting them in the water tanks and things like this.

We had a famous Captain Ortigosa, who was incarcerated, and the report went out worldwide that he was in sealed, windowless room, and we were able to ascertain that the story wasn't correct. We found ourselves often being used by the European ambassadors, who were kind of weak-kneed on pursuing human rights cases. I remember particularly one time the Italian ambassador, who was known as a neo-monarchist, had instructions to inquire about this Captain. He was so nervous because he didn't want it to appear to the Stroessner government that he had an interest in human rights issues, that he came to me and wanted all the information he could get from me so he could answer his government.

On another case was when the Italian Government wanted to extradite one of their citizens who was well known as captain of the local aero club and in thick with the Stroessner group and the military. He was alleged to be guilty of a number of crimes including assassination. Knowing that the local ambassador was incompetent, we provided detailed information on this person to our embassy in Rome to give to the Italian government.

Probably my most difficult moment in those three years, though, was in the context of the Haitian crisis, when we suddenly had a desperate need to find a home for Duvalier, "Baby Doc," as we called him.

Q: The son of "Papa Doc."

TAYLOR: Yes. The Department identified countries that they thought were potential homes for Baby Doc and sent out very firm instructions. And the instructions were go to the highest level as quickly as possible and make the following points, all of which pointed out the strategic need to get Baby Doc out of Haiti in order to enhance the prospects for Haiti's political change, etc. "You would be a great partner in this effort if you would receive him." Well, I got this message out of the cold, and was appalled. Here I am sitting in a dictatorship under instructions to avoid anything that conveys approval, and consistent with that would be to avoid things that give Stroessner leverage over us, create obligations.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And so I got on the secure phone and I inquired about this. I said, "I've been around long enough to know this is not the kind of cable you find as a vehicle for discussion, when told

to do it,” but I told them I was going to come in with a reclama, and I really wanted them to take it up with Under Secretary Armacost. And so I sent in a reclama; I told them it was highly unlikely the Paraguayans would receive him, if for no other reason than they’re very racial society in terms of Blacks and they wouldn’t want to take a Black. But in their own funny way, they would also see themselves further poisoned in the eyes of the international community by taking this piece of political garbage.

But my key point was that they could have a political football with this; it would give them the political opportunity to ask, “Well, what are you going to do for us?”

Well, my front office took it up with Armacost and lost. I got a repeat instruction, and so I went and saw the Foreign Minister and gave it my best. I was so pleased when they came back and said no, they didn’t want this political garbage. I was most glad because if they’d have said yes, would could have had a difficult period.

The other very difficult time came in 1988 after one of these Palace-led attacks against me in the press. It involved a group called Women for Democracy that was apolitical, if you can say that in that society. (The two women co-chair were the sister-in-law of the Foreign Minister, a Colorado, and the wife of a prominent constitutional lawyer, well identified with the Liberal Party.

I’m describing an incident that was unique; not only my experience, but without doubt in our diplomatic history. This Women for Democracy group, a group patterned very much after Argentina's "consciencia" movement, had seen how the press had been going on for almost two weeks on this attack and decided to host a dinner to honor the American Ambassador and his wife. We were supporting this organization with National Endowment for Democracy money, so we knew the group. And so we got this invitation to go to a very large private home. It was a coat and tie dinner for 300 people.

We accepted the invitation; it was just an "omenaje" dinner, an event honoring us. Well, the dinner was supposed to begin at 7:30, but they asked all the guests to be there at 7:00, and we were supposed to arrive at 7:30. I got a phone call on our own radio system from the DCM who was there with our Embassy people, saying, “Got a problem. The National Police have cordoned a six-block area around this private home, and are forbidding anyone except diplomats from entering.” There are some European and Latin American diplomats among the 300, but in each case they elected to stay with their Paraguayan friends. And the 300 people are outside this perimeter singing national songs - as happens in many countries, you sing patriotic songs, and you know you can’t be charged for that, but everyone knows you’re singing it for a different purpose.

So the question was, should we come or not? And we decided it would look very bad if we didn’t come, and so we went, and we were allowed through. We got there and found about 30 people in the home, mainly our own Embassy and then those who had been preparing the food. I would say about 30 minutes after we arrived, as we were out in the garden, just sort of near the house

and the patio, we smelled some teargas wafting down from where the crowd was, and we're commenting on it. We could hear the grenades exploding. Suddenly, we saw two policemen look over the roughly five-foot wall of this private property, and they lobbed a canister of teargas at us. It landed about three meters from me, very potent, very strong, and we all raced into the house and shut the sliding glass doors.

The hostess was beside herself, because she was very concerned about us. A comical aspect is that she took my wife and me into a very nice library for privacy and comfort. Of course this is a very warm climate, so wanting to make us comfortable, she immediately turned on the air conditioning unit, which of course sucked in the teargas.

The other comical aspect is that I always had bodyguards, and the bodyguard was assigned by the anti-terrorist squad of the National Police. Under the arrangement we provided them training and some equipment, another anomalous relationship we had with the government. And this young man, Rojas, of course had been trained on how to handle teargas. So he was going around helping everyone in the group, putting salt in their nose and then wetting cloths and helping us all, and here it's his government providing all this atmospherics.

We're in the meanwhile on our handheld radios talking to drivers and the embassy home base, trying to determine what to do. Finally, we decided it was okay to leave, so we returned to the Residence, and I called the Foreign Minister from there. I feel convinced that the Foreign Minister did not know anything about this. I had been in his office up to an hour before I left the Residence, and what I learned later was that his sister-in-law had called him while I was there; I remember his taking a call during my call. And that's because she had had the first inkling that they were going to cordon it off. We later learned the exact words of the President's call to the head of the National Police to do this.

Well, I say this is unique because I don't know of another occasion when a head of state has directed that the American Ambassador accredited to him be tear gassed. It is not a record in diplomatic annals that I aspired to, and unfortunately, it began about a seven-week period whereby in an understanding with the Department we agreed that I should only talk to the Foreign Minister until there was an adequate resolution of this act.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Bob Gelbard of our Latin American Affairs Bureau managed this. As most embassies, we had a chance to look at the draft diplomatic notes and protest. I saw earlier drafts but did not see the one that finally went to the Paraguayan Embassy. It demanded the kind of apology that I would have told them you cannot expect from a dictator; you won't get it.

So it held things up for a long time, and when we finally got what we thought was an apology, and publicized it that way, that of course was grinding glass into them, and they denied having made an apology, and we had to sort of proceed on from there. But it resulted in an editorial in the New York Times that highlighted the Paraguayan action and praised our stance for human rights and democracy, and it recognized that it was an unusual thing.

Paraguayans, a number of them, point to that incident and the Pope's visit as being two defining things that showed the weakness of the regime. What happened when the Pope visited is that again they showed their political stupidity by trying at the last minute to change part of the Pope's itinerary. He had decided to meet with some social groups - were groups that the Palace didn't like - and so they tried to change it. The Vatican came back and said if they wanted to change it, the Pope would scratch his visit. Stroessner's crew backed down. But all this got known and it was quite a dust-up.

Also, of course, the Pope's visit advertised the President's own dysfunctional family: he didn't live with his wife, he had a pathetically drug addicted alcoholic son, he had a daughter who had troubled marriages, he had a son that was homosexual in a country that did not accept such, he had some divorcees, and it was rumored that he had fathered some 88 children; all in all a very interesting family. Some of these features, not surprisingly, were writ large among his cabinet ministers, especially separated or divorced spouses, and this in a country that wouldn't allow divorce. So here on the occasion of the Pope's visit you not only saw the President's family, standing together for the first time that the public could remember at the airport having to face the difficulty of being next to each other and not really knowing how to talk to each other, but then when we were in the palace for a major reception, we saw the Cabinet officers and those heads of state agencies with their wives, who on many occasions they were not living with or were not faithful to, also together on this occasion. So the Pope's visit pushed a lot of hot buttons. I exposed some vulnerability, and at the time it was a regime that was trying to be salvaged by this militant wing of the Colorado Party.

Q: You left there when?

TAYLOR: I left the second of September 1988.

Q: And Stroessner was overthrown...

TAYLOR: Not yet. Before I left there had been rumors for quite awhile that he had kidney stones, and we heard about enormous pain, reluctance to surgery, etc. He didn't want to go under any surgery as he was fearful of anesthetics, of being out of control. He didn't want to leave the country and yet he didn't have full faith in domestic surgery, so he was a troubled man with this. We'd get stories about enormous pain he was going through and about a planned surgery by an imported surgeon. What was discovered just two weeks, I think, after I left, was that he had prostate cancer. And this was when his mortality really got registered.

We knew that the head of Corps One, Andres Rodriguez, had been at various times plotting a coup. We knew the personalities involved in this. In effect they advanced plans by a couple of years because he was going to do it when Stroessner was a little weaker and older. We'd heard that the group of militants had a five-year plan to move Stroessner's son into the Presidency. They advanced their plans because of the illness of the President, and they started cleaning house by arranging for the retirement of senior military so that the President's son could move up in rank

quickly. One of the mistakes they made was to arrange that the General Rodriguez of Corps One, the most powerful general apart from the President, become the Minister of Defense, which was strictly an administrative job. That, if nothing else, fed the coup plans. The coup was planned to occur on a number of different dates, but the President wasn't where he was expected to be, and so it finally didn't happen until sometime in January of 1989.

JAMES F. MACK

Deputy Chief of Mission

Asuncion (1986-1989)

Mr. Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin American where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: This is a good place to stop and we will pick this up when you left in '86, Where did you go?

MACK: I went to Paraguay and became the DCM. That was my big promotion.

Q: Stroessner was there!

MACK: Alfredo Stroessner was there and in fact was overthrown toward the end of my tour.

Q: Next time we will pick it up '86 and off to Heir Stroessner. STOP!

Today is the 28th of November 2005, and we are off to Paraguay and it was '86. You were there from when to when?

MACK: I was there from 1986 to 1989.

Q: What was the state of play in Paraguay at the time first in Paraguay itself and then in American/Paraguay relations?

MACK: When I arrived Stroessner was in his 33rd year in power. And his relationship with the United States was very poor. Because of obviously the U.S. did not take kindly to his form of one party rule, which was really a dictatorship, albeit a popular one. There were continuing civil and human rights violations of opponents who were still being arrested. In the electoral sense,

Stroessner did allow some prominent politicians from the opposition party to come back to Paraguay and there was an election. And of course Stroessner overwhelmingly won the election.

There was a joke told in Paraguay about the how the Americans are always boasting about their extraordinarily modern system for tabulating presidential votes, how they did all these projections within an hour of the closing of the polls based voting patterns in certain precincts, how the prognosticators could predict with a high deal of accuracy who would be the next President of the United States. According to the joke, when Stroessner heard about the American boasts, he responded that all this was very impressive but that he was able to predict the results of a presidential election in Paraguay years before it was held.

Q: Did we have any particular issue with him other than he was a dictator?

MACK: Human rights and lack of political freedom in the country. Those were the major issues.

Q: There are dictators and dictators. What kind of rule did he have at this time?

MACK: Well, when he came to power, the country had been in the midst of a long civil war. He put an end to it and put his party, the *Colorado* party, in power. He really brought order to the country. There was no question that he enjoyed a lot of popular support.

The country had been in shambles due to years of chaos. Stroessner began to bring order to Paraguay. He made some major infrastructure improvements over time. For example, the water out of the faucet was good to drink in most Paraguayan towns. This is quite an achievement for a third world country. You could drink the water.

Having served in Central America and been sickened with dysentery and every other intestinal bug known to man, I thought that was a rather impressive achievement.

Over time he established a decent phone system and a fairly decent road system. He negotiated an end to a border dispute with Brazil regarding where in the Paraná River to draw the line, paving the way for the construction of the Itaipu dam between the two counties, which at that time was the largest hydraulic dam in the world. I am not sure whether the Three Gorges dam in China now is the largest. But Itaipu was absolutely huge. Paraguay's half the electricity produced was about 20 times the demand in Paraguay at the time so Paraguay then was able to sell 95% of it so to Brazil which largely financed the project with the World Bank.. So by putting an end to this dispute, essentially inundating the disputed area in a huge lake behind the dam which became a bi-national entity, Paraguay was able to take a gigantic step forward in terms of energy independence. The project employed a lot of people, gave opportunities for a large number of Paraguayan firms to get lucrative contracts. I am sure not all of them were awarded based on merit. But, nonetheless a lot Paraguayans learned a lot of skills in the process. And he did the same thing with Argentina downstream in the construction of the Yacyreta dam which was well underway at the time that I was there. So he really did bring progress to the country.

On the other hand, like most dictators or authoritarian figures, he did not know when to leave. If he had left five or ten years earlier he would have probably gone down in Paraguayan history as a greater leader despite his strong-arm rule. He basically overstayed like Marcos and Fujimori did, as did a lot of others.

The fact is that Stroessner may even have had the support of the majority of the population at the time he was ousted. The Colorado Party through which he ruled was very well organized right down to the grassroots. He spoke Guarani. Many loved him. Many did and obviously many did not. Many left the country because of him. But even people who did not support him recognized that he did a lot of positive things. But he stayed on too long. He had many of the same acolytes with him including ministers who had been with him since almost the beginning. Those running the country were almost a gerontocracy, if that's the word. The average age must have been seventy or seventy-five for the ministers. And by and large they were corrupt but very, very loyal to Stroessner.

And that was the situation when I got there. Our ambassador was very direct in dealing with Paraguayan Government on human rights issues and as a result our relations with the government were very, very poor.

Q: What was Stroessner doing to his own people. Were the jails full of dissidents?

MACK: Well I don't think that at that point after thirty-five years in power Stroessner had the jails filled with dissidents. There were a few but at that point most who had actively opposed the regime had simply left the country or shut up. I don't think there was a huge group that were actively protesting. He had the place pretty well tied down. This brings us to an event celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday, which was a national holiday by the way, to which the diplomatic corps and spouses were invited. At that point, I was in my third year as DCM and Tim Towell had replaced Ambassador Taylor. The annual event was hosted by the Presidential Escort Regiment, which was basically his Praetorian Guard. At that event all the senior members of the military were there. It was a big event.

Then somewhat after that, not too much actually, a curious event happened. Unbeknownst to the U.S. Embassy, his "consuego" General Rodriguez – consuego in this case meant that Stroessner's son was married to General Rodriguez' daughter - was plotting against Stroessner. Understand that the two were very close, General Rodriguez was his senior general and Commander of the First Cavalry Division and when I say Cavalry I literally mean literally that. I paid a major in that division to teach my young son how to ride!

In any event, President Stroessner kept his Presidential Escort Regiment stationed very near where he lived. Gen Rodriguez' division was on the edge of town. Theoretically this

arrangement provided protection to Stroessner. But it turned out that unbeknownst to the U.S. Embassy, the plot was beginning to thicken.

General Rodriguez apparently had become convinced that Stroessner had lost confidence in him. At least this was the story that I heard later. When Stroessner called Rodriguez in, Rodriguez assumed he was going to be axed so he claimed he couldn't go because of a leg injury. At that point, Rodriguez' group decided to strike first. A few months before, Stroessner had undergone a prostate operation that did not go well. Apparently there was a lot bleeding and his long recovery led to speculation that he was dying or even had died. This led to some jockeying among various factions for advantage just in case Stroessner did not survive. Some of Stroessner's people must of picked this up and for some reason believed, maybe correctly, that Rodriguez was suspect. In any event, thinking that Stroessner was moving against him, Rodriguez decided to move against Stroessner.

This was almost unthinkable in the context of a rule that had gone on for 35 years. We in the American Embassy saw some clues but never put the pieces together because we could not conceive Rodriguez would overthrow Stroessner, given their historical and family ties. Of course, no Paraguayan believed the US did not know. In fact, since I was in South Africa at the time of the coup, they thought I had been sent over to secure his exile.

That was absolutely not true. I had just left for South Africa before the coup but was there with my wife, three of my kids and mother in law to visit the game parks. The night that the coup took place we had just arrived in Pretoria. The next morning a note was passed under my door informing me that Stroessner had been overthrown, and asking me to call the Embassy in Asuncion. So I called Ambassador Tim Towell, who said "Jim you don't have come back but I really prefer that you would". I got the message so I left my family to complete the trip to the game parks alone and took the next scheduled plane to plane to Rio, which was not for two days. .

When I got back, I learned that bullets had flown over the Embassy compound between forces loyal to Stroessner, some of which were stationed across the street at the president's home, and the forces under Rodriguez who had Stroessner's Presidential Escort Regiment headquarters surrounded a few blocks away. Fortunately no one at the embassy was hurt. .

Q: Were there casualties among the Paraguayans?

MACK: Yes, among the military, but eventually it became clear to Stroessner's forces that they could not prevail against Rodriguez' division. It was a kind of Mexican standoff at this point. At the end, the commander of the Escort Regiment counted his own guns and realized that further resistance was futile. Stroessner was sent out of the country. He is alive today. 1989 was sixteen years ago, so that would make him ninety-one years old. He is living on ranch in Brazil and still alive. And there are still people in Paraguay who would like to see him return. He remained fairly popular. There were a considerable number of people who supported him. In fact some of

his younger supporters from those days are powerful in the government today. The joke going around Asuncion when I was last there in 2006 was a group of Stroessner supporters went to visit the old man in Brazil to tell them how well the “Stronistas” were doing. He reportedly responded that “he was the only one missing”.

I must say under Stroessner biggest crimes were of corruption and repression of political opponents. There was virtually no violent street crime at that time. The streets of Asuncion were safe. This is unique among any Latin American country that I have seen. In Asuncion, young women, children of the middle class, high school girls would ride public buses at night to go down town to promenade around in the center of town. Can you imagine that today in any other country in Latin America? It is inconceivable. That is how safe things were. Yes, there were burglaries and that sort of thing. But there was, virtually, no violent crime. It was said that not a leaf fluttered in Paraguay without Stroessner knowing about it. That was the condition in Paraguay.

Q: In a way, this man had been going since 1954 and we were tutt tutting at least or shaking our heads about his human rights thing, yet we had Peace Corps, we had military connections, I mean it seems like we were working both sides of the street?

MACK: I guess you might say that. Paraguay was a great Peace Corps country. Peace Corps volunteers were welcomed and relative safely as well. Unlike some other countries.

But I must say relations grew quite testy during Clyde Taylor’s Ambassadorship. He was very, very strong on pushing the Government to open up and on human rights side so there was constant tension with the Government.

Q: Were we concerned that Paraguay was a smuggling haven?

