

BARBADOS

COUNTRY READER TABLE OF CONTENTS

Richard W. Teare	1960-1962	General Officer, Bridgetown
Gerald B. Helman	1962-1963	Economic/Commercial Officer, Bridgetown
Robert B. Morely	1965-1967	Consular Officer, Bridgetown
Eileen R. Donovan	1960-1965 1965-1969 1969-1974	Consul General, Bridgetown Assistant Director, Office of Caribbean Affairs, Washington, DC Ambassador, Barbados
Thomas Macklin, Jr.	1970-1972	Political Officer, Bridgetown
Peter P. Lord	1970-1974	Deputy Chief of Mission, Bridgetown
Edward M. Featherstone	1973-1976	Economic Officer, Bridgetown
Theodore R. Britton, Jr.	1974-1977	Ambassador, Barbados and Grenada
Johnny Young	1977-1979	Administrative Officer, Georgetown
Donald A. Camp	1979-1981	Political Officer, Bridgetown
Nicolas Robertson	1980-1981	Assistant Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Bridgetown
E. Ashley Wills	1980-1983	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Bridgetown
Anthony Kern	1981-1983	Regional Labor Attaché, Bridgetown
George A. McFarland, Jr.	1983-1985	Deputy Chief of Mission/Chargé d'Affaires, Antigua, Virgin Islands
Thomas H. Anderson	1984-1986	Ambassador, Barbados
Paul A. Russo	1986-1988	Ambassador, Barbados
Nadia Tongour	1988-1991	Political Officer, Bridgetown
G. Philip Hughes	1990-1993	Ambassador, Barbados

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1991-1995

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RICHARD W. TEARE
General Officer
Bridgetown (1960-1962)

Richard W. Teare was born in Ohio in 1937. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1948. His career includes positions in Barbados, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, New Zealand, and Australia. Mr. Teare was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July 1998.

Q: So you were in Barbados from '59?

TEARE: It was 1960, February, by the time I got there. I was by then 23 years old and I stayed until July of 1962.

Q: What was the situation in Barbados in those days?

TEARE: It was a British colony. In fact it prided itself on having the oldest parliament in the Western Hemisphere. It had been settled in the 1620s, I think. It was a member of the prospective West Indies Federation.

Q: You might explain what that was.

TEARE: Yes. This was a promotion really by the British to try to get most of the Caribbean colonies into a single unit and to shove them off into independence sooner rather than later. The winds of change I think had already started to blow there. They came along shortly afterwards in Africa. There was a large body of educated people although the islands were essentially rather poor and some of them had internal self- government with elected parliaments and premiers. I think the British thought they were ready and furthermore could be governed by themselves as a unit; that is they could govern themselves but in a Federation format. I think this was rather naïve on the part of the British. I think they didn't fully appreciate the local pride, local animosities, and self-interest of several of the entities. Also there were big disparities in size. Jamaica had I think three million people. Barbados had only one quarter of a million. Some of the smaller islands had not even a hundred thousand people.

There were inevitable jealousies. Trinidad was a fairly distant second to Jamaica but it was important nevertheless. Trinidad resented Jamaica and Barbados and the smaller ones resented the two bigger ones. They had a Federal Prime Minister by that time and he was a Barbadian, Sir Grantley Adams, and he was really the grand old man of politics there, the equivalent of Nkrumah in Ghana or Eric Williams in Trinidad. He was older than Williams. Of course, having

a Barbadian as a prime minister meant you didn't have to give it to either Trinidad or Jamaica, compromise and so forth.

There was a federal senate that had representation from each of the islands, equal representation, and there already was a Lower House, I guess, that was weighted in proportion to population. But the whole thing was really imposed from outside, or encouraged from outside. There was never any ground swell of support locally for it because each of the islands kept its own government going and that is where the intense, active political life was. No one got excited about the doings of the federal government in Port of Spain, not even the feds themselves.

But the United States had made a commitment to the British to foster this development. So among other things we decided that we would elevate, if that's the right word, the consulate general in Port of Spain to the title of United States Mission to the West Indies Federation. At some point, I guess by this time it was 1961, we assigned a senior career officer, Ivan White, who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary for EUR and DCM in Ottawa, I think. He was going to be Chief of this U.S. Mission and Ambassador, waiting in the wings to the entire Federation on the day it should become independent.

Well, when Ivan arrived in Port of Spain there was nobody to meet him at the airport from the federal government, but there was the Protocol Officer of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. That was illustrative of the way things were. The federal government never really got up and running. Island governments prevailed. I left Barbados in '62 and I think Jamaica became independent in '64 and Trinidad also, and Barbados itself in '66 and most of the rest later in the '60s, although a couple of them never have. The Federation quietly faded away. We were left, I guess, with a little bit of egg on our vest.

One incident that came back to have more significance later in my career, later in the '60s, was an occasion when there was something being considered by the federal parliament in Port of Spain that was of interest to us. The Deputy Principal Officer from Port of Spain came over to see Florence Daisch, one of the federal senators at her home in Barbados. This was done without the knowledge or prior consultation of my boss, the consul in Barbados. In fact this had happened before my time but he still talked about it frequently. The officer in question who made that unannounced trip was one Philip C. Habib who was deputy principal officer in Port of Spain at the time. I later wound up working for him in Saigon. But my Barbados boss' attitude toward him was so bitter that I remember being skeptical that he was coming to Saigon about the time I got there.

Q: I take it that even at that time there was considerable immigration to the United States, or attempted immigration?

TEARE: Oh, there was and that was our biggest problem in the post, visa fraud attempts. The traditional outlet for population from the West Indies is to the UK. That was the case and is still true today. Barbadians used to come back from trips to London and say, "I did think I had never left home. All the railway trainmen there are Bajans." That is not a good accent. But they felt at home. The London Transport was full of Barbadians.

Q: Oh, yes, and the busses too! I think all the conductors on the busses.

TEARE: Yes, yes, exactly. A lot of them also went to Canada. Not too many were able to go to the United States in any given at that time because there was a sub-quota of the Western Hemisphere...a sub-quota of the British quota. There was supposed to be a hundred per year for quota immigrant visas. Now people have been going to New York, particularly, since at least the 1920s and there was a body of people already there who were petitioning for relatives some of whom had gotten on quota status. So we would issue several hundred immigrant visas per year even though we were on that line of sub-quota. But then there were a lot of people trying for NIVs through all manner of subterfuge. And when I think back on it now I think they were pretty amateurish compared with what I've heard of since.

There was an affidavit of support for them, for example, from a particular travel agency that catered to the Barbadian trade in New York. We would get several of those a week in both NIV and IV cases and when you saw one of those coming you automatically became suspicious. A good case, we always used to figure, didn't need that kind of help and a case that had that kind of help was prima facie suspicious. Well the law tells you in fact that you operate on a guilty until proven innocent basis on visas and that is the way we were. Applicants would say... I would say... "Well, Miss Kumberbash, it says here on your application that you are going to visit this Mrs. Bravid in Brooklyn for six months." And I would say, "That seems like quite a long visit. Why should Mrs. Bravid give you room and board for all this time?" And then I would ask, "Are you related to her?" And she would say, "Well I just call she Auntie." And I would say, "Does that mean she is really your Aunt?" And the applicant would say, "Well, I think there is some family connection."

And then the applicant would say, "Besides, I can't stay any longer than six months because you will throw me out." I had to explain that the Immigration Service really didn't have the capacity to follow everybody and that was why we tried to screen them at the beginning rather than so forth and so on. You know after you've said that six or eight times in a morning your vocal cords are beginning to fray. I don't know what our refusal rate was. I don't think it was 40 or 50 percent but it was certainly in the double figures. We would have some people coming back again and again.

We would have the usual batch of congressional letters and so forth. We ran a visa mill. Not a huge one, but that was essentially what we did. That consumed almost all of the time of one Officer.

Q: This was not yet at the high time for tourism was it? What about tourism?

TEARE: Tourism was growing. There were some winter residents with very nice places, including Marietta Tree whom you may remember, who was later a delegate to the UN.

Q: Yes...a friend of Adlai Stevenson.

TEARE: Yes, and in fact I once delivered a telegram to Stevenson at her place. The place belonged to her and her husband, Ronald Tree, the Marshall Field heir who had grown up in

Britain and become an MP. I think he was later knighted. I took this envelope to... Heron Bay was the name of the property...and I asked to be taken to Governor Stevenson. This must have been very late '60 or early '61, after the campaign...not his campaign but after Kennedy was elected. In fact the message may have had something to do with his appointment to the UN. I don't know.

Anyway he was sitting on the beach and he got up and brushed the sand off his hand on his bathing trunks and shook my hand and received the envelope I brought him. He read it and said there would be no immediate answer and thanked me and I went away again.

But there were some other people who had fancy residences up and down the Gold Coast there. One was Claudette Colbert. Another was the stage designer Oliver Messel. So there were some high rollers, year-round residents. Tourism was growing. When I first went down there were no jet aircraft flying in but by the time I left in '62 the first jets had reached down there. We had come down from San Juan by DC-6.

Q: Was there any political activity that we were following?

TEARE: We paid attention to the local politics. There was an election there in my time. Sir Grantley Adams' party, which had been in for years and years, was turned out and the opposition came in. I had already come to know the leader of the opposition who then became Prime Minister, Errol Barrow. I would have met him in due course but saw more of him than otherwise because his wife at the time, they were later divorced, was an American citizen, a Pastor's daughter from New Jersey named Carolyn...I forget her maiden name.

So we reported extensively on that election. I remember more than it deserved...more than the Department wanted. Ian McCloud was the Colonial Secretary at that time in I guess Macmillan's government. He came to Barbados and talked about constitutional status and I suppose, although I didn't get any insight into that, he might have talked about what would happen if Federation didn't succeed, although Britain very much wanted it to.

I remember also that Government House did not invite me, as Acting Principal Officer, or my colleague to the reception they gave for McCloud. I thought that was pretty shabby and I think I let that be known in official circles. I don't know if it did any good.

We were the only career consulate in Bridgetown and there was only one other post, well it called itself a career consulate...and that was Venezuela. It was just across the alley from us. The consul was a woman named Marisa Jimenez de Ward. Her father was a cabinet officer in a previous Venezuelan government. I think it was one of those that had been turned out altogether. She had married a white Barbadian named Ward and had already settled in Bridgetown and got the appointment as consul. I think they were open two hours a day, three times a week or something like that. They were sort of a joke. We were the only real post and then there were a few honorary ones, Sweden, the Netherlands, that sort of thing...businessmen who did that on the side.

There had been only two Americans up until my time, the consul and vice consul. The post had been a consulate general before the war. It was downgraded during Federation and then it quickly popped up again to be a consulate general and then an embassy. But that was after my time.

The Principal Officer was a guy named Knox Lamb, who was born in 1902, so he was already 58 when I got there. He was a lawyer, first in the Army and then in the military government in Germany. Then he switched over to State at some point as an FSR but still doing legal work in the military government and under McCloy and whoever else was there. He was integrated into the Foreign Service as a Reserve Officer and was told, I guess, that either he could retire or go to Barbados and so he went to Barbados for three years and enjoyed it, particularly given that he was from Marks, Mississippi. I'm sure all of his friends and relatives were segregationists and here he was in a majority Black country. But he managed that all right.

Why don't we stop? You look glazed.

Q: No. No, I'm really not. When I look glazed it's only because I'm thinking of another question.

TEARE: Oh, okay.

Q: No. You mention that it was a majority Black island. How did this fit? Were there racial tensions and all? Was there a good modus vivendi would you say?

TEARE: I would say it was very good. There were some tensions certainly and there would always be talk about inter-racial couples or percentages of the blood in the mixed population that was quite evident. I mean there was a sizeable mixed population is what I mean and you could make your own guesses about somebody's ancestry. But at least in local and Federation terms it was all settled. The Blacks had 21 out of 24 seats in the House or Assembly, something like that. It was dominant.

There were three main political parties: the Barbados Labor Party of Sir Grantley Adams, the Democratic Labor Party of Errol Barrow, he became Prime Minister with full internal self-government while I was there. The third party was called the Barbados National Party and it had the two white MPs and one guy of mixed race who was also the mayor of Bridgetown. We knew them all.

Q: This is '60, '62, the beginning of changes in the United States regarding civil rights and all this. Was there much interest in what was going on or was this just another world?

TEARE: I think there was quite a bit of interest. Of course the civil rights movement got hotter still in this country later. I wasn't there in Barbados to see the reaction. But there was always, I think, some interest and pride in the achievement of African-Americans. Althea Gibson came to play tennis in some sort of exhibition while we were there. That was a private promotion not a government one. I think in many ways Barbadians thought that they were much farther advanced given that the Africans were in the majority there in descended people. So I think for the most part they were fairly relaxed about it.

Now a lot of the economic power was still in the hands of whites and in those days it was respectable work to cut canes in the field. I went back there on vacation in 1993 and found that the sugar industry is in serious decline. Nobody wants to work in the cane fields anymore. It's hard and furthermore, nowadays I was told, people associate cane cutting with slave days. So it sounds to me although this 1990s update was very superficial, it sounds to me as though there has been more politicization or radicalization or it's more politicized now than it was 35 years ago.

Q: Was the popular entertainer Harry Belafonte from there or was he from somewhere else?

TEARE: I think he is from Jamaica. I'm pretty sure he is. He was known. The real entertainment stars however were the Calypsonians from Trinidad, Mighty Sparrow, people like that.

Q: Oh, yes, Lord Invader.

TEARE: Yes.

Q: Well having had this taste of a very difficult, hardship life and all what was in store for you in 1962?

TEARE: One more word about Barbados, if I may. Knox Lamb left and we heard, in fact I think he told me this himself, that he went back from his medical exam here. They couldn't find anything wrong with him physically but he got the doctor to say that it would be better for his mental health if he did not return to Barbados. So they scratched around and I think they would not have had another post for him except that the then consul in Brisbane was killed in a plane crash. And so Knox Lamb and family went off to Brisbane and he spent the last two years of his Foreign Service career there, and very happily I understand.

Q: Was he happy in Barbados?

TEARE: I think he found it limiting and maybe he didn't like the racial situation but if so he never let on. Again I was only with him for about four months but I learned a fair bit from him. Then we got a new Principal Officer, Eileen Donovan.

Q: Oh, yes, I've interviewed her.

TEARE: She arrived straight from the senior seminar. I think she was in the second such seminar. I think she was the only woman in it. She had known I guess for some months that she was coming to the job. She knew that her two Officers there were brand new O-8s and she did quite a good job in fact of running us and getting along with the local people and so forth. She also was dismayed to discover that the other vice consul and I had both joined the Royal Barbados Yacht Club, which discriminated on racial lines. I must say we had done so on the invitation of people we had met when we first got there and without any real thought and probably should not have. We did not resign and in fact she joined the Club herself, as I recall, but she also joined, and so did we, an adjacent club which was open to all races called the Barbados Aquatic Club. So there

was a bit of balancing. But I think that my successor and other junior Officers who came to the post thereafter were told not to join, which was probably wise, in fact definitely wise.

The one other point that I would mention is that we had a senior FSN named Agatha Barnes who had joined the staff of the consulate a few months before I was born! And therefore was in her 23rd or 24th year when I got there. She was a white Barbadian, or mostly white, a maiden lady who knew all the regulations and had, I guess, gone to Washington once or twice for training but anyway knew all the right people in Washington. She knew precisely where to send vouchers and monthly reports of passports issued...just everything. The longer I think about it the more I see in retrospect that she really ran that post. She was taken ill, a malignancy, and had to stop working and spent her final few months at home or in the hospital. Eileen Donovan quickly realized that we were in trouble without her and arranged to get a staff corps American assigned, a woman named Millicent Funk. She arrived sometime in mid or late 1961. Milly Funk was good but she hadn't had Agatha's breadth of experience, although Milly had to learn too. Anyway we kept the place going.

We were in rented quarters, part of a floor of Barclays' Bank Building and we had an incinerator on the roof and the duty rotated between the other guy and me. Every week or so we'd go up on the roof and burn *Current Foreign Relations* which had come to us by pouch. There was a U.S. Naval facility, Ocean Graphic Research Station, quote, unquote, up at the other end of the island. They had an FBO and we got pouches through them.

Q: By the way during this time were you at all impacted by the arrival of President Kennedy on the scene?

TEARE: We heard about it, we followed the speculation about his marriage, you know, that his father-in-law allegedly promised Jackie one million or two million or something if she wouldn't divorce him until after the election, that sort of thing. We were in the position I think of anyone else in the public at large; we didn't have any inside...

Q: I was just wondering particularly about many people who were in Washington when Kennedy came in or in college, who were caught up in the idea of government service being a good thing.

TEARE: Oh, yes, that. I think it was an exciting time and I think for somebody like me newly in government this was very ennobling and we felt some sense of mission certainly. There was also a lot of anti-Castro sentiment going on, then the Bay of Pigs occurred.

Q: The Bay of Pigs occurred while you were there. Was that sort of a difficult time?

TEARE: Yes, it was very embarrassing. Although the Barbadians, I don't think, paid much attention to it. In fact they didn't pay much attention to anything Latin. Unlike Trinidad where there is a certain amount of interaction with Venezuelans in particular, Barbadians had very little interest in the Latin American world. Venezuela to them might as well have been Pakistan or something, maybe more remote because Pakistan was in the Commonwealth! Their orientation was all to London, New York, Toronto. I remember, it must have been Princess Margaret who

was married while we were there, and the local wire broadcasting called Rediffusion carried the BBC account of the Royal Wedding and so forth. That is what really turned them on.

GERALD B. HELMAN
Economic/Commercial Officer
Bridgetown (1962-1963)

Gerald B. Helman was born in Michigan in 1932. He received a B.A. and an L.L.B from the University of Michigan and was a member of the Michigan Bar. After entering the Foreign Service in 1956, he was posted in Milan, Vienna, Barbados, Brussels and Geneva. Mr. Helman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 8, 2001.

Q: Where did you go?

HELMAN: Barbados.

Q: Oh, boy.

HELMAN: *(laughs)* Don't ask me why.

Q: I can see you were obviously on the hardship track. (laughs)

HELMAN: *(laughs)* You know I had nothing to do with any of those assignments. I was just a loyal servant. They told me to go to Milan, I went to Milan; they told me to go to Vienna, I went to Vienna; they said go to Barbados, I went to Barbados. It was after Barbados when all of a sudden the assignment process became different for me.

Q: That you had to take note.

