

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

AMBASSADOR JEANETTE WALLACE HYDE

*Interviewed by: J. Edgar Williams
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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Hyde.]

Q: Could you tell us a bit about how you were raised and grew up and something about your early years and your family.

HYDE: Yes, I would be glad to, Ed. I am- First of all, my name is Jeanette Wallace Hyde. I was born in a small community in Piedmont, North Carolina, in the foothills of North Carolina; Hamptonville, which is in Yadkin County, and is west of Winston-Salem. It was a wonderful community to grow up in. I could not have asked for a better early childhood.

I am the youngest of three children. My father was a politician.

Q: He passed that along to you, did he?

HYDE: Well, I believe I did take after him in many respects.

Q: By the way, I forgot to mention, Jeanette, that you are being interviewed by J. Edgar Williams.

HYDE: Indeed. And I am honored.

Q: I am the one that is honored.

So, Yadkin County.

HYDE: ...in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Q: Yes, I remember when they moved. Your mother and father were both from North Carolina?

HYDE: They were. They both were born and grew up in North Carolina.

Q: And where are your siblings now?

HYDE: I have one sister that is living here in Raleigh, North Carolina and I have one sister in Florida.

Q: Oh yes. So in your home life, did they keep you very busy around the house?

HYDE: Extremely busy. I just grew up busy and I have continued to be busy.

Q: You sure have.

HYDE: You know, we had a big garden.

Q: What did you grow?

HYDE: Oh, everything, everything. And gave it away to the neighbors as much as anything. And we also had a mill, a milling company. So I loved going with my father to help him in the store, to help on the farm, and to help him to go and call on the milling company. So it was an interesting life and we always had plenty of animals around the house. We had lots of friends nearby and we went to church every time the church door opened.

Q: If you do not mind my asking, what denomination?

HYDE: At that time, I grew up as a Baptist.

Q: A Baptist, yes.

HYDE: I am a Presbyterian at the present time.

Q: Okay. So am I.

Now, did that affect your upbringing, the religious aspect?

HYDE: Absolutely. I feel that my values in life came not only from my family, from my wonderful mother and father, but from the Church because I did just literally spend a lot of time in activities at the Church. And it was a moderate Baptist church, very moderate. In fact, today it would be called a liberal Baptist church and it instilled what I think are important values in my life.

Q: Well, was there political talk around the dinner table?

HYDE: Absolutely. My father was very political; he held political office for 22 years.

Q: What office?

HYDE: He was on the board of education, which was a big thing in a small county.

Q: Oh, I bet.

HYDE: Because the school system was the largest employer in the county at that time.

Q: Oh yes.

HYDE: And he ran as a Democrat in a Republican county and he was reelected and served for 22 years, which was rather remarkable.

Q: That is remarkable, indeed.

In your school did you have any teachers who had a particular influence over your life?

HYDE: I feel fortunate to have had really good teachers. They took it very seriously that they were forming the educational future of their students. And I had one that encouraged me in my debating and writing.

Q: Debating, huh?

HYDE: Right.

Q: I am not surprised.

What did you do at that time for other things, just for pleasure? Did you like to read books?

HYDE: You know, my family is a book and newspaper-reading family and so I grew up reading the newspaper and reading a lot of books. Back then the Bookmobile called on you and you did not always have to go to the public library because the Bookmobile would pass by. So I always had a great availability of books.

Q: What kind of books did you like to read?

HYDE: Well, that time it was probably rather juvenile in my early years but later on I enjoyed biographies and history because I found that I could carry on a conversation with adults when I read the more serious things.

Q: How about dating?

HYDE: Well, yes, you always grow up having boyfriends, so again the Church was our social outlet, and so a lot of my dating went on going to church on Wednesday night or Sunday night. And also I was active in athletics.

Q: Oh, what athletics?

HYDE: Basketball.

Q: Basketball, huh?

HYDE: So, of course I took an interest in the boys who were interested in athletics also.

Q: And did you engage in say, school activities like you were the president of your class?

HYDE: Yes, I was often the president of my class and played in the band and sang in the glee club.

Q: What did you play?

HYDE: Well, early on I played the clarinet, and later I played the saxophone.

Q: The clarinet meaning a woodwind; it is an aerophone.

HYDE: That is right.

Q: Okay, so saxophone, wow, sounds like my sister.

Now, did you write much at that time?

HYDE: You know, I was fortunate that our English teacher required quite a bit of writing. At that time, you know, this is in the 50s when civil rights was being debated and I took the opposite view from the average Southerner of that time and I would write a lot of my papers around civil rights issues, arguing that all people were equal and that this should be an equal society for everyone, regardless of skin color.

Q: Well that is great that you got into that very early, yes?

HYDE: Well, again this was due to my father. He really had a great respect for all people and he loved all people and I grew up loving all people and not having any prejudice toward anyone.

Q: Did you save any of your old essays, writings?

HYDE: Unfortunately I am not sure that I have. There may be some boxes around with papers but I sort of doubt it.

Q: It would be something to publish it now, would it not?

Now, when you started to- when you were thinking about going off to college, where did you think of going? Did you have several places in mind?

HYDE: No, actually for as long as I can remember I wanted to go to Wake Forest University.

Q: Wake Forest, okay. And so you stayed there- is that where you got your degree?

HYDE: No, actually I went my first two years to Wake Forest University. I got married after my sophomore year.

Q: Oh, to Wallace?

HYDE: No, this was the previous marriage.

Q: Okay, I am sorry.

HYDE: He was a Wake Forest University Law student and he graduated from law school, we got married that summer and he had a military obligation in Greenville, Mississippi, of all places. And he had done his undergraduate work at Notre Dame and Wake Forest so we went Greenville, Mississippi, where we lived for four years and that was very interesting back about 1959 until early '63.

Q: Was he at a military base there?

HYDE: Yes, there was Greenville Air Force Base in Mississippi. So that is when I took the opportunity to finish my last two years of college.

Q: At what school?

HYDE: Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi.

Q: So, I assume from what you say that that marriage fell apart?

HYDE: Well, it lasted about 18 years.

Q: Eighteen, oh, 18 years, well that was not a fall apart marriage, that was a fairly lengthy one.

I am curious about one thing, I am curious about a lot of things, but this one thing is how did you get interested in Greece?

HYDE: Well, my husband was actually stationed with the military in Greece, on the island of Crete. And it was just absolutely a great opportunity for me to do, for both of us to do a lot of traveling during that time. We were there two years. I took the opportunity of attending the University of Maryland's formal Greek classes so I learned to speak, read and write Greek in my studies with the university's branch there.

Q: That is a tough language; it is all Greek to me.

HYDE: Well, maybe because of my southern accent I really did not find Greek to be that difficult. I had a minor in French at Wake Forest University and I found French much more difficult to learn to speak.

Q: Well after all Crete is the southern part of Greece.

HYDE: That is right.

Q: So you taught there, did you?

HYDE: I did. There was an American school that taught dependents and I had a contract with the U.S. Defense Department, so I taught most of the two years that I was there, also taking time to travel in the Mideast and Europe a great deal.

Q: So it sounds like you must have enjoyed it. You were in Heraklion?

HYDE: Yes. The military base was just outside Heraklion, but that was the major city.

Q: Did you get up to the island where the volcano Thera erupted and destroyed the Minoan civilization back in 1400 and something BC?

HYDE: The Minoan civilization was on the island of Crete. And the ruins there are magnificent.

Q: Oh, I'll bet. Did you go through the labyrinth?

HYDE: Yes, yes. I found myself spending quite a bit of time at the Minoan ruins and learning quite a bit about them, early civilization, because any time there were any American tourists I was asked to take them there and to lead the tour. So I thoroughly enjoyed that.

Q: I bet you did. And did you visit Santorini, the island?

HYDE: I did, yes. And Rhodes.

Q: So it sounds like you are a real Rhodes-type scholar.

So then when you came back from there did you maintain your interest in Greece and Eastern Europe and Europe in general?

HYDE: Well, I have, as far as my interest in Greek and Middle Eastern writers, I enjoy Plato and Aristotle and learning about the Greek civilization. So yes, and I love mythology; I have enjoyed knowing quite a bit about mythology.

Q: Did you know El Greco was from Crete?

HYDE: You know, I am not sure I did.

Q: I am sure you have seen his paintings.

HYDE: Yes, indeed I have.