MACK: There were some who said that Paraguay in those days existed to provide to its neighbors, the Argentines and the Brazilians, smuggled products that were heavily taxed in their own countries, the most important of which I think at the time was whiskey. Apparently, Paraguay was one of the largest importers of Scotch Whiskey in the world – with 3 million people. Ha! Ha!

The smuggling business was huge. Whiskey, computers, condoms - you name it. Whatever was in short supply in those neighboring countries or overpriced, Paraguayan smugglers were happy to provide. And the smuggling was very coordinated. Stroessner’s military commanders controlled much of the trade. That is how they made their money. Their salaries were paltry, which is why a cavalry officer taught my son how to ride on the side. Stroessner’s acceptance of smuggling by his commanders was just part of the deal; that was the arrangement. They were allowed to do that in exchange for loyalty to the government. That system worked quite well. There were a lot of wealthy senior military officers.

Q: Well, were we able to make any inroads on the human rights thing in conjunction with other countries?

MACK: I would say, yes things did open up a little bit. One of the leading opponents to the government was allowed to come back and begin some political activity under certain restrictions. But he was allowed to come back. The largest newspaper, I think it was called ABC Color if I remember correctly, was allowed to resume publishing when I was there. And they were somewhat critical of his government. They couldn't be too critical but the fellow who ran it definitely was not Stroessner supporter. So I think because of the gerontocracy, because the leadership was aging, they were not as vigorous as they might have been in stamping these kinds of things out. So the government was opening up somewhat. However, Stroessner gave no sign of stepping down. He was "reelected" while I was there.

Q: How did you read Stroessner? Did you have much contact with him?

MACK: I had almost no contact with him. Nor did the Ambassador.

Q: Was Paraguay playing any role in Latin America that we were interested in other than smuggling whiskey?

MACK: Well, I would say not a huge role, their role was smuggling. A Paraguayan city across the Paraná River from Brazil, and also close to Argentina, personified this. It was then officially called "Ciudad Presidente Stroessner". That city is now called "Ciudad del Este" or City of the East, and exists to supply the contraband needs of those countries. Over time it attracted a very interesting element from the Middle-East that settled there – and later became a hot point for terrorist fundraising and perhaps was even the place from which the terrorist acts against the Jewish community in Buenos Aires were orchestrated. At the time I was there, these terrorist acts had yet not taken place. But people who engaged in every kind of smuggling activities were there. And anybody who wanted to do that kind of thing seemed to be allowed into the country by one means or another. My guess is that these people had to pay heavy bribes.

To give you an example of the extent corruption in Paraguay, I remember our consular officer once telling me he had in front of him an applicant for a US visa with a Paraguayan diplomatic passport who could not speak Spanish. It turned out the guy was from Morocco. So the point is that the Paraguayans were even selling their diplomatic passports to foreigners. That was the level of corruption. That was an issue between us and Paraguay. Because even then we had some security concerns about people traveling, for whatever purpose, to the United States.

Q: Was there any residue of Nazi's there at that time or not?

MACK: '86 that would have been 41 years after the war. I think if it were, it was very, very limited at that point.

Q: You didn't have Nazi hunters working in the area?

MACK: I don't recall if there were Nazi hunters there. I don't recall, no. I do remember that there was a very old Colonel in the Paraguayan army who was Russian in origin and I think came over in the 1930s as a captain in the cavalry to fight with the Paraguayans. In 1986 he was still serving Stroessner loyally. Remember Stroessner was probably only a young lieutenant or captain during the Chaco war.

In the 1930s Bolivia and Paraguay had fought a really nasty protracted war for several years over control over a desolate region that covers half of Paraguay called the Chaco. The war was largely won by Paraguay. To help them, the Paraguayans hired a number of White Russian Officers who were unemployed as a result of losing the war to the Bolsheviks in the early 1920s. Paraguay hired them to train and lead their Army against Bolivia. These were cavalry men because in the 1930s the cavalry was much more efficient in operating the trackless waste of the Chaco. Interestingly enough, Bolivia hired former German officers from World War I to train their Army. These officers from Russian and Germany played an important role in training, and probably leading, the Paraguayan and Bolivian armies in the war of the Chaco.

In fact, I think some Tartar officers, White Russians, who were particular adept at cavalry tactics trained the Paraguayans. They helped them defeat the Bolivians in what was really a war of "water holes". Since much of the Chaco was basically a desert most of the year, whoever controlled the very few sources of fresh water controlled the battlefield. It was a very bloody war and most who died likely died because of dehydration rather than being shot.

Q: How did we deal with the Government itself? Did we go to the various Ministries and other active services?

MACK: We would seek Foreign Ministry support on various international issues, which I cannot remember at this point. We were always politely received, but as I recall we were not particularly successful in pushing our brief. One big issue we did have was narcotics smuggling. Paraguay was a transit point for Bolivian cocaine because of the porousness of the borders, the availability of landing strips all over the place. This was complicated by having a corrupt government and military that was complicit in smuggling. If you could smuggle whiskey you certainly as heck could smuggle cocaine or whatever you wanted to smuggle.

In fact, while I was there I took it upon myself to convince the DEA to reopen its office due to Paraguay's role as a narcotics transit point. So drugs were an increasingly sensitive issue for us. To say that we solved any major problem at the time, I would say no. Paraguay was not the location of major foreign successes of the U.S. at the time.

DAVID N. GREENLEE

Ambassador

Paraguay (1999-2003)

Ambassador Greenlee was born and raised in New York and educated at Yale University. After service in the Peace Corps in Bolivia and the US Army in Vietnam, he joined the Foreign Service in 1974. In the course of his career the ambassador served in Peru, Bolivia (three tours), Israel, Spain and Chile, as well as in the Department of State, where he was involved in Haitian and Egyptian affairs, and at the Pentagon, where he was Political Advisor. Three of his foreign tours were as Deputy Chief of Mission. He served as United States Ambassador to Paraguay and Bolivia. Ambassador Greenlee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: You went from Haiti coordinator to Paraguay, ambassador to Paraguay...

GREENLEE: I was special coordinator for Haiti for a little over two years, from July of 1997 until sometime in the second half of 1999. That year, in about April or so, it developed that our Ambassador to Paraguay, Maura Hardy, was going to break off her tour earlier than expected for a high-level job in the department and I was selected to replace her. But, as I noted earlier, I was held up by the Helms staff, and so I took advantage of the dead time to learn some Guarani at the Foreign Service Institute.

Guarani is an interesting language, spoken by European immigrants and indigenous Paraguayans alike. When the Spaniards conquered what is now Paraguay, they defeated the Guarani people, who were great warriors. The Spaniards came without women, so they took concubines from the native population. Not just one or two, but in Paraguay many more. The women would raise the children, and the children would speak Guarani. That was the language of the hearth.

Q: I take it the discrepancy of one conquistador for many women was because the males had been killed?

GREENLEE: I think that's part of it, but the other part of it was that the conquerors, the Spaniards, had power and rights but not women. Maybe not every *conquistador* would have many women, but at least some did, as many as 30 or 40 women, I have heard. So they weren't around to raise all their children. The women did that. Since the offspring of the Spaniards were in a position to have comparatively good jobs, jobs in the Spanish administration or the Church, it was important for them to know Spanish as well as Guarani. So a system of dual languages evolved. Spanish was the language of government, the courts and the church. Paraguay became a bi-lingual country, with an underlying dependence on Guarani. The Guarani people, as a people, disappeared, but their language persisted, and it is a sophisticated language. It has the equivalent

of the subjunctive, and you can say anything in Guarani you can say in Spanish—unlike Quechua, which is much more mixed with Spanish. There are a lot of words in Quechua that are really Spanish words with Quechua endings.

Q: When you say the Guaranis disappeared. What happened?

GREENLEE: They were killed off or absorbed. There actually are a few people who call themselves Guaranis. I met some of them in a forest preserve, the Mbaracayu national park on the border with Brazil. They call themselves Guaranis, but I am not sure they are. But the Guarani language is spoken all over Paraguay. Almost all Paraguayans speak it. There was a period under Alfredo Stroessner, the dictator, when the language was looked down on, but it never disappeared, and in recent years it has flourished. Paraguayans abroad, when other Spanish speakers around, delight in lapsing into Guarani.

Q: Could you talk a bit about the Stroessner period? Stroessner was almost synonymous with Paraguay during my Foreign Service career. When you thought of Paraguay, you thought of Stroessner.

GREENLEE: Stroessner was a very strong anti-communist dictator of Austrian descent who ruled the country with the Colorado Party for about 35 years. He had an iron grip on the country. If you read The Honorary Consul, the Graham Greene novel, you can get a sense of what could happen if you were on the opposite side of his regime. Stories about Stroessner are legion. The Paraguayans can be very tough and rebellious people, and the knife can cut both ways. There were Argentines working with Paraguayans to overthrow Stroessner. Stroessner's guys rounded up a few of them and threw them out of a DC-3.

Q: The DC-3 being an airplane.

GREENLEE: Right. Threw them out, killed them that way. It was like Rodriguez de Francia with airplanes. Stroessner was dictatorial, very tough, very anti-communist, and very unsavory. During the Cold War, or at least the early part of it, he didn't get the kind of back-pressure from the U.S. or other western democracies that he got toward the end of his regime.

Things started to change, I would guess, when Jimmy Carter became president, and human rights became a main feature of our policy. Pressure against Stroessner built up, and in 1989 he was overthrown by the army commander, General Andres Rodriguez. There followed a period of transition, a somewhat difficult period because Rodriguez was known to have been involved in drug trafficking, as well as other kinds of contraband. But the U.S. was pleased to see movement toward democracy. Stroessner went off to a gilded exile in Brazil, where he died, a very old man, in August 2006.

I came to Paraguay at an interesting time, the beginning of August 2000. About ten months before, there had been a traumatic event in Paraguay. The vice-president of Paraguay, Luis Maria Argaña, was assassinated. It was alleged that people close to the president, Raul Cubas, were behind the killing, and Cubas was forced into exile. There was a lot of turmoil. Our ambassador, Maura Harty, played a key role in helping the transition to a new government. Luis Angel Gonzalez Macchi, who was the head of the senate, was next in line and became president. Another key actor at the time was the army chief, Lino Oviedo, who some believed was behind Argaña's assassination. He, too, fled the country, but retained a strong political following. (After a time in exile and then in jail in Paraguay, he became a contender in the 2008 presidential election.)

Well, that was the background when I arrived. Gonzalez Macchi was President. The country was in a kind of political and economic paralysis and remained that way throughout my tenure.

I presented my credentials in a sober and impressive ceremony. There was an honor guard and some guy made a tape of the whole thing and sold it to me. He inserted fire-works and music in the lead-in that were entirely his invention. But I bought the tape and have it somewhere.

Gonzalez Macchi was famous for being a nice guy. People liked him personally. But he had no apparent interest in governing or rooting out corruption. He was part of the system and wasn't about to change it. He benefited from it, as did his family and his wife's family. His wife was actually, I think, his fifth wife. She was a former Miss Paraguay, very beautiful, and, some said, quite smart.

The continued fallout from the Argaña assassination and the ineffectiveness of the Gonzalez Macchi government framed the political landscape. It was actually quite difficult for me, as ambassador, because there were Paraguayans, influential Paraguayans, who insisted that the U.S. should not prop up such a corrupt government, that the government was not legitimate since it didn't enjoy broad popular support. But there was really no alternative for us. I often made the argument that a democratic constitutional government was ipso facto legitimate, but only those around Gonzalez Macchi, or benefiting from the status quo, really accepted that. So the public argument went that the U.S. was opting for stability rather than good governance. We were seen as part of the system. The owner of the Paraguay's largest newspaper, ABC Color, a guy named Zuccolillo, who favored the renegade Oviedo, plied the line that if the U.S. were an honest country, it would force Gonzalez Macchi out and new elections would produce a legitimate government.

Q: How was this attitude transmitted? What were you getting from the State Department and congress? Did you have instructions?

GREENLEE: Well, I read about Paraguay extensively before going there, and of course was familiar with the mission program plan, basically the policy and resource document for our

bilateral relationship. I also met with lots of people, stake-holders in the government, NGO and private sectors. And I was studying Guarani, which helped me get ready in a cultural sense.

The problem I saw before arriving was that the informality and the corruption that comes from the informality of Paraguay's economic system was not checked by a strong legal system. But Paraguay has a strong cultural base. It's a nation state. Paraguayans can sit at the same table, master and servant alike. That was the environment I came into. It was interesting and challenging from a policy perspective.

But there wasn't too much that I could do with all of this, even at risk of being seen as interfering in their internal affairs. I found myself in the position of being a prop for a president who wasn't dealing with the problems of the country. I was supporting democracy, while Gonzalez Macchi was supporting himself and his family and friends.

PERU

WILLIAM LENDERKING

Public Affairs Officer, USIS

Lima (1980-1983)

A native of New York, Mr. Lenderking graduated from Dartmouth College and served a tour with the US Navy in the Far East before joining the Foreign Service of the US Information Agency in 1959. As Public Affairs, Press and Information Officer, he served in posts throughout the world and in Washington, D.C., where held senior level positions in USIA and the Department of State dealing with Policy, Plans and Research. Mr. Lenderking was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: Okay, 1980; whither?

LENDERKING: I thought having a big press attaché position was the best job in the world, and I was happy to have another one of those jobs rather than be PAO, because the latter was more of a bureaucratic manager kind of job. Trouble was, I'd never get promoted with another press attaché job, because it was considered essential to acquire management experience in order to make it to the top levels of the Foreign Service. So, since I still had plenty of ambition, I recognized the conflict. Being a PAO involved having to be a naysayer to a lot of people and my experiences with my PAOs in Italy and Bangkok were not the happiest. But people who thought I had some talent kept saying, you know, you should be a PAO, you are senior enough and you have been around long enough. So anyway, I get a phone call in the middle of the night from Bob Chatten, the East Asia and Pacific Area Director who had succeeded Bill Payeff and an old friend, who says, "Congratulations! You're going to Peru as PAO!" I had not applied for that and I said okay, Peru. And my wife, who is Australian, is just awake enough to say, "Peru! Where's that!" She'd barely heard of it and couldn't visualize how it could be any fun or at all interesting. So, Peru is a long way from Bangkok and that was my next assignment, as PAO to Lima, Peru.

Q: Describe what you know about the role of Frank Ortiz, both in Washington and then when he came to be ambassador.

LENDERKING: I am going to say some things that are critical of Ambassador Ortiz, for the sake of the historical record. He died a few years ago and never had a chance to rebut what I am about to say. But he was the kind of person who would not have thought twice about going behind someone's back to slime him or her, if it was in his interest to do so. Anyway, I'll try to keep personal remarks to a minimum, but the kind of person he was also affected his performance as ambassador, so that's relevant too.

He wanted this job very badly. He had been ambassador to several other countries, I think most recently Guatemala, but before that in Barbados, maybe some other small country. He was critical of the Carter initiatives in human rights and the diplomats who had been active in Central America and had tried to do something in countries where there were severe human rights problems, caused by the way dictatorships that were friendly to the U.S. treated their own people.

Frank Ortiz worked very hard to ingratiate himself with the White House, saying for example that pushing for human rights in countries where they were blatantly violated was a wrong policy and that if he were an ambassador he would faithfully carry out the Reagan policies and back away from some of these policies that he thought were mistaken. So he was successful in currying favor with the White House and persuading them that he was a Latin American expert and a conservative loyalist. But what he was really successful at was pushing his own ambitions.

Some of us were outraged when he came. Ed Corr was a very successful and popular ambassador, and although he was no troglodyte, as a career ambassador he could be counted on to faithfully support the policies of the administration in power. So, replacing him well before he might have been expected to move on was, in effect, a blatant example of politicizing our Foreign Service. It's nothing new, mind you, but generally it's not a good or healthy thing for our country. I'm well aware, of course, that an ambassador is the President's personal representative and that all ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the President, but politicizing the process by filling posts with political loyalists is, in the long run, against our own interests.

As for Frank Ortiz, I don't like speaking ill of him, but he was such a prime example of a bad ambassador that I think his case is instructive. I will quote a friend who was also an ambassador and a career foreign service officer, and who knew Ortiz quite well. He said Frank Ortiz was the only Foreign Service officer he had ever met about whom it could be said that after 35 years of service he had not a single friend. Ortiz was not a pleasant person, but he was wily. He had his own personal agenda, which was the furthering of Frank Ortiz. I think he was intellectually dishonest and a coward and still I tried to do what I could as a Foreign Service person to give him support and do the best job I could.

Here are some examples: he was not friendly, to say the least, to the Fulbright program. He once said publicly, "I don't know why we have a Fulbright program; all it does is give grants to Marxists." That was nonsense. He was also a masterful backbiter. He was tough on me, cordial on the surface but saying nasty and untrue things behind my back, but he was much tougher on

some other embassy officers, most of who were working hard and doing really good jobs. If there was a pattern, he was toughest on fellow Hispanics whom he regarded as social inferiors. He himself claimed direct descent from Spanish grandees who settled New Mexico. He played that card whenever it suited him, and he was able to bamboozle a lot of people with that kind of approach, whether his claims of ancestral distinction were true or not.

Now here is a huge irony: early on the White House chief of personnel, Helene Von Damm -- I think that was her title, but in any case she had been Reagan's secretary early on and she was now a high ranking assistant and a real power in the White House -- came to Peru on a visit and Frank Ortiz had gone out of his way to welcome her and her assistant because she was so influential and had Reagan's ear. At that point I had been involved rather peripherally with AFSA (the American Foreign Service Association, the professional association of the Foreign Service, which also functions somewhat as a labor union) in campaigning against the proliferation of political appointees as ambassadors instead of career officers. I believed with AFSA that the basic criteria should be professional experience, expertise, and competence, and not political loyalty. And I had been outspoken in a few situations where I said we should not have so many political appointees. So Helene Von Damm comes down and she turns out to be just a very savvy lady and of course totally political. Frank Ortiz duly called the Country Team (office directors) together to meet with her and we sat around the table and talked about issues and problems, and the issue of political appointees came up. At this point it was so clear to all of us Helene von Damm was so much more a savvy and congenial person than our career ambassador that I really couldn't say anything and didn't want to. She was very impressive. All the other office directors said after the meeting that it would be great to have Helene Von Damm as ambassador rather than Frank Ortiz. So the issue wasn't strictly political appointees -- it was competence. Later on my wife and I got to know her and her assistant a little bit personally, and they were both real professionals, smart, quick studies, friendly and good company and certainly not fooled by the likes of Frank Ortiz. Later on, Helene went to Austria as Reagan's ambassador and I was quite pleased. I lost track of her after that, but she seemed to me at the time as the kind of political appointee no one could take justified exception to.