HELMAN: I think you had to develop some insight into how the process functioned. I came to the conclusion that the real assignment process would be less a matter of the Personnel Office working on the basis of some master plan than your "street reputation." After Barbados, all my assignments were the result of someone from a substantive office calling and saying that they have a job open and wanted me.

Q: Well, I can't tell you how many interviews, particularly when I first started this, of guys who became ambassadors and all were maybe standing at the urinal next to Roy Henderson and they'd say, "Where are you going?" and "Oh, you don't want to go there. I'll get you a better job." I mean things were done that way. (laughs)

HELMAN: *(laughs)* There was that.

Q: Well, we'll catch you next time in 1962 when you're off to Barbados.

Q: Barbados - you were there from '62 to?

HELMAN: I was there for six months beginning in the fall of '62.

Q: You were just there for six months?

HELMAN: Yes. I was transferred out early because it was discovered that my youngest child, my son, who was born in Vienna, had a congenital muscular deformation in the eye muscles. It required specialized surgery and extended post-operative care which couldn't be handled on Barbados so I asked for a medical transfer which was granted. So I was there only about six months.

Q: Well, let's just talk about Barbados at this time. Was Barbados independent by this time?

HELMAN: No, it was a British crown colony as I recall. One of the last. We had a Consulate General there. I recall talk of independence was very much in the air but I think as I recall they were a couple years away from getting independence.

Q: What were you doing?

HELMAN: I was doing economic and commercial work and also helped Eileen Donovan, who was the Consul General - and a marvelous lady - on some of the political work. I got involved mostly in political work through my job because labor work sort of fell to the economic and commercial officer and labor activity was very important politically on that island. Errol Barrow, I guess who later became Premier after independence, was a major political figure for years. There also was a fellow by the name of Walcott who was head of the Barbados Trade Union Congress, the principal labor union on the island. Of course Walcott and Barrow played very important roles in the politics of the island. I got to know both men and their associates. Political life on Barbados was pretty active. I enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun.

Q: Were the unions there sort of on the British model of quite militant and saw things as "them versus us" and all that?

HELMAN: Nothing in Barbados was really militant, which was one of the charms of the island. They were a well-educated people, high literacy rate; they were reasonably prosperous - I don't mean prosperous in a Western sense, but there wasn't too much poverty on the island. They had the sugar and tourism which were the principal industries on the island. They were doing very well. But it was on the British model and the Barbados Labour Party was closely affiliated with the Workers Congress on Barbados, much like the UK.

Q: Were the union people open to talking to them and all of that or...

HELMAN: They couldn't avoid the planters. It was a small island. *(laughs)* There was a planter's community but that was pretty small and the fraction of the population that was white was also I think in the neighborhood of five, six percent, and it was pretty obvious to me they

weren't going anywhere beyond the short term. The planters did dominate the island's economy, but not its politics. If you wanted to know what was going on, you really couldn't avoid the labor union people. And they were a lot of fun. I mean they used to hold rallies and they were spellbinding speakers.

Q: I interviewed some time ago Eileen Donovan and she was saying the social life got to be something because there was sort of a wife at home and the little wife who came to the parties and things like this. But there were a lot of sort of social gatherings and all that. Did you find that?

HELMAN: That was certainly true and Eileen was a marvelous hostess as well. She did a very good job with representation work. But there was a lot of socializing. Again, it was a small island. One of the things I found was that after about four or five months you'd already met everybody that was going to be of any particular significance to your job for the next couple of years because you were talking about a handful of people. Your description of Eileen's comments about the social life reminds me that of course there were a lot of Americans on the island; forget about the tourists but there were a lot of Americans who came to the island as a second home. One of those was Marietta Tree, whose husband was Sir Ronald Tree who owned the - I think it was called the Shady Lane Hotel, which was the premier hotel on the island at that time.

Q: He had theater connections, didn't he?

HELMAN: Theater, yes. He was in the arts world but he spent a good deal of time in Barbados, at least at that time, and Marietta Tree, of course, comes from - what was the name of the Massachusetts family?

Q: Saltenstahl or Adams or...

HELMAN: No. Her brother was I think governor of Massachusetts.

Q: Lodge?

HELMAN: No. But she comes from a very well-known, prominent Massachusetts family, I believe Peabody. She was at that time when I met her - this was during the Christmas season of '62, it must've been - one of our ambassadors to the United Nations.

Q: Yes. A very close friend of Adlai Stevenson.

HELMAN: A very close friend. Very close indeed, yes. And Sir Ronald was a very tolerant gentleman because he had his own interests. It was a very sophisticated world, particularly for this innocent from Detroit. *(laughs)* Which I was, despite my innocence, learning. So there was that social life, but most of my socializing was spent with the blacks on the island who were in prominent leadership positions and those guys I met were largely in the labour union movement.

Q: Was there the equivalent of white flight as independence reared its head?

HELMAN: Not when I was there and I really stopped following it because what happened to Barbados seldom showed up in the New York Times or the Washington Post. At that time I think the white community was pretty conscious that the trend was towards independence with political and eventual economic power in the black community. A lot of the political power was already in the black community. If you went to the parliament in Barbados it was really quite nice - I mean sort of entertaining in the sense that it was, in its procedures and dress and decorum, very similar to the House of Commons - and maybe even more so with the speaker in wigs and robes and all that sort of stuff and the question period and so on. And most of the representatives were black and even then the ministers of the colony were black, and any election was going to go black.

EILEEN R. DONOVAN
Consul General
Bridgetown (1960-1965)

Assistant Director, Office of Caribbean Affairs
Washington, DC (1965-1969)

Ambassador
Barbados (1969-1974)

Ambassador Eileen R. Donovan taught high school history in Boston when World War II began. After the Pearl Harbor incident, Donovan joined the Women's Auxiliary Corps. She was sent to Officer Candidate School in Des Moines, and came out as a 2nd Lieutenant. After teaching Japanese women for a period, she took the Foreign Service exam and was sent back to Tokyo to begin her career that would culminate with an Ambassador appointment. She has served in Manila, Barbados, and Japan. The interview was conducted by Arthur L. Lowrie on April 7, 1989.

DONOVAN: INR and from there I went to the Senior Seminar on Foreign Policy for a year. While I was there I had been reading about the goings on in the English-speaking Caribbean where they were trying to get a federation going of Jamaica and Trinidad and eight small islands. And, they had already established the federation. It was headquartered in Trinidad, but they weren't moving very fast. So I wrote a little paper on this when I had to write a paper on something and this seemed like an easy one. And, then I was assigned in 1960 as Principal Officer and Consul to Barbados and the eight other islands.

Q: *Was that on the basis of the paper written?*

DONOVAN: I think that's where somebody got the idea.

Q: *Because you had yet no experience in the Caribbean area.*

DONOVAN: None whatsoever. I had never even been there. So, it was a strange situation really. The post was Barbados, an independent reporting post. No embassy over it anywhere. That sounds like a really picayune place to send someone that just spent a year making policy in the Senior Seminar. So, it included the so-called Windward and Leeward Islands for Consular Affairs, as well as everything else. That meant Antigua in the north and St. Kitts, Nevas, Anguilla, Dominica. Going southward it meant Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and I was supposed to go from one place to the other and see how things were going. Well, it so happened that the person who had been there before me had been a civilian in the Army as a JAG lawyer at the Nuremberg trials and he didn't know anything about being a Foreign Service Officer or a Consul either, but he spent his whole time on visa matters. And it was the smallest place that you can imagine. There were four local employees, all white Barbadians and two Vice Consuls, who got there just a couple of days before I did, and me. That was it. There was no American secretary, there was no code room. When they sent us coded messages, they came on what was called a one-time pad. Do you remember that?

Q: *Yes.*

DONOVAN: One of the two Vice Consuls had to sit up all night and pour over this one-time pad. And it turned out it usually had nothing to do with us anyway.

Q: *What was the main mission of the Consulate General?*

DONOVAN: It was a Consulate then, by the way. It wasn't even a Consulate General. It changed in a couple of years. It had been to refuse visas, really. And, this poor man used to spend two days a week driving his car out to the airport to get all the other messages that weren't sent by code. He had not written a political report in a year. He'd written no biographical reports. So, I was sent down there really as Principal Officer and Political Officer and the two Vice Consuls continued to do the visa work. I've always been somewhat annoyed that so many of those poor people who were legitimate tourists had to be refused on the assumption that they didn't have a good enough job to come back to and they probably never would. Well, some of them never would, but when I think how easy it is now for hundreds of people from hundreds of places just to walk in and have no problem whatsoever. And, these were awfully nice people, of course the island was 97% black. They said it was less than that but that was because they counted the mixed people as white in their census taking.

I got to know, very well, all the officers of the government who were all black except the Governor General who was the Queen's representative, as you know. When I started off, nobody knew anything about these other islands. Nobody had written any books about them. The whole thing was under the jurisdiction of what I called EUR, in the department the Bureau of European Affairs and they were all hitched on as sort of an appendage to the Great Britain desk officer most of whom didn't give them too much attention. So, I started off on my peregrinations in the Leeward Islands transport planes, the biggest one of which carried 14 passengers. Well, anyhow there were all kinds of these Chief Ministers as they were called. Half of them had never been beyond the third grade. The Islands were colonies then.

Q: *How was your relationship with the Governor General?*

DONOVAN: It was fine because he was a very nice guy. But he wasn't calling the shots really. It was the Prime Minister, the Premier as it was then. So, I got to know all those black fellows very well on the other islands and on Barbados too. And, I did a lot of things that had never been done before. The four white girls that worked there, (the man that was there before me had told me, I met him once in Washington before I went down, he said, they're white because all the banks have white employees and the prestige of the Consulate demands that they be white employees, too). Well, the population is 97% black so the first administrative, managerial thing that I did was, as these girls got married (they were all about 21-22 and attractive) and they left, I had interviews and replaced everyone of them with a black girl. There was a fascinating guy who was the Mayor of Bridgetown, which is the capital of Barbados, and when I left he gave a speech and said, the day that I changed the color of the Consulate was the day that he knew I was going to be all right. Because there was very little socializing between the white people, who were mostly businessmen, bankers, bread factories, and things like that and the blacks. The whites down there were living in the 1850s, I guess, they considered that the blacks were somewhat inferior. But the blacks said to each other, this has to be changed.

The other big reason why I was sent there was that there was a thing called the Federation of the West Indies formed in 1958 which included Jamaica and Trinidad, as well as my eight islands. It was headquartered in Port of Spain and Grantley Adams who had been the Premier of Barbados had taken on the job to head up that and Princess Margaret, had come down to dedicate it. It opened in 1958 and they established a little thing called a USOM which was an aid mission to see if they could do something about loans and guarantees. It was to become independent in 1962.

Jamaica, which figured out that in the long run being the biggest and most prosperous island, it would be paying the most of the bills, decided to opt of the Federation of the West Indies. There were ten islands in that and a little while later my boys ran over to Trinidad expecting Williams to say, we'll get along with nine.

Then much to the surprise and horror of the other islands, the Premier of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams said, no, in this case one from ten leaves zero and I'm not going to stay in this Federation either. Trinidad's going to become independent. My boys were shocked and hurt and humiliated. And the way he did it too, he published it in his newspaper that this is what he was going to do, while they were sitting in the hotel room waiting for the meeting.

So, they then and there decided to form a thing called the Eastern Caribbean Federation which would be my eight islands. Well, the Department which had favored the Federation of the West Indies which would have been the best solution for all of them had it worked, decided they weren't going to support, any longer, an emasculated organization of small islands that would never be viable on their own. The Department, over British protests, said they were closing up their mission in Port of Spain. There wasn't any Federation for it to be a mission to, and closing out this one little they had was a loan and guarantee program for small businesses and farmers. They were closing that out too and that they told the British the best thing now is for you to keep all these islands. Keep them as colonies, it will be best for our security and defense and everything else. But the British had no intention of keeping them. They wanted to get rid of them.

Q: What was your position? You were still there?

DONOVAN: I was still there. I was in the middle of all this.

Q: What position did you take?

DONOVAN: My position was that we should have supported the new Federation because it was better than each little island going independent on its own. It was then under the jurisdiction of EUR and Jamaica became independent in 1962 and Trinidad shortly thereafter. Then Barbados said it was going to. Oh, they had a lot of big fights in this Eastern Caribbean Federation as they had meetings here and there and it looked as though the whole thing just wasn't going to work. So, Barbados said it would become independent, either within or without a Federation. There was a young man named Erol Barrow who won the election on the platform on the independence. So, Barbados did become independent in 1966.

In 1965, having been there five years and in the middle of everything and very, very friendly with all the black leaders, there wasn't a one of them who didn't know me and like me. Every time they came to Barbados for some meetings, I had a dinner party for them. They didn't bring their wives but picked up another girl somewhere and called her my "comfort". I remember the great big Premier of Antigua, Bird, only came half an hour before the dinner. I said how nice, you're a little early, nobody else has come yet but they'll be coming along. He said, I just really came over now to ask you if I could bring my "comfort". Well that was the first time I had heard that word, you know, and I stepped back a couple of steps and said, I beg your pardon and he said yes. I said, well surely you can do that, I said, I'll have to do a little bit of table rearranging around here, but I can do that. He said, well I might as well go and get her now then because she's sitting out in the car.

Every time I would go to these islands they would all say to me, do we have to do, have a communist revolution to get any attention from the United States? I said it begins to look that way doesn't it? Just at that time, it was 1965, EUR switched its responsibilities for these islands to ARA. ARA was all concerned with the Dominican Republic at that time and there was no one in ARA either who cared much about these islands in spite of my wonderfully prepared political and economic assessments every year as to what was going to happen if they didn't do thus and so. So I was to be assigned somewhere else. I left there in 1965, my first departure.

Q: Before you go on to that, what about was there any special reaction or affect on the Cuban missile crisis when you were in Barbados?

DONOVAN: No. We also had a little outfit there in Barbados which was theoretically under my command called the US Naval Facility "Oceanographic Research Station". There was a strong belief among the leaders of all the islands that anything that was sent out from Cape Canaveral would drop into the ocean on top of them. So I studied up on the principles of the ballistic missile trajectory and said how it couldn't possibly stop in the middle and drop. It would have to keep on its trajectory until it was going where it was going. They didn't believe that either. So then I arranged with the Department of Defense and the officials at Cape Canaveral to take all

the leaders up on a trip there. So we met at various places and all of my boys got on the plane with me. I was always the only woman in any of these things, you know. Up we went and we were given the red carpet treatment at Cape Canaveral and then taken to the lift-off of a silo missile. They were given all kinds of briefings about how safe they were. So, they began to think maybe they wouldn't worry about that.

But there was little or no reaction, to your original question, to the Cuban missile crisis itself. They didn't pay much attention to that.

DONOVAN: When I got back to ARA, I thought, oh, before I go anywhere I'm going up and tell these people what they're doing wrong, what they should do instead, and how somebody should read my messages. (They had lost the last two political and economic assessments somewhere between EUR and ARA). There were still a lot of people in ARA who thought these islands spoke Spanish down there. So I made an appointment with the Assistant Secretary of State for ARA.

Q: *Who was that?*

DONOVAN: It was Bob Sayre then. Do you know him?

Q: *I don't know him personally, no.*

DONOVAN: He was a very nice guy. A man of few words. He never said very much but he listened and that's more than a lot of people do. So, I went up and I think I talked for half an hour about these islands and their leaders and what was going to happen to them. There was also a black power movement going on in Trinidad with a few repercussions in Barbados and more in Antigua.

So he said, where are you going? I said, I don't have another assignment yet. He said, well you're not going anywhere. He said, I'm going to divide the Office of Caribbean Affairs and create a new section called Commonwealth Caribbean and you're in charge. See what you can do. So that's how I got to stay there for several years.

All kinds of things were happening. Barbados' independence was coming to fruition. I went down with Chief Justice Warren to the ceremony in November 1966. They appointed an Ambassador to Barbados, a political Ambassador, who was not a success. That's all I care to say about that one.

Early in 1969 I was one of six women in Washington who won the Federal Women's Award. At that time, Elliot Richardson had come over to be Acting Secretary of State. U. Alexis Johnson was his Deputy and Assistant Secretary of State. Elliot Richardson came over to do the awards presentation for me at the Statler Hotel.

Q: *Had you known him before?*

DONOVAN: He was from Massachusetts and that was the only connection that we had. But I gave a pretty good speech that night, a short one. And he got to know me. And then he asked me a couple of times to come and tell him about a little island called Anguilla which was part of St. Kitts. St. Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla, which had decided to secede from St. Kitts. St. Kitts had sent over some policemen, no armies of course, to stop them and there was a big fuss. London bobbies were sent too. There are a lot of Anguillans in the United States, mostly in New Jersey, who were calling their Congressmen about this terrible affair. So I had to go and brief some Congressmen and brief Elliot Richardson on what the hell was Anguilla and what was this all about. Nobody else knew to tell you the honest truth. So that brought me to the attention of more senior persons than had not known me before. I guess the Department submitted my name with others as the next Ambassador to Barbados and Special Representative of the United States of America to all the other islands that had not yet got independence. You couldn't be Ambassador to them because they weren't independent, but it amounted to the same thing.

Q: That was the beginning of the Nixon Administration, right?

DONOVAN: Yes. Elliot Richardson was an outstanding Republican. Alex Johnson stopped me in the corridor one day and said, Eileen don't get excited about the Barbados possibility because no one is going to appoint anybody that the Department of State recommends. It'll be a political appointment made by the White House. I said, I'm not excited about it, I'm just grateful that the Department would include me among whoever else. So, one day they announced that it was I. I would go back again. Sayre and others said, well we thought it was about time we sent somebody there who knew something about it and you seem to be the only one. He didn't say exactly that. I just made that up right now, but he did say someone who knew something about the area. So, off I went again.

Q: How big, when you went to Barbados, how big had the office gotten by now, when it became an Embassy?

DONOVAN: Now it's huge. When I was there, as I told you when I first went, it was tiny.

Q: When it was still a Consulate?

DONOVAN: Yes, then it became a Consulate General a few years later, but it still didn't have any code room which it got when it became a Consulate General. It had no Marine Guards and the Prime Minister of Barbados said we didn't need any; nobody was going to shoot us. I really didn't think we needed any either. It had no AID Mission, all of that. After the Grenada affair, then the Department really got excited about the whole area and then they gave a little, either an Embassy or a branch of our Embassy, to Antigua, which Chief Minister Bird had been asking me for years and there was no chance of any such thing. Then they established an Embassy in Grenada, and then established a Regional AID Mission which is headquartered in Barbados.