Q: Yes, his name was Theotokopoulos, and he was from Crete.

HYDE: I do not think I did know that.

Q: Anyway. So did you have to work your way through college.

HYDE: No, my parents.

Q: Your parents and then subsequently your- when you were back in school at Maryland- oh, well, you did not go to University of Maryland in Maryland but only at the one in-

HYDE: The branch of the University of Maryland on the island of Crete.

Q: Okay.

Now, when you were at Wake Forest, were you active in student affairs there?

HYDE: Well yes, I was quite a bit. I joined the Young Democrats Club and was active in that and enjoyed some electives about religion and society, and so there were quite a few activities around those subjects.

Q: You were active in high school, continued being active in college. How about when you were down in Mississippi?

HYDE: Well, I was active with the officers' wives organizations, and I remember I was the editor of their little officers' wives newsletter and I continued to be active in church down there and did some volunteer work at the hospital there in Greenville. I have always been a great volunteer; I believe in it.

Q: I can tell.

Well now, both at Wake Forest and down in Mississippi, Delta State?

HYDE: Delta State.

Q: Delta State. What was the social structure on campus? Had Blacks been admitted to Wake Forest at that time and to Delta State at that time?

HYDE: No, no, not at that time at all.

Q: Was there a movement afoot to bring them in?

HYDE: Well, at Wake Forest to a certain extent, but not a great deal. And in Mississippi not at all, not at all.

Q: Yes.

HYDE: And my views sometimes conflicted with others.

Q: Yes, I can imagine.

So you did not have to work your way through college.

HYDE: No, I really did not.

Q: So, when did you come back to North Carolina?

HYDE: I came back to North Carolina in 1965, from Greece.

Q: And you were still with your husband at that time?

HYDE: Yes.

Q: And this is why you were in Fayetteville?

HYDE: Yes.

Q: He must have been at Pope then.

HYDE: No, actually he had finished his four year military obligation by this time and he opened his law practice, he entered into a law partnership in Fayetteville.

Q: I see, okay. So that is where you started all of your entrepreneurial activities.

HYDE: Indeed. When I first came back I went into social work and worked with the Cumberland County Department of Social Services and later with the North Carolina Administration of the Courts. I was the first family counselor- I was the first female family counselor with the court system that had just been started at that time. I really enjoyed social work and counseling. I went back and worked on my master's degree at night with UNC-Chapel Hill and really enjoyed it but actually by 1971 I had decided to leave social work and counseling and go into business for myself.

Q: So what business did you go into?

HYDE: Well, in 1971 I went into ladies' retail, a ladies' boutique. That was my first one.

Q: You started the business?

HYDE: Yes.

Q: And operated it yourself?

HYDE: Yes, yes. I had a partner, but I actually ran the business on a day-by-day basis. And retail is not an easy business, but I enjoyed it, and my father had been in retail and my grandfather before that.

Q: What kind of retail?

HYDE: He had had just a sort of a country store and service station and he had a couple of stores, and I had grown up working in those stores so retail and selling sort of came naturally to me.

Q: Oh yes. But you did not stop with that one store.

HYDE: No, I eventually had three stores and enjoyed it and did all right with it. You know, sometimes if you are a little under-capitalized you find yourself doing more of the work rather than being able to hire people, so I did work very hard but I enjoyed every moment of it. And I had an opportunity to sell my stores and so I did.

Q: Oh, you sold them all at the same time?

HYDE: Yes.

Q: Okay. But then you got involved in other things; you started other businesses?

HYDE: Well, I started investing at that time and one of the early investments was in the Golden Corral restaurant chain. The Golden Corral restaurant chain had one restaurant then. When I was asked to make an investment in this chain, they hoped to have 1,000 restaurants some day, and people thought that I was being rather naïve to make an investment in one restaurant that hoped to have 1,000 someday. But indeed it did come true over the years, so it turned out to be a very good investment for me.

Q: Well that is great. Was there another restaurant chain also that you were involved with?

HYDE: Right. Later on, several years later I had the opportunity to invest and serve on the board of directors for McGuffey's, McGuffey's restaurant chain, and that also has turned out fairly well. Not as successful as the Golden Corral, but there are still some McGuffey's restaurants around.

Q: Where are they based?

HYDE: They started in Asheville, North Carolina, and there is still a McGuffey's in Asheville. In Tennessee and-

Q: Are there any around-

HYDE: I am no longer associated with McGuffey's.

Q: Any in the Triangle area?

HYDE: No, no.

Q: But you are also a banker, right?

HYDE: Well, as time went on I was finding myself investing in various opportunities and a little bit of real estate. I had a couple of rental houses that I was renting out and just various things that would come my way. In 1987 I was asked to join some associates, some business friends of mine, to start a new bank in Raleigh, North Carolina. So we all invested in this bank that we started and it was called Triangle Bank, and I served on the board of directors. And this bank did well, really, really well. We were slow developing, but eventually we were acquiring other banks, buying up small banks, and we grew until 1998 when we were bought by Centura Bank and as a result also, of course, RBC, Royal Bank of Canada. So that means all of our Triangle stock became Royal Bank of Canada stock and that was a very good break.

Q: My Triangle Bank account became an RBC Centura Bank account.

HYDE: Well, that is right. And we appreciate your business.

Q: Now, you mentioned a couple of minutes ago that you had gone back to work on your masters.

HYDE: Yes, I did.

Q: Did you finish it?

HYDE: No, I did not, unfortunately I did not continue since I changed fields and left social work and counseling and went into business.

Q: I see. You did not think of going and getting an MBA?

HYDE: Well, I thought about it. Actually, I have always really wanted a law degree and just never did do that either; but I was interested in law also.

Q: So what happened to your marriage then?

HYDE: Well, I guess it was one of those midlife crises.

Q: Do you still speak Greek?

HYDE: I still speak some conversational Greek. It has been a long time, over 40 years. But I am always delighted when I run into someone of Greek descent or go into a Greek restaurant and am able to at least say hello and how are you, and a little exchange of informal conversation.

Q: Sure. That is great.

Now, what did you find to be your main challenges in doing business in North Carolina?

HYDE: Well, being a small business owner it is always, I think, a struggle to get started, to get your business on a sound footing, to build your clientele. In ladies' wear, of course, it is all seasonal, so you have got to be adept at choosing the right styles for the coming season, and then of course have to be able to move your merchandise. But to say that there were obstacles, other than the normal retail business, I do not recall that it was anything out of the ordinary. Of course, I made sure to pay my bills on time and I had a loan from the bank to meet and just the long hours; the opening at 10:00 and closing at 9:00, those are long hours.

Q: Yes indeed.

HYDE: And I had some good help, but I was there most of the time.

Q: Was politics a factor in your business dealings?

HYDE: Not at all in my business but I will have to say that politics has been a part of my entire life, from early childhood with my father on through university days and on into the community. As soon as I did return to North Carolina, to Fayetteville, North Carolina, I became instantly active in Democratic Party activities.

Q: Did you get involved in the Vietnam War activities, protests or anything of that kind?

HYDE: Not to a great degree but somewhat. I belonged to an organization called the Young Democrats Club, statewide, and every year we would have a convention and every year we would have a party platform. And I remember that our party platform always included being against the war and wanting to bring our troops home.

Q: Now, can you tell me a little something about when your marriage, your first marriage ended and how you and Wallace got together?

HYDE: Well, my first marriage ended; I did not realize you were going to ask all these personal questions.

Q: People need to get to know you.

HYDE: Well Ed, I have been married three times.

Q: I did not realize that.

HYDE: And my first marriage ended, my divorce was in 1975, I think that was the year. We were separated for about three years before we did get a divorce and then I remarried in 1976 and that marriage lasted eight years. And then it was during that marriage that I moved to Raleigh, North Carolina.

Q: From Fayetteville?

HYDE: From Fayetteville,

Q: Okay.

HYDE: And that was in 1976, and about two years after that was when I sold my shops, my dress shops.

Q: And so when did you and Wallace get married?

HYDE: Wallace and I were married in 1985 and we have been married well over 22 years now.

Q: Wow. You are a real married woman.

When did you first start getting involved with civic groups such as the Triangle World Affairs Council and other groups that you have been involved in?

HYDE: Well, always. I have just always lived a very public life, belonging to a lot of different community organizations, volunteering my time with organizations. When I lived in Fayetteville I was in numerous organizations and most of the time ended up serving as president of the organization.