Q: When you got back to Lima, how did that go? We tried to play the honest broker and we ended up coming down rather firmly on the British side.

LENDERKING: Once the battle was over and the Brits had won so decisively, the controversy died down quickly and there was not a lot of residual resentment against us. Shortly before this, Jeane Kirkpatrick had visited -- she made two trips, actually. For the first one she came as a visiting scholar invited by USIA and we had just arrived in Lima a day or two before. We invited her and her husband, a delightful man, to dinner and they had just come from Argentina, about which Ms. Kirkpatrick claimed some expertise. We spent the whole evening arguing about her famous article that had just appeared, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," which brought her

smartly to the attention of the incoming Reagan administration and was instrumental in landing her the job as US Ambassador to the UN. In the article she claimed that right wing dictatorship that we supported could always change over time, but Communist regimes were totalitarian and immutable. Please remember, disputing that false notion was part of why I got kicked out of Italy, and here we were, seven years later, arguing some of the same points. I criticized her article on several points – I had read it very carefully -- and we had a very lively discussion over dinner. As you recall, Ms Kirkpatrick was no shrinking violet and she didn't give an inch. At the end, we parted amicably but I think she made a mental note that Ed Corr and I, and perhaps others in the Embassy, with our talk about promoting democracy and supporting those in Latin America who were true democrats, were not as hard-line anti-Communist as she would have liked.

Now, she had just come from Argentina and I said well, what do you think of the Argentine government? And she said "Oh, I think the admirals are just a little bit misunderstood." Now mind you, this is a government that had taken over the Falklands and had perpetrated some of the worst human rights abuses – remember the 'desaparecidos'? the 'disappeared ones'? in the history of Latin America. So in my view Ms. Kirkpatrick, much as I admired her for her gutsy understanding during the Cold War that Communism presented a real threat and wasn't an invention, and those who thought as she did, had a real blind spot about oppressive, dictatorial regimes. And they failed to understand that acquiescing in their brutality, or even supporting it, went against our long term interests.

Q: Disappearances.

LENDERKING: The disappearances. And for someone like Jeane Kirkpatrick, who I always regarded as a sensible anti-communist and not some rabid polemicist, to say something like that - well, I thought she was way off base, to put it mildly.

A few months later, she had been made ambassador to the UN, and she returned to Peru with all the trappings of her high office, with her own government airplane. She didn't have to depend on USIA and some arranged speaking arrangements, she was now a personage. She was treated as an honored embassy guest and a VIP by the Peruvian Government. She seemed a bit suspicious of Ed Corr and of me as well, because she remembered our conversation and referred to it. So anyway, this little vignette maybe sheds some light on the dispute over human rights policy that began with the Carter Administration and roiled the body politic for a time. And the Falkland Islands battle later on soured our relations with Argentina for a while, because there was no doubt whose side we were on.

Q: How did we view the military in Peru?

LENDERKING: The military was still dominated by leftists and they favored keeping us at a distance. Of course, we had to continue the work of building close relations with the military forces, but they were very standoffish, and it was not easy to deal with them. Our military

attachés had a tough row. And we wanted to get the military-to-military cooperation restored and I just don't recall the specifics of that time but there was always an issue.

RICHARD OGDEN

Deputy Chief of Mission

Lima (1983-1985)

Richard Ogden was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1939 and grew up in New Canaan. He attended Stanford where he majored in economics and went on to receive his masters from the Fletcher School in the spring of 1963. He entered the Foreign Service in 1964 and in 1966 he began service in Bogota, Colombia as part of the Economic Section. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to Thailand, Argentina, Peru, England, and Spain.

Q: In 1983, where were you?

OGDEN: In 1983, I got a call from Frank Ortiz who was going to be the new ambassador to Peru, and he asked me to come down to be his DCM. The Department approved. I very happily said, "Yes," so we were off to Peru for our next tour.

Q: So you were there from 1983 to?

OGDEN: I was there from 1983 to 1985.

Q: What was the situation in Peru?

OGDEN: It was a very difficult period. Fernando Belaunde Terry had been reelected in 1980, and so we were living through the last two years of his presidency. The situation was rather unstable because the Shining Path guerilla group was becoming much more active, especially around Ayacucho. The security situation for the embassy was hard and it was dangerous to travel in certain parts of the country. Some areas were virtually off limits for embassy travel. Belaunde was trying to get through his mandate and we were, of course, anxious to sustain democracy and to promote it. We worked quite closely with him to do that.

Q: What had been the recent history of Peru, leading up to the present?

OGDEN: This was Fernando Belaunde Terry's second term. He'd been elected in 1963 but had not been able to finish his mandate. There was a coup in 1968 and General Juan Velasco Alvarado took power. Velasco used Belaunde's settlement with the International Petroleum Company as an excuse for the coup. His administration nationalized a lot of land and companies

including IPC. Eventually, a more moderate General, Francisco Morales Bermúdez, took power in the mid-'70s. So the background to Belaunde's election was about 12 years of military rule.

Politically, the left in Peru for a long time had been dominated by the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). Belaunde's party was the Alianza Popular which tended to be more centrist and moderate. One of Belaunde's key goals was to get through his second term so he could hand over power to an elected successor.

Q: How were relations with the embassy and the government?

OGDEN: They were very good, especially in the early part of his term. In the last year or so, I think relations were not quite as close because Belaunde was having a harder time governing. There was a feeling that things were slipping a bit out of his control. But he was an elected leader, he was popular, and we tried to support him in every way possible. We had a lot of very interesting programs in Peru. I can run through them.

Q: Yes, let's run through them.

OGDEN: We had a big AID program, I think one of the biggest in Latin America at that time. It was primarily involved in agricultural reform and also in health and education. Agricultural reform was a priority for Belaunde.

Q: Was that agricultural reform tied to the land reallocation?

OGDEN: Yes, land reallocation, better rural roads and trying to encourage the production of agricultural products with good export potential.

Then we had a big civil air problem involving Eastern Airlines at that time. Eastern was not getting as many routes and landing rights in Peru as it wanted. The government was trying to favor Aero Peru. We had a lot of negotiations with the Peruvians on that issue. Eventually, the situation got so bad that the CAB had to cut off Aero Peru from the United States. By the end of my stay, there were no direct flights between Peru and the United States. That's a very unusual state of affairs. The Peruvians just didn't like the fact that Eastern was challenging their national company.

Then there were also mineral issues that were important. We had some problems come up with Occidental Oil and Belco Oil. Southern Peru Copper operated a very large and important mine near Ilo and we followed that situation carefully.

Q: Have the expropriation issues been pretty well settled?

OGDEN: Well, under the Belaunde regime I don't recall any expropriation issue arising. But the problem remained under the surface, I guess. When the APRA leader Alan Garcia was elected in 1985, the issue came up again. I believe that he nationalized Belco, although I had already left by that time.

Narcotics was a very big issue for us in Peru. We were funding programs to eradicate Coca production in the Huallaga valley, and AID was promoting agricultural substitution programs. We also were funding efforts by the Peruvian police to track down narcotics traffickers. Our funding levels were small then, but Congressional interest in the programs was very high. I recall several Congressional visits to Peru which focused on the narcotics problem.

We had very close relations with the Peruvian military in those days. Ambassador Ortiz was an avid tennis player and had assembled a group of tennis enthusiasts in the embassy. We would go out almost every weekend to play tennis with key Peruvian military leaders. For example, the army chief at the time, General Julian Julia, was a tennis nut and we often would play with him and other top army generals. Between sets, we never missed an opportunity to emphasize the importance of democracy to the future of Peru. If any coup thoughts were brewing, I would like to think that we kept them in check. This was real tennis diplomacy.

Q: Was there a communist party in the area?

OGDEN: I think the Aprista Party on the left was wide enough to include most of the communist-oriented thinking in Peru. Prior to the 1985 election, we had several very useful sessions with Alan Garcia, the Aprista leader, while he was a candidate for President. I can remember several luncheons when we were talking about possible new AID programs and how we could cooperate on narcotics and other issues. It was a big disappointment to learn later that Alan Garcia had taken a different path and decided not to cooperate with the United States. I think he missed a big opportunity to transform the left in Peru into a more responsible political force.

Q: Did we have an attitude or do anything about the Shining Path?

OGDEN: Well, we certainly had an attitude which was to promote security and to limit travel to areas in which Sendero operated. Our anti-narcotics program was not directed against Sendero. Indeed, at the time the links between Sendero and narcotics traffickers were not very clear although we were very interested in the issue. We were concerned about the military and the police reaction to Sendero. Human rights violations were occurring and we didn't want military repression to turn the population against the government. We made this point often at high levels of the government and within the military. Frankly, it was hard to know exactly what was going on in small villages in rural areas. Anyway, Sendero was very active and got to be more of a threat. The group would frequently blow up electricity towers plunging Lima into sudden darkness.

Q: As we saw it, what was the objective of this organization?

OGDEN: Sendero seemed to be an indigenous movement. It didn't receive much help from Cuba or Russia and didn't seem to want it. The guerrillas often used brutal intimidation of local villagers to enforce their objectives. They tried to provoke the military into human rights

violations. The group's stronghold included the Ayacucho area. Later, it almost certainly formed links with the narcotics traffickers as its power and influence spread.

Q: What was the role in those days or was there one of the intelligentsia, universities, thinkers, and that sort of thing?

OGDEN: Well, there was always concern about the extraordinary poverty in Peru. Many people felt that the government wasn't doing enough, that Belaunde just wasn't dealing with the problems. The knock on Belaunde was that he was more interested in big projects like the marginal jungle highway, than in social reforms to help ordinary Peruvians.

Surprisingly, there was a strong free market group in Peru at the time. It thought the solution to Peru's problems was to get the government out of the way and to let the private sector operate. The free marketers noted the black market in Peru was large, and healthy, and growing and felt more of the economy should operate that way.

At the other extreme were the leftist groups. They advocated the kinds of solutions tried by General Velasco. For them, capitalism was basically selfish and evil. The only solution was for the State to nationalize as much of the economy as possible and to subsidize basic activities like transport and electricity.

Unfortunately, Peru seemed to lack a strong center which could sustain moderate programs within a stable economic and political framework. There was too much social experimentation with radical programs.

GEORGE A. MCFARLAND

Retired Annuitant

Lima (1985-1997)

Mr. McFarland was born and raised in Texas and educated at Southern Methodist University and the Universities of Texas and Princeton. After a brief journalist career, he joined the Foreign Service and was assigned to the Passport office in Washington. His subsequent overseas assignments, primarily as Political Officer, were in San Jose, Nicosia, Istanbul, Lima, Ankara, Brasilia and Antigua, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires. He also served as Cyprus Desk Officer in Washington. Mr. McFarland was interviewed by Lewis Hoffacker in 1999.

MCFARLAND: I took retirement very early, the 2nd of January of 1985 and moved directly to Lima, Peru, with my wife and two small children. I should have mentioned that my second child of the second generation, a boy, was born at Princeton just before I left there. I moved to Lima largely for family reasons, not because I had any employment lined up there. In fact, there was none to be found at a decent wage. Peru was in the depths of a very long recession with no end in sight. I was not interested in trying to go into business for myself, not having had business experience and after considering the general reputation of Peruvian business practices, which are not terribly open and legal. And I settled down to write novels. I dedicated several years to writing novels and finished two, and finished them, in fact, several times after rewriting, but was unable to get any published. It's possible that I was too far away from the United States to be in touch with publishing trends or I didn't have the right connections. It's also possible that the manuscripts just weren't good enough. But it was a very disillusioning experience, because I had thought that my only real gift was in writing. It turns out that novel writing amounts to more than writing, though. The two children adapted well to Peruvian life, growing up surrounded by a large and very caring, close Peruvian family. I benefited from that, too. This family, like most Peruvian families, has a sense of "family-ness" that goes well beyond anything practiced for the most part in the United States. For example, to this day, I get birthday greetings from nieces and nephews in Peru and not one from my nieces here in the States. I traveled around taking the children to see most of Peru with my four-wheel-drive pickup, and we did a great deal of camping up in the mountains, in a largely unvisited area, probably Valley of the Volcanoes. From north to south, wherever we could go that was safe, we went. We wound up camping a great deal on the beach because in the mountains travel became very risky because of the terrorist threat, *Sendero Luminoso*, Shining Path, Hispanicist operations. It was a, quote, Maoist organization, a phenomenon in South America because it was without dependence on outside support. They charged, in effect, taxes to people whom they could threaten, who were within their reach, and they ruled by fear.

Q: How Communist are they, or were they?

MCFARLAND: Totally. They were Pol Pot types.

Q: In other words, they went by the book?

MCFARLAND: By the book. By the Maoist book.

Q: They weren't just... Well, that's a long time ago. Even China has evolved.

MCFARLAND: Until 1992, roughly, and there are some of them operating. In 1992, after they had started trying to move into Lima, and had set off a car bomb that devastated a whole block of downtown Lima, the police got very serious about catching their leader, which was the objective that President Fujimori had set, and they caught him - and within a mile of our house, a middle-class area where you would never have expected him to be hiding, was his house.

Q: Fujimori did it.

MCFARLAND: Fujimori gave the right strategic directions - go for the head of the organization.

Q: Would you care to talk about Fujimori?

MCFARLAND: Certainly. He's a remarkable figure. He has already overstayed his fame, his moment, in Peru. He took office in 1990, after two decades, 22 years, really, of decline, when Peru reached a point well below what it was in '68 when Velasco had taken over. Fujimori succeeded APRA president, American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, named Alan Garcia, who had been a very credible, very promising young politician when he ran for office in '85, and was elected overwhelmingly, and promptly betrayed all hopes by becoming one of the most corrupt presidents on record, not only he but all the people with him, only a few of whom have actually been charged but were generally on the take. He has been living in exile ever since 1990 in one luxurious setting after another, which you can't do simply on the retirement pay of a former president. He obviously has millions. He's living in Paris right now in a luxury apartment with his own security force, and previously spent a long time in Bogotá. If there was anything Peru did not need at that point it was betrayal, and he betrayed it. The reaction against him resulted in Fujimori's election.

Q: Pardon the interruption - is Fujimori anti-corruption, or is he also a taker?

MCFARLAND: Well, he's got his own thing, now, apparently. But he was anti APRA corruption because politically -

Q: But he's vulnerable to the same Peruvian disease.

MCFARLAND: He is now, but it's not known. I mean, it's only surmised.

Q: Okay, all right. I just thought I'd ask.

MCFARLAND: But in the case of Juan Garcia it was quite obvious, and in fact was attested to by one of the Italian executives of a company who worked on building an electric railway through Lima. It never got beyond the point of building a series of gigantic concrete pillars in one street, several miles worth of pillars - no train. He apparently made quite a lot of money off that, and off a deal that Peru had ordered I think it was a little over 18 Mirage fighters. Now they didn't *really* need them. Of course they didn't. And these were greatly in demand at the time, and Alan worked out a deal by which another country would buy them at a much higher price. Peru would recover whatever it paid for them, and he would take the rest. As I say, he lives well in Paris.

And of course, this gets into the question that was posed by a Brazilian at the time. It's not just him, it's all of us. They people who pay bribes are no less guilty than those who accept them. But in this case, it wasn't Peruvians who were paying bribes. It was a sharp operator who was

making money off his country. But there is a very, very strong tendency among Peruvians. Do we sell out whatever crook we're working for?

Q: Well, now, you as a retired government employee living in that environment on a limited pension, how did you faire in that environment?

MCFARLAND: The first year I saved more money than I had been able to save on active duty, but after that the cost of living began to rise and rise and rise. It's not quite clear why. After Fujimori came in, he began privatizing the state-owned enterprises.

Q: Was that a good thing?

MCFARLAND: Yes. And bringing in investment in a variety of things. The money came in. There was also a great flood of unacknowledged narco-dollars from drug smuggling. Peru is a tremendous source of cocaine. It's the largest coca-growing country in the world. It's not clear just what proportion of Peru's total dollar supply comes from that. I suspect that a much larger proportion comes than what they acknowledge.

Q: Do you have drug lords there as you do in Columbia?

MCFARLAND: Yes.

Q: Are they known

MCFARLAND: No, they stay more out of sight, and they're not so well known. There's great suspicion, though, that a great many of the top people in the army are compromised. The problem, of course, comes back to our requirement. I had never professed to have a solution to the drug problem. I can see in both ways. I'm horrified by drugs. I am equally horrified by the cost of the drug war. And one of the costs has been that by making drugs illegal, we have raised the profits of the drug lords, for all the smugglers, and because they are making so much, it's nothing to them to pay off police, army generals, judges, governors, whoever. In all the producing countries, this is having a terrible effect on the fabric of society, on the civil authority, on people's confidence in government - not that they had much confidence previously. That's been their historical experience. Their governments were not to be trusted much. That is one reason for the election of this son of Japanese immigrants, Fujimori, to be president, because the little people have had it with the traditional ruling group. They have been one failure after another, even though the army was not really part of the traditional ruling group, they tried that experiment. The Peruvians actually had tried all the varieties of political organizations just about, except out-and-out Communism, but they picked this Japanese as someone who was wily and smart and yet not a European type. And his first term was a great success. He brought security to his country after this long reign of terror, and he acknowledged involvement and investment, even though very little of it trickled down. But the poor people seem to have infinite patience. They felt that after a while they'd begin to get theirs. The trouble is, now, being seated on a

second term, he closed down congress at one point and fired the supreme court justices, made way for himself for a second term, and now in his second term people are thoroughly fed up him. The economic policies have not resulted in greater wealth farther down. Even the people at the top are beginning to have problems. And something like 30 or 40 per cent of Peruvians live in extreme poverty, by which I mean not having enough to eat and not having adequate clothing or adequate housing. People in the United States don't understand, on the basis of US experience, what it is to be poor, as you know very well.

Q: Yes.

MCFARLAND: They know what it is in Peru, and one of my brothers-in-law remarked to me years ago, "We live in a poor country," and I caught his whole meaning: that its poverty had an impact everywhere you looked, people's attitudes, and the way people lived, from the top to the bottom. And everything is relative. By standards of Bill Gates and, indeed, by the standards of a good many millionaires around Austin, I'm poor. By the standards of poor people in Lima, I'm terribly rich.