Q: But when you were Ambassador in Barbados, what other agencies were represented?

DONOVAN: Toward the end they had a little one-man USIS office. They also had a whole bunch of Peace Corps people. That's a whole other long story. Barbados said it didn't want any Peace Corps and I thought, well you don't need it as much as the other islands. Some of the other islands said they didn't want it either. So, quite early in the game they sent a Peace Corps Mission to St. Lucia. Sargent Shriver, who was head of it, and his wife, the Kennedy girl, Eunice I guess, came down to inspect the Peace Corps Mission in St. Lucia. I went over for that. Then Barbados decided it wanted a Peace Corps, but Barrow didn't tell me. He was supposed to be my friend, and he was, but I guess he didn't want to tell me that he now wanted a Peace Corps. So, he went up on a visit to Washington and went to Peace Corps Headquarters and they said, sure they'd send him one. So, he came back and announced it in the press the next day. Then it turned out that the person who told him that didn't have the authority to do so and they canceled it out. Well, he was furious. It left him looking pretty silly, you know. A year or so later they got a Peace Corps group. We had 280 volunteers in all the islands.

Q: Did he blame you?

DONOVAN: No. I don't think he blamed me.

Q: Because he hadn't told you?

DONOVAN: No. I don't think so, I don't think so.

Q: Did you have any agency, CIA, in the Embassy?

DONOVAN: No.

Q: So you didn't have any of the traditional bureaucratic rivalries in your Embassy, I gather? Because you didn't have enough other agencies represented?

DONOVAN: We had, of course, from the beginning, the US Naval Facility. No, not while I was there. There has been a succession of political Ambassadors. There was a career man who was there for a few months, but he wanted an assignment in Latin America and he had a Spanish name so he got it. But, some of the others were pretty sorry specimens. But one of them had enough clout in the White House to get a military attaché complete with plane assigned to Barbados. So, that was the end of the Leeward Island Air Transport. Anytime that Ambassador wanted to go to any of the other islands, which wasn't very often, he had a plane. And, of course, the Consulate people could go in his plane to the other islands to issue visas or to refuse them as the case may be. But that was after I had left.

Q: From a couple of things that you've said, I got the impression that you didn't feel, even as Ambassador, that your views and your assessments, your predictions, were being given much consideration in Washington. Was this a frustration?

DONOVAN: That was true, but I didn't know it then. One of the mistakes I made was in not giving myself more clout in Washington. I never called them on the telephone to ask them for

anything. I took them at their word when they said only a flash telegram will go to the Secretary of State, you know, a real emergency. When I think back, I realize that I didn't throw my weight around enough as far as Washington was concerned. After I wrote those masterpieces of polished prose that were my political and economic assessments for a year, and I spent hours on them as you can well imagine, I should have gotten myself on a commercial flight and gone up to Washington and said, hey, what about this? What are you going to do? What do you think? In that respect, I didn't realize that I could have had more clout. I didn't realize that I was not just a poor forgotten orphan down there. It was a little better after I became Ambassador. Those first years when you imagine--no American Secretary. I finally got someone sent down under the title of Administrative Specialist because they said we weren't big enough for an Administrative Officer.

Q: Did you ever learn to type?

DONOVAN: No. I refused to do that. So I finally got a fine girl sent down as Administrative Specialist and then she was the one who undid all the telegrams and would get a call from the naval facility in the middle of the night saying they had something that was urgent for us. Those first months or year, we didn't even have a desk for an American Secretary and when she first came down we had an orange crate standing on end with a piece of green/beige blotting paper on the top of it. Now, of course, I should have gone out to the best furniture store in town and ordered a secretary's desk and chair and billed the Department, but there wasn't any money in our budget for that. There wasn't any money for anything.

Q: Speaking of influence in Washington, you must, given the length of time you were in the service, you must have had a lot of contacts in the Department in Washington, too, that if you had wanted to throw your weight around more you knew people to do it with.

DONOVAN: Yes, I think I did. But, I didn't do that. As I say, it was a mistake. We all make them I suppose.

Q: I think it's a rather common mistake among Ambassadors. They don't realize how much clout they have if they really use it.

DONOVAN: I remember we had a visit from the redoubtable Congressman Rooney during that first year, who came down with his nanny, Bill Crockett. Do you remember those days? Anyway, Congressman Rooney said, I have four things to say to you. One, I don't see why we should have any office here anyway. Two, I don't see why there should be a woman in charge of it if we do. Three, you asked for an American secretary. What do you want an American secretary for? And, four, who paid for these fish? We were up at my house where there was a little pool about a diameter of six feet and there were little fishes in it. There were a few little dark brown fish that had been swimming there ever since the day I arrived. I don't know what they were--minnow or what. Nobody ever fed them or anything. He said, who brought these. He said, don't you know the Department doesn't pay for goldfish. I said, one, they're not goldfish and, two, they just.... He said, how did they get here? I said, I guess they came by spontaneous combustion long before I got here. He looked at me kind of oddly and he said, well, don't be like the wife of the Ambassador in London who was charging the Department for the goldfish around the house. He

said, you know what she did? I said, no. He said, she pulled all the goldfish out and made them into manure and charged the Department for the manure.

Q: Did you get many congressional visitors?

DONOVAN: Yes, quite a few.

This is an excerpt from an interview with Ambassador Donovan conducted by Ann Miller Morin in 1985.

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

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

Q: Grenada?

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

Q: I love it.

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

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

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

Q: Good heavens!

DONOVAN: So nobody asked them to guarantee the safety, but this scared off a lot of people. It scared off the congressmen, for one thing, and it scared off the official Barbados delegate, who

never went. And it scared off a lot of people. I went with my political officer, named George Moose, who was a very fine black political officer. One of the smartest men I ever knew who's now ambassador in some little small African country. Anyhow, we went. He had the celebrations at the Grenada Hilton, I guess it is, right on the beach. And the head table with its back to the beach and I, being the only woman again, well there were other women somewhere, but I was the official representative of the United States and the ranking woman. So of course I sat on Mr. Geary's right. I felt a little bit like I did that day down in Hiroshima in the boat. This is going to be another good way to die. If I were any of those people he's been shooting up, and they were good people, I would be right on the shore in the waves going "AAHRRRRRR" [imitates machine gun noise] at the back of the table. So this is probably my last dinner, but so what?

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

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

DONOVAN: They did send an officer from the Venezuelan embassy, a security officer. But he was so far back in the audience that he wouldn't have been any help to me. He couldn't stand behind me or anything. Anyway I didn't need him. Then just after I left, this young man named Bishop... Geary went on a visit to New York, he wanted to talk about the UFOs in the United Nations. He was crazy. So anyway, Bishop overthrew him, and at the beginning Bishop headed up a group called the New Jewel movement, in case you people know what that means. It means Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation. He seemed to start off all right. He was a hard-core Marxist and he went from bad to worse until his doings were worse than Geary's, plus the fact that he invited the Cubans in to build this giant airfield. They needed an airfield, but they didn't need that one.

Q: That was military?

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

Q: But I don't know it firsthand.

DONOVAN: Barbados asked the United States to help. Barbados didn't but it was the woman prime minister of Dominica who was speaking for them. This was all legal under the United Nations and OAS agreements for regional self-defense. Later on it was made to look illegal but it wasn't. It was just as legal [as it could be]. Rather quickly we and the Barbadians and the Jamaicans finally got forces in there and captured these guys who captured him. I think it was a

good thing. It's too bad we had to get into it, because you know most of the publicity has been anti, "attacking a little state like Grenada." We weren't attacking it. We were, in fact, liberating it. It sounds naïve but it happens to be true. I wouldn't say it if it weren't because I don't usually like anything that Mr. Reagan does, but in this case I do.

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

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

Q: They were all communist?

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

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

DONOVAN: No, Barbados now, tourism is the number one industry, above sugar. But Grenada, it's always been bananas and cocoa. It's called the spice island. Bananas and cocoa and copra and nutmeg. But the prices of all those things have gone way down on the world market and they have 30 to 40% - this is just yesterday I read - 30 to 40% unemployment.

Q: Wow. Gee whiz.

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

Q: Is it the only one who went leftist?

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

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

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

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

DONOVAN: Well, I think it's high time. Now we are supposedly doing so. There's a thing called the president's Caribbean initiative, which is getting American companies to invest with them. That's a slow and uncertain process. They'll invest where they can make the most money and that will be Barbados or those places which have the best infrastructure for their purposes. It won't

help Dominica much, poor miserable Dominica. I feel sorry for it. It's the only one which has a rain forest and which has very little sunshine and black beaches. There are certain islands which have coral beaches, namely Antigua and Barbados and parts of St. Lucia, but a lot of the others are volcanic. They're black beaches. For some reason tourists don't like black beaches. They want a nice clean white beach. The black beaches are just as clean but it isn't as pretty. And... where was I?

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

DONOVAN: Tourism is...

Q: For the islands that are attractive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DONOVAN: No.

Q: They don't do that?

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

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

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

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

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

Q: Are the people very sensitive and very proud?

DONOVAN: Yes. They're proud and sensitive.

Q: I would expect they would be.

DONOVAN: And they are proud of their heritage, which is justice, social justice, and democracy, law and order. I mean the Barbados House of Representatives, the House of Assembly, was established in 1639. The third in the New World.

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

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

Q: And that is Barbados?

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

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

DONOVAN: Well, that's not functional literacy.

Q: Oh, it's not?

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

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

DONOVAN: No.

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

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

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

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

ROBERT B. MORELY
Consular Officer
Bridgetown (1965-1967)

Robert B. Morley was born in Massachusetts in 1935. He received his BA from Central College, Iowa. After joining the State Department in 1962, he served in Norway, Barbados, Warsaw, Caracas, and Quito. Mr. Morley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

MORLEY: From Norway, we went to Barbados.

Q: Quite a change.

MORLEY: Yes. The Foreign Service had not yet developed a formal bidding process. So the assignment was a complete surprise. We arrived in June of 1965. I was assigned as head of the Consular Section. Barbados at the time was a dependency of the United Kingdom. Our office was a Consulate General. Our American staff included the Consul General, George Dolgin, two consular officers, an administrative officer, a "utility infielder" that handled a wide range of responsibilities, and a communicator. So, it was a very small post. We depended greatly on support from a U.S. Navy base located at the north end of the island. Barbados was an excellent assignment for a family with young children. Two of our children, Karen and Dennis, were born on the island.

Q: What was the main function of the Consulate General there?

MORLEY: We were primarily a consular post. We issued a lot of non-immigrant visas (NIVs) and immigrant visas (IVs). In addition, during the tourist season, protection and welfare were major concerns. Later, when Barbados began to make preparations for independence, we got very busy with non-consular issues. This included increased substantive reporting on political and economic life in Barbados, making arrangements for the arrival of a high-level delegation to participate in independence ceremonies, and preparations for conversion of our office from a Consulate General to an Embassy. The official delegation was larger than the entire American staff at the Consulate.

We spent a lot of time dealing with both the Barbadians and the British on these issues, and preparing inputs for the briefing books for the U.S. delegation. There was a lot to do for our small staff, especially if we had to continue operating our consular section at its usual pace.

The Consulate General had had regional responsibilities throughout the Eastern Caribbean. Our new embassy was supposed to continue these responsibilities. This was to continue when we became an Embassy. Washington seemed nervous about the region's vulnerability to Cuban and Soviet influence as the British withdrew. So our staff expanded to include AID and USIS people, and we had to move to new quarters. One thing we were spared – Washington did not get around to appointing a new Ambassador until well after I left. Eileen Donovan was our first Ambassador. She had served earlier as Consul General in Barbados.

Q: Let's go back to the consular side.

MORLEY: We had consular responsibility for nine island governments, all of which were dependencies of the British. We were responsible for the entire area from Grenada in the south to the British Virgin Islands in the north, including Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Antigua, Barbados, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla, and the British Virgin Islands. People from all of these territories came to us for visas.

Each dependency was entitled to 200 quota immigrant visas a year and whoever could qualify for non-quota - that is, next of kin of American citizens or other preferential status. So, we were issuing on the order of about 2,500 to 3,000 IVs a year. We also had a brisk NIV business. When Barbados became independent, it became a more complicated mixture. Barbados, being independent, was eligible for its own quota within the Western Hemisphere category, as opposed to a 200 sub-quota from the UK quota. So, we had to deal with Barbados as an independent country with its own quota, and the other countries as dependencies of the UK. We had a lot of work to do on the other islands both before and after independence. Either I or my consular colleague would make a trip to the other islands about every six months.

Q: I would assume that there must have been quite a few refusals, weren't there?

MORLEY: There were quite a few refusals. Fraudulent documents were a major problem. We found that, not so much in Barbados, but in some of the other island governments, there was corruption. An applicant could get a good behavior certificate from the police when, in fact, the person may have been convicted one or more times of a felony - that kind of thing. So, we had a relatively high refusal rate. But I don't remember the exact statistics.

Q: You were there from '65 until when?

MORLEY: To '67.

Q: What about protection and welfare? This was at the height of sort of a wanderlust for a lot of Americans. Marijuana and other things were creeping in. You had displaced youth going around. Did this hit you?

MORLEY: No. Our major challenges involved deaths of American citizens during the tourist season. Barbados was a very popular vacation spot for Americans. They would start to come down in large numbers around the middle of December and the pace would slow up in the middle of March. I had to get involved in perhaps as many as one or two American citizen deaths a week, notifying next of kind, preserving estates, arranging for shipments of remains, and so on.

In those cases where a man, for example, was traveling with his spouse, it was fairly straightforward. We would just give advice and counsel to the survivor, help them with necessary arrangements, and comfort them to the extent they needed it. But in cases where Americans were down in Barbados on their own, the problem was more complicated. We had to ask the Department to contact next of kin, not always an easy task. When the Department was unable to do this quickly, we had to make certain decisions to deal with the immediate situation. We also had to do our best to preserve elements of the deceased's estate, whatever money he or she had, other possessions they had with them, for final disposition. In some cases, it was just personal property. In some cases, it was real property. Americans at that time sometimes owned a place in Barbados to visit every winter or to retire to because they could live on Social Security.

Q: But you weren't running across what came to be known as the hippie group?

MORLEY: No, that didn't occur in Barbados during my time. We had heard about it. When I went back to the United States, I was amazed at changes that had taken place. Civil rights protests, anti-Vietnam protests, seemed to occur every day. The "hippie phenomenon" as you called it, was in full blossom. Except for brief visits, I had been absent from the United States from March of 1963 when I went to Norway to when I came back from Barbados in 1967 for Polish language training. ...

Q: Let's go back to Barbados. In '66, it became an independent country?

MORLEY: Yes, it did. The Embassy was established and the staff increased. We expanded our consular section to four Americans. About that same time (toward the end of the summer of 1966), I was transferred to a political/economic position. We got a new Consul to head the Consular Section, Bill Ryerson.

Q: What was the prevailing opinion in, at that time, the consulate general, as Barbados was getting ready to become independent about whether Barbados and all?

MORLEY: Within the embassy, I'm not sure that there was a consensus. Certainly there were some doubts about whether Barbados could make it on its own after literally centuries of being a dependency of the UK. During the years prior to independence, Barbados was getting a significant budget subsidy from the UK Treasury every year. This was to continue for a specified period after independence. I don't remember how long it was. But they were to be weaned after a while. They were almost totally dependent on sugar, with growing income from tourism. Most of their sugar went to British Commonwealth countries. Within that category, most of it went to the UK. They were worried about what would happen to sugar exports should the commonwealth system change so that they would lose their protected market in the UK. So, they started to develop the tourist industry in earnest. Our major concern was whether Barbados was

viable. Certainly they had democratic roots. They probably had the strongest democratic roots of any of the small island groupings in the eastern Caribbean. Generally, the British did better in this respect or were perceived as doing better in this respect than the French or the Dutch. Barbados reportedly had the oldest parliamentary system in the Western Hemisphere.

Q: Who was the first leader of Barbados?

MORLEY: Errol Barrow. He was the head of the Barbados Labour Party.

Q: What was your impression of him?

MORLEY: He was quite accessible. I used to drop by and see him in his office after independence while he was Prime Minister. Government headquarters was probably no bigger in its entirety than this building.

Q: You're talking about FSI.

MORLEY: This building alone. I used to go by and talk to him. We chatted up. He called me in one time to get some feedback on what was going on, for example, in the Dominican Republic. This was during the period when the United States and other OAS Members intervened in the Dominican Republic. So, I went in and talked to him about that. I think our intervention surprised him. He impressed me as being urbane, intelligent, friendly to the United States, and practical-minded. He seemed concerned at the time that we would close our Embassy in Barbados. Perhaps for political reasons, he wanted the diplomatic community in Bridgetown to expand, and a continued US presence was key to that objective. He seemed aware that closing the Embassy had been discussed in Washington. Fortunately, I was able to reassure him that the United States would maintain an Embassy in Barbados, and that the island would become the center of our activities in the Eastern Caribbean.

Q: Who was our first ambassador to Barbados?

MORLEY: Eileen Donovan. She had previously been the Consul General in Barbados. George Dolgin replaced her and became Charge after independence. After over a year, Donovan arrived as our first Ambassador.

Q: How did she operate?

MORLEY: We overlapped only a few weeks after my arrival. I hardly knew her.

Q: What was the role of Cuba there? Was there a Cuban problem?

MORLEY: Cuba and our relationship with Cuba was not an issue in our relationship with Barbados. It hardly ever came up. About a year before I arrived, the UK let the Cuban planes have landing rights in Barbados for refueling purposes. But that had stopped by the time I got there. I didn't detect any residue of ill feeling over that. But we made periodic demarches to the

Barbadian Government, as instructed, to resist any increase in the Cuban presence on the island, and warned of the dangers of a close relationship with the Castro Government.

Q: We were going through a rather difficult and transitional time in the United States on civil rights, with integrating the country, particularly during this period. How did this play in Barbados, or did it?

MORLEY: It didn't have a large impact. About the time I arrived there, it had become public that Barbados was going to be independent within a year. Basically, most people's attention focused on the preparations for independence and what Barbados was going to be like after independence, what its relationship with the UK would be, how this would change its business practices, how this would affect its relationship with the United States, and so on. There wasn't much play on the racial problems of the United States in the local press or in my conversations with Barbadians.

Q: What was your impression of the last year of British rule there?