Q: Not surprising.

HYDE: Then when I moved to Raleigh I said to myself I will never be president of another organization because it takes up too much time and I work too hard at it. So having moved to Raleigh and also becoming involved in different charitable and community organizations, those involved with children and health care and the arts and academics, I have been willing to chair projects that have a beginning and an end, maybe six months to one year beginning and end, but not a tenure as president. I enjoy community activity and I believe it is important. I believe in volunteer work, in trying to give back to the community; I am very serious about that.

Q: Which are the ones that you are currently the most active in?

HYDE: Well, I am not as active as I have been most of my entire life at the moment. I have been active with, as you know, the International Affairs Council and of course the American Diplomacy Journal, and I have also been involved with different children's organizations; the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute; I am active with helping Wake Forest University. I probably should say at this point, I have done- a lot of my community work has been fundraising, helping to raise money for organizations, everything from the arts to charitable groups. And I have been doing fundraising for organizations since, really since the late '70s. And I am involved with helping Wake Forest University to raise money; I do different volunteer events for NC State University and Meredith College.

Q: And Elon.

HYDE: And Elon University, yes.

Q: I remembered your-

HYDE: Well, I served on the board of Elon University, Wake Forest University and Western Carolina University. And I have been with the board of visitors of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Q: Oh yes. But you have also served on the North Carolina International Trade Commission and North Carolina Board of Transportation.

HYDE: Yes. That was back in the mid-'70s and early '80s. I was an appointee of Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor of North Carolina. He appointed me to the Board of Transportation in 1976 and I served eight years, until 1984, which was really a great experience. The Board of Transportation deals with a huge budget of both state and federal funds, and of course decides all transportation needs for the state. It is a board that everybody wants to be on, and so I felt quite honored to be on that board.

Q: What about the International Trade Commission?

HYDE: I was on that, again during the Governor Hunt Administration. It had just started, as I recall, in the early '80s, and I was on that board fairly briefly. I do not recall that I made any international trips with them, but I did host a couple of things here in my home.

Q: What about the North Carolina Global TransPark Authority?

HYDE: I was on that, again during the '80s when it just started. It had just been conceived by the legislature and I was on that board for a limited time. The years escape me a little bit, but perhaps that was the late '80s and I cannot remember exactly why I did not continue on that board, because I cannot remember the timeframe exactly.

Q: Tell me about the Young America's Business Trust.

HYDE: Well, I really feel good about that organization. When I returned from my ambassadorship years in the Caribbean (1994-1998), I was approached by someone with the OAS, the Organization of American States, Roy Thomasson, about starting a new organization that we would name Young America's Business Trust. So I was the founding chair of the Young America's Business Trust and the focus and goal, the purpose of the organization is to help young people of the Caribbean and Latin America, Central America. At that time I was most interested in the Caribbean, having just served there for four years. I found that in the Caribbean countries the young people are well educated; it is a good educational system but then there is no employment available for them, there are no employment opportunities. Sixty percent of the population, at least, is under the age of 30 and mainly unemployed. So the intent of our organization was to introduce them to entrepreneurial opportunities, to help them to understand they could take a small amount of money, \$50, \$100, and start a small business, a little landscape business, maybe a small catering company, and they could do their own business. It seems that in the Caribbean they all had academic ambitions, but it never occurred to them that they could start a small business on their own, build that business if they saw a need, whether maybe it was selling flowers, growing and selling flowers. They thought that only established business people could be in business, and entrepreneurship was a new idea to them. And when I was in Barbados I was somewhat active with Junior Achievement, which did a good job, I thought, in the Caribbean. It was sort of building on that idea.

Q: You were also on the board of the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships.

HYDE: Yes. I continue to be involved on the advisory board. That is a wonderful program, named after, of course, the former general, President Eisenhower. It is a fellowship program and we were fortunate that the Eisenhower Foundation chose the Triangle of North Carolina to have an organization. Every year nominations can be made for a fellowship of young, up and coming leaders, future leaders.

Q: Similar to the Marshall.

HYDE: Yes, similar to that. They have to be nominated and then there is a personal interview. If the person is chosen, he or she goes to a foreign country. All of their expenses are paid to send them to a foreign country of their choice to study a certain business or endeavor in a foreign country that they would like to then bring back to the United States to see if it can be improved upon or introduced to our community. So I enjoyed being a part of that, and a part of the interviews. We have certainly had some outstanding young people who have gone through that program and they have benefited from living and working abroad. Well, actually living abroad and studying certain businesses.

Q: For how long do they live abroad?

HYDE: It is anywhere from one month, six weeks, two months at the most.

Q: How did you get interested in the Raulston Arboretum?

HYDE: Well, upon my return from the Eastern Caribbean almost 10 years ago the Arboretum reached out to me asking me to get involved in their activities. They have a spring fundraising activity that is a garden event. And so I have chaired that event and have been on the committee for that event and have contributed quite a bit to that particular endeavor. And then two years ago they started a wine festival because North Carolina now has a wine industry that is very successful and it is making use of land that is diversifying from tobacco use to producing grapes and a thriving wine industry. So I have been involved with their wine festival at the Arboretum.

And then also at the School of Agriculture, of which the Arboretum is a part I have been involved in and supportive of the 4-H organization.

Q: Now, you are also a member of the board of Wake County Communities and Schools. Tell me about that.

HYDE: I have been, I am a former member. Again, that was- about nine years ago I was approached about being a part of that board. And I was only on that board a couple of years and I have tried to support it, but I found that I just really did not have time to make all the meetings. I did a fundraiser for them here in my home and I continue to support it, but I am not on that board.

Q: I see. You have gotten some very distinguished awards like the International Visitors' Council Citizen of the World Award. That is a great award. And you have gotten the Triangle of World Affairs Council's Distinguished Citizen for Public Service. And YWCA... [end of tape] ...you must have them on a wall somewhere. You have gotten so many of them, so how did it make you feel?

HYDE: Well, I am most honored that these organizations would recognize me with awards and I feel very humble and appreciative.

Q: Well, you also got some awards that came about as a result of your service as ambassador in the Caribbean so we will get to those later. But is there anything else about your early life or your education or your upbringing or your former commercial activities that you would like to talk about?

HYDE: Well, I would just say that I think I have had a life of opportunities and I have tried to take advantage of every opportunity that comes my way. I just believe in never turning down an opportunity. I mean, just go for it. And I have never particularly planned what would come next, but just as things came to me I have tried to take advantage of them and I have had just a wonderful, great life. I have very few regrets in life.

Q: Tell me, did you have any sort of direct relationship with the Clintons during those years?

HYDE: Yes. Having been involved in politics all of my life and back in the '80s I was involved with North Carolina politics on the state level. We invited then Governor Bill Clinton to come and speak to one of our main state events; it is called the Jefferson-Jackson Day event. And he was the speaker and as I recall I was on the committee to make arrangements and to greet him and so forth. And then the same thing happened with Hillary Clinton. This was probably about 1985 that a Democratic women's organization that I belonged to invited Hillary Clinton, who was First Lady of Arkansas, to come and speak at one of our events, and again I got to know her. Also, I have been involved in national politics since the early '80s.

Q: In what way?

HYDE: Well, mainly attending conferences held usually in Washington, DC where often one or the other of the Clintons was speaking. And you know, you do not get to know people well like that, but you do get to know them somewhat and to believe in them and to feel that they have a lot to offer our country. So while they may not have known me that well, I felt that I knew them back from the '80s and then until he decided to run in 1992.

Q: Ah yes.

HYDE: I was part of the 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign due to the fact that my husband and I had become very involved with Senator Al Gore, first in helping him somewhat when he ran for U.S. Senate as he left the House of Representatives and we were part of supporting him. We came to know Al and Tipper Gore, and later when he became the running mate of Bill Clinton in the '92 election I was asked to be one of the co-chairs of the Clinton-Gore campaign here in North Carolina, which I did, and really gave over a year of my life in that campaign.

Q: Did you by any chance ever know Senator Helms?

HYDE: Indeed I do and I am very honored to have had the opportunity to get to know Senator Helms. It is quite an interesting story, if I may indulge myself.

Q: Oh, yes.