Q: Well, there are a few rich ones at the top, a few families that are rich, is that it? Is there a middle class of some dimension and then a heavy lower class? Is that still the pattern?

MCFARLAND: Yes, for many years, there was this land-based aristocracy, the *hacendanos*. *Hacienda?* - that was the owners, the families, the owners of *hacendados*. And they pretty well ran things, especially outside Lima, in their own districts. They were like squires or barons or whatever. And if there were votes, their people voted the way they wanted.

Q: And they had serfs on their land.

MCFARLAND: Well, not really, but something -

Q: What do you call them?

MCFARLAND: What, the *peones*?

Q: Peones? Were they sharecroppers, or did they pay?

MCFARLAND: More or less, they were sharecroppers. That's right. Or they were paid minimal wages. It depended on the landowner. Some were quite enlightened and treated their people well, and then others were brutal. But that was the old system, and that was broken up by the agrarian reform of the military government. That's what I was saying - if they had stuck with that, they might have had a place in history that was more favorable to them; but they broke it up, but they didn't really introduce anything good enough to be viable in its place. They were all wary, I think, of carrying out agrarian reform. Japan did it. Israel did it. But in Peru they didn't catch on. And it had difficulty feeding itself.

Q: Relations with Washington are better with Fujimori?

MCFARLAND: No, they were for a time, but we became critical of his human rights practices.

Q: Prisoners, and political prisoners.

MCFARLAND: Well, yes, and. . . . It's not quite fair. There's something on both sides. It's a question of due process. During the worst of the terrorism, as they called it - it's fair to call it an insurgency - the police were on the point of being undermined and corrupted by the influence of the *Sendero Luminoso*. The police, after all, live in these same slums where a lot of the revolutionaries live. Their families were hostage when they were off, and they'd restore them at night and on weekends. Their loyalty was not entirely unquestioned. The army also, drawn mostly from up in the mountains, by forced levies - there was enough of a draft of them, mainly enforced just against the poor and powerless, because the sons of the wealthy could always buy their way out. If you really wanted somebody you had to go to the villages and pick them off the streets without even letting them notify their families. So they weren't sure of the army either. That's why there was an elite force that went in and got this leader of the *Sendero*, an elite force from the police, not from the military. The military never won its war. But I've lost my thread.

Q: I'm sorry I interjected. You were living in Lima now, and you lived there for, you say, 13 years.

MCFARLAND: 12 years.

Q: And then you moved to Austin.

MCFARLAND: Yes.

Q: For good reason. To be close to family.

MCFARLAND: Well, by the time I left, the insurrection was, for all practical purposes over. That was just before we left. Another small guerrilla group, MRTA, Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru, stormed the Japanese embassy during a diplomatic reception.

ANTHONY QUAINTON

Ambassador

Peru (1989-1992)

Ambassador Anthony Quainton was born in Washington state in 1934. He graduated from Princeton University in 1955 and joined the Foreign Service in 1959. He served at overseas posts in Australia, Pakistan, India, France, Nepal and as ambassador to the Central African Republic, Nicaragua, Kuwait and Peru.

Ambassador Quainton has also served as the Deputy Inspector General, Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, and the Director General of the Foreign Service. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: Next you went to Peru. You were there from when?

QUAINTON: I went to Peru in December, 1989 and was there until September, 1992.

Q: How did that job come about?

QUAINTON: I am not sure how it came about. As I was completing my second year as deputy inspector general, I was asked if I would like to be considered for a number of different posts. The first one was Bulgaria, but my name didn't pop out of the hat. In that case, happily so. Sherman Funk was a very loyal superior and said to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary that he would be grateful if I could get another mission, although he had no particular axe to grind for any particular place. Out of the blue in the late summer of 1989, Peru was suggested. I was happy to accept, having served in Latin America once before, although not in South America. But, the internal workings of the D Committee, the Deputy Secretary's Committee, were as opaque then as they are now. Officers often have no way of finding out how their names are suggested for a particular post at a particular time. Peru did not have notable management problems that someone from the inspector general's office might take on immediately and fix. Indeed, my predecessor had won the Replogle Award for management. It was a well run post.

The agenda in Peru was a very specialized one as I quickly found out as I read into the Peruvian account, in the autumn of 1989. The focus at that time was on the forthcoming elections which were to take place in the spring of 1990. The universal expectation in Washington was that those elections would be won by the great Peruvian novelist, Mario Vargas Llosa. All the papers that I read and all the analysis that I was given suggested that on arrival I should deal promptly with Vargas Llosa and his team since they would be running Peru for the ensuing five years. These judgments turned out to be far from correct as time would tell.

Q: While so much was going on were you and the political section able to have pretty good rapport with the Fujimori group or because it started out as such a small thing did you find yourself somewhat on the outs?

QUAINTON: Well, no one knew Fujimori at all until after the first round. That is not quite true, there was one AID officer who had met him when Fujimori was rector at La Molina. That officer had a very negative view of him. We thought right up to the end that Vargas Llosa would not get an absolute majority in the first round, but that he would have such a substantial plurality that he would still get through in the second round. It was hard for the embassy's political section to focus on the possibility that Fujimori might win. It was a little as though someone had said to us that Senator Hayakawa from California was a likely president of the United States. It was

inconceivable that a first generation Asian could come to power in a very traditional country such as Peru. So we were a bit closed in our thinking. We recognized that something had gone wrong and that Vargas Llosa was on the skids, but we found it hard to imagine that we would end up with Fujimori, at least until the last few days when we began to see this as a possibility. It was certainly very, very late in the campaign.

Once we got past the first round, however, I immediately went to call on Vargas Llosa and Fujimori and got a fair amount of publicity by inadvertently staying ten minutes longer with Fujimori than Vargas Llosa. This was interpreted by the Vargas Llosa camp as a clear decision by the White House to turn against him and throw in our lot with Fujimori. It was entirely fortuitous. Fujimori's wife served tea in Japanese fashion sitting on the carpet in the living room without a table and it took longer than I anticipated. Fujimori was surrounded by papers, books and seemed to be trying to read into an agenda that he had inherited. And, he had no team. It is not easy to send the political and economic sections out to get know Fujimori's team because there wasn't much of a team. There were the two vice presidential candidates who we got to know. There were some economic advisors. He had a motley group who were not orthodox liberals. It was thought that he would pursue a much more populist economic policy than Vargas Llosa. We tried to identify some of those figures and provide them our views about what was necessary in order to reform the economy. That effort continued right up until Fujimori's inauguration in July. Before the inauguration, Fujimori came up to the United States, went to New York where he met with the Secretary General, and the head of the IMF and World Bank. He was given a lecture on what was necessary to put Peru on the right track. It had an enormous impact on him, and he threw out his economic policy team and got a whole new team who would go along with Vargas Llosa's set of policies. Vargas Llosa's people were extraordinarily bitter that their policies and programs had been stolen by an "incompetent" Asian after they had done so much hard work. And, they really had. They had drafted laws and were ready to go and run with their program.

Q: Like Dewey's team.

QUAINTON: Yes, very much so. The focus of the first nine months that I was in Peru was on the election. Fujimori had a hostile legislature since he had no real political party. The number of people supporting him who were elected to parliament was very small. The lack of legislative support continued to bedevil his policies for the next 18 months until he managed to throw out the parliament in what is known as the self-coup in April, 1992. That was 18 months ahead. In the meantime, there was constant conflict between Fujimori and the parliament.

Q: Did you find that when this happened that all the other embassies, newspapers and power establishment within Peru found themselves without any real contacts with this group that came in?

QUAINTON: Yes. Most of the press was hostile to him. They regarded him as something as a clown. In campaigning he frequently wore Indian dress. At one point he appeared as a sumo wrestler. He was thought to be rather a joke. But he was far from a joke as subsequent history has shown. He had a wonderful touch for figuring out what people would like and established contact with them. He traveled very widely, something that has continued to this day and certainly continued in the months after his election. He would pop up on weekends in small towns, looking at projects, taking his son fishing, etc. He had tremendous energy in terms of willingness of be out among the people. This was something that Vargas Llosa was incapable of. Vargas Llosa was a very stiff, starchy intellectual who found people not to his taste generally. Fujimori reveled in meeting and being with people. He loved the adulation that he got back in return.

But, you are right, there was a strong sense of not knowing what he was likely to do. He moved very swiftly to take control of the police and the armed forces. He fired almost all of the top admirals in the navy from one day to the next and put his own man in as commander of the navy, the navy being the most conservative and pro Vargas Llosa of the services. To a lesser extent, he did that to the other services and the police. He put his own stamp very quickly on the organs of government that were most important to his survival. The military, I think, was totally astounded at his decisiveness.

They were extremely reluctant to get directly involved in politics. Any sign that a general was getting interested in politics would lead to that individual being fired by Fujimori, who kept remarkably strict control over the military services.

He began very quickly to implement a shock program in accordance with the IMF's guidelines. For example, he removed the subsidy on gas, which was sold for about 18 cents a gallon. It was cheaper than water. The price went to over \$2 a gallon overnight. Subsidies on foods, grains, etc. were taken off and prices went up dramatically. But, within three months he had brought inflation down from 7000 percent annually to a couple of hundred percent and within a year he brought it down to 10 or 11 percent, which was an extraordinary achievement. He increased tax collection. He quickly overhauled the tax collection system and appointed honest people to run the Peruvian equivalent to the Internal Revenue Service. He brought about a complete turnaround in the economic situation in Peru in the first year of his mandate.

During all of this time, he was continually harassed and opposed by the congress. He was increasingly fretful of their opposition. He didn't try to accommodate them at all. He wasn't interested in accommodation or indeed in institutions. In his view, if congress had to go, then congress had to go. He had no compunction about dismissing it in April, 1992, provoking, of course, a tremendous crisis in relations with the U.S. It was the first time in Latin American history that a freely elected parliament was dismissed extra-constitutionally by an elected president.

Throughout this period from 1990 until early 1992, the biggest part of our agenda was, of course, the drug agenda. We were anxious to co-opt Fujimori to get his support for a more aggressive interdiction campaign and, if possible, for eradication of coca plants, particularly in the upper Huallaga valley, which was the area from which about two-thirds of Peru's production came. Fujimori had as his principal adviser a well known economist, Hernando de Soto, who had written a book called *The Other Path*. The first path was Abimael Guzman Reynoso's *Shining Path*, which was causing considerable chaos throughout the country. DeSoto was very influential and often argued against the U.S. interdiction strategy and in favor of alternative development.

On the drug front, Fujimori had a strong desire to cooperate with the United States. Just before I went to Peru, President Bush had announced a major drug strategy for the Andes and promised major resources for Andean countries - Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia - to help them with their interdiction and crop substitution programs. In point of fact, those monies were not dispersed promptly, in some cases not until 1996 or 1997, leading to considerable cynicism by the Andean governments about American intentions. Certainly in Peru's case, Fujimori took the view that if he was going to take a tough line on narcotics and get peasants out of coca production, he would require substantial money for alternative development for other crops which could be used by the small farmers as a source of income. We initially were skeptical of that approach because the AID economists could not see any crop that would provide comparable return to coca. Over time, a number of cash crops have been developed which are, in fact, competitive, but at that time there was not a whole lot we could do. The congress objected very strongly to our disbursing AID resources to Peru given widespread human rights abuses. It was a classic case of the difficulty of co-existence between a number of competing American priorities. We wanted to control drugs and at the same time promote democracy and human rights.

Fujimori, for reasons of his own, did institute economic reforms for which he got very little credit in Washington even though reforms had been a major rhetorical thrust for his administration. It certainly was one of the subjects that I discussed repeatedly with senior finance officials. But the focus in Washington was on drugs and on human rights. Peru was constantly criticized for not reducing the acreage under coca production. Fujimori said, "Well, when we tried to get resources for alternative development, your congress refused saying they would not provide aid to a country with systematic human rights abuses." The systematic human rights abuses grew out of Fujimori's efforts to control two terrorist organizations, The Shining Path, Abimael Reynoso's organization, and the MRTA. Both organizations were extraordinarily brutal in their tactics, murdering peasants, villagers, as well as killing police and soldiers. The response of the police and military was to strike back very forcefully.

Human rights was a constant problem in Washington, where there was an unwillingness to recognize that Peru was a highly conflicted society in which it would take quite a long time to change attitudes about the role of the military and permissible behavior. Civil rights organizations were singled minded, America's Watch particularly, demanding the United States reduce its ties to Peru until the Peruvian military and police got out of the drug and interdiction

business. So many of the things we wanted to do were halted by various congressional restrictions, and we didn't get the narcotic results that we wanted.

We began to make some progress on human rights, however. Fujimori, himself, recognized that change in the behavior of the military and the police was going to be in his interests and in the interest of the whole country. There was a constant effort on our part to work with the Peruvians, and help them to develop structures within which the rule of law could operate. We worked to get the army and police educated on human rights issues. There was, in my time, some progress, progress which accelerated after I left Peru, in part because of the extraordinary success that Fujimori had on the eve of my departure in September, 1992, in capturing the head of the Shining Path, Abimael Guzman Reynoso, breaking the back of that organization and thereby reducing the general level of violence in the society.

Q: You had been the anti-terrorism person in the Department. Was there a time that you came down on terrorism rather than drugs?

QUAINTON: There was a linkage to the degree that terrorists provided protection to the traffickers in some of the areas in which there was drug production. For the Peruvians, the anti-drug campaign was also an anti-terrorist campaign. The army repeatedly asked for our assistance in dealing with the terrorists, at the same time that it was reluctant to become involved in anti-narcotic efforts. A great achievement for Fujimori was to convince the military that they would have to engage in the drug war, beginning with the air force and the navy. Our perception of the military was that they were all corrupted by drug money and were reluctant to be involved in anti-narcotics program because they benefitted too much from the narcotics business. For them, it was not a useful thing to try to get the drug war cleaned up. So, there was always a constant tension.

Terrorism was another policy issue for us at the embassy. We were among the targets. Shortly after I arrived, a bomb went off at the Marine guard's house during the visit of a congressional delegation. The terrorist threat continued right through the time I was there. The embassy was twice rocketed. The residence was strafed a couple of times by machine gun fire, and then in February, 1992 it was blown up by a very large car bomb. So, we were very much in the center of terrorist activity mainly from the Shining Path, but also to some degree from the MRTA. We constantly received intelligence reports of threats to me, threats to the embassy, threats to the residence, threats to the American community, to American business, which kept the Americans in Peru very much on edge. This threat certainly defined our lives. I was able to travel more than others because I had a good deal of protection - 14 bodyguards at all times, a four car cavalcade. This was a very disagreeable way to live. I can now imagine the kind of security the President of the United States has to live with. We did not allow officers to travel outside of Lima except to a very few limited places - a couple of places along the coast and a couple of places in the south. But most of the central part of the country was off limits. These restrictions inhibited our ability

to report on much in the country. I tried to take colleagues with me on my trips, enabling them to take some of the pulse of the country.

We twice had authorized departures from Peru. We never had any evacuations. I was strongly opposed to evacuating people, although there were times that it was a very close thing with Washington close to ordering an evacuation. The community was very divided on this issue. A majority wanted to stay in Peru and did not feel personally threatened where they lived. On the other hand, there were others who were quite frightened, wanting to get out. So, authorized departure provided a way which allowed people to leave who wanted to leave, but those who wanted to stay could stay. Unfortunately, if one's family members left, they couldn't come back and new family members couldn't come, so there were a lot of negative aspects to authorized departure as well.

One of the other effects of terrorism was that it allowed me to carry out something like Jack Tuthill's Operation Topsy in Brazil. I succeeded in reducing the embassy staff from a permanent complement of just over 200 to 135, a cut of about a third. However, the motivation was different and my approach was somewhat different. It was clear that we had too many people. The more people we had, the more we were at risk for security reasons. Using the security angle, I required every agency head to give me a list of every employee along with a description of what each employee did. There were several agencies that were resistant, as you might imagine, but in the end all complied. Then, using the list and working with the DCM we went through it identifying jobs that in our judgment were secondary and didn't fit in with the central focus of what we were trying to do in drugs, human rights, counterterrorism, etc.

Bit by bit I persuaded Washington agencies to cut back. For example, I eventually got rid of DIA's airplane, which had seven or eight people associated with it. They tried desperately to justify keeping the plane on the grounds that it was the source of much useful intelligence about terrorism, drugs, etc. I asked them to produce all the reports that had resulted from trips which the airplane had taken in the country and they produced a pile of reports, most of which described the airfields they had visited. I told the Defense attaché that we could fly commercially to those airfields and describe them without having our own plane. Washington was angry that I wasn't more supportive. DIA was angry - that I could understand - but I could never understand the importance of these planes. But, the fact is that the product didn't justify the large number of people and costs. It was a very interesting exercise. Needless to say, almost as soon as I was out of the country, my successor reinstated most of the positions at the advice of other agencies who convinced him they needed greater resources to carry out their mandate in Peru.

Q: What were the human rights abuses during your time that caused such agony back in Washington?

QUAINTON: There were a lot of documented disappearances. A great number of unexplained killings. People would just show up dead. Credible reports would come in that the army or

paramilitary units would go into villages and just cut people down on suspicion that they were terrorists. They were often quite indiscriminate in how they used violence. There were also some allegations of torture, but mostly it was operations carried out by the police and the military in rural areas with little regard to any kind of civilized code of behavior. These cases were well documented. Human rights organizations were very active in Peru. Peruvian human rights organizations were very critical of the government and the military. They would stay in close contact with Amnesty International and Washington human rights organizations. These groups kept up a considerable drumbeat on the issue. All of these things came onto my agenda when President Fujimori visited Washington in the early fall of 1991. I came up with him, as did my wife. We had very useful meetings with President Bush. I think he thought that he had gotten a good hearing, but in fact not much changed as a result of the visit. In fact, the administration was not able to get the additional resources that he expected from such a visit.

Q: Were these human rights abuses in the program a Fujimori program or had it just been a continuing one from the previous administration?

QUAINTON: The abuses went back well into the previous administration. Fujimori was, himself, publicly opposed to human rights abuses. But he was reluctant to publicly berate the military and was quite protective of the military in some respects. He was also receptive to some of the programs that we proposed, such as adding human rights into military training courses, etc. The military would often deny the allegations against them, although when pressed they would say, yes, there had been some cases of military abuse and they would assert these officers had been appropriately punished. We never could get confirmation, however, that they were in jail. This always led to a constant suspicion that we were being lied to by the military about their good intentions and that they continued their bad practices notwithstanding what Fujimori and others were doing to clean up the military's act.