MORLEY: The British seemed to be in a hurry to get out, no question. For years, there had been a very low official British profile on the island. There was the Governor, with a very small British staff, a small British consular office, and not much else. Barbados had received substantial budgetary support from London over the years, and the UK had provided technical support in various areas, including medical services, agriculture, transportation and public services. The British had also funded or helped fund the construction of a new hospital, airport and deep-water harbor.

Q: Had the British done well with Barbados, do you think?

MORLEY: The Barbadians were satisfied with the outcome. The negotiations between the Barbadians and the Brits were certainly not characterized by animosity or bitterness or anything like that. The British gave the Barbadians a golden handshake in terms of continued access to their market for sugarcane and continued budgetary supplements for a certain period of time. So, there was certainly no animosity between the two.

Initially, at least, the Barbadians still looked to the British for guidance in international affairs. Certainly, the British helped them with issues such as admission to the United Nations and other international organizations. The British agreed to represent them all over the world, as they did with other countries. So, there was no ill feeling. The Barbadians felt that they were ready for independence. They wanted no part of a Caribbean federation. They wanted to be independent, but not tied to anybody else. On the other hand, the British wanted an independent Barbados because Barbados and the other eastern Caribbean territories had become a net drain on the British economy. London assumed that the United States would pick up the burden of economic support.

This assumption was correct, but it took longer for Washington to assume its new role than either the UK or the Barbadian Government had assumed. It took serious unrest in Antigua, Anguilla and, to a lesser extent Dominica and Grenada to wake Washington up.

THOMAS MACKLIN, JR.
Political Officer
Bridgetown (1970-1972)

Thomas Macklin Jr. was born in Fort Worth, Texas in October of 1935. He attended San Diego State University and majored in political science, later receiving a masters degree in history. He entered the Foreign Service in 1965 and took his first post as a Consular Officer in Amsterdam. His career took him to The Hague, Vietnam, Barbados, Israel, Russia, and Italy as well as several posts within the State Department. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 2000.

Q: You were there from '70 to when?

MACKLIN: '72 – two and a half years. Eileen Donovan was the ambassador.

Q: She sort of made a career out of the Caribbean, didn't she?

MACKLIN: Yes. She had been consul general there before and then was deputy on the Caribbean desk and then was named ambassador there. She was the second ambassador after Barbados went independent in '66. The first one had been a political appointee.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the situation on Barbados and up and down the islands. What was happening there?

MACKLIN: This was a time when going back to the '50s Britain had said to itself, "We can't afford all of these stupid colonies. They cost us a lot of money. We've got to let these people go, but groom them for independence" like they did in Ghana and all of the African colonies. So, the British helped patch together something called the Federation of the West Indies. It was a good concept. It would have been much like Indonesia. It was a federation running all the way from Jamaica around to the British Virgin Islands, down the Leeward, the Windward Islands, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago. It would have taken the whole group and made it one federation. They did it. They had their first election. Grantley Adams from Barbados was elected prime minister. The problem was, the political leaders in Trinidad, and Jamaica wanted to run their own countries. They might have accepted federation if they were the prime minister, but they didn't want to do it if somebody else was the prime minister. So, I think Jamaica was the first one to withdraw from the federation. They even had a cabinet. They were starting to function as a federation. Jamaica withdrew and then Eric Williams, the leader in Trinidad, said, "Well, one from ten is zero, so I withdraw, too." So, that left Barbados and Associated States. The British tried to get it back together again, but it didn't work. So, Barbados in 1966 went independent on its own. The guy who had been chief minister, Errol Barrow, became prime minister. I arrived some four and a half years later. He was still prime minister. The smaller islands were made Associated States, states in association with Great Britain. They had elections and a government based on the parliamentary system within their own island. They had a chief

minister or a prime minister – it depended on the island. They were in charge of their own domestic affairs but turned to Britain for foreign affairs and defense. There were British representatives on most of the islands. Then within each little island grouping, there were breakaway problems. St. Kitts, Anguilla, the most famous. Anguilla, which is quite a ways away from Nevis and St. Kitts, said, “We don’t want to be part of St. Kitts” and they seceded from St. Kitts Nevis Anguilla. Anguilla had something like 2,000-3,000 people, not much of a population, but they eventually succeeded in breaking away from St. Kitts. The prime minister of St. Kitts had been the treasurer of the federation and was held in wide esteem. He tried to keep his three islands together, but wasn’t able to. Antigua included an island called Barbuda, which had 1,500 Barbudans on it. The highest point in Barbuda is about five feet above sea level, but there are people living there. There are something like 10,000 Barbudans in the Bronx and 1,500 in Barbuda. They tried to go independent from Antigua, but never quite made it. The ambassador told the leader of the movement in Barbuda, “There are more people in my apartment building in Washington, DC than there are in your island.” It stayed part of Antigua. Then there were a couple of colonies – Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands. That was kind of the lay of the land.

Q: What were you doing? Just going around and showing the flag or patting heads?

MACKLIN: There has never been much reporting on those islands. Eileen Donovan had been there before and knew a lot of the people, but Eileen was very gracious. She could write well, but she was very catholic and very bossy. She was not an easy person to get to know and she felt that she should keep her distance from the staff. She lived in a very nice house up the island next to the actress Claudette Colbert and I think was kind of awed by Claudette Colbert, who was a Barbadian resident.

Q: She was a famous movie actress.

MACKLIN: Yes. Eileen Donovan was sharp as a tack but was had been out of touch. The prime minister of Barbados, Errol Barrow, really liked to drink and carouse. He was kind of a very social animal. She was very, very correct. There was friction there, which made it harder for her to do her job.

Q: Somebody I talked to said that if you had a dinner party, you never knew – the men had wives, but they might bring a second wife or a substitute wife. It was a pretty relaxed society.

MACKLIN: Eileen Donovan had a very well defined sense of propriety. There are certain social things you didn’t do. But I was there because she had campaigned to get a political officer. Basically, some of the guys from the embassy traveled, but for the most part they didn’t. Nobody knew much about... Bradshaw was the guy in St. Kitts. He was flamboyant. He had a yellow Rolls Royce that he drove around the island. The movie “The Yellow Rolls Royce” was in part based on him. The novel “An Island in the Sun” is a composite of St. Kitts and Barbados and includes Bradshaw as one of the characters, although by another name.

So, I was brought in. I had two DCMs there. Peter Lord was the second one. John Dreyfuss was the first one. The first DCM was one of the fastest drafters I’ve ever known. In those days, you could type things out on the telegraphic form and then you take them to the communicator, who

would punch out a tape and send them in or you'd do an airgram, which is typed on an airgram form. John was one of these guys who never used a secretary. He could type faster than she did. It was kind of like Amadeus. In the movie "Amadeus," Mozart would sit there and compose and he'd never have to review it because he got it right the first time. That is the way John Dreyfuss, the DCM, was. He was a very gifted writer and he could sit down and hammer out a sensible telegram that didn't read like Shakespeare, but it was logical, coherent, and he was very good. John had a drinking problem. He had been a Marine in World War II and had been on Iwo Jima and really never gotten over it. He couldn't talk about it very much without shaking. He liked Latin America and he served in a number of Latin American posts because the way he got to know the guys in the government and the colonels was, you'd go out drinking and whoring. It wasn't that he was unfaithful to his wife. I doubt if John ever did any whoring. But he liked to drink and he liked to go out with the guys, with the colonels. He was DCM in Guatemala. He was head of the Political Section in Guatemala and in Chile and a couple of other places and I think he must have been very good at developing these contacts. But in the West Indies, although the West Indians were great, it wasn't quite the same. He felt that he was going to be selected out of the Foreign Service because he was in a backwater.

Q: One of the things was that that was Latin America and this was all British. I would have thought that people there were completely out of sync in this non-Latin environment.

MACKLIN: Yes, and he was. He liked to speak Spanish. He missed the drinking. There was a USIS officer there, a PAO, who was out of the same mold, a guy named Wes Stuart, who was a nice guy, but also liked to drink. I'd get together at their house. They were very generous in having me over and so forth. But they basically drank and talked about how great it was to work in Latin America and how much they missed the colonels and all that stuff. John Dreyfuss made it very clear to me that the job wasn't going to be important enough and he was going to be selected out of the Foreign Service. He was a 3, which is now the equivalent of a 1.

Q: About a colonel.

MACKLIN: He would never make FSO-2 because he was in Barbados. The only chance he had of ever making the next promotion was if he could be the one who traveled the islands and did all this political reporting. I said, "Well, John, that's up to you guys. I'm new here. You guys tell me what you want to do." He said, "I need to be the one who does this." I said, "Well, it's okay with me." Eileen Donovan said, "No, you stay here. You're grounded. You run the embassy. He goes. You stay." Terribly upsetting to John Dreyfuss. He traveled with me once to Antigua. We went up there and stayed for four or five days. He'd start drinking in the morning. I just can't do that. It was kind of pitiful. The guy was very talented. He eventually died at the age of 60 of complications from drinking. In any event, there I was, in Barbados. The ambassador wanted me to travel around. I had a great time. I traveled to all these islands up and down the chain, introduced myself. A lot of them thought I worked for the CIA. So, I'd take along reams of visa applications, pass out visa applications. I was really the only guy at the embassy who traveled. All of the island governments are different. They all have different personalities. You wouldn't think so. They were all schooled in England. The Dominicans tend to be extremely xenophobic and it's hard to get to know and a quiet place. The island is very different than the other islands. It's volcanic rather than corral. It has 365 rivers. It's just one big rainforest. There is a very large

nature conservancy estate there protecting plants and animals. The prime minister would never talk to me. He was a fairly simple man but very suspicious. There was a family there. The leader of the opposition was very well educated and she later became prime minister. One of the two newspapers was run by a couple who had been very much involved in the literary scene in France in the '20s and knew F. Scott Fitzgerald and all those people and had been involved of the Federation of the West Indies. The prime minister of Dominica, whose name was Blank, was suspicious of anybody connected with the Federation. So, he did what he could to limit their political life. Antigua was absolutely totally thoroughly corrupt. The islands were all different.

I remember the Barbadians, one of the things they had was a small factory of about 300 people. American companies would take cotton gloves and cut them out and then would ship them down to Barbados, where they would be sewn together and then shipped back to the United States. That was just barely economic. There was a slight economic advantage to having these gloves sewn together in Barbados. Then one of Nixon's early measures to strengthen the U.S. economy was, he put a tariff on all foreign imports. So, this was impacted. That was considered a foreign import even though the gloves were an American company sent down there by an American company and so forth. So, with the tariff, that factory kind of folded. So, there were a lot of frustrations like that.

Q: I know you got married because you married one of my vice consuls, Sandy. Did that happen at this point?

MACKLIN: I was kind of going out with Sandy in Vietnam. I was direct transferred to Barbados. I wanted to go directly there. So, I went there. The ambassador kept making a big to-do out of how important it was to her to have a single political officer so you could travel and not worry about the family. She did that over and over and over. [break in tape] I got married in May. I went up and had home leave. We got married and she came back with me. She taught school at St. Stephens, a small private school there. Then we left there a few years later.

One of the interesting aspects of Antigua was the American expatriate population. There was a naval facility in Antigua. Coolidge Field, the airfield, was named for a pilot in the Army Air Corps. The hotel I used to stay at all the time called the Lord Nelson was owned by a guy named Nick Fuller. He was kind of an interesting piece of work and was very typical of the kinds of people you find in the West Indies, which collects all kinds of characters. Nick Fuller had gone to West Point and was in the class of 1945. When he graduated from West Point, the war was over. They found they had more officers than they had billets for. So, they were offered other opportunities in the U.S. government, including in Nick Fuller's case the diplomatic service. So, he entered the diplomatic service in 1946. His first assignment was in Antigua. He stayed there for two or three years. He had a naval group at his command with his own launch and so forth. One of his main functions as vice consul in Antigua was to dispose of U.S. government property in Antigua. They did this with a sealed bid system and got rid of a large BOQ complex and a lot of other properties. Although they kept the territory that the naval facility was on at the time I was in Barbados-

Q: It was one of those bases for destroyers.

MACKLIN: Exactly. That's where we got it. When they opened the bid for that BOQ and a lot of the beach property, who should have been the high bidder but Nick Fuller. Nick Fuller got the bid for that BOQ and for a bunch of that beach property. Really surprising. At the end of his three years in Antigua, he was reassigned to Colombia. He actually went to Colombia, but by then the inspectors had gone to Antigua and sort of checked things out and they caught up with Nick and said, "The way you conducted that closed bid, disposal of government properties was probably inconsistent with government regulation." Nick said, "Well, screw you. I quit." He went back to Barbados, turned the BOQ into a hotel and built another hotel along the beachfront. So, he ran this. The guy was incredibly well connected. Every time I'd stay there, I'd meet a different collection of characters. The mayor of Jersey City, who was later indicted for connections with the Mafia. There were Mafia guys who would come down and stay there. An Australian girl, Jill Something, who was the one who blew the whistle of the sergeants' mafia in Vietnam, stayed there for two or three weeks. She told me some wild stories about what it was like to deal with the sergeants and all these BOQs up and down Vietnam. She had two Australian rock bands and a Korean girls' band. Fascinating stories. There was a former editor of the "New Yorker." It was kind of a wild collection of people. Fuller was flamboyant and sort of had an in-your-face relationship with the government authorities in Antigua. He was a balsy kind of guy. He had a long portrait of Lord Nelson on the wall of the hotel. I asked him one time how he got it and he said he was in New York on other business and he noticed that portrait in a PanAm office in the Rockefeller Center. So, he liked it and went away and came back the next day, coat and tie, and walked in and asked to see the manager. He said, "I am from the home office. I am supposed to pick up that painting and take it over to the president of PanAm. He wants that painting. Give me a couple of your men. I want it now." There was something about Fuller that made people comply. So, they got a couple of workers out and took it down and said, "It's a great painting." He said, "Okay, put it in this taxi cab. Take me to the PanAm building" and left the two workers there. Then, of course, he went out to the airport and shipped it down to Antigua and there it was on his wall. He was that kind of a guy. He had strange connections. There were a lot of novelists who came down there.

Did I go over the CIA problems?

Q: I don't think so.

MACKLIN: About midway through the tour, there was an election in Barbados. The prime minister, Errol Barrow, was running for reelection and Tom Adams, who became the prime minister later on and whose father, Sir Grantley Adams, had been prime minister of the Federation of the West Indies that had fallen apart in the late '50s, ran against him and was leader of the opposition. He was an extremely articulate, very bright guy who was a very pale black and was considered a little bit elitist by some of the working class in Barbados. Although Tom Adams was more articulate and more interesting, Barrow won hands down. Barrow was kind of a rough guy who was smart and very West Indian. He liked to drink and chase women. Our ambassador was a very cultured lady from New England who had a very Catholic sense of propriety and felt that there were certain things you didn't talk about. The two of them, although they knew each other and had for a long time, there was a clash there. At one of the big campaign meetings in downtown Bridgetown, Errol Barrow made an offhand comment about the CIA and he wasn't going to let the CIA come down to Barbados and push anybody around. He

would say things like that. One time he said he was a good friend of Frank Sinatra's and he was going to bring Frank Sinatra down to campaign for him. Nobody took it very seriously. The DCM ran back to the embassy that night and reported those comments and then found the ambassador and she got upset about it. My advice was, "This election year rhetoric, just don't pay any attention to it." The CIA covered the West Indies from an office in Miami. There were no CIA operatives in the embassy, but they had the people out of Miami travel a lot. As they usually operate, they identified people on the islands who became paid informants. I knew who a lot of them were. I got to know the guys in Miami fairly well because they would come down about every three months and they were the only ones who really wanted to talk to me about what was going on. The ambassador was concerned with being aloof and with her role as an ambassador. The DCM, Peter Lord, was a nice guy but he was really concerned with his social life in Barbados. We almost never talked about what was going on on other islands. The CIA would come down and want to know about this or that leader, cabinet changes in St. Lucia or St. Vincent. They were really interested. When they came to town, they also paid a courtesy call on the attorney general or the head policeman in Barbados. They maintained a formal intelligence link in case there was any information that needed to be passed. The ambassador chose to believe that that relationship was being put in question. I said, "No, It's not really. Let's just leave them alone." Well, she insisted. She sent a couple of first person cables back saying she was going to get a clarification on this. She asked for an appointment to see the prime minister and he refused to see her. That kind of puffed out of context. It took about six months for it to finally blow over. This kind of silly stuff... Sometime after that, the CIA traveling guy came down and said, "There are things we're interested in above and beyond what the embassy is interested in. You're the only guy who really travels these islands. We'd like to bring you up to Miami and talk about what we do and maybe encourage you to do some additional reporting since nobody else seems to really do reporting." There was no real indication that the Caribbean desk ever read what I did. I did mostly airgrams in those days and a few telegrams, but they never asked me for clarifications or more information. The desk officer, the one time he came down on an orientation trip, could not remember who any of the leaders were or the capitals of the islands. It was all very depressing, but the CIA was really very interested. They asked me if I would come to Miami and they wanted to talk about additional reporting. Eileen Donovan got very upset with that and said I may not go. But she said, "Thank you very much. I'll go." So, she went up there and came back and basically said, "I don't want to have too much to do with those guys." At the same time, AIFLD (American Institute of Free Labor Development) was trying to expand their operation in the area and had an AIFLD guy placed in Trinidad. He was kind of a bozo but he was a nice guy, a black guy from New York with a strong labor background. She really didn't want him coming to Barbados because of AIFLD's past connection with events in Guyana with Cheddie Jagan and stuff like that. So, at the time I left, that was still kind of a point of contention. I always felt we could have worked together a little bit better.

Q: You left that...

MACKLIN: I left there in July of 1972.

PETER P. LORD

**Deputy Chief of Mission
Bridgetown (1970-1974)**

Peter P. Lord was born in Italy in 1929. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1952 he served in the US Navy from 1952-1955. Later on, he earned his master's degree from Columbia University in 1965. His career has included positions in Khorramshahr, Caracas, Arequipa, Lima, Bridgetown, Lusaka, and Yaoundé. Mr. Lord was interviewed by Lambert Heyniger, in April 1998.

LORD: ...When we got to Washington they asked how would I like to be DCM in Barbados because the DCM there, John Dreyfuss, now deceased, had been suddenly moved, I think, to Guatemala City, requested by whoever was ambassador there at the time. Not knowing much about Barbados but being attracted by the title of DCM I said, "Why not?" So, off we went to Bridgetown and found it busy, interesting, a great place to be, a very enjoyable assignment, one of our favorites.