HYDE: Well first of all, I would like to say that although I have been a lifelong Democrat, I have the greatest respect for the two party system, I have the greatest respect for Republicans. I believe that Americans should be active in politics, whether through the Republican Party or through the Democratic Party and I believe that with all my heart and I always have. I have always had great respect for Senator Helms even though we were on opposite sides, and I have to tell you that of course I worked against Senator Helms in his elections. I supported his opponents because that is who I was; I was active in the Democratic Party. But it was not out of any disrespect or out of- in any way disliking him; it was just purely political.

So, fast forward a number of elections and years, I find myself having been appointed by the President of the United States to be U.S. ambassador and of course, as you well know, you need the support of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate and you must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Well, of course the highest ranking member of the Foreign Service Committee was Senator Jesse Helms, someone I had worked hard against all of his years in the Senate, since 1972, but not in any personal way, of course, but only in just political terms.

Well, I needed Senator Helms' support and we both were from Raleigh and we both went to the same church; we lived in the same neighborhood, but we really did not know each other. We had nodded to each other at church or we had nodded to each other in some public forum, but did not know each other personally. So as I am going through preparing for the confirmation, working with the State Department, the person at the State Department tells me that they need to make an arrangement for me to meet with Senator Jesse Helms, and that they will accompany me to this meeting. And I said, you know, I am sorry but I have to go alone to that meeting. I said this is my cross to bear and he is my U.S. Senator and I really need to call on him alone.

Well, they were not happy with that, but they did finally agree that I could make the appointment and I could call on Jesse Helms in his office, which I did, and I have never been more nervous in my life. It was more than nervous; I was frightened. I thought here he knows that I have raised money against him when he was running for reelection, that I have always supported his opponents and now here I am calling on him to ask him for his support. I did not know what could happen, what kind of reception I would receive. I remember when I arrived by taxi to his Senate office building I literally was, I think, shaking, I was so nervous. I went in, introduced myself to his receptionist and the receptionist said indeed, Senator Helms is expecting you and led me into his office. Well, the moment I entered his office Senator Helms rose from his chair, I went across the room and put my hand out to greet him and it was like magic; we were like two long lost friends, we were like long lost cousins. It was just an instant identifying with each other. We had mutual friends, but we just did not know each other.

He invited me to sit down. We sat and we talked and talked; we talked, we laughed, we joked at how he was on one side of issues and I was on the other side; how he was Republican and I was a Democrat; how we both lived in Raleigh and both went to the same church and had mutual friends but it was just a wonderful conversation, very warm, very humorous; he could not have been more delightful and the reception could not have been better. He called in a photographer and he said we want our pictures taken. Well, that is the picture I have right there in my office today that I proudly have had on my wall since 1993. I am very proud of that picture.

I was supposed to have had a 30 minute, well, 15 to 30 minute courtesy call. We had been talking for at least 45 minutes when he said look, you have not had lunch. I want you to meet an old friend of mine and we are going to take you to the Senate dining room and have lunch. Well, unbeknownst to him, of course, I had another appointment and it

was with the FBI director, Louis Freeh, following my 30 minute courtesy call with Senator Helms. I have to admit that I made a choice; I just absolutely accepted the invitation to go to lunch with him and his friend, Admiral Nance was the friend's name, and Senator Helms had grown up with Admiral Nance.

But anyway, I did not make a telephone call to the FBI director's office to say I am late, I am sorry; I just did what seemed to be the right thing to do at the moment. So we went, we took the little trolley to the Senate dining room. Senator Helms took me by the hand and introduced me to every Republican senator in that room. He told each and every Republican senator this is my ambassador, this is my North Carolina ambassador and I want you to support her.

Well, I have never felt more humble in my entire life. It was touching, I was honored, and I felt undeserving but I was very much appreciative of Senator Helms. As we finished lunch he asked me if I had ever met Senator Bob Dole and I said no, sir. He said come on. We walked into Senator Dole's office, the receptionist stands up and the receptionist says oh, Senator Helms, I am so sorry but Senator Dole is in consultation with a delegation. And Senator Helms said good. He strode to the senator's door, opened it, unannounced, just opened it and Senator Dole jumps up from his seat, Senator Helms says do not bother, I just want you to meet my ambassador, my North Carolina ambassador, Jeanette Hyde. I shook hands with Senator Dole and Senator Dole was very nice, and Senator Helms said I just want you to support her, we are leaving. So we leave and we left a stunned delegation, by the way; the delegation was shocked that someone had, I guess, more or less intruded on their meeting with Senator Dole.

We went down and we were passing the Senate chamber and he said, have you ever been on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I said no sir; I do not think I have. He said come on. He took me inside, we went down the aisle and we found his- he said this is my desk. Ironically it was on the left side of the aisle, not the right side, the left side. And anyway, we went to his desk and he opened the top of it and I saw some homemade Christmas cards, it was about February of that year, and some homemade Christmas cards from his grandchildren were there. If I may tell you this short story, Senator Helms became very quiet, and he was standing there at his desk, very tall, and I looked at him and he had a faraway look in his eye. And in my mind I questioned well, what is he thinking about, because he was very far away in his thoughts. Then he said to me, the last time that I saw Senator Hubert Humphrey is he came through that door right down there into- on the floor of the chamber. He was so weak and so sick with cancer he could not open the door himself, he had to have help. Hubert Humphrey was there to give his farewell to the U.S. Senate. There was not even standing room left in the Senate and as he gave his farewell speech there was not a dry eye in this chamber. And as Hubert Humphrey left, as he left the floor of the Senate he did not go back out that door he came in; he came up the aisle to go out the back door. He slowly made his way up the aisle and as he got to my desk he stopped, he threw his arms around me and he said, Jesse, I love you.

Well, Senator Helms still had this distant look in his eye and he looked at me and he said, have you ever been to a funeral in Minnesota in, I think it was February, so obviously he

had gone to Hubert Humphrey's funeral. But it was a very touching story and a very touching scene for me as he related this memory of what most people would have thought was his archenemy, but they were good friends and I think indeed they loved each other.

Q: That is a wonderful story. It is so good that you obviously feel very strongly about- I am happy to hear that.

HYDE: As Senator Helms and I left the Senate chamber, we took the trolley back to his office and I profusely thanked him. I thanked him so very much for his hospitable reception, for the conversation, for the support, and I was almost at a loss of words as I stood there to thank him and to say goodbye and I looked at him and I said Senator Helms, I am so grateful to you I wonder if I can go one step further; could I possibly ask you to present me to your Foreign Relations Committee at the hearing of the Foreign Relations Committee? And he looked at me, he said you do not ask me that; I volunteer. Now, that is how magnanimous he is.

Well, indeed he did present me to his committee and if I had written it myself it could never have been any better or more wonderful or more glowing. He spoke to his Foreign Relations Committee and told them that we were poles apart politically, that we probably would not agree on very many issues, but that he knew me, he knew of my work and my activities and that I was not mean spirited, that I did not have a mean bone in my body, and that I would work harder than almost any other U.S. ambassador ever. And I will never forget his support, I will never forget his recommendation and I am most grateful to this very day for Senator Helms's support and for his friendship.

Q: This is really a marvelous story.

Well, today is September 13 and here we are, Ambassador Jeanette Hyde being interviewed by former Foreign Service officer J. Edgar Williams. So we will pick up from where we left off yesterday and yesterday we pretty much covered your early life, your family, your education, your activities in North Carolina, your entrepreneurial, civic, and many other kinds of activities. So today we will try to concentrate on your job as ambassador to seven Caribbean countries.

And the first thing I would like to ask you is how did the idea of your being an ambassador first come up?

HYDE: Well, after the Clinton-Gore campaign and President Clinton and the Vice President were sworn in to office, of course as you know the transition takes place and it is a big transition because there are many, many, many jobs and board positions available with the change, with the transition. So I was asked on several occasions what would I be interested in doing, was there a position in Washington with the U.S. Government that I would be interested in, and I kept saying thank you but no thank you, I am perfectly happy doing what I am doing. I was involved with my business interests here in Raleigh and was not interested in going to Washington, DC for a job. I was honored they asked me, but I was not interested. Several times they had asked me, and asked me to send my

biographical information. Probably from even November until sometime in maybe February or March this conversation went back and forth. One day I received a call from someone in the Clinton Administration asking me would I perhaps be interested in an ambassadorship. Well, that gave me pause because I had not considered it, and so I told that them I would like to think about it, that that would be interesting.