Q: About the drug issue and the lack of response of compensation, was this primarily because of the human rights or was it just our making promises and not delivering on them?

QUAINTON: In general, we didn't deliver on our promises to the Andean countries. Congress kept the administration on a very tight leash with regard to dispersing resources. Disbursement was linked to drug performance, which Washington perceived was not sufficiently good, at least in terms of commitment by the Peruvian government and military. There was also opposition to any aid to Peru as long as the military was engaged in human rights abuses. So, both these things intersected. It never really got to the point in my tenure when Peruvian efforts were sufficiently successful on both drugs and human rights that it became possible to unlock the funds.

Q: Corruption has usually been the key to the success of those who are in the drug trade. We have seen Colombia almost collapsing under the corruption from the drug lords. What about the effect in Peru at the time you were there?

QUAINTON: There was no serious corruption at the top of the Peruvian government, involving the president or his ministers. I think there was evidence that some of the officers of the armed services had accepted drug money and were corrupt. Fujimori did dismiss such people when he found out about them. But, Peruvian society was not as profoundly corrupt as Colombian society has become. Of course, Columbia had substantial value added by converting coca paste to cocaine. Coca itself is a fairly basic agricultural product and the amount of money that came into Peruvian coffers was substantially less than that which went into Colombian hands.

J. PHILLIP MCLEAN

Deputy Assistant Secretary for South America

Washington, DC (1990-1993)

Mr. McLean was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and was educated at Seattle University and the University of Indiana. He entered the Foreign Service in 1962. A Latin American specialist, his service in the State Department in Washington and abroad, primarily concerned Latin American Affairs. His foreign posts were Brasilia, Edinburgh, Panama City, La Paz, Milan and Bogota, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In Washington Mr. McLean held positions dealing with Latin American Affairs, including that of Deputy Assistant Secretary for South America. Mr. McLean was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: Warren Christopher. Well, when did you leave that job?

McLEAN: I left that in 1993. I just might mention in that period one of the things that we did which was the Fujimori coup and terrorism in that case. Fujimori was and is a difficult person.

Q: He's the President of...

McLEAN: He's the President of Peru. He came in to everyone's surprise. No one expected him to be elected. I had, in fact, an aide, a guy who worked closely with him in USAID in Lima when he was at the university. The guy came in and said he'll never get anything accomplished, the place would fall apart because he never sees anything through, he's always more worried about being in control than he is about getting the job done. That turned out not to be an accurate summary. The guy was and is very much dedicated to getting some things done and changing the country. The country was in a terrible mess as he took charge, with raging inflation and institutions falling down around the country. I went to his initial inauguration, and we were pleasantly surprised that he said a lot of the right things. He had suddenly become a convert to

orthodox economics and brought in a lot of good people, people like Fernando Desoto and others, but it was hard to get in close to him and know what was going on. One of the biggest things that was going on in the country, of course, was the Sendero Luminoso terrorism activity.

Q: The shining path.

McLEAN: The shining path. That was one thing that my boss, Bernie Aaronson, was very much interested in, because Bernie saw himself, I think correctly, as a peacemaker, and he saw there a chance with this terribly extreme group of people, people that next to the Cambodian Pol Pot regime, the Khmer Rouge, the most savage group of people that had ever been around, and it was growing in power. We had some very quiet programs that did in fact have some good effect, working again with the police and not so much with the military. I remember Bernie was a little stunned when I called him to say that actually Guzman, the head of the Sendero, was in fact arrested by people that we had worked with. But one of the things that happened before, just before that, was that in frustration of getting things done, Fujimori--it happened when Bernie made a trip down there with my office director, and while he's there--boom, Fujimori declares that he's shutting down the Congress and taking over, so there was a real question of the legitimacy of his regime at that point. We had to struggle with the idea of what are we going to do now. Are we going to recognize him or not recognize him? His vice president was in the country in the U.S. at that time, and I know a few times there was some question whether we shouldn't be doing something with him. It was one of those moments when you're trying to find out what policy you're going to follow, but you have a sense that Fujimori is in charge, and if you're not going to recognize him, you're going to have a difficult time, and Sendero was still going on at that point. I remember I called Vargas Llosa the famous author, Peruvian author who had run against Fujimori and been defeated by him, and Vargas Llosa in effect said, "Hey, there's nothing for you to do but continue to recognize him." And then the question was how to put pressure on him in order to get him to move back towards a more democratic stance and get him to make some agreement. I worked with his finance minister, who was in the midst of a major negotiation about the debt and getting the country back on its feet, and he worked with me in terms of putting pressure on the political side of government to say that they're not going to have these economic reforms, they're not going to have international support unless they take some steps back towards democracy. I got the IDB even working through...

Q: IDB?

McLEAN: The Inter-American Development Bank, to make some decisions which would further put pressure in saying, "We're going to stop negotiations with you unless you do this." In the end I think it worked out very well. We pushed them along, and we got them to make some step towards having another election for a new congress, to do that right away, to do in terms that were acceptable democratically. They have some voting observation teams go in from outside. Very dramatically we went to the Organization of American States' General Assembly in the Bahamas and got Fujimori to come up and make these statements to the international community,

which eased considerably the pressure we had to move against him in some sort of punitive way. He was still a problem, though, because he is served by a rather dark figure, behind-the-scenes operator, head of intelligence, and trying to work with America on non-government organizations, which very much wanted to see the United States play a role to bring down Fujimori and to stop him from his human rights abuses and the rest of it. In this process we were always promising lots of aid and yet we could never deliver it because of human rights concerns. Every time we were about to crank out some of the money that we had promised into the international community that we do, the Japanese were a very strong force in favor of Fujimori, and promised them and others that we would do this, but we were always kept from doing it by Senator Leahy and others in Congress who were worried about Peru's human rights record. In the end the money promised probably was as effective as money delivered, because we kept the process going and, in fact, certainly not in my time, and I don't think immediately after, did we ever disburse any of that money, but we were always promising it, and that always added up in the total that was needed to get the IMF agreements for the different programs and the World Bank programs that were put in place at that time. But in the end human rights was still a problem.

JAMES F. MACK

Deputy Chief of Mission

Lima (1994-1997)

Mr. Mack was born in Connecticut and raised in New York State. After graduating from Cornell University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Honduras. In 1966 he joined the State Department and was sent to Vietnam in the CORDS program. Mr. Mack's other overseas service was primarily in Latin American where he served as Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at a number of posts before being named US Ambassador to Guyana. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy March 20th, 2004.

Q: After '94?

MACK: After '94 then Al Adams our Ambassador to Peru selected me to be the DCM?

Q: Who was Ambassador?

MACK: Alvin Adams. Previously, he had been Ambassador to Haiti. My wife and I decided to take the assignment to Lima really because of my oldest daughter Sally. Sally was going to be a senior in high school and had been in the International Baccalaureate Program at the American School in Quito. We knew that the American School in Lima, Colegio Roosevelt, was an

excellent school, and it had the IB program as well. I had actually wanted to go to Guadalajara as consul general and was offered the job, but when I researched the American school there, I learned that it was not very good. They also did not have a International Baccalaureate Program. So we went to Peru for my daughter's sake. Lima was a very different type of town.

Fujimori was President and at that point Peru was the Saudi Arabia of coca, the raw material for cocaine. They produced more coca than Colombia and Bolivia combined at that point. Peru had two insurgencies, which were declining strength but, nonetheless, still quite dangerous. One was the MRTA and the other the Shining Path or Sendero Luminoso. Even in Lima there were fairly frequent bombings and shootouts. The MRTA was the more traditional revolutionary movement, with links to the Central American guerrilla groups. In 1995, this group had planned very thoroughly to take over the Congress of Peru which was housed in a 1930's fortress type building. For this purpose they had purchased or made Peruvian military police uniforms and had a vehicle painted up to look just like a Peruvian Army truck. To execute the plan they had brought 45 of their fighters out of the jungle to Lima and staged them for two weeks in a house in one of Lima's tonier suburbs to put the fine fitting touches on their preparations.

Fortunately, somebody in the neighborhood noticed an awful lot of bread being delivered to the door every day and tipped off the police, who surrounded the house. There was a big shoot-out and a number of people were killed. The police captured all those who survived as well as 45 weapons, ammunition and explosives.. And, therefore, the takeover attempt on the Peruvian Congress never happened. It was going to take place in two days.

An American involved in the group was arrested separately. Her name was Lori Berenson. She had been living at that house and apparently was the lover of the leader of the MRTA unit that was posed take over the Peruvian Congress. She had been scouting the Congress with the wife of the overall MRTA leader posing as a journalist from the "Third World Press", of Brooklyn New York. Her ruse apparently was an interview with one of the female members of Peruvian Congress about what it was like to be a female member of Congress. Anyway she was arrested getting on to a bus the same day the police raided the house where the guerrillas staying. Her arrest became a *cause celebre* in the U.S. and the subject of an enormous "free Lori" campaign in the US, I think orchestrated by her parents, both of whom were university professors in NY City. Twelve years later I believe she is still in jail probably because the Peruvian population was outraged that a foreigner had actively aided and abetted a violent guerrilla group that had cost so much pain and suffering to Peru.

Almost exactly one year after the first failed attack and Berenson's arrest, the same group, this time led by the group's *maximo jefe* successfully took over the residence of the Japanese ambassador and took hostage 700 people who were attending a reception in honor of the emperor's birthday. 72 of them remained hostage for over 4 months. So yes, the guerilla groups were active when I was there, but little by little Fujimori was applying the pressure successfully with the support of the notorious Vladimiro Lenin Montesinos.

Q: So we will talk about what was happening during the time you were there? The Peru-Ecuadorian War. What the problem as we saw it with Human Rights? What was our relationship on that issue? Because it sounds like he was doing many of the right things? We will talk about that? And any other things that were going on there. Maybe the business, the role of the military and any developments that was there?

MACK: 1994 to 1997 in Peru.

Q: So during that time how were we dealing with him? The good points, the bad points and where were we standing?

MACK: Well! The mission had virtually no relationship with Fujimori as a person. He was not predisposed to the United States. Both our Ambassadors, Al Adams and Dennis Jett, early in their tenure, had forcefully expressed our human rights concerns to Fujimori, regarding alleged government involvement with death squads who had killed alleged leftists. That soured Fujimori on us so we did not deal with the Fuji government at a Presidential level. The Ambassador met Fujimori only when he was accompanying a high level visitor to call on the president. But I cannot recall that either ambassador had direct talks with Fujimori during my time, except to present credentials or escort a high level visitor, like the head of ONDCP under Clinton, Gen Barry McCaffrey. We dealt with the Peruvian government at the ministerial level. We did have access to the ministers and to the military high command so we were able to get our work done. .

The big issue was, of course, narcotics. Fujimori had come to the conclusion, I think I spoke about this the last time we talked, that the narcotics trafficking was fueling the two Peruvian insurgencies, the Sendero Luminoso and the MRTA, so he made a commitment and decision early on to really go after the traffickers. And I explained, I think, during our last conversation that he authorized the use of deadly force to force down or shoot down narco aircraft who refused to obey instructions to land. We had worked out the arrangements with Peru under which we could share intelligence just prior to my arrival. I believe we negotiated the deal with either the head of the Peruvian Air Force or Minister of Defense. I can't recall.

Under the agreement, the Peruvians had agreed to respect certain international rules related to how you intercept civilian aircraft, in this case civilian narcotics aircraft. You need to be aware that there were stringent requirements in that regard. Unless the Peruvians met them, any US official who passed information led to the loss of life could be criminally liable for murder.

Prior to that time, a US person who shared information that led to loss of life could be liable even if stringent safeguards were in place to avoid mistakes. So obviously none shared information under those conditions. In any event the law was changed; Fujimori agreed to follow strict intercept guidelines; and we began to share intelligence on narco aircraft. As it turned out, most of the information that the Peruvians used for intercepts they had gathered themselves based on training and equipment we had given them. In a nutshell, they were able to learn when the

narcotics aircraft were coming and to what landing strip in the Peruvian Amazon. As a result when the narco aircraft was landing or when it was trying to take off with a load of drugs, it very frequently was intercepted by a Peruvian Air Force plane, often a plane we had provided to them.

The Peruvian Air Force was very successful in starting in '95 intercepting these aircraft, very successful. And during for eighteen months or so I think there twenty odd aircraft were shot down or shot up on the ground. I think of these 20, six or seven were actually shot down when they refused to land. Finally, after about eighteen months, the first narco pilot agreed to land when instructed to do so. It surprised me it took that long for those narco pilots to come to the conclusion that if they did not land, the odds were very good they would be shot down.

Q: What were the Peruvian Air Force flying for the intercepts?

MACK: They were flying actually A-37's which we had given them. A-37s are very old jet aircraft that only fly about 400 miles per hour. But that was fast enough since they were dealing with narco aircraft flying at half that speed. We had mounted F-16 radars on the front of the A-47s. In addition, we always sent up a separate aircraft to monitor the situation and help the A-47s identify the narco aircraft.

It was only many years later that we had this horrific incident where the Peruvian Air Force apparently didn't follow completely its own intercept safeguards and ended up shooting down a missionary aircraft. This produced the immediate suspension of all U.S. aerial intercept assistance to Peru.

The Peruvians were not following their own guidelines; they were rushing through the procedures. And in that particular case, the indications that the missionary aircraft was a narco aircraft were not there. It was actually going into Peru, not out of Peru. It was not varying its altitude. It was not trying to evade. It was in broad-daylight. They didn't bother to check the tail number. Or at least they had not gotten a response back before they opened fire. The interceptor never established contact with the missionary plane. It is true that narco pilots rarely acknowledge a request by the intercept aircraft to land. But the narcos usually flew at night. There were a whole lot of signs that should have told the Peruvian Air Force interceptors that the missionary aircraft was not a narco aircraft. But anyway, that tragic incident ended the intercept program in Peru. This occurred in 2001, four years after I left.

Q: During that time basically the pilots were taking coca out, was that it?

MACK: Well they were not taking out the coca leaves; they were taking semi-processed cocaine it was called "paste", in its crudest form or "base", which is more processed, but still not cocaine HCL, the product sold in the US.

Q: The big money is not there?

MACK: Well the biggest money is not there. But certainly there is money there. The farmers were not able to take it beyond paste or maybe base anyway. So they took it that far. And you are absolutely right if you compare the price they received for cocaine base in Peru to the wholesale

price for cocaine HCL in the United States; There was a huge difference. It was probably two or three percent of the US wholesale value of cocaine. However, the buyer actually flew almost to your door and you didn't have to hump it over the mountains to Lima. It was a quite good deal for coca farmer as seen from his perspective. He wasn't really comparing himself with the wholesaler in New York. He was comparing himself to how well off he would have been if he were not growing coca.

Q: Was narco money penetrating the judiciary or military system?

MACK: This is a very broad question. I would not allege that narcotics penetrated to the degree that it penetrated in Colombia. I think there was much greater penetration in the Colombian Congress and Judiciary. But some military who served in the jungle areas where narcotics were produced did become tainted to some degree. There were cases where the Peruvian Army Officers were directly involved with narcotic trafficking or protecting trafficking and being paid off by them. I don't recall instances of members of the Peruvian Congress or Legislators being involved. I don't recall that was the case.

Fujimori worried about that. He didn't want Peru to become another Colombia. That was often discussed.

Q: Incidentally the death squads seem to be a more general Latin American manifestation and not restricted to Argentina and Central America. Did you ever sit around and figure out why was so?

MACK: I mean I can certainly imagine why it was. In some cases it was a judiciary fearful to act because of the threat of retribution so that the bad guys walked. In other cases the incompetence of the police, their inability to collect good evidence, or maybe it did not exist. So it boiled down a feeling that from their perspective there was no other way to go after these people successfully.

Q: Well now can we talk about what started the Peru-Ecuador War?

MACK: Well the territorial dispute that started it has been around for many, many years, decades.

Q: We first got into it in 1942.

MACK: Correct. I have now forgotten the precise history, but yes, there was a dispute in 1942. There was another dust-up in the '50's or '60's. I can't recall exactly when. But what happened in 1995 was that the Ecuadorians had much better and easier physical access to the disputed area in the Sierra del Condor than did the Peruvians. This area gets 200 inches of precipitation a year. The terrain is very rough, mountainous. The forest is dense. The area is very difficult to move through, extremely difficult, with no access roads except on the Ecuadorian side. The access by the Ecuadorian side is not as precipitous so they built roads up to the disputed area and constructed fortifications just inside. This was just a way for the Ecuadorians to demonstrate their sovereignty over the Amazon, because it was on the Amazon slope of the Andes. And at some point the Peruvians noticed what they perceived was an Ecuadorian encroachment. I can't exactly remember what it was. But the Ecuadorians expanded a little bit farther than they had

before, and the Peruvians caught on and told them to, “Stop” The Ecuadorians would not leave so the Peruvian military was given the order to oust them. And the Peruvians tried. They had to walk through fifty to one hundred miles of mountainous terrain even to get to these little forts the Ecuadorians had constructed, which were very close to Ecuadorian supply lines. It was very, very difficult for the Peruvians. They had some minimum success at first but the Ecuadorians held pretty fast. They had all the advantages of terrain and supply. And to add to the Peruvians misery, the Ecuadorian Air Force was flying cover over these areas and when the Peruvian Air Force attempted to attack the Ecuadorian positions. The Ecuadorian's shot down, I think, a total of about four or six Peruvian aircraft. Once again the Ecuadorian air base was much closer to the front than the Peruvian base. The Peruvian pilots faced horrendous weather in getting to the front whereas the Ecuadorians didn't because they didn't have to fly over the rain forested mountains. So there was just a horrible fight that was very, very damaging and very difficult for the Peruvians. This was an extremely popular undertaking on the part of the Ecuadorian military. For years every Ecuadorian school child was taught that this was Ecuadorian territory and that the Ecuadorian army was simply attempting to obtain what was rightfully Ecuador's.

On the other hand Fujimori was not going to let Ecuador get away with it. And therefore the war ensued. The war was really a series of skirmishes. I do not know what the total death toll was but I imagine it was in the hundreds with many more wounded. There was a cease-fire. Luigi Einaudi, then I think US Ambassador to the OAS, and who later became Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, headed up a group to try to find a solution. It took over a year but they did. Ecuador and Peru signed a Peace Agreement. I can't remember the date.