Q: Before we get there, I believe often in the Foreign Service, the ambassador or principal officer is quite interested in who is being assigned to his or her post. In this case you are going down there to be the ambassador's deputy, did you know the ambassador?

LORD: The ambassador was Eileen Donovan, a career Foreign Service officer, who had previously been consul general in Barbados during an earlier time before independence. She was suddenly being faced with having to replace her DCM and there not being much choice. She asked me if I would be interested. I think she was really quite worried that the Department would assign someone to Bridgetown who didn't want to go. In fact, my predecessor there, I think, who was much more of a Latino oriented political officer much preferred to go off to Guatemala City.

Q: You were a Latino type yourself by this time.

LORD: Well, I didn't know what it would be like, but I assured her that the job appealed to me. She said, "Okay," and down I went.

Q: What was Bridgetown like?

LORD: Bridgetown in those days was a more pleasant and manageable embassy and place to live in than it has become since. This was before the U.S. intervention in Grenada, before we had an AID mission in Barbados. We had a small USIA office which was closed when I was there. I seem to bring closings wherever I go.

Q: Why?

LORD: USIA was cutting back. We had a large Peace Corps for the eastern Caribbean program which was headquartered in Barbados. The mission was not too big, it was quite small as a matter of fact.

Q: I think we should also mention, should we not, that you were not just an envoy to Barbados but also to a number of other islands.

LORD: There were six other islands which were “associated states” in association with Great Britain. These included from south to north, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua and St. Kitts.

Q: Which meant you had to do a great deal of traveling.

LORD: Well, somebody did and usually that was not I, unfortunately, although I did get to all the islands at least once. The leaders of all these states were usually strong personalities who had been in office for some time and the ambassador knew them from her previous tour as consul general, so she would go around whenever anything important had to be done. Otherwise, our one political officer was responsible for liaison with these island governments, so he traveled quite a bit. In addition, we also had in our consular jurisdiction two British crown colonies, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands. So, that added up to Barbados plus eight other islands, which was quite a long title for the ambassador.

Q: Did you have an economic officer?

LORD: We had an economic officer and an administrative officer. The busiest part of the embassy was the consular section because traditionally immigration to the U.S. from Barbados was high. The “Bajans” live on an overpopulated island. It is an island which is only 20 miles long and 16 miles wide, which makes it smaller than Rhode Island or Delaware. Barbadians are well educated and tend to emigrate. Money sent home by them has come to be an important source of national income. So, the consular section was quite busy. There was a consul, and two or three vice consuls.

Q: This is a new job for you and more of a supervisory and management position than what we would call a substantive position, what were your chief responsibilities?

LORD: They were the same as in any embassy. I was an alter ego to the ambassador and had to fill in when she was not there. As time went on, she spent more time away from the office, if not traveling or on home leave, just at home on the island because of health problems.

Q: So, you found yourself to some extent running the post?

LORD: Yes. It wasn't a difficult job and I enjoyed that. It was a busy job contrary to what many people might think, but it wasn't too busy, we had time to enjoy the island, the water sports and do some traveling.

Q: I remember because I visited you there, you had small children.

LORD: Yes. While in Lima our first two daughters were born and a third daughter was born in Bridgetown. This was a very easy place to bring up young children.

Q: Was your residence on the water? Could you go swimming all the time?

LORD: We were not right on the water but close to it and for young kids all you had to do was put them in a bathing suit and take them down to the beach every day. We had servants who made life easier for my wife. But, she also got quite involved with the local community, which is English speaking. People are very friendly there and don't have some of the hang ups and attitudes towards Americans that you find on some of the other islands where the racial composition of the population makes for much more friction both in their local politics and towards the American presence.

Q: I would like to pursue that a little further with you. For one reason or another I have visited a number of Caribbean islands myself, including Barbados and Jamaica. I see a rather significant difference between life and culture and people in Jamaica on the one hand and in Barbados on the other. Barbados struck me as a place where everyone seemed to be nicely dressed. The elderly Barbadian women when they went into town had crocheted gloves on and hats and everybody was nicely turned out. I got the impression that Barbados was a well established society. Is that true?

LORD: It's true that it is a civilized place and that it has taken its English inheritance seriously and adopted British ways up to the point that it is frequently called "Little England" just because it has some of the same conservative, well behaved attitudes towards getting along with each other. I suppose that has been breaking down gradually over time, particularly as lack of employment and economic problems assert themselves. But, at least when we were there it was a very friendly, easy place to get along and the people were nice in the sense you described.

Q: I wanted to ask you if Barbados, while you were there, got involved in any efforts towards Caribbean union, Caribbean federation. Was the local government trying actively and hard to promote closer relations with other islands? Was that a priority?

LORD: Not really. That had been tried and played out pretty much. The Federation of the West Indies involving Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados and the larger islands didn't get anywhere because of differences in size and costs and who should bear them. Barbados was under the leadership of Errol Barrow, who was the first prime minister after independence in 1966 and who had a second term. He won reelection while we were there. He was very much a strong, independently minded person who had been trained as a lawyer and economist and tended to see things in realistic and practical terms and always weighed decisions and policies in terms of what made sense for Barbados. Costs were always an important factor because Barbados is not a rich country.

Q: Was part of the problem that he and the Barbadian government were concerned that possibly federation would actually bring a lowering of the standard of living, a lowering of the economy in Barbados as other islands got more attention?

LORD: Not necessarily. Barbados is so small that it stands to benefit from becoming a part of a larger economic unit. But, it doesn't have much money to contribute.

Q: Barrow didn't see any particular benefits for Barbados?

LORD: No. He also didn't want to be upstaged or overwhelmed by the larger countries of Trinidad or Jamaica so he tended to go it alone.

Q: Let's shift focus a little bit. You mentioned that one of the other islands that you were responsible for was Grenada. Can you tell us anything about communist penetration of labor unions, particularly on the docks and in the harbor of Barbados? Any show of Cuban interest in getting involved in Barbados?

LORD: No, that wasn't a real threat or danger when I was there. The labor movement in Barbados was dominated by the Barbados Labor Union and was led by Mr. Frank Walcott, who was a member of the same party as Barrow. So, he was a senior member in the labor movement and in the parliament. Labor didn't get out of hand. Most of the private economic interests in Barbados were controlled by the traditional white elite.

Q: There is bauxite, for example, in Jamaica and therefore there is more labor unrest, more chances of the government having trouble with unions than would likely be the case in Barbados?

LORD: I don't know that you can blame it on bauxite. Usually mining industries like that pay a pretty good wage. The problem in Jamaica is you have two very competitive parties there and probably two competitive labor groupings and that may account for the labor unrest in Jamaica in part. Barbados has just one government-related union. The economy in Barbados had traditionally been based on sugar - harvesting sugarcane and refining it.

Q: I'm getting the idea that Barbados and Barbadians are possibly somewhat more conservative than might be the case with other islanders. Were there problems with regard to crime and American citizens being molested or attacked?

LORD: Very seldom. That has become more frequent, as I understand it, lately, but at the time we were there the economy was in fairly good shape, although I think it has gotten worse since then because sugar has continued to decline. Tourism has become bigger and bigger and provides the main source of income. But, that means there are a lot of tourists around and Barbados looks at tourism ambivalently because while they appreciate the money the tourists bring in, they don't like being overrun by largely white tourists who are taking precedence before anybody else while they are there. So, with the worsening of the economy and the increase in tourism, that means there will be more crime and resentment of whites.

Q: You were there for four years?

LORD: We were assigned for three and we liked it so much we stayed for four.

Q: Do you remember during that period any particular times when you had to make demarches to the Barbadian government on U.S.-Barbados issues or international OAS or UN issues?

LORD: Certainly there were a lot of UN issues taken up because Barbados was essentially a pro-western, pro-American government that thought the same way we did on many things, so Barbados' support was sought in the UN. I remember particularly the debate over whether the China seat should go to Red China or stay with the Nationalist Chinese. Barbados had established formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan and had a resident Chinese ambassador there who did a very good job. The Department called me in the evening one year when the vote was just about to come up. The country director back in Washington said that they really needed Barbados' vote this time around and could I find out what Barbados was going to do. This was after I had been there for a while and my contacts were well developed, so I was able to obtain assurance that evening from the foreign ministry that Barbados was expected to vote in favor of Nationalist China. I passed this along. And it did.

One of the bilateral questions that took a lot of our time while we were there was negotiating a new air transport agreement between the U.S. and Barbados. Errol Barrow was a pilot and had a strong interest in establishing a national airline. He wanted to get a route to the U.S. It was complicated by the fact that the tourist industry brought a lot of tourists on flights from the U.S. to Barbados and many of them on U.S. carriers. Barbados wanted to restrict U.S. carriers as leverage for getting its own route to the U.S. Formal negotiations were held in Bridgetown with U.S. government representatives who came down from Washington.

Q: They applied pressure in the sense that they said you can't have any more flights to Bridgetown unless we get a gateway in JFK?

LORD: That is what the arguments would be carried to an extreme but they were wise enough to know that they didn't want to deny U.S. flights and therefore U.S. tourists. They never did get agreement for their airline, which they finally established. It wasn't really a Barbados airline although it had the title and so forth. It was a plane leased from Freddy Laker's enterprise in Britain, as I recall, and the question revolved around what constituted an airline and whether this was just a temporary lease which didn't make it an airline. But, it did fly to Luxembourg via Iceland. I took it one time.

Q: Anything else that you would like to tell us about your tour in Bridgetown? You were there for four years. You must have practically developed webbed feet.

LORD: You asked about the communist influence. There wasn't any that amounted to anything anywhere in many of the islands. Antigua and Dominica had some pro-communist activists but they were kept pretty much boxed up and under close surveillance and didn't generate a large following. The New Jewel Movement, which developed in Grenada while I was still there under the leadership of Maurice Bishop, was more nationalist and leftist in some aspects than the existing government. Most of the time I was there, it was led by Eric Gairy, one of those old time leaders who was an autocrat and aristocrat. When Maurice Bishop did gain political power and was then executed by the movement backed by Cuba that led to the U.S. intervention, that did become a serious threat by Cuban backed forces. But that happened after I left. It happened fairly quickly. When I left in 1974, that was not a danger. I can't remember exactly when our intervention in Grenada occurred and Bishop was killed, but it was several years afterward.

Q: Yes. Also, it seems to me that in the context of the Caribbean that actually executing a government leader seems a very unusual thing to have happen.

LORD: It was.

Q: Barbados established diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1972. Did we make a substantial effort to try to persuade the Barbadian government not to do so?

LORD: Yes, we did. I don't remember now the circumstances of that recognition. I think it was probably an effort by Errol Barrow to show his independence of the U.S. and to assert his own Barbadian nationalism. A resident Cuban mission was not established in Barbados while I was there.

Q: Ambassador Donovan stepped down while you were there?

LORD: No, she was there when I arrived and still there when I left. She finished her tour shortly after I left and the new ambassador came later that same year, 1974.

Q: With a new DCM.

LORD: Yes, but he arrived after I left so we did not overlap.

Q: It is always unfortunate, isn't it, when both of the top two people leave and arrive at the same time. You enjoyed being a DCM in the Caribbean?

LORD: Yes, that was good fun. It was a good career move and a nice place to live because Barbados was such a pleasant place, both in climate and friendliness of the Barbadians. I might add that the one memory I have of one non political event was the erupting of the volcano in St. Vincent, which is a 100 miles due west of Barbados. St. Vincent is a charming little island with a 3,000 foot volcano called Mount Soufriere. It was a favorite place to take people who came to visit who liked this kind of adventure. The first time I climbed to the top of Soufriere was from the windward side with an old school friend who visited. There was a lovely cone in the top with a clear green lake in the crater.

Q: Did you go down in?

LORD: Yes. It seems to me we did go down and felt the water and even went for a swim. The next time I went over I took my wife along and two other visitors. We had an arduous climb up from the leeward side on a much hotter day. We got to the top to find that the clear green lake had turned to a light grey. Steam was rising from the crater lake with a strong sulfurous smell. We concluded that the volcano was becoming active and we shouldn't stick around very long, so we didn't. We went back to the hotel we were staying at which was run by an American who had been there a number of years and who had an interest in nature and its forces. We reported this to him and asked him to report it to the authorities. I don't know what happened but it never got reported and the fact that the volcano was becoming active was relayed by a pilot of a small

plane who happened to fly over and noticed it. So, I didn't get credit for this discovery; somebody else did.

It didn't erupt violently. What happened was that an island of molten lava appeared in the center of the lake and, fortunately, the plug was never blown at that time. I went back later a third time and saw this island of volcanic material in the center of the crater. But Soufriere has been a problem ever since. There have been periods when it has threatened to erupt and when they have actually evacuated the population from the northern end of the island where the volcano is, but I don't think it has erupted violently with a lot of ash the way the volcano in Montserrat did just recently or the way Mont Pelee did in Martinique in 1906, or thereabouts.

Q: What do you think is going to happen with Montserrat? I think they have wanted to evacuate all of the inhabitants for a while.

LORD: The southern part of the island where the capital, Plymouth, is located has been almost completely destroyed by the ash which is many feet deep. I think all the buildings, the capitol and docks, etc. from what I read have been abandoned, and they are hoping to rebuild in the northern end of the island, which is less likely to be affected by future volcanic activity.

Q: I gather you didn't go swimming on your second and third trips up the Soufriere?

LORD: No.

EDAWRD M. FEATHERSTONE
Economic Officer
Bridgetown (1973-1976)

Mr. Featherstone was born in New York City and raised there and in Japan. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania and serving in the US Army, in 1961 he entered the Foreign Service. As a Japanese language and area specialist Mr. Featherstone served primarily in Japanese posts, including Kobe-Osaka, Yokohama, Niigata, Okinawa (Consul General) and Tokyo. He also served in Barbados and in Washington. Mr. Featherstone was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1999.

Q: You were sent to Barbados in 1973.

FEATHERSTONE: That's right. I went out to Barbados and we were in the West Indies for about three years.

Q: You were an economic officer, I gather?

FEATHERSTONE: I was an economic officer. I took the economic course, the economics course as they called it, at FSI. I didn't know what I was going to do after that. Everybody was

telling me that it was good to get into the economic sphere of thing. So, I took the economics course. Unlike a lot of my colleagues, I had had a fair amount of Mathematics and what not, so I didn't have much trouble with the course.

Q: *Was this a six-month course?*

FEATHERSTONE: Yes, a six-month course.

Q: *That was intensive.*

FEATHERSTONE: It was a very intense course. Actually, it was a very good course. It was one of the better things the department did, I think. Luckily, even though I had flunked out of pre-med long ago, I still retained the math and science. It took me through the ECON course somewhat more easily than some of my colleagues.

Q: *How large was the embassy in Barbados?*

FEATHERSTONE: Very small. We had myself, and I think about four other officers.

Q: *Plus the ambassador.*

FEATHERSTONE: Plus the ambassador.

Q: *Wasn't it Eileen Donovan?*

FEATHERSTONE: No. She was later. Oh, wait a minute, I'm trying to determine when Eileen came along. Eileen was first, I guess. You are right. It was Eileen and then it was a black fellow, Theodore Roosevelt Brittan. He was originally from South Carolina, or someplace like that. But, he had lived in New York for the past 20, 30 years. Anyway, he was the ambassador. He was a dreadful man. He had three or four women come in, accusing him of being the father of their illegitimate children.

Q: *Barbadian women?*

FEATHERSTONE: Yes. He was the ambassador. I think that is when I started to take another look at the Foreign Service, and what was happening to it. I didn't like what I was seeing. Anyway, this guy was venal, corrupt, a liar, among other things.

Q: *Not really the best recommendations for an ambassador, let me say. Wasn't this known before he became the ambassador?*

FEATHERSTONE: Pretty much. Certainly, the Barbadians knew it. The head of state, the prime minister tried to get rid of him. I don't know whether the department was trying to show their stuff, but they didn't. They left him there. The result is the relations we had with Barbados were terrible, awful.

Q: *Were you the only economic officer or did you have any assistance there?*

FEATHERSTONE: I was the only economic officer as such. We had a couple of consular officers. We had one or two cultural types, USIS types. But, yes I was the only economic officer.

Q: *There was certainly a DCM?*

FEATHERSTONE: Yes. The DCM was... Gosh, I can't remember.

Q: *It doesn't matter, as long as there was a DCM there. Was the embassy limited only to the island of Barbados or did you have other territories?*

FEATHERSTONE: The embassy on Barbados was accredited to seven of the windward islands, including some famous ones, such as Grenada. These were places we visited. As the economic officer, I visited all of them regularly. My favorite happened to be Grenada. But, I knew the leaders and most of the people who were in these various islands fairly well. They had their own agendas in a way. They were looking for development. They were looking for more tourism. They were looking for handouts in the United States, but they didn't get them. We weren't giving them at the time, and weren't about to. That was one of the problems. We always had to dampen down expectations that they might get something out of us. That is another quibble I had with Brittan. He was always making statements to the effect of "Someday, we are really going to let you have what you need to put your country in high gear." It was never going to happen.

Q: *Promises, promises.*

FEATHERSTONE: That's right. He wanted to make them feel good.

Q: *What were your main problems as economic officer there?*

FEATHERSTONE: Theodore Roosevelt Brittan.

Q: *I see. That answers that one. Were there any problems with drugs at the time?*

FEATHERSTONE: There were some drugs. Some of the consular people that I talked with, would speak of Americans getting in trouble with drugs and what not. I don't think it was a great big deal, though. It was mostly pot, smoking it and that sort of thing. I don't think people were heavily into it. As I understand, people are now, down in the Caribbean. You are liable to get yourself blown away because they have all kinds of traffic.

Q: *It wasn't a route for drugs to the U.S. or anything?*

FEATHERSTONE: No. It was not. I never got too much involved with the drug stuff, other than talking to some of the consular people, who came across it. I remember when I was a consular officer, getting involved in it a couple times, because people were smoking pot. But, in Japan, you can get seven years for pot. So, it is a big deal. We would have these people come in and say,

“Gee, this is the only time I ever smoked pot. I have never done this in my life before.” You find out, later on, that this is their tenth time up or something like that.

Q: Did you get any Congressional visits to Barbados?

FEATHERSTONE: I think we had a couple, not many though. I think we had one or two. I can't even remember who they were. There were no big problems, as I recall. I think some of them just came down here because it was a nice place to be.

Q: During the winter, yes.