So fast forward, I did indicate an interest and after awhile one day, one morning early, I am reading the newspaper and having a cup of early coffee and the telephone rings and it is President Bill Clinton asking me if I would consider an ambassadorship and he was looking at the Eastern Caribbean countries of our U.S. embassy based in Barbados. And again, I was really sort of taken aback and so I thanked him profusely and asked him could I discuss it with my husband and give it some thought because I took it very seriously and would call back. And he said indeed, that he could understand that. So anyway, later in the day I did call and accept the appointment so the process started from there.

Q: Oh, very interesting. So this was the only country or series of countries that was mentioned?

HYDE: That is right. They decided. But when they had- I will back up a little bit. When they had asked me to go ahead and send my biographical information they did- after I had already said yes, I would consider it, I indicated that I spoke French and Greek, and that perhaps if there was a country that involved either one of those two languages that it might be appropriate and interesting for me. But when the president actually made the telephone call it was with the appointment to Barbados. And at that time the U.S. embassy in Barbados covered four countries, including Barbados. Later it was changed, which I will tell you about.

Q: Well, could you just tell me now the seven countries that you were ambassador to?

HYDE: Well, first of all, as I went through the confirmation process I would like to mention that I spent several months, almost up to eight months in DC working with the State Department, on my own but going into the office which they provided for me every day at the Caribbean desk, and I read files, they set up appointments for me with all of the agency heads of the agencies that were posted at my U.S. embassy in Barbados. So during that time I met with the head of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the head of the U.S. Coast Guard; I met with military personnel, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and the Commerce Department, Labor Department, and it was a great education for me to find out from each one of them what their mission was in the Eastern Caribbean.

Now, at that time the U.S. embassy was for four countries, which included Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Barbados. I went through the confirmation process and actually arrived in Barbados in April, early April of 1994. Shortly after I arrived in Barbados, having been confirmed to be the U.S. ambassador to four countries, the four I just mentioned, I was informed that our government wanted to close the U.S. embassy located

in Antigua, that served Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis. This was a time of budget deficit reduction on the part of the Clinton-Gore Administration. They wanted to reinvent government, to make government smaller and in doing so they had decided that the U.S. embassy in Barbados could take on Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis.

So of course it fell to me to inform the government, meet with the government on many occasions and to make the rather complex arrangements for the closure of our U.S. embassy in Antigua. It was a delicate matter because it meant a loss of prestige, it hurt the economy in Antigua to not have a U.S. embassy with personnel and an ambassador there, so there were many ramifications that were very unfavorable to Antigua, but I assured them that the U.S. Government was going to continue to be in close contact, that I would do my best for them not to know the difference, that there was a U.S. ambassador in Antigua, and of course in St. Kitts and Nevis it was the same thing. But that was one of the first things and that gave me six countries, and of course the U.S. Senate had to go through the confirmation process again to confirm me for those two extra countries.

Then later, probably a good year and a half later, I was asked to close the U.S. embassy in Grenada. And of course it was the same delicate situation because Grenada did not want to lose the U.S. embassy and its personnel and its ambassador, but I was able to again assure them that the U.S. Government considered them important, an important ally, and wanted to continue working closely with the government of Grenada and while also honoring our past history, because it had only been a few years since the U.S. had intervened in Grenada when Cuba had become involved in Grenada.

Q: I was just curious about whether there were still, at the time you were there, whether there were still any sort of feelings or repercussions resulting from our retaking Grenada from the Cubans and their allies.

HYDE: Well, it was a fresh memory to them and very much so, and they talked about it, we discussed it, but for the main part they were grateful to the U.S. Government for its intervention. They had become a stable democracy. They had moved on and had advanced in their development and there was really no indication in their government or their society that this had taken place a few short years prior.

Q: Another thing I am curious about is the- from the political status of these countries that had only recently been just British colonies and some of them had- I thought some of them had gone to the level of being what they used to call a self-governing colony and others had become independent. But what was the overall status for each of these within the British Commonwealth?

HYDE: Well, the seven countries had all been former British colonies. However, they had varying histories. Barbados had always been under British rule. From the 1600s on there had been British rule maintained in Barbados. Now, St. Lucia on the other hand had changed hands 13 times between the French, Spanish and British. So there was a varied history there because of several different countries having ruled St. Lucia at one time or another, but their most recent history was that they were British colonies and the same for

the other countries. And it made for an interesting population and society in these countries. But they all had become independent starting in the mid 1960s when they achieved their independence from Great Britain.

Q: Full independence?

HYDE: Full independence. And they were fully functioning democracies with democratic rule, a parliamentary style government with the prime minister and of course a governor general appointed still by the Queen of England because they continued to be Commonwealth countries.

Q: All of them?

HYDE: All except Dominica. I think I am correct in saying that. It was a republic, rather than having a governor general.

Q: Did you find that there were any differences in the way that you dealt or had to deal with each of these countries?

HYDE: Yes. They were all different in many ways, a lot because of their histories, and even their accents; they all spoke English but it was with a British accent or something close to that, so there was a distinct difference in each of these countries.

But I would like to say that they are strong democracies and they have been strong allies of the United States. All during the Cold War our country could depend on them to be, except of course for the Grenada incident, allies of the United States.

Q: What were the main problems that you found in dealing with these countries? Were there any problems involving all the countries or did each country have its own problems?

HYDE: Each country definitely had its unique set of situations and problems. They all had a separate relationship with the United States Government and they do not always agree on issues.

Q: Could you give me an example of that?

HYDE: Well, one example would be shortly after my arrival taking my post in Barbados when the United States Government decided to intervene in Haiti, Haiti being a Caribbean neighbor of course, and the Caribbean countries were expected to not support this effort. And the State Department had indeed told me that they did not think I would be able to get my Caribbean countries to support our U.N. resolution approving of the United States' intervention in Haiti. So, of course that was a challenge that I took upon myself, and I called on the individual countries, dealt with them, of course, separately and tried to convince them that it was in their self interest, as well as in the interest of Haiti and the United States, that we restore law and order to Haiti. And it took some doing, and

just because one country might agree to it did not mean that another one of those Caribbean countries would agree. One or two of the countries agreed to take refugees and would allow a refugee camp for Haitians to come ashore, to live in their country; other Caribbean countries would not agree to that. So, as I recall, Antigua agreed to it and I believe it was Grenada agreed to it, but Barbados would not consider letting refugees come on to the island and be set up in a camp.

Q: Barbados, I believe, I have heard has a higher standard of living than most of the other countries there.

HYDE: Barbados is more advanced and has a higher level of development than the other Caribbean countries.

Q: I wonder if this has anything to do with- I believe it used to be sort of a, not exactly a prison colony, not like in New South Wales but that they used to send a lot of Scots and English down there who needed to be sent somewhere, back in the maybe 17th, 18th Centuries.

HYDE: Well, it is very interesting. The settlers, even going back farther than that, as the Americas were discovered, which included, of course, the islands and North and South America, settlers looking for their good fortune migrated from England, Ireland, Scotland, to Barbados because of the sugar cane farming opportunity. Sugar cane was king; it was a cash crop, it was in demand in the world as we knew it then and so to seek their good fortune settlers left Great Britain to come to Barbados. As Barbados became fairly full of plantations and people, then of course they sought their good fortune further west and eventually made their way to Charleston, South Carolina. And they settled Charleston and then started creating plantations there. And then these same people moved on up the coast into Wilmington, North Carolina. But it is very interesting, the first eight governors of South Carolina were Barbadian or of Barbadian descent.

Q: Really.

HYDE: Yes.

Q: I never knew that. It is amazing, the things you find out.

What is the ethnic mixture there now? Is there a lot of English and Scottish blood among the people?

HYDE: Yes. The planter society descendents remain on the island and of course the sugar cane is no longer the cash crop that it used to be, although they do still grow sugar cane but it accounts only for about 10 or 15 percent of their gross domestic income. There is still an English descendent business community there, but 95 percent of Barbados is of African descent because the sugar cane industry in the beginning was slaves, of course, who were brought from Africa. The first stopping point, the first place

to land, was in Barbados and then they moved on up the island chain, eventually into Antigua.

Q: I am curious about the relationship between your countries, especially Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago.

HYDE: Well, they are neighboring Caribbean countries. Trinidad and Tobago are, of course, based on the oil and gas industry. They are not a beach environment and really do not attract as many tourists to their beaches as Barbados and the other six countries along the Eastern Caribbean. But they of course are on very good terms, and they are part of CARICOM, a common market that the Caribbean countries have.