I have an interesting story about the war. Our military attaches from the embassy were prohibited from going up to anywhere near the war zone by their own commander because of “force protection” concerns. Instead we sent up our Political Counselor, not to the front line, but to Peru's forward staging area. We had him there for two weeks. He would report back to us by satellite phone on what was going on. It was ironic that the military was not allowed to go so we had to send our political counselor, a civilian. Sometimes the US military imposes tighter restrictions on its people than we civilians. They were very frustrated. It was a difficult time.

Q: Were we trying to prevent Peru, which got its nose bloodied at the Sierra del Condor, from attacking somewhere else? After all, Peru is a bigger country with greater military potential than Ecuador?

MACK: Correct, yes. We particularly feared that since the Peruvians were at a tactical disadvantage where the war was actually being fought, they might attack somewhere else where they would have an advantage. We worried that they would go up the Pacific coast and try to take Guayaquil. Fortunately, the war ended before that happened. But it was a pretty tense two weeks.

And, of course Fujimori went up to the war zone and walked around the jungle with his troops. Those were the days when Fuji was riding very, very high. He was seen as personally leading the defense of Peruvian sovereignty.

Q: How was it playing in Peru at the time?

MACK: Well it, I think the overwhelming majority of the Peruvian populace supported what it saw as Peru's effort to defend its natural territory. We could hardly really take sides. We just wanted the two sides to stop and work out an agreement. Remember we had military missions on both sides. And we were in contact with the military on both sides. Our desire was to foster some sort of cease-fire.

Q: I was having an interview with Les Alexander who was in Ecuador during the war. He was having a hard time with Ecuadorian military. He kept telling them that they were poking at a much bigger tiger than they were and urging not to do it.

MACK: The Ecuadorians were pretty full of themselves, I am sure. They were able to successfully hold off the Peruvians in that particular part of the country. But that didn't mean they could hold them off in the coastal area where it would be much easier to run tanks across.

Q: Was there a democracy? Was Fujimori a product of democracy?

MACK: Fujimori was popularly elected in his first and second terms, of that I have no doubt. I was there for his election the second time around. When he was elected for the first time, the traditional political parties were held in very low repute. And people basically elected the pig, if you know what I mean. Anybody but! He ran as the anti-establishment candidate. And the populace was so upset with the traditional parties that they wanted to turn to something new. In a sense that is what they did in the case of Chavez in Venezuela.

So, yes he did quite well in his first term. He began to get a handle on the insurgency and the economy was going up. In his second term he began to get a handle on the drug situation. So he was riding very high. He was very active in carrying out projects of electrification in the highlands and legalizing shantytowns being built outside of Lima. He spent a lot of time with poor people. So he was quite popular with them. He still is quite popular with those people.

SURINAME

JOHN J. CROWLEY, JR.

Ambassador

Suriname (1980-1981)

Ambassador John J. Crowley, Jr. was born in New Mexico on February 10, 1928. Mr. Crowley received his BA from the University of West Virginia in 1949 and his MA from Columbia University in 1950. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1948. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Venezuela, Peru, Belgium, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Suriname. Ambassador Crowley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 27, 1989.

Q: Well, then a place where I don't imagine any president ever has been or ever will go, your appointment as ambassador to Suriname. How did you get the appointment?

CROWLEY: Well, I believe--I never saw it in writing--but I believe I was under consideration before--you know how the system is in the Department. They make lists of people. I think I was on lists before. But one time Lowell Kilday, who was then in personnel, called me and he said, "If you want to, your name could be on a list for Suriname."

And I said, "Lowell, you know, I spent my whole career practically in Latin America. I'm much more comfortable in a place where they speak Spanish, but . . ."

And he said, "Well, but you served in Belgium and, you know, they speak Flemish there and so forth." [Laughter]

Q: Did you find yourself having to go up and say, "You really shouldn't do this. You should be more conscious of human rights and all," and getting a rather fishy-eyed stare? Did you find yourself having to do things that you realized weren't going to get anywhere but were instructions?

CROWLEY: Well, during my time, you see, it hadn't come to the point of actually committing these atrocities, and there were always doubts. If you went to him and said, "Well, there ought to be more freedom of speech," he'd say, "There's freedom of speech. They can print anything they

want to, the newspaper here." You couldn't really pin it down. Of course, once the murders were committed, then he was over the hill.

What I used to do with him was talk mainly--I talked some about local conditions--but it was mainly geopolitical, saying, you know, it was bad for his country to get off in this orbit with Grenada. And, as it turned out, Bishop was murdered and so on, and this was not a good thing. But he always assured me, he said, "Mr. Ambassador, your country has nothing to worry about from me from a security standpoint. I know that we're in the US sphere of influence and all that." But his bottom line was really, "What do I think is good for me? How far can I go?"

ROBERT E. BARBOUR

Ambassador

Suriname (1984-1987)

Robert Barbour was born in Ohio in 1927. He graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1948 and attended The George Washington University. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1949, his career has included positions in Iraq, Japan, Vietnam, France, Italy, England, Spain and Surinam. Mr. Barbour was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: Today is July 24th, 1995. Bob, we're at the point where I mentioned before. We've got Suriname, then Diplomat in Residence, and you were in Suriname from '84 to '87, then you were Diplomat in Residence, and then you were an inspector. I can't remember if we covered it before, but tell me how that appointment came up.

BARBOUR: The appointment came up, I guess, in the usual fashion, my experience up to that point was all western European, and bilateral, but the European Bureau, as you know, is not in a position to have much influence on who goes to its posts. And that's how I happened to go to Suriname.

Q: Just for the record, why does the European Bureau not have too much control over...

BARBOUR: Because it is that bureau in the Department that has the fewest professional ambassadors, always. And sometimes very few indeed. In any case, I wound up going to Suriname which ironically is probably, after French Guinea, the most European part of South America. It's the smallest country in South America, and we had there a small embassy. I might

mention that during the confirmation process, which was delayed at the instance of the senior Senator from North Carolina...

Q: Jesse Helms.

BARBOUR: Yes. One of the alleged objections, which he was said to have, and these were all spurious, was that it was not known whether I spoke Spanish. And I said, "Tell the good Senator that I do, but they don't." It was not at all an unpleasant assignment, it was not all uninteresting. The country is extremely diverse in its ethnicity, in its origins, in its history, the people are charming, are lovely and the kind of people who could teach all things such as manners and inter-racial relations. We had a very pleasant three years there, demanding, stressful, they were not agreeable, interesting, entertaining they were, we don't regret the three years there at all.

Q: Were we in consultation with the Dutch, because this had been their bailiwick for so long?

BARBOUR: The Dutch had an ambassador there, a very active, a very impressive ambassador, the French were there, Indians, Chinese, Russians, various others. The Dutch were looking after their vestigial interests, maintaining a presence, maintaining a flag and with it hope that better days would come back. They were like the French in much of French Africa, very present, very much a factor, but very low key and not actively or directly involved in many things, and do things that they did participate in officially, for example. Anyhow, I give you these elements of introduction because our whole stay in Suriname was marked by this congeniality, this enormous good humored dignity that the Surinamese have, that made our stay there very pleasant. I mean, I had contact whenever I desired with anybody there. I obviously visited them from time to time, I visited the military commander, who like everybody else there, was unfailingly courteous.

Q: But he was the de facto leader for so long.

BARBOUR: He was the power behind the throne, and undoubtedly responsible for the murder that I frequently as we talked, had in the back of my mind, is it possible that this person can have such bloody hands. In our very first meeting he asked whether American policies, and Dutch policies, were the same. And I said, "No, they're not the same, but," I said, "and I know you don't like to hear this, we do come together on the question of civil rights in this country." So we talked about human rights. And he listened very courteously, and then he said, "You're quite right, I don't like to have that question put at me that way. But I asked the question, and you gave me a fair answer." We never had any difficulty dealing, even when the topic of our conversation was the sort of thing that those on the receiving end don't like to hear. But they were always pleasant, always very courteous, as were all our dealings in that country.

Q: We're talking about the Reagan administration when you were there, whose approach to human rights was much more low key than that of the Carter administration. Did you find that Suriname was just so far off the political radar that nobody was paying any attention to it, or were there human rights abuses, people in jail or what have you, that we were pushing on, or anything of that nature?

BARBOUR: The situation got worse later on. In human rights policies the Reagan administration were less activists than during the Carter administration, but they were no less present. It was a significant element of our policy interests in Suriname to push for them. Later on in the latter years of our stay there, a small civil war developed, insurrection of a man, which generated a reaction inside Paramaribo, and in the countryside, troops would go in and there would be killings, and rampaging, and things like that by the army. We began to have more acute civil rights problems, and we began to talk openly about them. Then there were arrests, there were even killings, never objectively documented. Let's just say we were involved in doing what we could about them.

Q: What did we do?

BARBOUR: Well, in public and in private. And the nice thing about dealing with people like the Surinamese, you can say what you want to say. You can say what needs to be said, and so can they, and they don't get offended, you don't get offended. But I remember talking to the Prime Minister once about a column in one of the newspapers that was written by a local Protestant minister, a very witty column, very amusing, but telling in its barbs. The Prime Minister said, "Well, we're going to bring him in here." And I said, "Oh, that's fine. Let's see you'll have human rights, you'll have freedom of the press, and you'll have religious issues, all in one bundle. That's really great." He said, "Maybe we'll just give him a talking to." Anyhow, I think that sort of thing is called interventions, we had lots of interventions of that kind which really, if we succeeded in dampening down some of their intentions to take reprisals, they served our purpose. We also went public. I gave one local talk on it, I wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper shortly before I left, and the issue was human rights. It was there, and it was a factor. Libyans came in. The military decided they didn't have any friends anywhere, they might as well have the Libyans, and of course, Qadhafi promised them all kinds of things. So he went to Tripoli, and the Libyans came and set up a--what did they call it--an Islamic Society, which was right down the street from my residence, and one of my new assignments, self assumed, was to get them out of there. And I had a lot of talks on the issue, I never succeeded in getting them out. But again, you could deal frankly with them. I would say to the Prime Minister, or the President, or the Foreign Minister, "Why don't you just throw them out, they're not doing you any good. They're coloring your image, nobody around here wants them. The Guianese don't want them here, the French don't want them here. Why don't you just throw them out?" They didn't, but at least you can't say that we didn't administer our points.

There was an internal security situation that came up once, and I called on the Surinamese commander about it. It concerned a Libyan trigger man who came into town. We knew it, we followed him around...

Q: *A hit man, an assassin.*

BARBOUR: ...a trigger man. We knew him, we knew when he came in, we knew he was, we knew he'd been around to look at the embassy. We had a good deal of interest in why he might be there. This was after the April attack on Tripoli, April 1984.

Q: *When we bombed Tripoli.*

BARBOUR: In reprisal for the night club bombing in Berlin. That's right. Shortly after that this fellow arrived. Mind you, I never had any instructions for dealing with the Surinamese. I had carte blanche to say whatever I thought needed to be said. So in this case I went to see Colonel (inaudible), and I said, "We know this man is here. We know who he is. We know that he was given a visa and was permitted to come in." And I said very pleasantly, "And I think you should know that if anything happens to any American here, you will be held responsible by my government." He didn't react really. I said, "But anyhow, here is his name." And I gave him the card on it. And that afternoon, I guess it was lunch time, I was home, and somebody dropped by to see me, and said, "He's leaving tomorrow at noon." Which was good. It was good in another way which has since become known in that we were able to follow him around, he was arrested in another country, and we got a whole suitcase of all his paraphernalia, and all his documents and things like that. So that was nice. But the point is not that we scored this counter intelligence coup, but the fact that we could talk to the Surinamese in that kind of manner without giving offense.

Q: *In the first place, was there a difference did you find between the civilian side of the government, and the military side of the government?*

BARBOUR: No, but there became a more difference later on. I will give you another little anecdote, a little revealing anecdote, and then I'll tell you about the difference. The relations with the military junta were officially chilly. Personally in a little place like Paramaribo, you run into everybody all the time. So, in fact, we talked to them. I've had some of them privately to lunch to talk to them. Relations were not bad. And we knew when they'd go off to Miami and have a weekend in Miami on the town, and come back. So we gave a visa to one of them, he went off to Miami with his girlfriend. And about 2:30 one morning, the Foreign Minister called me and said he had something urgent, and asked if I could go to see him. The Foreign Minister calls, you go, unless he makes a habit of calling at 2:30 in the morning. So I went to see him. And he said, "Can you tell me, Mr. Ambassador, why Captain (inaudible) has been arrested?" Captain (inaudible) was a member of junta, I hadn't the faintest notion. My first reaction was that he and

his girlfriend were on the town and he'd gotten into a fight in a bar. And I said, "No, I haven't the faintest idea, I'm sure it's nothing political." So anyhow, I had no telegram, I had no information, I had no nothing, but during the course of the night I found out that he had been arrested in a DEA sting operation. Arrested, taped, filmed, and everything else. He had been the willing participant of a sting operation showing that he, as a member of the Surinamese junta, was willing to open up the country to drug trafficking. So it was all on tape as he negotiated prices, and entry points, and things like that.

But by the opening of business the next day, the morning newspaper and the radio all had scare stories about an American plot against Suriname. Little did they know, Suriname was not a country we had ever plotted against, but the CIA was involved, and the Americans were all against Suriname, and they were even hinting of big demonstrations, and stir up the people. So at that point too I went around to see Colonel (inaudible), and at the end of the morning he agreed to receive me. We talked about it and I gave him the information.

Q: You got the information from?

BARBOUR: By phone, scarce as it was, and I gave it to him and I said, "Now what I want you to know is that we only know what we know, and it concerns Capt. (inaudible). And this campaign that is being stirred up, all these allegations, the excitement, really doesn't do anybody any good because at this point we only know what we know." Meaning we don't know anything about anybody else. And the Colonel, who was no fool, got the point 100%, and without batting an eye, "Oh, well, in this case the Foreign Minister is not speaking for the government." And that was the end of it. The afternoon newspaper, evening television, nada. It was a minor affair. I went that afternoon when I went to play tennis, I was a national hero because the civilian elements of the country, in or out of government...in government worked with the military either under duress, out of fear, or because they made a lot of money on the side. Outside the government the civilian element hated the military, but tolerated it. But we were careful not to seem opposed or any threat and you had this element of forces who existed there, co-existed, and until this little civil war started, co-existing with amazing congeniality.

But when we were there I would add on a personal note, one could travel all over the country, and Suriname at that time was 99% virgin Amazonian jungle.

Q: Did we see the Soviets and the Chinese doing anything there that we considered...

BARBOUR: I could never figure out why the Soviets were there, except I guess they were sucked in on the coattails of Castro, and Bishop. The Soviet ambassador was, I think, basically a well-intentioned person. His wife made no bones at all about her feelings toward the regime at home. She was quite outspoken, and spent as little time in Suriname with her husband as possible, was therefore a pleasure to be around when she was there. The Chinese were there, I

think, because they had a sense of mission. They'd built a lovely sports complex in the Chinese fashion. They said, "Which would you like to have? A stadium, airport terminal, or the various things they have in their catalogue. The Surinamese chose a stadium, which is a large complex. The Chinese said, "Let's see, this is July 1, 1981, it'll take 18 months, and we'll let you know what we need." In Chinese fashion doing things in a country like Suriname, they need very little. Everything and everybody is important except the basic laborer, and they delivered it on time, just as they said using Chinese workers, Chinese engineers, Chinese design, Chinese raw materials, Chinese prefabricated materials, and that was that. So why they were there, I never figured out.

Q: *Were there, say American missionaries, or any people like this?*

BARBOUR: Yes.

DENNIS HAYS

Ambassador

Suriname (1997-2000)

Ambassador 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 in 1975, 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.

Q: *OK. You went to Surinam in early 1997. You had described earlier the discussion of putting rafters, Cuban refugees, there, and the military had gone down and had discussions with senior people in the government that you didn't have anything to do with. Why don't you talk about what you did do in Surinam and what the situation was there at that time, in 1997?*

HAYS: Surinam is a wonderful place. It's the end of the earth, but it's a wonderful place once you get there. The key things that influence Surinam right to this day are: 1) they were a Dutch colony and not a British or French colony, and 2) there wasn't a very strong independence movement there. The Dutch literally had to kick them out of the nest, and the story is, with some verification, that they actually bribed a few of the local parliamentarians who by a one vote margin voted for independence. As part of the golden parachute, the Dutch gave basically the right of free immigration for a time period. When they gave that it was like, who wants to go to

Holland? It's cold and rainy and gray. You can be in the warmth of Surinam and live like Dutch citizens. This was in 1975 when it became independent. By 1980 the government through petty corruption and just inefficiency was falling apart, and there was a protest by some sergeants to get better pay, better conditions. When they did this they discovered that the government collapsed around them, and they had an opportunity, which they seized, to take over the government. Their leader, a guy named Desi Bouterse, took over at that time. By a year or two down the road he was also having a lot of problems maintaining control. There was a fairly active democratic movement opposed to him. His grip was getting looser and looser. Curiously, there was a Cuban connection. There was a Cuban colonel, Gonzalez was his name, who came in as an adviser. People told me he told Desi, "Look, the reason you have these problems is because you didn't have a bloody revolution. People don't fear you."

By 1982, there was a famous incident when Maurice Bishop from Grenada came and paid a state visit to Surinam. Desi held a big rally for him and got about 1,500 people to rally to meet Bishop. There was a labor leader, Cyril Dahl, who held a counter demonstration and got 15,000 people out. So Desi was terribly embarrassed by this number one and then to add insult to injury, that night at the state dinner Cyril, who was the head of the union among others, including the electrical workers, cut the power to the Presidential Palace. So there's poor Desi with his revolutionary comrade-in-arms sitting in the dark. That was late October. Whether that played directly into the events, I'm not sure, but in early December Desi and company decided to strike. They went out and rounded up about twenty people they thought were their opponents -- labor leaders, attorneys, a couple of the military guys who had turned against them, and took them to this old fort and tortured them and killed all but one of them. This sent a huge shock through Surinamese society, because this had never happened before. The Surinamese didn't kill each other, they were calm and peaceful with everyone getting a piece of the pie. It was clear that the revolution was now blooded and it was likely that more of this was going to take place. I'm doing this as a lead-in.

Q: This was in 1982?