FEATHERSTONE: But, they came down and we always entertained them, of course. We took them around to see things. We had a small naval base in Barbados, a U.S. naval base. I believe, it was sort of a listening type of thing, where electronically, they would tune in on various places and what not. Then, we had maybe 10 or a dozen naval personnel there.

Q: I wanted to ask you about naval visits, whether you had any.

FEATHERSTONE: I don't think we had many naval visits. As I say, we had this naval group there. Of course, we saw them all the time, and were friends with them. They had a little commissary, or PX, what have you. We used to be able to use that.

Q: In the embassy field, did the Department pay much attention to Barbados?

FEATHERSTONE: No, they didn't pay much attention at all, except when Brittan's antics got them into some kind of trouble. They took a stand on that.

Q: Was there any Cuban influence, at the time, on the island?

FEATHERSTONE: Yes. Later on, there was. As a matter of fact, after I left, they had a thing where they were going to get flights to Cuba landing in Barbados. There was a big outcry about that. Britain, of course, claimed that it was his doing that got that squelched. I don't think it was he, but they did finally get that back on track. There was no presence there.

Q: How were we Americans regarded by the Barbadians, in general?

FEATHERSTONE: Well, most of the Bajans, as they call themselves, would like to be in the United States. As a matter of fact, many of them were. They would get a visa and once they got a visa and got to New York, they had relatives there. They would stay there, of course. I don't blame them, what the hell. I would do the same thing myself if I were in Barbados. That is probably how my ancestors came from some far off village.

Q: All of ours did. Did we give any military assistance to Barbados?

FEATHERSTONE: Not when I was there, although we did later on, after I left. We got very interested in it. Of course, this was after Grenada and all these things happened. They started, big

time, giving Barbados some weaponry, and military training. Things that were never thought of before. That was after my time there.

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

A New Yorker, Ambassador Britton was educated at New York University and served in the US Marine Corps in World War II and in the Korean War. Primarily a banker by profession, he served at a senior level in many Government Departments and Agencies including, among others, Department of Housing and Urban Development, US Information Agency and Veterans' Administration. In his career outside of the US Government, Ambassador Britton has served as President of United Mutual Life Insurance Company and President of the Association of Black American Ambassadors. From 1974 to 1977 he served as US Ambassador to Barbados and Grenada and as US Special Representative to the Caribbean Associated States. Ambassador Britton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

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

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

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

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

Q: Where was the embassy located on Barbados?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: His name was Errol Barrow.

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

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

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

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

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

BRITTON: Prime Minister Barrow sometimes campaigned against the US on the basis that the CIA was attempting to destabilize many of these countries because of their relationships with other countries, particularly Cuba. He did not hold very much brief for Cubans, per se, but he respected Cuba's right to exist as a country. As a result, anything that infringed on Cuba had its effect on other countries down there. Each country was expected to not be friendly with Cuba, and Barbados asserted its independence of that. So he was constantly concerned that the CIA might do things to undermine Barbados' status. I presume, other than the commercial side of it

when the Cuban flights were coming through Barbados en route to Angola, it was as much of a defiant show of friendship or independence as it was for the commercial benefits. As I say, he was constantly railing against that. Personally, he was friendly to me. We had a little situation at one point, but we were always the best of friends.

Q: What was that situation?

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

In seeking to set up this airline, it did not meet the test that the then American Civil Aeronautics Board required of a foreign carrier. It must be 51% owned by foreign nationals, and so forth. Barbados said it had purchased its airline for \$250,000, which normally gets you a good supply of gasoline for the airline. By the way, the name of the organization was Caribbean International Airways, which in the Lexicon of an abbreviation of international carriers would have made it CIA. [Laughter] So they changed it to International Caribbean Airways.

The CAB was not impressed with the presentation made to them and insisted on additional information, so they would not give Barbados clearance to land, or recognition as Barbados' national carrier. With that, they refused to give American Airlines a long-term, you know, considerable rights. They gave them a three-months landing right--and also Eastern Airlines. I then went public with a protest that American carriers were being singled out for discriminatory treatment. I'm against discrimination of any kind. That then caused a reaction from them. I said that I thought they ought to rethink that, and not put the carrier in the position of having to make a choice between the Bicentennial traffic and Barbados.

There was a great need for domestic carriers on the American scene because of the bicentennial, and it would have been very easy then to shift, because they have to make deployments of materials, and people, and equipment, and so forth. I said that it was my considered judgment that the general counsels or attorneys for airlines would not let them make long-term commitments based on a three-month flying permit, that they would tend to be a little bit more cautious. I thought this would hurt Barbados, and I suggested strongly that they should reconsider it, because it really was not helping Barbados. Well, they took it on the basis that I was interfering in the internal affairs of Barbados, and the P.M. attacked me on radio, TV and--Rediffusion the wired radio down there--and said that if I didn't like it, I could always pack up and go home. I had calls from throughout Barbados to say that I was right. Interestingly, it turned out that the entire airline industry, British Airways and others, had been undergoing some of this same kind of, for lack of a better word, harassment, uncertainty. So they were happy that someone had finally spoken out, and they and other foreign carriers suddenly called me to thank me for speaking up on their behalf. I became sort of a hero of the airline industry. I never had to worry about a first-class seat anytime I took a plane going anywhere. [Laughter]

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

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

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

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

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

BRITTON: Very much so.

Q: What happened?

BRITTON: We were getting the regular requests from the State Department to protest to the Barbadians that this was an unfriendly act of sorts, you know, to allow the Cubans to land in Barbados and to continue these flights. The notes were going over, representations were being made to the foreign minister, but nothing was being done. Actually, the prime minister also held the defense portfolio. By the way, he died in 1987, I believe. A very untimely loss. He was a good person. But I can say this now, although we were making the representations, they were not getting very far. I always remember that one day--it might have been in mid-summer or early summer--we were having lunch, just the three of us, Earl Barrow, his wife and myself. It was his birthday--again, a measure of our friendship that we were having lunch over at the prime minister's mansion. I said, "Errol, I can appreciate the situation Barbados has been in. When the Cubans come through, you charge them landing rights, you sell them fuel, you sell them food, you sell them cigarettes, whiskey, almost anything that they want to buy, and you take in a goodly amount of money. Believe me, as a small country, I can understand that this is necessary, and that you do have a need for funds. You don't get that much support from other governments in terms of economics." I said, "However, it is beginning to move towards the tourist season, and you're going to get a large number of tourists coming down. As you know, your largest number of tourists at this moment are from America, and next Canada, and Europe. God forbid it should happen, but if one of these nights one of these Cuban planes lands here and it gets blown up or something like that, your tourists are going to fly to the four winds. Now, God forbid it should

happen. In fact, I would never want to see anything like that happen here. But you are pushing it to the limit, that you can create, as far as I'm concerned, problems for Barbados. I'm speaking to you only as a friend. I think you may want to reconsider it, and suggest that maybe it's time to take your winnings and that's about it."

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, there are those representatives who are in the United Nations who have a great deal of autonomy and, either because of abdication or absence of influence from their home country, are sufficiently powerful that they can take an independent position, because they have that kind of

relationship with their people back home. So this is actually how it works. If the US wants a given position, number one, the impetus will come from the Secretary of State, probably with the support of the US U.N. representative. But it means several ways of achieving support from the home country, as well as from the local country. Sometimes, obviously, there are quid pro quos.

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

BRITTON: Yes.

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

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

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

BRITTON: Yes it is. Grenada is too.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: Diefenbaker.

BRITTON: Diefenbaker. They were regular visitors to Barbados.

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

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

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

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

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

BRITTON: There were times when they had problems, but basically their problems were minor. I remember that I earned the hostility of one of my officers down there. An American called him on Sunday morning to ask him for help, because he needed some proof for one of his children to get back into the States and he had none. His children weren't being allowed on the airplane because one didn't look exactly like him, you know, and his wife, they being blond, he was brunette. So it was something in which I really felt that the embassy should have gone out of its way to help him. The duty person refused to deal with him, and told him to come into the office on Monday morning. Well, if you miss a plane on Sunday morning, and you come into the office on Monday morning, you will not go out until Tuesday morning.

Q: Very expensive.

BRITTON: Yes, expensive and inconvenient. Secondly, we're in there to look out for American interests, as far as I'm concerned, and American interests start with your individual voters. He came in and, of course, we took care of him. I was a little bit concerned that the duty person did

not go out of his way. I said, "Now, anytime you need time off you can get it, if there was a real problem say, other kinds of problems, you could have worked out something else. But you're the person on duty. If you don't do it, who will?" But it didn't go down well then, and it later came back to haunt me. This person made some disparaging remarks about me later. But that's the kind of thing that you get.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: We don't have to talk about this, but you alluded to the fact that you had problems with the duty officer who later caused you problems. What I'm really looking at is how the system works, for somebody who doesn't know anything about the State Department. Can you give some idea what the problem was?

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

John said, "Yes, I appreciate it."

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

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

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

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

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

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

BRITTON: Of course, there's a problem too, if you're speaking for the education or edification of future appointees. If the ambassador does not try to run every detail of the embassy himself, he can keep a sort of dispassionate view of how things are done and rely upon his subordinates, particularly his deputy, to run things, and he can keep a sort of overall, generalized view, and look to his deputy for the performance and proper evaluation. Now, that's always tricky. It works both ways.

Let's say, for example, in my case, I had some hostility to this person in Barbados because of his performance or his approach to things, and that might have been strictly the prerogative my deputy. As it was, my deputy agreed, and he agreed not because he was the kind of person who was currying favor by agreeing, but because he was professional enough to feel this way. As a result, of course, my action should have been his action, perhaps. By taking that action, I opened myself up, because here, after two years, I was still--in fact, less than two years--in a sense, the novice mistreating a career professional. I love the career professionals, and I have great respect

for them. In fact, that was part of my problem. I could not understand how a person such as that person could survive.

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

JOHNNY YOUNG
Administrative Officer
Georgetown (1977-1979)

Ambassador Young was born in Georgia and raised in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. He was educated at Temple University and entered the Foreign Service in 1967. Before being named Ambassador, Mr. Young served in a number of embassies in the administrative field, including Madagascar, Guinea, Kenya, Qatar, Barbados, Jordan and the Netherlands. In 1989 he was named US Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 1992. He subsequently served as US Ambassador to Togo (1994-1997), Bahrain (1997-2001) and Slovenia (2001-2004). Ambassador Young was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

YOUNG: My career counselor at that time was Mary Ryan. I remember we were going back and forth and she said to me, "I assure you before I leave this job I'm going to get you a good onward assignment. You deserve it after being in that place for three years." Because at that time Qatar had a reputation of being not a very nice place. There was nothing there. It was hot as hell and it was just considered a real hardship. It was and we were getting 25% hardship differential and we deserved it. She worked on various possibilities for me and she finally nailed down Bridgetown, Barbados as my reward, a three-year assignment there. So we went to Bridgetown. The ambassador at that time was Frank Ortiz and the deputy chief of mission was John Eddy.

We arrived in the summer. We moved immediately into a hotel, the Southern Palms Hotel located right on the beach, I mean a holiday setting if ever there was one. Our children were seven and five. They thought they had died and gone to heaven. When it got time for us to move into a regular house they said, what for? They said, this is just heaven. What are we going to move into a regular house for? They swam everyday; they were on the beach everyday. They just loved it and we also loved it, but it was no fun living in a hotel for over three months. We found a house. We rented it. It was the first posting we had been to where the government had not provided furniture, so we had to buy our own furniture. At that time we were able to buy furniture under the government contract. My wife and I scraped the money together and we bought a three bedroom set of Drexel furniture under the government contract and had it shipped to Barbados. We furnished our house with it and we had a very lovely home, up on the top of a hill overlooking the ocean. It was wonderful.

Q: You were in Barbados from '77 to when?

YOUNG: '77 to '79.

Q: Frank Ortiz, its interesting that Frank Ortiz was a regular Foreign Service Officer, was ambassador there because that's the sort of place they usually toss to some political appointee.

YOUNG: They had. In fact Frank was sent to clean up the mess.

Q: Free political ambassadors and then you send a professional to clean it up.

YOUNG: We had an ambassador there who was a disgrace. He was a mess. An absolute mess. His reputation was that he was in every hole and alley and corner of Barbados and that can be a good thing dependent on how its done, but this was not in the most flattering way shall we say. He had gotten into fights with people in the embassy. Shortly before we arrived there he had locked the political officer out of the embassy. He had gotten rid of a couple of officers. He had made some changes to the residence that made parts of it look like it was rented out by the hour and things like that. He had painted every wall in the embassy sort of like sea blue. It was just unbelievable.

Q: What was his background?

YOUNG: Well, he had been an educator and a person involved in development work and what have you. He was a black Republican and that was his reward. Barbados. So, Frank was sent to clean up the mess because the mission was demoralized, unhappy, the ambassador had earned a very bad reputation in the country and the Department wanted a major improvement in that situation so they sent Frank and he made a difference. He was a wonderful ambassador. He did a great job, established excellent rapport with the Bajans they're called.

Q: What are they called?

YOUNG: Bajans, Barbadians are called Bajans.

Q: B-E-?

YOUNG: Bajans. B-A-J-A-N-S. Bajan. Excellent relationship. At that time Barbados was, and I think still is, a symbol of great stability in the Caribbean region. It is the oldest democracy, really a true practicing democracy in the region. It was a symbol that we wanted to use in expanding this kind of stability and success to other countries in the region as well, particularly in Trinidad. Jamaica was going to hell in a handbasket at that time and needed every example it could possibly get. I found it a very nice place, wonderful people, but given the breadth of work that I had carried out in Qatar, I found it dull, the work was not interesting.

Q: You were the administrative officer.

YOUNG: I was just the administrative officer there and I didn't find it that satisfying. After a short time I decided that three years of that would just not be my cup of tea and I asked that my

assignment be curtailed to two years which it was. Now, after the curtailment, things began to become a little bit more exciting in the region. I was asked to travel to a number of the islands that were talking about independence to look over the situation in order to prepare for American delegations that would attend the independence celebration of these different countries. I traveled to Saint Lucia, Dominica, and Antigua to find out what they had in the way of hotels and restaurants and this and that and talked to the leaders of the countries to get a sense of where things were going and that was exciting. Things were beginning to happen. It made the assignment more interesting. Then we had a couple of other things that happened there that were fascinating.

There was a coup on the island of Grenada. There was a U.S. medical school there. Our concerns of course were for all American citizens on that island in the face of a coup, but we were particularly concerned about the students who were attending the medical school there. The ambassador wanted to know how we could get some information on what was going on. I had met a young man and his wife earlier when they were visiting Barbados. The woman had been a secretary in the embassy in Barbados and she subsequently married. The fellow she married had entered the Foreign Service. They were passing through when I met them on the way to his first assignment, which was to Caracas. I knew that he was from Grenada. I said to Ambassador Ortiz, "You know we have a fellow in our embassy in Caracas named Roland Bullen. You should contact the ambassador there and see if he would release Roland and allow him to travel to Grenada and then he could get information and send it to us." He did that and it was a great success. Not only was Roland able to get into Grenada and get the information, it turned out his brother was appointed a minister in the New Jewel movement government.

Q: Was that new jewel.

YOUNG: The New Jewel movement government.

Q: Very kooky.

YOUNG: So, that's what happened. That was really a great thing and that worked out very well. Roland has subsequently of course gone on to bigger and better things. He's now our ambassador in Guyana. One other remarkable event was a volcanic eruption on the island of Saint Vincent. One night my wife and I were coming back from a function and we said, my God, we can't believe it is snowing on the island of Barbados because it looked just like snow. I mean we saw all this white stuff coming down and thought, my God, this is very unusual. Then the report came out that this volcano had erupted on the island of Saint Vincent. Again we had concerns about the U.S. citizens there and an evacuation.

The first of the countries to become independent was Dominica, I'll never forget because I remember Pat Kennedy came out to help with the U.S. delegation. He accompanied the U.S. delegation on that trip. That was interesting because it was the first time I had ever attended an independence celebration. It was quite moving. At midnight when the British flag was lowered and the new flag of Dominica was raised, they played God Save the Queen. A member of the American delegation gave me a little nudge and said, "You know, why are they playing My Country This of Thee?" I had to explain to him what that was all about.

We left Barbados in the summer of 1979. Before going I went to the independence celebration of Saint Lucia and again received the American delegation and supported them throughout that exercise and again attended that celebration. That was memorable because Princess Margaret was the representative from the British government. These little children had rehearsed all day long for days for the presentation they were going to make when Princess Margaret made her appearance. We waited and waited and waited and those kids were in the sun and they waited and waited and she never showed up. I thought it was just absolutely awful. I thought it was just terrible. She never showed up for that. Then they continued on with the ceremony. That was it. That was indicative of the kind of person that she was. On various events, even when she came to Dominica, you saw the same thing.

Q: She was very much sort of the indulgent aloof person. She didn't see any sense of duty.

YOUNG: Not at all. I saw her actually in Dominica where she was supposed to officiate. In Saint Lucia it was Princess Alexandra who came out and it was like night and day. I remember we made the comparison and we said, my God, this is a pro in Princess Alexandra.

Q: Did you note while you were in Barbados and other places, I guess in Jamaica it was more pronounced, but was there a racial element taking over, was there a sort of a white colonialist group that was being displaced?

YOUNG: No, not in Barbados. In Barbados there was a long-standing community of white Barbadians. They were not all well off by any means. In fact they were called red legs and some of them were very poor. They were beginning to find their way off the island through immigration to England to the United States and to other places. There was a community of them there. They were well entrenched. Some of them had good businesses. Some of them were also professionals, doctors. They were not the overwhelming element in terms of their influence in the country. They were important, they were there, they had a history there, but no, we didn't run into great racial problems there. The other thing I might add is we didn't run into some of the problems that you find today in Barbados. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) didn't exist.

Q: The disease.

YOUNG: The disease, yes, it didn't exist at that time. Or crime. We had minor break-ins now and then, no kind of assaults, no murders, that sort of thing. It wasn't a high crime wave. It was, however, beginning to be a transshipment point for narcotics. We were running into an increasing number of cases involving transshipments from further down in Latin America or through other points in the Caribbean using Barbados as a transshipment point. I remember we had one case involving a very well known family who had come through and someone had sent a box of dolls to this family. I don't know if it was in Canada or the United States. This package was addressed to the maid at one of their estates somewhere and the police knew what was in it and when the maid went to get it they nabbed her. Then revealed that inside the dolls there was marijuana or whatever the drug was. They were able to establish really that the maid had absolutely nothing to do with it. It was somebody else's. But I mean that kind of thing was

beginning to happen. Now it's a major concern to us. As a matter of fact I think we even have DEA people assigned to the mission in Barbados.