Q: Oh, that is interesting.

HYDE: Yes. There was a brief federation but it was not considered successful. The governments, the peoples of the islands were not satisfied with having a West Indies Federation, and each became an independent governing country. And then later in the 20th Century they did form a common market where they- well, for the most part they have a common money.

Q: A unit, a monetary unit?

HYDE: Yes.

Q: What would that be, a dollar or a pound or the Euro or something?

HYDE: Well, they have an Eastern Caribbean money, the dollar, except for Barbados. Barbados has its own monetary system.

Q: Did this CARICOM happen while you were there? [Begin tape two, side one]

HYDE: It has been successful. They share, as I mentioned, a common currency, except for Barbados. Now, it does still have the Barbados dollar. And they share security forces. They have a regional security force that is based in Barbados, but it is made up of the seven Caribbean countries and they have a common Coast Guard and military. And that regional defense force of the Eastern Caribbean works very closely with our U.S. military. And our U.S. military often goes to the Eastern Caribbean countries. They deploy and carry out exercises and work with the regional defense forces. It has been a very good relationship.

Q: How about the politics of these different countries. Are they all sort of one tendency or ideology or do they have different sort of leftist, rightist, whatever you want to call them? How would you describe them?

HYDE: They are completely different. They are very individual, independent countries and yes, there are some more conservative, some more liberal, but they are very

democratic. They have free and fair elections and a free press. They enjoy all of the elements of democracy that we do in the United States. I was very impressed with their governments.

Q: What about their views towards the United States? Is this sort of an individual country thing or is there a sort of generally held view of the United States?

HYDE: Well, generally they have as many views as there are countries. Around the world, especially small countries have a little bit of a love-hate relationship, mostly they love us and they admire us and they want to come and shop in the United States, they like to migrate to the United States and they like that there is a close relationship with the American people and the American government. But, at the same time, they are very aware that they are small countries, they are dots on the map and that they live in the shadow of a great, big, elephant-size nation, the most powerful nation in the world, and they are very aware of that. And that is why I call it a little bit of a love-hate. And the only time that this was in evidence was really when I would be asking them to enter into agreements, enter into treaties with the United States Government, and I really was very involved in many agreements and treaties between our country and their countries. They were aware that, well, just because the United States is so powerful and big, they did not want to appear as if they were always doing our bidding and that they would automatically agree to what we would ask them to enter into an agreement upon.

Q: Now, these treaties, I believe I heard something about drug smuggling and that kind of thing. Does this have anything to do with the treaties you talk about?

HYDE: Yes indeed. That was one of the first major treaties. As I mentioned, I had the U.S. Coast Guard on my staff, which made up part of my country team, and there was a contingent posted there in the U.S. embassy. And a few short months after taking up my post the U.S. Coast Guard met with me to talk with me about the problems of drugs moving from South America, mainly from Colombia, moving through the islands, using the islands as stepping stones to get drugs into the United States through Puerto Rico, into Florida, into New York, and also drugs that flowed to Europe. And they had engaged the Eastern Caribbean countries for many years in wanting them to enter into an agreement whereby our U.S. Coast Guard could apprehend and enter into what is called "hot pursuit" of drug boats and drug airplanes moving from Colombia or Venezuela and going through the islands one by one. There was a fear that these countries would become narco-governments, narco-states because of the power of the money of the big drug smugglers. They used fast boats, they used fast planes and it was easy to pay off a port official, a policeman, to look the other way as drugs would be moved through the islands, making their way up the island chain into Puerto Rico, into the United States. So it was in our self-interest, the self-interest of the United States, that these countries work with our U.S. Coast Guard, allow our U.S. Coast Guard to enter territorial waters in hot pursuit of a drug boat. And it was a sovereignty issue; the small countries felt that this was an invasion- an intrusion on their sovereignty for our Coast Guard to be able to just go into their territorial waters, to go into their territorial airspace.

So I asked the Coast Guard to give me the draft language of a treaty that we would ask these countries to sign, and they did. So I went from island to island selling the idea of entering into a cooperative relationship with our U.S. Coast Guard, and of course there would be proper protocol and formalities, legal formalities that would control our U.S. Coast Guard intruding upon their sovereignty. It was very delicate, very sensitive and two or three of the countries could see it was in their self-interest to keep the drug boats and planes from using their countries; other countries felt that sovereignty was the larger issue. So it took me almost all of the four years to finally get all seven treaties signed.

Q: Which were the most difficult ones to get to sign?

HYDE: Barbados was the most difficult, oddly enough, because we had a wonderful relationship with Barbados but because they are more advanced and larger they felt the sovereignty issue more acutely. They were the last ones to sign it.

Q: And the other difficult ones?

HYDE: Well, St. Vincent was one of the later ones, too. Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis sort of one by one I was able to help them realize that it was in their self-interest. We had the platform, we had the ability and actually they would use our platform, our boats and our planes. Although our U.S. Coast Guard is monitoring Caribbean waters and airspace, they cannot enter into another country's airspace or territorial waters without permission. They cannot execute law enforcement activities. So the treaty addressed the fact that our boats and our U.S. Coast Guard planes and boats would radio ahead while still in hot pursuit. The Caribbean country would fly out or bring a boat out to join our Coast Guard, and while we had the boats, the sophistication, and the technology they actually had the law enforcement power to apprehend, to go aboard, to arrest and to execute the law enforcement.

Q: Sounds as though this was an extremely useful thing that you did there.

HYDE: Well, it was very important and no other countries were doing it. Within two or three years Trinidad came on board, Jamaica was -- I am not sure Jamaica has signed it -- but when I left in 1998 Jamaica still had not signed the drug agreement, but some of the other Caribbean countries had come on board.

Q: What do these countries think of globalization in general and things like the North American common market, or whatever you want to call it; what do they think of that?

HYDE: Well, they would like very much to be a part of NAFTA, of the North America Free Trade Agreement. They would like to be a part of it. And they would like to have a close relationship with the United States; they want to work with the United States and they know it is to their advantage to do so.

Q: Let me ask you a little bit about the way you ran your embassy there. Did you, first of all, did you get to choose your deputy chief of mission?

HYDE: No, I did not. The deputy, if you do not mind I will call him the DCM, the DCM was there and had been the chargé there for about a year and a half in the absence of an ambassador prior to my getting there, and he remained for a little over a year after I came. And there was, I think, a transition for him to have been chargé and then a new ambassador arrived. I thought a great deal of him and he was very good and he helped me very much.

Q: So your next DCM, did you choose him?

HYDE: I was able to choose the next DCM.

Q: He was a career man?

HYDE: He was a career FSO and came from The Hague; he had been at The Hague and was highly recommended and I interviewed him and hired him.

Q: Did you handle most of the administration yourself or did you delegate that to your DCM? I mean the internal workings of the embassy.

HYDE: Well, a lot of the internal issues regarding personnel problems, housing problems, it would go to the DCM first and then if necessary he would involve me in it. And there were certain circumstances that I would be involved in. Housing was a little bit of a problem; people had their congressionally mandated space and size of housing that they had to adjust to and so problems would arise. Often I was involved, but I asked him to take care of the internal problems.

Q: At the embassy did you have representatives of AID, USIS (United States Information Service)?

HYDE: I did.

Q: Did you have Peace Corps?

HYDE: We had Peace Corps, but Peace Corps was not located within the embassy. The headquarters for Peace Corps was in St. Lucia and I called on the Peace Corps frequently when I was in St. Lucia. And also we had Peace Corps stationed in Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and Grenada and I made sure that at least once or twice a year I would meet with those Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: You would go there yourself?

HYDE: I would. I met frequently with Peace Corps headquarters in St. Lucia, but I also visited the volunteers themselves out in the other islands. I appreciated them and they seemed to appreciate having the opportunity to sit down and talk with me, and relate to

me what their jobs were and how they felt about the countries and how they were enjoying their experience.

Q: And how often did you visit each of these other nations?

HYDE: The business of issues with the seven countries mandated that I was in each one of these countries at least once a month. There was a great deal of travel. My travel was by commercial airline, a small commercial airline with old planes.

Q: They did not give you your own plane?