HAYS: This was in 1982. By the late 1980s, Bouterse was trying to maintain his power in the army, but he was prepared to turn civilian control over to the government, which happened. There was then what was called the "telephone coup" in 1990 where Bouterse called the president and said, "You're screwing up. You're out." And he took over again. And then there was another time after that a few years later when he pulled back once again and allowed new elections to take place and a democratic opposition government came into power. Just before I got there in the '96 time frame, there was yet another election and a political party which he was identified with won. A man named Wijdenbosch became the president of the country and he was seen as a lieutenant of Bouterse, but Bouterse himself did not come forward. When I was on my way down there, the question was, do we deal with Bouterse or not. When Barry McCaffrey had gone to Surinam to talk about placing refugees he dealt with these guys, Bouterse and his lieutenants.

Q: He was the Southern Command?

HAYS: He was the Southern Command, at that point. In the interim, the embassy was recommending and apparently the Department was prepared to accept a level of engagement with him. De facto he was in power and so we need to talk to him, and we have American business that wants to get into oil. None of that is going to happen if we don't talk to this guy. I felt very strongly that that was a mistake and would send the wrong message right from the start for the American ambassador to meet with this guy. I might mention it hadn't really been an issue for my predecessors, because he was not playing that role at that time. The other government was in power. In fact, both of my predecessors said they had never met him, whereas when I got there he was all over the place, at every reception, every party, every everything, you would run into him. Nevertheless, I felt very strongly that we shouldn't have anything to do with him, and quite frankly, because it was Surinam, the Department was prepared to humor me. They didn't insist. They said well we've got the shrimp guys, we've got the oil guys, we've got the other guys and we'll try to work it out. I feel that the Wijdenbosch government certainly had its problems, but they increasingly separated themselves from Bouterse and his hard core. I believe that Bouterse is still involved in narcotics smuggling, and I think he's got a piece of alien smuggling and other issues that are around there. On top of everything else, it would've been a mistake to deal with him, although most of the other embassies did in fact. Their ambassadors would go see him and invite him to national days. Except for the Dutch. The Dutch were busy trying to indict him at this time for both drug smuggling and for human rights, the deaths of '82.

Q: He had no official position at that point?

HAYS: He was head of the party that had won the election, and so by that, especially in the beginning, it was felt that he was pulling all the strings. I think that became less and less the case until at the end when there was another election he and Wijdenbosch ran on separate tickets, separate parties. They had split completely and this impacted on both of their vote totals. Surinam was one of these countries that, even more so than Guyana, had a small population and a big land area, the size of the state of Georgia. The population was only half a million. Another key factor is that in the eighties when all of this was going on, literally half of the population left the country and took advantage of the opportunity to go to the Netherlands. Disproportionately, of course, it was the educated, the entrepreneurial group, and the professionals that went. The country is still recovering from having half the population, like 350,000 of 700,000 go. It's now gone back up to half a million, although I think it's more like 600,000.

The difference between Surinam and Guyana is that in Guyana you have basically the two large population groups; the Afro-Guyanese and the Indo-Guyanese who are engaged in a zero sum fight. I win you lose, and vice versus. In Surinam, you have not only the Afros and Indos, but you also have a large Japanese population, a huge Chinese population, the Iranians and the Maroons, the escaped slaves from the river system. If you want to see an African village of the

seventeen-hundreds, the only place in the world is Surinam. They still have the same customs, the same food, the same dress, the same language and everything. The amazing thing is if you look at continental drift right where South America goes into Africa, Surinam and Ghana touch. Most of the slaves brought to Surinam came from Ghana. Geologically, 500 million years later they are only next door.

URUGUAY

ERNEST V. SIRACUSA

Ambassador

Uruguay (1973-1977)

Ernest V. Siracusa was born in California on November 30, 1918. He obtained a B.A. from Stanford University. He had service in the U.S. Navy during the Second World War and spent one year at MIT as a graduate student in economics. He served in Buenos Aires, Rome, Lima. He was ambassador to La Paz and Montevideo. He was also in the U.N. as an advisor on Latin America. He retired in March 1974. He was interviewed by Hank Zivetz in June 1989.

SIRACUSA: So to go from Bolivia to Uruguay was to experience CHANGE. But while Uruguay in contrast to Bolivia was well-off, in more recent years its own problems had been deep-seated and produced tragic consequences.

Among other things, socialist experimentation had burdened the economy with programs it could not afford and thus tended to impoverish the country. Also, ill-advised and egregiously uneconomic protectionism, seeking to create an industrial base as a source of jobs, enriched only a few while it drained the wealth of agriculture and left Uruguayans worse off and dreaming of past affluence now out of reach. Yet through it all the University poured into this economy of limited scope hordes of graduates--lawyers, engineers and doctors in droves-- with little or no career opportunity awaiting, and many infected with a heavy dose of Marxist indoctrination to exacerbate the impact of their seemingly hopeless prospects.

In our view Uruguay as an always leading practitioner of democracy in Latin America deserved, in its hours of travail, not only our pressure for betterment but also the understanding and even compassion for its plight of the world's foremost democracy. Seeing Uruguay as it actually was insofar as we could discover the truth and so reporting it was deemed to be our obligation as an Embassy. And so we did this rather than join the carping and criticism along with the popular flow stimulated by "human rights" activists in Washington and elsewhere and the exaggerations and distortions of the critics mentioned above.

(After the Vietnam War, many of the activists who had unrelentingly badgered Washington for its policies, found new cause for their energies in the problem of Human Rights; and many of them dove into it with indiscriminating vengeance which often honored sensationalism over truth. Thus, sadly, anyone who questioned them for exaggeration and trumpeting of unsubstantiated "fact" became targets for derision and worse. And thus the noble cause of promoting human rights everywhere, which properly became a strong arm of American Foreign Policy, was comedy at times reduced to open carping and scolding, while those who believed more could be gained by "quiet diplomacy" were often pilloried and vilified. So, the price for integrity.

Thus integrity in reporting (how much easier to go with the flow and conform to the conventional view, however inaccurate) had its price in bringing down the wrath of such activists and even members of Congress such as Koch of New York (later Hizzoner the Mayor) who was riding the tide for all it was worth. Koch, it might be noted, was especially unpopular among military circles in Uruguay as author of the "Koch Amendment" to the Foreign Assistance Act which singled out Uruguay for denial of military aid because of its supposed egregious record on human rights.

As for Koch, who gave his special, wrathful attention, to Uruguay and later to me, I have a special comment. In late 1976 or early 77 I asked to see him and journeyed to New York for that purpose where he received me in his office. I had maybe an hour and a half or two hours with him and found him seemingly to be most reasonable and straightforward in his apparent interest in the subject. I tried to give him the most honest and objective picture of the actual situation in Uruguay that I could, warts and all where justified. Such a picture, it was clear, was not the same as the one from which many of his comments had emanated but I operated on the assumption that he was interested in the truth and thus might give some weight to my objective presentation.

BARBARA H. NIELSEN

Rotation Officer

Montevideo (1977-1978)

Barbara H. Nielsen was born in New York in 1949. She attended Middlebury College, Indiana University, and Yale University. She has also served in the Peace Corps in Katmandu from 1972 to 1974. Her career has included positions in Montevideo, Tegucigalpa, Dakar, Santiago, Algiers, Stockholm, and Athens. Ms. Nielsen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 2004.

Q: You were in Montevideo from '76 to when?

NIELSEN: I got there in '77. It ended up being a 13 month assignment. I'm not sure what the norm was. They kept changing that. For my predecessors, it was a JOT assignment and you were either to stay on at post and go into a regular slot or, if there wasn't one, then you would be moved after usually 18 months. But in my case, they moved me after 13 months for whatever reason. I didn't actually finish my rotation. I guess I should go back and do it. I was cheated out of my consular rotation. I never did do consular affairs.

Q: Let's talk a bit about Uruguay. What was it like when you went there in '77?

NIELSEN: It was in the throes of the military regime. The Tupamaros were under control by then. There was still some concern about those urban terrorists, but they were largely subdued. At the same time, human rights were a problem between our governments.

Q: Jimmy Carter had just come in.

NIELSEN: Yes. We were making strong statements about support for human rights and Uruguay was a place where you could feel that those statements were justified. That was the work of the political section at that time. They were taking a lot of complaints on behalf of individuals who thought that they had been tortured or otherwise their human rights were abused.

From the point of view of a cultural affairs officer, which was what I was doing, it was a very fine place to be. We had a binational center there with a full program of cultural events. Those were still the days when we brought cultural groups to perform. We had a great library, one of the models in Latin America. I was allowed to teach American literature in our program there. All in all, it was a great place. The culture and society were... One thing that a military regime does is create order, so it was very orderly. The Uruguayans tended to be fairly subdued anyway. It was an easy place to live. The middle class was in decline, but they still hung on to a decent standard of living. They were fine counterparts.

Q: You had military dictatorships in Argentina and Brazil at the same time.

NIELSEN: Yes, not to mention Chile, of course.

Q: The Tupamaros were essentially college students, weren't they? Where were they coming from?

NIELSEN: Most of them were middle class bourgeois family young people who were caught up in the Marxist ideology of the time.

Q: But you say they were pretty well under control?

NIELSEN: Yes. I never met one. They weren't holding rallies or demonstrations or doing anything at all.

Q: On your side of the cultural work, did the opposition to the military play any role? Were you getting protests?

NIELSEN: I don't remember any specific incidents. I suspect that there was a high degree of control. We were not so far as I can recall a venue for the opposition. I was there for a year, but I don't remember, for example, that we were trying to help artists who wanted to protest against their government. I don't think they were doing that.

Q: What were we doing?

NIELSEN: In terms of what?

Q: Our USIA function.

NIELSEN: We were running exchanges programs. My job was in large measure working at the binational center where we were modeling modern library practices and doing English teaching. Within the framework of English teaching, we were teaching American culture. We actually had a certificate program so that students could receive a qualification in American studies. That was one of our big emphases, English teaching, librarianship, cultural events. I'm trying to think of examples of what we had on the cultural events side. I think that was where we had a dance troupe. We did bring musical groups and dance groups, theater groups occasionally if they spoke Spanish. There was a big avant garde troupe that we brought and which was very successful there.

LAWRENCE A. PEZZULO

Ambassador

Uruguay (1977-1979)

Ambassador Lawrence A. Pezzulo was born in New York, New York in 1926. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Colombia in 1951. He served in the U.S. Army from 1944-1946 and joined the Foreign Service in 1957.

Ambassador Pezzulo's career included positions in Uruguay and Nicaragua. He was interviewed by Arthur R.. Day on February 24, 1989.

Q: When was it that you went down?

PEZZULO: I went down in 1977, and Congress cut aid to Uruguay in 1976, one year before. There was an amendment by a future mayor of a northeastern city, called Koch, who took the initiative on this issue, and curtailed military assistance to Uruguay.

When I got there, there were a series of issues to be faced. First of all, the Uruguayan military felt very aggrieved; they felt that the United States had misunderstood them, had dealt arbitrarily with them. They were quite bitter and made no bones of it.

Q: They told you this, I suppose?

PEZZULO: Absolutely. My first meeting was with the three Service Commanders; they had a triumvirate running the government, and we spent three and a half hours, they professing that the United States didn't understand Communism, and didn't understand the problems they had, and had abandoned them in their hour of need; and my saying to them, "You're exaggerating. If you went back and looked at what we did over the years with you, you'd know that's not true. I'm surprised you're saying that. And furthermore, what you're doing now puts our whole relationship in jeopardy, because you've taken arbitrary action against your citizens, and I'm not even questioning whether they deserve it or not. But world opinion is against you and our relationship is hostage to actions you've taken." So that's how we began. The day I arrived.

And human rights became the central issue. It was interesting. When I got there, there was a lot of mythology as to what had happened in Uruguay, in the State Department's own recollection of events. I set about to try to get the facts. I had my political officers, and my station, and the military officers, spend full time. I said, "I want to know the history. Let's look back at what happened, and turn it over stone by stone."

Q: The history of how the government had handled the guerrilla movement?

PEZZULO: Yes, that's right. And what emerged was interesting, if you have the time for it. Because what had happened was this. Uruguay was a traditional, and one of the most longstanding democracies in Latin America, in fact one of the models. Uruguay, Chile, Columbia--those were the models of Latin American democracy. Along about the middle of 1950-60, they suffered a real decline, economically. Uruguay had always been an exporter of meats, hides, products of that nature. World War II was one of the big heydays. Then there was a slump. The Korean War was another big heyday. And then it slumped again. And unfortunately they had not diversified their economy enough, so this slump really hit, and it kept going down.

And what happened--it's a very small country, very middle-class--the young people--professionals--accountants, lawyers, doctors--professionals of all sorts--became frustrated in the late sixties. And they began to look around and attack their system. The Tupamaros was the product of their frustrations: first reflecting their criticism then turning violent into a guerrilla band. It began as an attack on the system for not providing the jobs and the opportunities. And then it turned nasty.

And the system was very soft. It's a small country. The crime rate was low. And suddenly, this

emerges. And the democratic government, which was soft and quite fragile couldn't handle it. So the military were called in.

The Uruguayan military had never fought a war; indeed, had never been called upon to do anything but parade and drill. And they came in and rolled up the Tupamaros, who were not very good as guerrillas. Once they trusted power, they decided that this was not a bad place to be, and took over the government.

And the interesting thing was that the repression did not occur then. I mean, the Tupamaros were guilty of crimes, there's no question. They blew up banks, they killed people, they committed terrorist acts--all of which were documentable--and criminal offenses. It was after the Tupamaros were rolled up, and the military assumed power that they began to investigate the root causes of the subversion. It was they that overreacted and committed all the abuses. They went into the universities, and became suspicious of university courses. They went after leftist professors. And before you know it, they were torturing people for information, making arbitrary arrests, and ultimately filling the prisons with some 5,000 political prisoners.

But when we found this out, and it took us about six months . . .

Q: *Your embassy working . . .*

PEZZULO: Yes. And we did it, you know, in a very studious way; in the meantime, just sort of keeping the ball afloat. Then I started to confront them with the reality of their own actions. And lo and behold, most of them didn't even know the history.

Q: *Them being the Uruguayans?*

PEZZULO: The Uruguayan military. And then I had the argument, you know, "Why are you paying so high a price for actions that can be reversed?" I don't understand it.

Q: *You won the war, why . . .*

PEZZULO: Well, that was sort of the centerpiece, and it became an intriguing problem. And they slowly began to see that this ambassador and this embassy were really interested in dealing with the problem. And they began to look at their own internal problems. And slowly prisoners who were in prison for years were released. And it slowly started to improve. I think it was an awareness that they in and of themselves couldn't come to because they had built up this illusion that they were the great saviors of the society.

Q: *A mythology of their own.*

PEZZULO: Their own mythology. And Washington had another mythology. I mean, they were not pug-uglies, they were people who had gone through an experience which they were not

prepared for, then tried to become cleansers of a society that didn't really need so thorough a cleansing; and got overzealous.

Q: Did you have a hard time selling this new look back in Washington?

PEZZULO: Well, the problem back in Washington became how to react to the positive steps the Uruguayan military was taking? And there were such things as helicopter parts that they needed badly. And at the time, there were some zealots on human rights that came in with the Carter administration--in the human rights office--that, you know, wanted blood. They were not willing to respond incrementally.

My approach to the Uruguayans was to prod them by saying: "You show me prisoner releases, you show me that you're closing up the offices that do the torturing"--there were two of them. "You close them down"--one of them they closed, by the way, by cutting off its gasoline allotment--just cut it off. "You do that, don't tell me about it, we'll find out, and we'll react."

Once they began reacting positively, I needed some give from our side. When I approached Washington, the reaction from the ideologues was, "Now wait a minute. It's not finished, and you can't show me that you did thus and so."

Q: From the human rights people, particularly?

PEZZULO: Yes.

Q: The military, on the other hand, in Washington were all for you, I suppose?

PEZZULO: Our military weren't involved.

Q: I see, they weren't?

PEZZULO: They were willing to do whatever had to be done. I mean, Uruguay was not an important country that they were going to fight for. And the whole program was a peanut; it didn't amount to very much. It's a small country; it's a country of two and a half, three million people.

But what was pleasing is that we were able to find out what the problem was. It was like trying to deal with a disease--giving medication--and you don't know what the heck you're dealing with. Pretty soon the medication was worse than the disease. But once it was cleared away, it was very pleasing to see that they suddenly realized that we were not trying to stick their nose in the mud; we were honestly trying to help and return the relationship to a more normal level.

And I wouldn't go so far as to say we were responsible for their return to democracy, but there are democrats down there who will say that. Out of this came a softening by the military, because they realized they had overplayed their hand; some of the more rational within the military started to see, and could argue their case a little better--this we were told when I was there--that they felt now they could speak, because the facts were coming out, and there had been unnecessarily harsh repression.

Q: Did you find in your own relationships with the military leaders there that you could establish a relationship of some trust, personally?

PEZZULO: I had--you know, some of them were very brittle. One of the commanders was a tough cookie, and he didn't like, at all, this gringo ambassador telling them about their business.

But some of the others were a lot more appreciative. Well, what really happened, I think, is that once they saw that this was a sincere effort to try to cope with the problem--I mean, I was not going to cocktail parties and forgetting this. We were getting into it. They realized there was a desire on the U.S. government part to do something constructive. And as they saw this was not an attempt to either embarrass them, or to make the case worse--in fact, it was an attempt to really find out what the heck happened--they became appreciative. So I had friends. You know, I had people who used to call me up and say, "Look, you met with so and so the other day, and you were a little tough on him. You know, he's this kind of guy, and it's best to handle him a little more gingerly."

Q: These were Uruguay military?

PEZZULO: Uruguay military.

Q: So they saw you as, in a sense, pushing their cause, and they wanted you to do it right.

PEZZULO: That's right. And the politicians were unable to play any role. For example, the current President was proscribed from acting in an political way. In other words, he could not have a meeting in his house for any political purpose; it was against the law. And the two traditional parties, that went back to the beginning of the history of the country--the 1830s--were proscribed because of this foolishness about a bunch of kids who got out of sorts. I mean, it was almost a fairy tale, that had, you know, just gotten way out of control.

Q: So by the time you left, things had really improved a lot.

PEZZULO: They had gone from about 4,700 prisoners, down to less than 1,000. And they were

letting them out quietly. And they were starting to talk about political liberalization. Now there was full censorship when I was there. All politicians were proscribed. Now this in a country that, prior to this period, had a free press and a prestigious university system. The military closed down the fine arts departments.