Q: Also in places that had the cruise ship industry sort of started there or was there much of that at the time?

YOUNG: The cruise ships were coming. You know Barbados has some incredible hotels, I mean unbelievable hotels and golf courses and a wonderful stretch of residences for the very well to do. Frank Sinatra and Claudette Colbert and so on. They'd have their beach homes there. Princess Margaret, Oliver Messel, the famous set designer had his spectacular house there. So, many very well known Americans had just gorgeous places there. They were lovely and they still have them and even more have been built. Sandy Lane Hotel, one of the top hotels of the world, is still there. It's gotten bigger and better, way beyond my means.

One thing we liked was that on Sundays we could go to mass and then after mass we'd select a hotel and go to the beach. Each Sunday it was a different hotel and it was a lot of fun. You know, only so much of that and you get tired of it.

DONALD A. CAMP
Political Officer
Bridgetown (1979-1981)

Donald Camp was born in New York in 1948. He received his BA from Carleton College and an ND from University of Chicago. He joined the Foreign Service in 1974. His overseas assignments include Colombo, Bridgetown, Beijing, Chengdu, and Kathmandu. His sister, Beatrice Camp, is also a Foreign Service Officer. Mr. Camp was interviewed by David Reuther in 2012.

Q: Now, after your 18 months in the Operations Center, in early '79 you move out of Washington to an assignment to Bridgetown, Barbados. Here you were, in NEA at the time when you're in Sri Lanka. You're S-SO. Now you're touching bases with another bureau. How does that come about?

CAMP: Yeah, I don't remember where else I bid for that assignment. I'm sure I bid back in the Near East Bureau and East Asia. But the Bridgetown opportunity came up and it was kind of interesting. My friends almost to a man, or woman, said, "You don't want to sign up with the Caribbean. That's not where it's happening. There's nothing happening down there, it's a dead end for your career. You'll never get promoted out of Bridgetown."

And I said, "Well, gee, I want to go to the Caribbean" I told someone jokingly that my Foreign Service Career was a search for the perfect beach. But it was more than that. I honestly was intrigued by the whole area, the cultural area. They offered me the job, and what was important to me was I was the sole Political Officer there. We were the embassy to four countries and three dependencies, but by the time I left two years later it was seven countries. They were still

gaining independence from the British Empire. And I really felt like I would have free rein, reporting on all those seven countries, and that really appealed to me. And in fact, it worked out that way. It was a very eventful two years in the Caribbean. I don't regret those two years, not the least because I became engaged to my wife there, but it was an unusual out of area excursion for me.

Q: Fair enough. So when you get to this embassy, who's there and who's the ambassador, what was he like to work with?

CAMP: The ambassador for the first year or so was a career Foreign Service Officer by the name of Frank Ortiz. He had made his career in the Latin America Bureau. He was very professional. He was replaced by the young political wunderkind of the bureau, Sally Shelton, who was I think at the time the youngest Deputy Assistant Secretary, certainly in a regional bureau. She arrived in June of 1979.

I wasn't really with Frank Ortiz that long. It was a very eventful six months for me because very soon after I arrived the Grenada coup took place. The New Jewel Movement, which was seen by Washington, not unreasonably, as close to Cuba, took power. I was in Grenada at the time of the coup. I had been sent by the ambassador to accompany three representatives of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, who were going to Grenada to inform the government of Eric Gairy that someone was smuggling arms into Grenada and that we suspected a coup. I met Eric Gairy. He was leaving Grenada at that time and we met him at Bridgetown Airport, the ambassador and myself, and briefed him on this. And he said, "Go and find out what's going on."

I and the ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms) agents got on the plane, landed in Grenada half an hour later, and the coup took place that day. I'm convinced the coup plotters knew that they were about to be exposed. And also, by the way, Prime Minister Eric Gairy had just left the island for a trip to the United States. So we were on the island as this chaos was taking place. The ATF officers were startled, shall we say, that their trip had been interrupted this way. This was either my first or second trip to Grenada. I didn't know the island particularly well. I was one month into my tour. In retrospect, I wish I had stayed and made an initial contact with the coup plotters, but the ATF people wanted to get off that island. And so we actually went to the port and talked our way onto a Holland America cruise liner that was in port. And so we left the island that evening, as the coup was successfully taking place. It was a day of great chaos in Grenada. We went back to Bridgetown. Washington, of course, at this point was frantic that this Cuban group had taken over an island in the Caribbean. Frank Ortiz wanted to establish a relationship with the New Jewel Movement, and quite rightly. But the first thing he did set our foot very wrong. He offered something like \$25,000 of assistance, which was all that an American Ambassador could offer at that time without Washington's permission. And \$25,000 was worse than peanuts to the new government in Grenada, which had of course very little interest in catering to us. And this became immediately a symbol of how America is treating the new government – offering a petty \$25,000 in assistance. And this established a relationship that unfortunately continued very rockily for the rest of my tour in Bridgetown. Someone in the department, very smartly, sent us a TDY'er (temporary duty), who was a Grenadian American in the Foreign Service, named Roland Bullen, later Ambassador to Guyana, who was actually

related to one of the coup plotters. Grenada is a small society and Roland had left Grenada after high school and was of the same generation. So he knew them all. He was sort of the temporary Political Officer to Grenada in the early days. He did a great job. Nevertheless, for a lot of reasons, it was a very rocky time, partly because of Washington politics, but partly because the New Jewel Movement themselves had very little interest in establishing a relationship with us.

Q: This is absolutely fascinating, because the embassy in Barbados is also responsible for Grenada, Dominica, and the other islands. So the only time we have a presence in these other places is when somebody from Bridgetown goes and visits or is there an on-island liaison office?

CAMP: We had no sort of liaison office on any of the islands at the time. I think years later we established small missions in Grenada and Antigua. That's what made the job so fascinating, apart from the Grenada coup. When you visited the island on your circuit riding, you were the embassy. You were usually received by the Prime Minister and the opposition leader. You were the source for everything, asked questions about visas, about commercial opportunities, about anything in our bilateral relations. You were the embassy for a day or two on Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Antigua. It was the same thing when the Head of the Consular Section went to one of the islands: he was expected to be the Political Officer as well as the Visa Officer. So we got out as often as we could, but it was a small embassy and a lot was happening on those islands.

Q: But I think your point was what a great opportunity to learn Foreign Service skills. Because you were it.

CAMP: Right. After the Grenada coup we were very conscious of what we would now call non-state actors. There was a similar takeover of a little tiny place called Union Island in the Grenadines, which was very close to Grenada physically just a couple months after the New Jewel coup in Grenada. And I was sent out to be the liaison to the coup plotters. The coup lasted all of 24 hours, I think, on a tiny island of maybe a thousand people. More significantly, in 1981, there was a coup attempt in the island of Dominica, which was -- like Grenada -- a real country. It was a member of the United Nations and this was an attempt to overthrow a fairly friendly government in Dominica. We had no idea what was going on there. I was told by the Ambassador, "Get to Dominica." There were no planes going in because of the coup. She wanted someone there on the ground to find out what was going on. So I flew to Martinique, which is the island next to Dominica, but not in our consular district, and went to the port and rented a fishing boat to go across to Dominica. It was the only way I knew how. And in retrospect it was kind of scary. It was not easy, particularly because I speak very minimal French, the language of Martinique. But I rented this boat, went across, and landed after dark in a little fishing village well south of the capital, Scotts Head, where I was immediately picked up by the police who assumed I was part of the coup force arriving. The whole island was in turmoil at this point, so I had to explain myself and make my way up to the capital of Dominica and find the Prime Minister at the time to say: The U.S. is behind you. What the hell is happening here?

So another coup, little noticed, but big for us in the Caribbean. In addition to that, we had a major volcanic eruption on the island of St. Vincent, an active volcano named Soufrière. This was primarily a AID operation, but of course we had all sorts of welfare and whereabouts

concerns, so I also went to St. Vincent to participate in rescue efforts after the Soufrière eruption. We were a tiny embassy, trying to deal with all of this. We were always trying to catch up. By the time I left we had two Political Officers and one Economic Officer. So Washington staffed us up fairly quickly. But it was no backwater, as my Op Center colleagues had predicted.

Q: You talked about the embassy activities, but how about the embassy's connection with Washington?

CAMP: That was handled primarily by the front office. The ambassador and the DCM would have dealt frequently with the desk.. I don't think the front office of ARA, Inter-American Affairs, got involved very often. We were -- except at times of coups -- kind of below the radar. The Desk Officer dealt frequently with the ambassador, which gives you a suggestion of how the relationship was. A lot of time it was only the desk that followed what was happening down in Dominica and St. Vincent and so forth. I remember a story, though I can't attest to its validity, of a new Bureau Assistant Secretary up in Washington receiving a senior official from one of the small islands of the Eastern Caribbean and opening the interview by saying, "Could you point to your country on this map here," which gave you a sense of how detached the senior leadership of Washington was from our little islands, except when there was a coup or a volcanic eruption.

Q: You talked about renting a fishing boat to get from one island to the other. Did the embassy have money for that kind of stuff?

CAMP: Our goal throughout my tour was to actually have the department provide some kind of permanent transportation, like a boat for the embassy. That was always a dream. But I don't recall that we had travel money problems. I could travel when I wanted or when I could get away. The resource crunch was not a real problem for us, same with representational funding. It was not a high-cost economy, except for the tourism sector. The boat across from Martinique to Dominica probably cost 50 to 100 dollars or something like that.

Q: Well, let me ask this. You have one embassy and a number of countries, how do you handle July Fourth?

CAMP: Sally Shelton, when she was ambassador would actually go to an island and hold a reception, not necessarily right at July Fourth but as our national day function. And it worked out pretty well. We would certainly invite senior members of all the governments to our big July Fourth bash in Bridgetown, but we didn't really expect them to hop on a plane and come down from Antigua or St. Vincent for the occasion. Sometimes they did. But, in retrospect, it was a very cost effective and fairly efficient way to run business with a lot of small countries. And presumably we could do it even better now with our instantaneous communication capabilities. It was a regional embassy. We could probably do that in more parts of the world if we wanted to.

Q: As you were saying, that part of the world though is quite a tourist magnet for Americans. Were there any particularly outstanding consular issues that arose that you can think of?

CAMP: Not anything high profile. When tourists were caught up in a coup or volcanic eruption, they wanted out of there. But each of the islands had a fairly developed tourist infrastructure that

had ways of dealing with Americans who got drunk or got sick. The medical facilities were not too bad in the islands, thanks to years of colonial infrastructure.

Q: One last question. We're always interested in the embassy building. I've never been there. Was it an old building, new building? Did the air conditioning work?

CAMP: We were on the upper floors of a commercial office building in downtown Bridgetown. It was the Canadian International Bank of Commerce. We had a separate consular office down the street and AID was located across the street. As security concerns worldwide ramped up, we started looking for a space of our own. Years after I left we purchased a lot that was, as it always is, somewhat out of town rather than being right in the center of town and built an embassy that incorporated all of its units. But during my tour, we were very much a part of the local economy; we took the elevator up to our offices and didn't have any excessive security. We did have Marine Guards, but it was limited security because we were part of a larger office building. The security regulations were much less strict back then.

Q: Your two years on this assignment are up then probably in the summer transfer season in 1981. what would you say is the takeaway from this assignment?

CAMP: I developed much more personal confidence in dealing with senior officials, in dealing with all the aspects of an embassy, whereas in Colombo I was very much working for a Political Counselor. I was much more on my own in the Eastern Caribbean, particularly when I went traveling and was a one-person embassy. I got a much better sense of all of the elements of an embassy. I helped put together the first IMET program, for the Eastern Caribbean – International Military, Education, and Training, not for the military, but for the Barbados Coast Guard. So I did much more in Barbados. And I think it proves that a small efficient embassy is a great way to train young officers, and also to carry out foreign policy.

NICOLAS ROBERTSON
Assistant Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Bridgetown (1980-1981)

Mr. Robertson was born and raised in California. He was born in Wilmington, near the heart of the Los Angeles Harbor district. He attended University of California at Santa Cruz. Mr. Robertson first desired to be an academic, but then spent some time working as a chef on a ship. After returning home, he took the Foreign Service written and oral tests and passed. Mr. Robertson subsequently was stationed in South Africa, Barbados, Argentina, Nigeria, Ghana, Venezuela, and worked as the Deputy Director of the Office of African Affairs in at the State Department. Mr. Robertson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Well you were in Barbados from when to when?

ROBERTSON: Eighty and '81, January '80 to December '81.

Q: What was the situation on Barbados?

ROBERTSON: Barbados was a very successful country. I mean, there's not too much to discuss with Barbados. At the time, you know, I just turned 30; I didn't want success, I wanted excitement and it wasn't very exciting. And then that was while Grenada had its Marxist government and I couldn't take it seriously.

Q: This is the New Jewel Movement and all.

ROBERTSON: Yes. After living in Chile, Argentina and South Africa, to find these goofy guys introducing that level of violence was weird. All I could say was, "Why are you doing this? I mean, you didn't have guns there before, why this coup? I mean, haven't you looked around the continent, haven't you looked around your neighborhood and seen where this leads?" And you know, you could engage them but it was- well, it seemed a very small world.

Q: Well did you go to Grenada?

ROBERTSON: No, I was going to the other islands; Ashley Wills, later Ambassador in Sri Lanka, was the PAO, and we divided up Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica. I mean, after 1978 and the New Jewel Movement, nobody could pull that off again; everyone exercised more caution. You can only do that once. There was always talk about Caribbean economic integration. Venezuela was a big player in the region – it was the 1970s. Venezuela still had a lot of oil money and they were giving scholarships, teaching people Spanish and everything. What changed everything in the region was offshore finance and all the money that flowed in from banks and funds.

Q: Drugs hadn't hit the place yet, had it?

ROBERTSON: No. When you talk about drugs it was just smoking marijuana still. It hadn't been taken to international levels.

Q: How did you find Sally Shelton as ambassador?

ROBERTSON: She was nice, she was smart and it was a pleasure to work with her. I didn't know enough about Washington then to know she had something to do with the human rights office; had been in South Africa before. But I hadn't realized at the time what a swath she cut in Washington, how- what her- how much she had done here.

Q: What were you doing information-wise in Barbados?

ROBERTSON: Actually, I had forgotten about this until just you reminded me. I had become friends with the AP correspondent who was based in Puerto Rico. After the 1980 election, with the new Reagan Administration, at one point I'm getting all these calls about this Pentagon exercise, which was a mock invasion of an island off Puerto Rico and they'd called- I forget what they called it but it was all sort of vaguely Grenada-ish, all the terminology. Ashley Wills was out, so I called the State Department for comment and got very clear guidance, and we

denied that such a thing as this invasion rehearsal had taken place. So I had my guidance, and dispensed it freely. Then this friend of mine from AP called me and he said, "Nick, what's your guidance on this?" I said nothing similar took place. He asked if I was sure that I wanted to go with that, and I said yes. He said, "Well Nick, I hate to tell you, but not only did they do that but they rounded us all up from the Caribbean and showed us the exercise." But I guess at that time, according to the Pentagon- it wasn't international affairs; it was domestic. They don't have to clear Puerto Rican exercises with the State Department.

Ambassador E. Ashley Wills
Public Affairs Officer
Bridgetown (1980-1983)

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

WILLS: Then Khomeini decided hey this is getting us good publicity in the Arab world and hurting the United States let's make it a long term thing. This was only a few weeks that I was doing this and then it became clear that it was going nowhere and I left the task force by early December. So my involvement there was not central it was pretty much peripheral but it was exciting for me because I was then I had just turned 30 and I was young and it was exciting and distressing. But here I was again at the end of December without an assignment. So we had been in the States at this point for about a year and believe it or not Foreign Service officers were not highly paid and living on my salary with a son in an apartment around here was killing us financially; I really wanted to get out. So I went in to see personnel and they said, "Look, there is a PAOship in the Caribbean, in Barbados. The guy who has the job now has just been kicked out by the ambassador," she didn't like him, "and hey, it's become politically important because there was a coup d'etat in one of the islands that you cover from Barbados, in Grenada. A bunch of Marxist thugs have overthrown this weird prime minister named Sir Eric Gairy." Do you remember him?

Q: This is the New Jewel people.

WILLS: The New Jewel Movement exactly. So Sir Eric Gairy who was the prime minister of this whole land of 90 thousand people and who was most famous at that point for having addressed a UN session devoted to flying saucers. He was convinced that flying saucers were real and that they were coming to the earth regularly and that there were aliens walking among

us; he was a very bizarre guy. The New Jewel Movement under a guy named Maurice Bishop decided he was a laughing stock and they also were committed Marxists; they were going to start a movement of Marxism in the Caribbean. It would start in Grenada but it would spread and unite with their inspiration, Fidel Castro in Cuba. So suddenly this sleepy little embassy in Barbados became important. I agreed to the assignment and began to read about the Caribbean and learned that there were thirteen island states, each with a vote in the UN, that we covered out of the embassy in Barbados. When that coup occurred in Grenada in November 1979, just about when the hostages were taken in Iran, our embassy, I think, had seven officers, most of them consular officers, visa officers. By the time I got there at the end of January we were up to thirty some officers because Jimmy Carter was at this time getting ready to run for reelection and he didn't want to be perceived as being soft on Communism. If there was a Communist threat down in the Caribbean, by God we were going to respond with every asset the U.S. government had. Our embassy expanded greatly, our USAID mission went from zero to about fifteen officers and several million dollars. I opened a public affairs operation, they gave me two or three officers to work with me and it turned out to be a lovely assignment in most respects.

So we got to Barbados and I spent about forty percent of my time on the road. The Windward Islands were Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Dominica. Then there were some little islands in between called the Grenadines, best scuba diving and the best snorkeling in the world is in the Grenadines, if you ever get a chance to go there. Then we also covered the Leeward Islands, which were Antigua, St. Kitts & Nevis, Barbuda and the British Virgin Islands. So I would fly in these little aircraft that would seat six people say, commercial aircraft. Here I was, I had been promoted to what is now called O-2.

Q: It is about a major.