HYDE: No sir, no sir. I think maybe years past that had been the case. I would occasionally be able to hitch a ride on a drug enforcement plane, military plane, a Coast Guard plane, especially if I was dealing with agreements and treaties that were about to be signed. Especially for the signing ceremony, the Coast Guard would accommodate me with a plane or the military.

Q: And did you send members of your staff out on frequent visits to these other countries?

HYDE: Yes, they were in those countries as well as accompanying me when I went. They did have times when they went separately, but often they would combine their visits with my visit.

Q: Did you hold frequent country team meetings and get advice and counsel from them?

HYDE: Absolutely. I valued my country team meetings and the country team itself. We met once a week. I had a staff meeting on Tuesdays and my country team met on Thursdays, which overlapped, of course, somewhat. But no, I felt that we functioned very well with a country team model and I found it very informative. We were able to bond and to work together closely on issues. They shared information, I shared information and I felt that it was an ideal situation.

One thing I will mention is that, prior to my leaving Washington, the State Department had informed me on more than one occasion that there had been low morale at the U.S. embassy in Barbados for years, for really decades, and I took it upon myself to try to turn around the low morale situation. I worked very hard at that by involving everyone in the issues, keeping them informed, letting them know that they were the professionals; I was aware of being an appointed ambassador, that they were the professional career officers and I depended on them. I delegated, and consequently I was able to build a very positive relationship with my staff. It took a little while and it did not happen immediately, it took months, several months. And also as part of that effort I would have my staff out to the residence and sometimes it would be purely social to have them out, other times we would have meetings at the residence with refreshments. But over the four years I was there I felt that I had a very well functioning, bonded staff and country team that I appreciated very much.

Q: Sounds as though you came away with a favorable view of the Foreign Service.

HYDE: Oh, indeed, indeed. I went out with a favorable view, and it only was enhanced by my years at the U.S. embassy. I was very much impressed by and appreciate the American Foreign Service. I recommend it to young people today. I speak to young groups, to groups, you know, when they are finishing high school or early college and I recommend the American Foreign Service to them.

Q: On your relationship with the Department of State, I think probably things have changed since I was in the Service now that there is e-mail and the Internet. Did you have frequent exchanges yourself with somebody in the Department of State in Washington, your desk officers? You had, what; did you have one desk officer or seven different desk officers?

HYDE: I had one desk officer.

Q: So did you go back and forth with the desk officer or with the deputy assistant secretary or an assistant secretary or someone?

HYDE: Yes, I did. Before we talk about that, I would like to just go back about the low morale situation at the embassy and I would like to just conclude that issue by saying that by the time of my departure morale was very high. People were choosing to come to Barbados, they were asking to be posted to Barbados, contrary to what it had been for many, many years of people coming and cutting their assignment short and not want to stay the three years, because people were not happy. I do not know if it was because of an island atmosphere or whether they thought that this was not good for their careers, but when I went to take up the post I had met with all of the agencies in Washington and I went with a determination that we would address the issues and that we would be a high performing, hard working U.S. embassy that would serve U.S. interests abroad. And really the treaties and the agreements that we were able to take care of, not just the drug agreements addressing territorial waters, but also the drug agreements addressing airspace so our U.S. Coast Guard and DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) planes could go into these countries' airspace. Also there were trade agreements, and a mutual legal assistance treaty, it was not just an agreement it was a treaty whereby our governments would work together on white collar crime, money laundering, alien smuggling and so forth. The Justice Department had wanted me to address that issue and the Justice Department was very pleased when I was able to get those countries to enter into the Mutual Assistance Treaty.

Q: So your islands would not become Cayman Islands, huh?

HYDE: No sir. No, that is very true.

Q: Your relationship then with the Department of State, directly between you and the Department of State while you were there, how did that work?

HYDE: Yes, you were asking about the desk officer. Do you know, I did not have daily or really very frequent contact. There were occasions when the desk officer and I spoke but I had the daily cable traffic, of course, that I read and I read everything that crossed my desk. And of course traveling to six other countries as frequently as I did my desk would pile up and it would take me long hours; I seldom left my office in the evenings until 6:30 unless there was something that mandated my presence at a diplomatic reception or so forth. But I worked long hours, 6:30, 7:00 and after.

Q: Tell me, did the Department of State usually follow your recommendations on policy matters?

HYDE: Yes, for the main part they did, and of course I followed their recommendations at the same time.

Q: These recommendations, did they sometimes conflict?

HYDE: No, I do not recall that there was a lot of conflict. There were maybe a few occasions where I would give a contrary view, but most of the time our relationship was very, very good. I feel that we kept them very informed and they kept us very informed and for the most part that was not a problem.

Q: Did you have a lot of congressional visits?

HYDE: We did. We had congressional delegations from time to time. We had military visits. I remember General Wes Clark when he was head of SOUTHCOM visited to meet with the Eastern Caribbean Defense Force and we had about three full days of meetings and receptions. U.S. Coast Guard visited on several occasions. And yes, members of Congress came to the Caribbean.

Q: Were there many U.S. citizens living on your islands, I mean, non-official citizens, business or etc.?

HYDE: Yes. There were quite a few American ex-pats that were living in all of the countries. Quite a few in Grenada, quite a few in Antigua, a lot in Barbados and actually all of the countries.

Q: Was it that university in Grenada that was part of the controversy back in '83 or '84, is that still operating?

HYDE: Yes. That American medical school there, I cannot remember the name of it at this moment, but it is still there and has grown, and I called on the university, met with university officials several times when I was in Grenada. It is a fine school and has added a BA program. So it has grown and expanded, but it is still a medical school.

Q: And while you were in the area did you go around, you probably did not have much time, but did you go around and visit the former French colonies and Dutch colonies in the Caribbean?

HYDE: Not really. And actually I did not have the time. Now, as I mentioned to you, we were in a time of budget deficit reduction and the administration was reinventing government, so in addition to closing the U.S. embassy in Antigua that served two countries and closing the U.S. embassy in Grenada that served that one country I was asked to close the U.S. consulate located in Martinique, the French island of Martinique. We had had a consular office there that served about five countries and of course each time one of these entities was closed it meant that my embassy took on the additional work. So we were truly doing more with less, which did not make me terribly popular. We were taking on all of the extra countries and responsibilities, but we did it. And we also had to cut personnel a little, especially our foreign nationals, a few positions, and I was sorry for that, but it was mandated. So I was on Martinique, the island of Martinique, but I did not have time to visit for the sake of visiting other nearby islands. Now, I did attend sometimes some joint conferences in Trinidad. So I was down to Trinidad on at least three occasions for Caribbean conferences.

I did speak occasionally with the ambassadors, the U.S. ambassador in Jamaica, the U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas, and the U.S. ambassador in Trinidad and Tobago. We would confer from time to time on issues.

Q: Confer in person or by?

HYDE: By telephone.

Q: By telephone.

Do you still today maintain contact with people that you either were officially associated with down in those countries or that you had friendships with?

HYDE: I continue to maintain some friendships with friends in Barbados in particular.

Q: What do you feel were the most important things you did? I assume the treaties would be high up there, but what are the other more important actions that you took while you were down there?

HYDE: Well, I think the first important matter was really gaining the agreement for the seven countries to approve U.S. intervention in Haiti, as I mentioned before. That was the first sort of challenge. And I think that my political skills, my past public life really helped me to get those countries to join our effort. They even committed small defense forces to Haiti, and they also provided some interpreters.

Q: You are thinking of Cajun.

HYDE: Yes. Some of the countries, especially St. Lucia, speak the Creole language and they provided interpreters for our military, for the Creole language in Haiti. So that was the number one most important thing, getting them onboard with us to go into a neighboring Caribbean country.

Number two was the drug agreements. And like I said, that took four years; Barbados was the last one to sign. The other was the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty that I mentioned that addressed white collar crime, money laundering and so forth. That was a rather difficult one because the countries each had something different that they wanted to have in those agreements, and I was working closely not only with the prime ministers, but the attorney generals to get that language whereby it would mutually address certain crimes occurring in their countries by Americans, but it was in all our best interests that that treaty be signed.

And then there were trade agreements-

Q: Tell me about trade agreements.

HYDE: Well, for one, Conoco Oil wanted to enter into an agreement with and wanted to have a contract with Barbados, the government of Barbados, to do some offshore drilling for oil. There is very much a thought that oil is offshore of Barbados. Now, it has not been successful to this point, but that was a rather sensitive agreement. The contract was signed and Conoco had 10 years to do exploration and to my knowledge- it has been about 12 years, and to my knowledge they have not found oil but they are still looking.