DALE V. SLAGHT

Commercial Attaché

Montevideo (1977-1980)

Mr. Slaght was born in Oregon in 1943. After serving in various capacities on Capitol Hill and in the Department of Commerce, he joined the State Department under the Commerce-State Exchange Program. As expert in commercial and trade policy, Mr. Slaght had assignments as Commercial Attaché and Minister Counselor at US Embassies and Consulates in Uruguay, Panama, Germany, Canada, Soviet Union and Mexico. He also served as Mexico Desk Officer at the Department of Commerce. Mr. Slaght attained the rank of Career Minister. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: With all this you were becoming a real...not an industry but a generalized trade expert.

SLAGHT: Certainly an expert on the Rules of Origin. This was a long time ago. This was 1974, I guess, but I did this for some time after the initial movement into that unit. I spent some time back in the Office of Legislative Affairs. This was all part of the Office of International Industrial Trade Policy. I went back to the division, spent a little time more on legislation. When I joined the Commerce Department in '72, I really didn't plan to stay there more than three, four, five years. I knew the thought of, in particular after being there a while, the thought of working in a large bureaucracy like that for a career was...I just couldn't see it. I expected to go on to business somewhere, as the Latin American representative of some company. About '75, I started hearing about a program that Commerce had with State called the State Commerce Exchange Program. At the time, State had more officers that wanted to come back for Washington assignments than the Department of State had positions for them in the building. At any time there were no more than thirty State officers sent to Commerce Department who'd be the head of the Japan desk or the head of the Mexico desk or whatever, and an equal number of Commerce people would go abroad on temporary assignments as commercial attaches. I heard about this program probably in late '75, and in '76 I started having pretty serious conversations with our Human Resources people about that. They said fine, we'll pursue it, and they did. I eventually was put on a list of Commerce people who would, they thought, would be acceptable to State for the program and I was interviewed by Winston Lord, believe it or not, on an assignment in, I would guess this would be '76. State accepted me. I began language training in

the spring of '77, and I went to Montevideo, Uruguay in September of 1977 as Commercial Attaché. I had a wonderful experience. The Ambassador there was Larry Pezzullo, and his deputy, James Cheek were really first-rate people.

Q: Both continued to have rather distinguished careers.

SLAGHT: Yes, they did. I had a wonderful time. Pezzullo was a fantastic ambassador. He and I had a mutual interest in tennis, and in back of the residence was a miniature tennis court, a paddleball court, really. You used tennis balls that had a hole in them so they were somewhat dead. He and I and usually one guy from the marine detachment and whoever we could gin up would play Sunday afternoons for several hours. We got to know each other pretty well. He was a very good man, a very good ambassador. Uruguay at the time had a military dictatorship and was on the opposite side of the Human Rights issue that President Carter was pursuing.

Q: Took the moral high ground.

SLAGHT: That's right. There was still the threat of their activities, but more of the activities, if you can call them, were being approved by the military government. They would arrest people. The scale of the violence was not anything near what was going on the other side of the river in Argentina.

Q: Some of them disappeared? People and all..

SLAGHT: There was repression. We were, as a government, at odds with the Uruguayan government on this question. So Pezzullo and Jim [Lyle Franklin] Lane who followed Pezzullo a couple of years later needed to be careful how they pursued these issues.

Q: You were there from '77 to when?

SLAGHT: To the summer of 1980.

Q: Were we at all involved or impacted by I think of the smuggling that went on between Brazil and Argentina, Paraguay in the middle, but also the reflections in Uruguay and all that. Did that?

SLAGHT: No, no. There was smuggling going on, particularly on the Brazilian border. Shoes, coffee and other things. They could always be found on the northern cities. Everyone suspected that they were brought over with the eyes closed of customs officers there. And they'd find their way down to Montevideo, the capital. The country had three million people, and a million and half were in Montevideo, so it was a one city country in many respects. I got to know very well the head of CitiBank and Bank of America there. We're still friends with the Bank of America representative. It was a small American community, and I made sure that the ambassador had face-to-face meetings with as many of these Americans as possible. We set up a monthly

meeting in the conference room in the embassy with a group of them, so they had their input in to the ambassador. He was able to explain what he was doing, what the U.S. government was doing. It was a healthy environment.

Q: This was during the Carter administration. Were you there when Rosalynn Carter made a trip to Latin America?

SLAGHT: No.

Q: Did the fact there was a military...

SLAGHT: Assistant Secretary of State Todman came through. He was the most senior U.S. government who visited.

Q: He was the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. Did the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights and all have any impact on your operations, the embassy operations?

SLAGHT: It certainly had impact on the embassy operations, but it had very little to do with the commercial side. I was, if you will, running commercial as if we had no conflict with the Uruguayan government, but human rights was *the* issue in our bilateral relationship. Poor Jim Cheek. He came out of that assignment in Uruguay as DCM and into the State Department as the deputy to Pat Derian in the Human Rights Office, a new office created by Carter. And because of that, the Reagan administration wouldn't touch him later as ambassador.

RICHARD H. MELTON

Deputy Chief of Mission

Montevideo (1982-1985)

Richard H. Melton was born on August 8, 1935 in Rockville, Maryland. He received his BA from Cornell University in 1958. He later attended Wisconsin University where he received his MA in 1971. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961 and served in many countries throughout his career including Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Portugal, England, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. Mr. Melton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 27, 1997.

Q: You left London in 1982 and were assigned to Uruguay as DCM. You served there for three years. So you arrived in Montevideo at the height of the Falkland/Malvinas dispute.

MELTON: Right. Uruguay is a very small country--3 million plus inhabitants. It has a livestock-

based economy. It has a very close relationship--love/hate--with Argentina. Uruguay was created as a buffer state out of the rivalry between Brazil and Argentina which continues. Uruguay's affinity was much more with Argentina, but this relationship is always on a roller-coaster.

The Argentine Ambassador, representing a military dictatorship, was an admiral, notorious for his authoritarian outspoken demeanor. He had a single view of the Falklands dispute--that of the military regime. He was prepared to regale one and all with his views at diplomatic receptions given the slightest opportunity. He also had very negative views of the US, which he also used to express to anyone who would listen.

My Ambassador was Tom Aranda, a non-career official, who had been on the White House political staff. He was a lawyer from Arizona who had been active in politics there. He spoke fluent Spanish and had some connections with Mexico. His principal asset was good Spanish; when his capabilities were tested, he scored 5/4+; he was incensed that he did not also score 5 in reading comprehension. In any case, he had strong views on all subjects. He also had a short-term photographic memory; he could look at several pages for a few minutes and then repeat virtually verbatim all that he had read. That was very useful in using talking points for meetings or public appearances; you could be sure that he would deliver them down to the last period.

I think our policy had always been clear--namely that we were supporting a transition to democratic government. The views of some members of the Reagan administration were welcomed by the Uruguayan military--e.g. Kirkpatrick's philosophical treatise on the differences between dictatorships and authoritarian regimes which gave considerable credit to the policies of some military regimes. These views, despite self-serving interpretation by Uruguay's military apologists may have been helpful to us because they tended to reassure the military. I don't think Ms. Kirkpatrick disagreed at all with our policy in Uruguay; she made the point that change at least was possible under a military regime. Democracy was always the goal. Change and democracy were precisely what we were supporting in Uruguay.

Human rights was still a concern. The transition process included the issue of the treatment of certain political prisoners; their rights had been violated in the past, although many of these people had clearly committed crimes and were not imprisoned solely or perhaps even primarily because of their political views. Nevertheless, their treatment in prison was an issue. A number of these individuals had been tortured; the evidence of that was clear. We successfully maintained the most extensive index of prisoners in Uruguay; we made it known to the authorities that we had such a list. That reinforced the pressure to deal humanely with those in custody and to comply with the terms of the political agreements which included provisions for the release of most of the prisoners. We were very conscious of abuses that had occurred. We took a very strong stand on human rights abuses.

VENEZUELA

ROBERT S. PASTORINO

Junior Officer

Caracas (1967-1970)

Robert S. Pastorino was born on March 16, 1940 in San Francisco, California. He attended San Francisco State University, where he received his BA in 1964, before entering the Foreign Service in 1966. His career has included positions in countries such as Venezuela, Colombia, Portugal, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and David Fischer on March 6, 1998.

PASTORINO: I got my first assignment, to Caracas, Venezuela, after the two months orientation course. If I remember correctly, I assumed that at the end of the orientation they would give me an assignment and I would automatically accept that assignment and go. I didn't think about changing it or negotiating for a "better" posting. I was ready to serve at the needs of the Service. If the assignment needed a language, then I would try and learn that language. I do remember the class did elect Mogadishu as the "worst posting". When I got the word, I remember they announced it in the class, I said, "Wow, that's Latin America". I had heard something about Caracas. I was happy. I went home and told Fran.

On the way home, I got a post report for the first time in my career. Right away, we found out Caracas was a modern city and not very far from San Francisco. We always worried for the first fifteen years of my career about not being too far away from my mother-in-law who lived in San Francisco. She was healthy but wouldn't travel under any circumstances. I guess I knew about Romulo Betancourt, but I didn't know much more about the country. I was very happy to go to Venezuela. For me it was a wonderful assignment.

Q: *Well, this Cuban foray became quite famous, didn't it now? This really put the nail in the coffin of Castroism in Venezuela didn't it? Latin America too?*

PASTORINO: Well, in Venezuela the Cubans had already been accused of intervening to subvert the Venezuelan Government. By 1970, it was pretty clear that Venezuelan Democracy was working pretty well there, as opposed to the totalitarian system in Cuba. So, the Cubans were not welcome in Venezuela. That's why they had to invade, in the middle of the night across the beach. But this drove another nail into the coffin. But it is an interesting fact that Carlos Andres Perez wiped out the radical leftist elements at that time, and now many years later, some

of those same elements are actually in the Governmental system that they had previously tried to overthrow. For instance, Teodoro Petkoff, a Venezuelan, has been a Deputy and Government Minister, after having been in jail and exile. Another is Domingo Rangel. The Machurucuto landing was well-known but not nearly as famous as Che Guevara going to Bolivia, or later the infiltration of Grenada by the Cubans.

It was important because of lot of people, within and outside the US Government made the comparison between Fidel Castro and Romulo Betancourt. They both came to power at the same time. One remained democratic; Castro was authoritarian. The human rights policy of the Venezuelans was far better than that of Castro. One became a US ally and Castro became a bitter enemy. Certainly, the Venezuelan economy prospered more that the Cuban one which became totally dependent on their erstwhile friends in the Soviet Bloc. Venezuela had its oil, but people conveniently forget that Cuba had its sugar and a five million ton quota. Romulo Betancourt was an author. He was one of these well-rounded Latinos who was a renaissance man, somewhat like Juan Bosch. So, it was a clear comparison between ideologies and systems.

Q: Was there any noticeable change or concern? I realize you were at the Junior Officer level, but when Nixon came into office in 1969, you were still there in Venezuela. The Nixon-Kissinger team seemed to be very touchy about leftist, or any regime with a leftist tinge. Did that play any part in how things happened?

PASTORINO: Well, I didn't see it. I don't have any memory of that. Also, *Accion Democratica* was considered a somewhat leftist, but democratic party.

OTTO J. REICH

Ambassador

Venezuela (1986-1989)

Ambassador Otto J. Reich was born in Cuba in 1945. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1966 with a degree in international studies with a concentration in Latin America. After serving two years in the Army, he earned an M.A. in Latin American studies with a concentration in economic development at Georgetown University, from which he graduated in 1973. Ambassador Reich was Director to the Council of the Americas and Assistant Administrator of AID for Latin America and the Caribbean. He was in charge of the office of Public Diplomacy in Washington, DC for three years, and was ambassador to Caracas from 1986 to 1989. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 30, 1991.

Q: Let's move to Venezuela. How did you get your appointment to be Ambassador to Venezuela? You served there from 1986-1989.

REICH: I was not anxious to go overseas and when I had gone into the government in 1981 I really thought it was going to be a short term assignment. I was very happy to have gotten the assignment in AID. It was right up my alley with my economic development background. When I took on the Public Diplomacy Assignment it brought me into contact with a lot more people at much higher levels in the State Department and in the White House.

Since I was doing a lot of public speaking, etc. in the fall of 1984 I was asked to be part of something called the White House Surrogate Speakers Program. Because of the election coming up, the President and the Vice President and Cabinet Secretaries were getting so many speaking requests from around the country, in addition to what they normally have, that they just couldn't be met. So the White House Public Affairs Office, etc. set up a stable of Administration officials who could be called upon to go and speak around the country on different issues. Central America was a very controversial issue even then. So I gave a lot of those speeches to groups around the country.

Shortly after the election of 1984, I was invited over to the Office of Presidential Personnel, where I was asked, to my surprise, if I would be interested in being an ambassador. I said that I hadn't thought about it very much. Frankly, to tell you the truth, of course I had thought about it but as something for much later in my career. Since I had only been in the Public Diplomacy job a little over a year, I didn't feel I had finished that job. In fact, we were right in the middle of this tremendous public battle on the policy. But I was very flattered. They mentioned a couple of countries which were attractive to me although relatively small, medium size embassies in Latin America. I said, "Thanks, but no." I had some personal considerations; my kids. I didn't think I wanted to take my kids overseas at such a young age, etc.

At any rate, time passed and I kept in touch with that particular office. Early in 1985 they called again and mentioned two other countries. I turned them down for the same reason. It became rather worrying because you can't keep turning this down too long or they will think I am just not interested. The third time they called they asked if I wanted to be ambassador to Panama to replace Ted Briggs, a friend of mine, who was also born in Havana, Cuba as a matter of fact. I said, "Yes." God must have been watching over me, or one of my guardian angels or something, because the process was about to begin...it is a very long process as you know of getting confirmed, and it is getting worse...George Landau, career ambassador who was in Caracas, [talking spring, 1985 now] decided to retire early and just about immediately because he was offered a very good job as President of the Council of the Americas in New York. This was in April/May and he was to leave in June, thus leaving an unexpected vacancy in a very important post.

I got a call, this time from State, asking if I would rather go to Venezuela than Panama. Of course, Venezuela is a huge country and frankly I was a little concerned about Panama simply because I had so many friends there. I thought that was not a good idea to go to a place where you have so many friends because familiarity breeds contempt and they might ask a lot of favors on visas, etc. So I felt I would rather keep my friends and be ambassador elsewhere.

Q: When you went out there what was America's interest in Venezuela and did you have any set agenda?

REICH: Sure. First, Venezuela is our first or second, depending on trade numbers for that particular year, trading partner in South America. Our number one trading partner in Latin America is Mexico. So Venezuela was very important from an economic standpoint.

Also, politically they have always exerted a very strong influence in large part due to their economic power. This is the country that has the highest per capita income in Latin America. With a surplus of petro-dollars in the 70s and 80s as a result of the oil crisis, they put their money where their mouth is, supporting democracy. They have the second longest record of a democratic government in South America. After Costa Rica, Venezuela with the overthrow of the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship in 1958 has now had, today, 33 years of democracy which is a good record.

We saw and still see Venezuela as a very important player in regional issues and in support of democracy which was our goal in Central America. They had been working independently of us to support the same governments...the Christian Democratic governments in Latin America -- the Duarte government, the Christian Democratic government in Guatemala which was trying to gain power through elections, the Democrats in Costa Rica, Honduras or Nicaragua. They did not support the Contras or the Sandinistas after the first few months. They were very disappointed with the Sandinistas as we were.

Our relations with Venezuela were very good. If anything, I wanted to try to improve them and bring the two countries closer together. I wanted to keep the flow of oil open to the United States. There is not a whole lot an ambassador can do, frankly, because that depends on world conditions, prices, etc. I wanted to have closer scientific and technical and business ties, if possible.

Venezuela was beginning to be used by the Colombian narcotic traffickers as a transshipping point and money laundering area. Venezuela grows hardly anything narcotic-wise. There is a mountain range on the border with Colombia where you can grow Marijuana and a little of coca, but they have all the coca paste they need coming from Bolivia, Peru, etc. We had a lot of different agendas but no one big issue which dominated our relations. Frankly that is one of the reasons why I like Venezuela so much. For instance, Panama would have been the canal;

Salvador would have been land reform and the guerrilla war; Colombia would have been narcotics. I was very glad not to go to a one issue country because this gave me an opportunity to deal with everything from agricultural, trade, defense, cultural issues. I got to know a lot about specific trade problems. We worked with Venezuela on things for Central America -- help for Haiti in trying to move it towards democratic elections, etc.

At the same time we had differences of opinion on Puerto Rico. I was commended by the State Department for being there. The Venezuelans had decided to change their vote on Puerto Rico in the United Nations from co-sponsorship of a Cuban resolution for the independence of Puerto Rico, to abstention, which took the wind out of the sails of the Cuban resolution and it failed.

So we had a lot of issues like that. We worked very closely with them on human rights issues in the hemisphere. It was a good period. At the same time it was a bad economic period for Venezuela. A lot of my time was taken up working on issues related to the debt. They had the fourth largest debt in Latin America, although it was manageable by Latin American standards because of the large amount of money that comes into Venezuela. But I had a lot of meetings with their Ministry of Finance people, and our Treasury Department. I was constantly being visited by the negotiators of the private banks. We managed to provide assistance to Venezuela at some very important times for them. They simply ran out of money one time and we provided them with a loan, for which they were very grateful. We felt it was very much in our interests because the stability of that country was very important to us.

They have gotten back on their feet. I am glad to say that one of the things that I did when I got there was, as is my custom, to start talking. I gave a lot of speeches about not only democracy and human rights, but about private enterprise and the market economy, because Venezuela had a very protected...and...very inefficient economy. There was a huge state sector of the economy.

I was accused of interfering in Venezuelan affairs. The Communist Party had a little newspaper that attacked me for interfering in Venezuelan affairs. But the Communist Party is insignificant in Venezuela, in fact, it is not even a party anymore because it did not get the necessary one-half of one percent that you have to get in an election to qualify. On the other side there were some very powerful industrialists who objected to my talking about opening up, liberalizing the economy, reducing trade barriers and saying that the consumer would benefit. They had become very wealthy behind these protectionist barriers.

Five years later all of that which I was calling for has happened. Not because I was calling for it, but because it was logical. President Perez, the current President, has undertaken very radical economic reforms and Venezuela is benefiting as a result.

I was very happy, my family was very happy and well received. We had a beautiful house courtesy of the American taxpayer. The Residence in Caracas is, I think, one of the nicest residences anyway. It is not a palace, a mansion, like some of our others, but a very pleasant

house in a very pleasant country. I would not trade those three years for anything. In fact, I might want to do it again sometime in another place. But not for a long time.