Q: Have they drilled?

HYDE: They have done some exploratory drilling. But because, you know, Venezuela has oil and Trinidad has oil and you know, Barbados is just north of those countries.

Q: Was there anything that you felt that you wanted to accomplish but somehow failed to accomplish?

HYDE: No. I really overall feel that all of my work, my efforts were successful. We had military agreements whereby our defense forces worked together and really, probably I guess the most important event was that I was able to convince President Bill Clinton to come to Barbados to meet with 15 Caribbean countries in a U.S.-Caribbean summit. I am very grateful to the president for committing to do this. And the way that came about is that each year as I returned to Washington, DC for consultations I would call upon the president and the vice president of the United States, as well as Senator Jesse Helms in our U.S. Senate. Those were three of my main visits other than, of course, being at the State Department. And as I would have my 15 minute meeting with the president I would always end my meeting by saying Mr. President, there has never been a U.S. president to conduct official business, in a Caribbean country. Now, the reason I emphasized official is that Ronald Reagan did go to Barbados while he was president to visit his good friend Claudette Colbert, who lived and had an estate in Barbados. But for a president to come

on an official visit and hold a summit with 15 Caribbean countries had not ever occurred in the history of our relationship with the Caribbean. And the first time I had my consultations I made the invitation and he just sort of looked at me as if that was probably not going to be a priority. The second year I issued the same invitation and I got the same impression, that it was not going to be a priority. The third year I made the same invitation and he looked me in the eye and he said, if I am reelected president in November of 1996 I will come to Barbados. Well, as it happened he was reelected in November of '96 and in May of 1997 the president, the first lady, the secretary of state, the head of the air force, military officials, well over 250 to 300 members of the media came to Barbados for a U.S.-Caribbean summit with 15 Caribbean countries. Barbados had a great convention center that accommodated this large gathering and it was a very, very successful summit and ended with memoranda of understandings and settling some issues that continue to be helpful today.

Q: Sounds like you really did a great thing for U.S.-Caribbean relations or many great things, I should say.

HYDE: Well, it was very positive and the Caribbean countries very much appreciated it and I think our U.S. officials, the president and the first lady and our secretary of state enjoyed it also. The president actually was there from, I think, if I am recalling correctly, from something like Thursday evening until Monday morning. It was Mother's Day weekend and we had a very beautiful large estate where arrangements had been made for them to stay and so they spent Mother's Day there. On that Sunday morning I received this crisis telephone call that the president of the United States needed a Mother's Day present for Hillary, and would I please see to it that a wrapped Mother's Day present was delivered to that estate where the president and the first lady were staying. So, of course everything is closed, stores are closed in Barbados on Sunday completely, there is nothing open, and so I commenced to look around my residence to find an appropriate Mother's Day gift that I thought Hillary would like. I had purchased a fairly large and beautiful piece of pottery, of local pottery, and I thought well, I believe she would like this and it would be a good memory of Barbados. And so I had that wrapped, boxed and wrapped and delivered to the president to give to the first lady for Mother's Day.

Q: What a great idea.

Well, I have gotten to the end of the questions that I was going to ask you and was just wondering if there is anything else that perhaps we have not talked about that you would care to mention.

HYDE: Well, overall I would like to say that it was a very productive, busy, enjoyable four years. When I arrived in Barbados I knew that my appointment was for a limited time; I had no idea if it was one year, two years, three years or four years but I went there with a determination that I would give it 1,000 percent and I would make a difference. I worked hard to create a relationship with the people of those islands. If I was invited to schools to speak to classes I did. If I was invited to speak with the Lions Club, the Chambers of Commerce, with the Rotary Clubs or to participate in any activities of those

countries, especially with Barbados since I resided there, I really wanted the people to be aware of the American presence and our friendship for those countries. And I am pleased to say that I did have a very, very good relationship with the people, and I did that to the extent that I could in all seven of the countries. I went to their independence days; of course, you know that means I went to seven independence day ceremonies and parades and activities per year so that meant over a four year period that was about 28 independence day celebrations. But I worked hard at the relationship and I have a great appreciation for the governments and the officials, the elected officials of those countries.

I think my success in being able to obtain the cooperation of the officials and the governments of each country was the fact that having been a politician myself, you know in a support way, I never ran for public office myself, never wanted to, but I understood that an elected prime minister or attorney general or any of the officials that were elected by their people, that they had to answer to their people, they had a responsibility to be able to justify their actions to the people, the electorate. And so therefore I did not go out to visit a prime minister or government with the idea that well, we are the big United States and this is what we want and we expect you to do it. I went out with the attitude that this is something that would be meaningful to the United States, but we wanted it to be meaningful to their country also, that it would be a mutual interest. And based upon the understanding that they had to be responsive to the electorate when election time came, and that sometimes they could not always do exactly what we wanted, but we were able to do some compromising that met U.S. interests as well as theirs.

There were elections while I was there so I ended up working with about 12 or so different prime ministers over a four year period.

One thing that I have not mentioned, Ed, also is the closure of our U.S. naval base in Antigua. After having closed the U.S. embassy there shortly after my arrival in the Eastern Caribbean, 18 months to two years later I was asked to be a part of working with the government of Antigua in closing our U.S. navy base there. And this was rather painful for Antigua, because it really did affect the economy of Antigua, losing the personnel and the other economic impact that withdrawal, closure, of a navy base does. And that one was quite difficult because of course we had the responsibility to leave the entire territory that we had occupied for many years in good condition. That was somewhat difficult, but we were able to do it and still maintain the friendship and cooperation of Antigua.

Q: I just thought of one more thing, and that is, what do these countries think about their relationship with Central America and South America as opposed to their relationship with the United States? Or, not as opposed to but in comparison with.

HYDE: Their relationship with the United States is much more of a priority to them. Barbados was the location for other embassies and so the governments of Brazil, Cuba, Canada, the EU, Great Britain, the United Nations, all had embassies or headquarters in Barbados that covered all seven countries, as our U.S. embassy covered the seven countries. So there was some relationship with Brazil and Venezuela and other countries,

but the United States was by far the primary country. One dollar of every two dollars that Barbados spends, at least 50 percent, is spent on U.S. goods, services and goods. We have American corporations headquartered in Barbados. We have banks, we have accounting firms and insurance companies that are headquartered in Barbados.

Q: What I was thinking about was that many people look at the Caribbean and the Caribbean countries as sort of part of Latin America but it certainly sounds as though, from what you say, that they do not consider themselves part of Latin America. Am I right?

HYDE: They do not, no, they do not. They feel closer to the United States, Great Britain and Canada. That is my opinion, of course.

Q: Well, that seems to be about it unless you have some closing remark.

HYDE: Well, I think there is probably much that I can add, but at the moment I am not recalling. I would like to say that I do have great appreciation for those countries. They are small; their economy of scale is very limited, but they have a highly developed educational system and they are producing students that, when they take our SAT tests, score very high. It is not unusual for a student from Barbados, and from the other countries too, to score 1,400 and 1,500 on their SAT. And I was proud that I was able to help a student, almost every year I was there, to attend West Point. West Point allows, I think it is something like 21 foreign students per year and I was working with our military that was posted there to the embassy. We were able to identify a Caribbean student that would qualify for one of those foreign slots, with a scholarship to go to West Point. So they have good educational systems, they have good values, community and family values; they are churchgoing communities. In Barbados it is mainly the Anglican Church and some of the other countries were more of a Catholic population, but they are very family and community oriented and all value getting an education. It is the British system of education and it serves them well.

Q: Do you anticipate that at some point in the future you might be asked to take another ambassadorial assignment?

HYDE: No. I do not expect that. I believe that being appointed U.S. ambassador is one of the greatest privileges that an American could ever have. I believe that it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I think that as a new president is elected that there are young people, younger people that have come up and have served that president and that that is more appropriate. I do not believe there are very many appointed ambassadors that are ever appointed a second time. I would not expect it.

Q: Well Jeanette, this has been an extremely interesting conversation and you are an extremely interesting person and I thank you.

HYDE: Well, you are kind. I feel that there is probably so much I am forgetting about.

Q: I will just say thank you, thank you very much.

HYDE: Well, and I would just like to say that it was a great privilege and I am most honored to have had that privilege.

End of interview