WILLS: No, lieutenant colonel, and then I got promoted while I was in Barbados to a 1, a colonel. By then I was only 30, 31 years old and I would go to these little islands and the prime minister of the island would want to see me, the prime minister of the country. It was pretty heady stuff and they are absolutely charming wonderful people, again overwhelmingly Black, well educated. The medical systems of the countries were pretty good and it was a very pleasant way of life and a very interesting job for me to set up a public affairs program in such a vast geographical area; but each of them was a little bitty island. Barbados was the biggest and had the biggest population; I think there were 200 thousand in Barbados; none of the others had more than 100 thousand. So these were little places. Even though there were thirty officers at this point in the embassy only five or six of us traveled a lot. So when we would go out to one of these islands we would canvas other sections of the embassy, is there any business you want me to do? The visa officers would often give me social security checks to take to American citizens who had retired.

I'll never forget as long as I live I went to an island called Anguilla off the coast of Antigua. This was basically a big beach, the whole island was a beach. There were two dives, hotels; very modest and I stayed in one of them and it had a beach bar. Having finished an arduous day of diplomatic work I went down to the beach bar about five o'clock and had a beer and I started talking to this guy. He looked a little bit like you Stu, an American guy and he was the guy... I didn't know where this guy lived but I had a social security check for him. I gave it to him when

I found out that he was the guy I was looking for. We started chatting just the two of us at this little beach bar. It is so gorgeous, it's just such a beautiful place and it's just the two of us, two Americans talking. Turns out he had left the United States in 1953 and moved to Anguilla. I said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Well, I was a screen writer in Hollywood and I became involved in the McCarthy trials. He accused me of being a Communist and asked me to rat on my friends who had been in the 1930s members of the small American Communist Party. I refused to do it and I left the United States in 1953." I was talking to him in 1981 or '82; so he had been out of the country almost thirty years and he had not been back in all those years. It was clear to me in talking to him that he really missed it, he was still an American. He had gone from writing screen plays for some quite well known... I wish I could remember his name... I came back to Barbados and looked him up. He was credited in several movies; he wrote the screenplay for a Humphrey Bogart film, I can't remember which it was, and for several other films, one of the Marx Brothers films. He was a well-known guy and there he was tending bar in Anguilla at the end of the earth. That is what you would find in the Caribbean.

I had so many amazing experiences there. I remember I was in St. Lucia waiting to get on one of these little planes to go back to Barbados. I'm sitting there at the airport, which consisted of a little block building. We would all go outside and sit outdoors under the palms and wait for the plane to come; sometimes it would be three or four hours late, sometimes it would be two or three hours early. It was very relaxed. I watched this plane in the distance, an old DC-3, maybe ten miles off when I first saw it coming in. Then I noticed it was beginning to wobble a little bit. Then I notice as it gets closer and closer that there is flame coming from one of the engines and smoke. Then I watched to my amazement and horror as that plane turns to try and come in to land at the airport where I am sitting and he doesn't make it and he crashes right before my eyes into the very end of the runway where it met the sea. There was a huge explosion and eight or ten people who are sitting there with me and I run out there. The plane is engulfed in flames. There were three Americans on that plane, all employees of a cargo company, and they were all killed. These little things that happen to you, vignettes.

I supposed the biggest thing that happened to me in that time was I became... there were two officers in the embassy who spent a lot of time in Grenada itself. Our task diplomatically was to prevent the Grenada revolution from spreading to these other islands, these twelve other islands. So we were offering scholarships, giving foreign aid, sending in speakers to talk about the evils of Marxism. Of course, I knew about them from having lived in a Communist country. So it was all very exciting but the focus was on Grenada. There were two of us; a guy named Larry Rossin, have you done his?

Q: No, but I know the name.

WILLS: And I became experts on Grenada; this will become important a little later. I went to Grenada several times; I never met Morris Bishop but I met his second in command who would later become famous at least in the Caribbean, a guy named Bernard Coard and various other people. I got to know the only remaining independent journalist in Grenada; his name was Alistair Hughes and he worked for the BBC as a stringer and he was opposed to the Morris Bishop government and the Morris Bishop government treated him horribly. We would stick up

for him even though he wasn't an American citizen. I may as well complete the story here. So I finished my tour of duty, came back to the United States...

Q: This would be 1982?

WILLS: ...1983 in July, we'd had our second child while living in Barbados. My wife flew up to South Carolina where her parents had retired and our daughter, Olivia, was born while we were in Barbados. So with our two children we went back to the United States in July of 1983. I'd asked the Foreign Service, because I had found myself...we'd done a lot of programs devoted to economic issues; all these countries were poor, they were worried about their economies and I would find myself talking to the central banker of Barbados or the minister of finance in St. Lucia. I didn't know enough economics, I'd taken undergraduate economics but that was it. I needed to become more literate in economics; so I asked the Foreign Service if I could go back and get a masters degree in economics. We have this series of schools where we sent officers and they asked me if I'd like to go to Harvard, or Stanford, or Johns Hopkins or Georgetown. I said I didn't want to go to any university outside the DC area because I didn't want to have to go one place for a year and then move back to Washington. I knew I had a U.S. tour of duty coming and I wanted to stay in one place for the stability of our family so they sent me to Johns Hopkins; so I started the Hopkins program. The Hopkins program said, "Do you have calculus?" I'd taken calculus in college and they said that's not good enough that was fifteen years ago; you have to take calculus all over again. There is a special two-week course in late August before all the other graduate students reported. I was taking a special calculus course being a student again but it was great because unlike my undergraduate education, which I had to pay for, the State Department was paying and paying my salary at the same so it was great.

I got about a month into the program and in late September 1983 I got a call from a friend of mine. I never will forget it; it was a Sunday afternoon. We had bought a house out in Vienna, Virginia. There was a Redskins game on and there I sat on the couch with my two little kids watching the Redskins game and I get this call from this friend whom I had known when I lived in Barbados. I had noticed in the media that there had been stories about political unrest in Grenada and that things were not going well. Then I read that Bernard Coard, the man I knew, had got into a disagreement with Morris Bishop, the prime minister and shot and killed him along with three or four other people who were close to Bishop. Coard who was regarded as a real hardliner and the real Castroite was now going to run Grenada. Ronald Reagan, then the president, didn't like the idea of having another Marxist country in our hemisphere. We had at that time a convoy of Navy ships on its way to Lebanon from Norfolk. This is when the bombing of the....

ANTHONY KERN
Regional Labor Attaché
Bridgetown (1981-1983)

Anthony Kern was born in 1932 in Strabane, Pennsylvania. He served in the armed forces in Japan and earned a B.A. from Southeastern University upon his

return. He worked for the National Security Agency and the Civil Service Commission before entering the Foreign Service in 1972. Mr. Kern served in Barbados and India, as well as in the State Department's International Labor Program and the African Bureau. He was interviewed in 1993 by Morris Weisz.

KERN: The first tour was Regional Labor Attaché for the Caribbean. I was, in fact, recruited for that job by John Warnock. John and I were sitting down in the cafeteria and I think we were talking about grievance issues. I think John may have been in the Department's formal grievance system.

Q: Oh, yes! I think he was an assistant to the man in charge of the whole grievance procedure.

KERN: That's right, Simkin.

Q: [Simkin was] a wonderful collective bargaining expert.

KERN: Yes. That was it. We were just talking grievance issues, and John happened to ask, "Would you be interested in taking the Labor Attaché assignment?" I jumped at that, and he said, "We had this place called Bridgetown," and he described it and it sounded very nice. And that evening I came home and said, "Sweet, would you like to go to Bridgetown?" And she said, "Why should we go to Connecticut?" (laughter)

Q: That's great.

KERN: And then I explained to her that it's in the lovely Caribbean and she became very ecstatic about this possibility.

Q: That's great. What training did you have for that assignment?

KERN: I did some off and on training. I talked to a number of people at the Labor Department and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Q: This would have been 1979, 1980, 1981, something like that?

KERN: Yes, right. My assignment started in 1981. The other problem we had which sort of limited the amount of formal training I had was that we were just in the throes of passing the new Foreign Service Act of 1981, and I was working very closely with Harry Barnes and Ben Read to finish that. The two key chapters that I got involved in were the labor relations segment and the Foreign Service grievance segment as well. So it was about 1979 or 1980. So the first assignment was Regional Labor Attaché for the Caribbean. We took off and wound up in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Q: But I asked you about the training. You got literally no training other than what you. . .

KERN: No. It was a combination of my previous labor experience at the Civil Service Commission. I did have a fair amount of knowledge. Then I took a few courses at FSI [Foreign

Service Institute], sat in on some courses. I had a number of meetings with the folks at the Labor Department in the various bureaus.

Q: That's when I first met you. I was doing some work for them.

KERN: That's right.

Q: But as for classes or the Harvard program or the summer program, none of that did you do?

KERN: No. I sort of walked into it. What I could have used was not so much labor training; I think I picked that up quite well. And I met enough of the folks at the AFL-CIO and Bill Doherty naturally and AIFLD [American Institute for Free Labor Development], so that I felt comfortable about my labor knowledge. What I could have used was information on the functions of a reporting officer at the embassy. So when I walked into the embassy, I wasn't sure what they were looking for and what I was supposed to do, so there was kind of an awkward period of adjustment there. But that came along fairly quickly.

Q: Before you went to Bridgetown. . . I want to get some details obviously of what you did in Bridgetown. But before you got there, you didn't have formal training in any of the FSI [Foreign Service Institute] courses, did you?

KERN: Yes. I took the area studies course over there.

Q: The area studies course. No labor studies.

KERN: No labor. That's where I spent the classroom time.

Q: So in effect your classroom experience did not include anything of what we call "labor training," that is, the course work.

KERN: That's correct.

Q: And it involved your absorbing from individual conferences knowledge of people, discussions, etc. What about the field of labor? Had you already taken a labor course in business management, getting your business degree? A labor relations course?

KERN: Yes. I had a labor relations course.

Q: Oh, so you did have some academic [training]?

KERN: That's correct. And remember, when I was with the Civil Service Commission, I was with the Personnel Management Training Center, but shortly thereafter we created the Labor Relations Training Center and I was Associate Director there.

Q: That's right. Did you know Tony Ingrassia?

KERN: Absolutely. Tony was the kingpin.

Q: Oh yes. He was the guy who was representing Civil Service when I was running the election process. Very impressive guy I thought.

KERN: Absolutely.

Q: So you had the background. It's not the typical Labor Attaché training program, but rather an absorption from the other jobs you had and your other education.

KERN: That's correct. And I think that the other unusual aspect is that I came into the labor program from the management ranks as opposed to academic or the trade union movement.

Q: Then you arrive in Bridgetown. What was the reaction of the Embassy? Had there been a predecessor?

KERN: Yes. Don Knight.

Q: Oh yes!

KERN: Remember Don? Don was the first Regional Labor Attaché and he was appointed after a study conducted by Phil Habib on the importance of the Caribbean to our foreign policy. So Don was the first Labor Attaché there.

Q: So in effect there was no problem of selling the Embassy on the job.

KERN: There was. I'd been there no more than a month and President Reagan at that time was making a big pitch to cut back federal employees and federal staffing. We had a Chargé there, Jennings Randolph, I believe, of the Virginia Randolphs.

Q: The son of Jennings Randolph.

KERN: Right. And he called me in the office and he said, "Tony, it's nothing personal, but I'm recommending that the Labor Attaché position be abolished." (laughter)

Q: Make your reservation home, please.

KERN: That's right. I said, "What's going on?"

Q: He was a DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. Was he a career DCM?

KERN: Yes, he was. At the time, Randolph was the Chargé, during the transition to a new ambassadorial appointment.

Q: Did he give nepotism a good name or a bad name? If you're willing to say.

KERN: I would say probably a *bad* name. He seemed to be hyperactive, hypersensitive to everything that was going on. Perhaps he had noble ambitions to become an ambassador. He wanted everything to be right. So that was my real introduction to the Labor Attaché function, [with Randolph] saying, "You're a nice guy, but we don't need the function."

Q: In going over these experiences of Labor Attachés, I find that so much of the value of the product of the Labor Attaché is based on the attitude of his Ambassador and in this case I gather when they tried to abolish the job. You were there literally less than a couple of months or something?

KERN: That's correct.

Q: Had you settled in a house yet?

KERN: Yes, a beautiful house. It was sitting up on a ridge overlooking the Caribbean.

Q: Was it the house assigned to the Labor Attaché or just an ordinary embassy house?

KERN: It was a rental. We had no embassy houses there in Barbados. But Randolph left, I would say, within a month, and a political appointee came in, Milan Bish.

Q: As the DCM?

KERN: No, as the Ambassador.

Q: Randolph had been the DCM or the Ambassador?

KERN: He was the DCM, the Chargé.

Q: Oh, the Chargé, DCM, career. In other words, he left before you did!

KERN: That's right. (laughter) And I said to myself that this was a nice change for me. And in came Milan Bish, who was a very hard worker for the Reagan campaign in Nebraska. This was his reward. He came to Barbados not knowing anything about the Foreign Service or diplomatic activities. I guess he'd been there about a week and was making his rounds, meeting everybody on the Embassy staff, when he saw the sign on my door which said, "Labor Attaché," and he came in. A very nice gentleman. He said, "You know, Tony, where I come from, we think labor people are a bunch of Commies." And I said to myself, "Ah hell, this is going to be sheer hell for three years."

But gradually I got to talk to him. He was very receptive, very open and what really sold him was the fact that I gave him the story about U.S. labor and its position concerning communism and I made it very clear that the American Labor Movement was the most anti-communist organization in the entire country. After that discussion, he became very receptive to the labor function. He held functions for Labor Day celebrations, for example. And as he traveled through the islands, he always made a point of stopping to call on the labor movement people.

Q: Did he take you with him?

KERN: No, we never had to go together. And he worked out very well. He was very open. We had a Labor Day reception at the Residence which he hosted and Bill Doherty was there. Bill was handing out the AFL-CIO pins and, you know Bill, he went up to the Ambassador and pinned it his lapel. Ambassador Bish respond by saying, "My God, don't let anybody back in Nebraska know about this!" (laughter) He was a very good-hearted individual. He worked very hard.

Q: Well, he sounds like some of the people, of which there were quite a number, of the unsympathetic people to begin with who began to understand the value and I suppose you would have to, whether you wanted to or not, take some credit for that because you exposed him to it.

KERN: That's correct. And he was very open and listened very carefully and absorbed it all. I had great admiration for the man.

Q: What did the job of the Labor Attaché consist of from your point of view? The trade union situation was what at the time?

KERN: Very active. Keep in mind that these are small societies on these islands and any kind of organized entity has a very strong impact. Throughout the Caribbean historically the independence leadership came from the trade union ranks. Tom Adams in Barbados came out of the Barbados Worker's Union. Vera Beard lead the labor movement in Antigua. Same thing in St. Kitts. On virtually every island in the Caribbean the independence leadership came out of the trade union movement. So it was very important.

Q: Characteristic of many of the British colonies and some of the others too..

KERN: That's true. They had that important role to play.

Q: Was there a Labor Government there at the time?

KERN: Barbados Labor Party, yes, which was the party set up by Tom Adams, the former trade union leader. The same thing in Antigua.

Q: They were in power.

KERN: That's correct.

Q: And the opposition? Was it conservative or what?

KERN: Moderately conservative. There weren't any great philosophical differences that I could see there.

Q: But none of the trade unionists were associated with the other party?

KERN: Initially they were loyal to the Barbados Labor Party. However, during the mid-1960s, the Barbados Workers Union switched to the Democratic Labor Party. A number of the trade union leaders in Barbados were members of the Parliament. This was true throughout the islands. This also held true in St. Kitts, Antigua, certainly in Jamaica where we had, when I was there, a very, very bitter election between Manley and Edward Seaga. At least 700 people died in those preliminary efforts before the election. There was a split between two trade union movements, the Bustamante Trade Union Movement (BTUM) and the National Workers Union (NWU).

Q: The conservative one.

KERN: The BTUM supported Seaga. But again this was the lineage of the original political movement. And then the opposition which supported Manley was the National Workers Union. I recall traveling to Kingston and visiting both of the headquarters and both were built like fortresses - huge stone walls about fifteen feet tall, wrought-iron gates you couldn't get into unless you barreled your way through with a truck. So they were in a state of siege. That reflected the kind of the political importance [of labor] throughout the islands.

We had strikes in St. Lucia, for example, by the trade union movement that brought down the government. The Government in St Lucia was known to be one of the more corrupt governments at that time. The trade union movement called a general strike, held on, and the government collapsed. There was an interim government where the trade unionists were appointed to various ministries and then, I think, within 90 days they had national elections and a conservative prime minister was elected.

Q: Now the scope of your responsibility was regional. Did your Ambassador cover more of the countries than just Barbados?

KERN: No. At that point, I had a very, very broad grid. I covered the entire Caribbean from Guyana and Suriname. . . .

Q: So in effect you worked for an Ambassador, who wasn't your supervisor in much of what you did?

KERN: That's true, because I had four other supervisors; the Ambassador in Jamaica, another one in Trinidad, one in Suriname and one in Guyana.

Q: And how did that work out?

KERN: Fairly well. They came in with their responses for my EERs [Employee Evaluation Report]. That worked out all right. And I think I managed to space my activity in a clearly equitable manner, not in terms of sharing time equally but trying to put time where it was required. For example, if elections were coming up I would schedule my travel to coincide with elections throughout the islands.

Q: Who governed your travel? How did you get paid for your travel? Did it come out of one pocket or did you. . .

KERN: This was a rarity and I don't think it ever happened again. I had a central travel budget which was funded out of the ARA Bureau. It was roughly \$20,000 and I came within \$3,000 each year of spending that amount. So I was on the road constantly. But it was a fantastic assignment.

Q: Was your entertainment budget similarly related to your travel?

KERN: Yes. It was all centrally funded.

Q: Centrally funded. So that your Ambassador in Barbados did not have, in effect, any control over that. He couldn't shift some of your entertainment or travel funds to his own?

KERN: Yes, [that is correct].

Q: You're right. It was a unique situation, as far as I know. But there was no conflict among the various embassies as to your coming or not coming?

KERN: No. It worked out very, very smoothly. They were very happy to see me, very receptive, looked forward to my arriving there.

Q: Were the other ambassadors all political [appointees]?

KERN: Let's see, let me think about it. No, the other three or four were career ambassadors. . . .

Q: You served the entire three-year period?

KERN: Yes, 1981 to 1983.

Q: And what special problems did you work on with respect to two other aspects, not only the diplomatic reporting side, but what about AID and USIA? Any activity that you sponsored or were a part of?

KERN: We did a number of Amparts [American Participant] programs where we had folks coming down, but we were also able to get a number of Caribbean trade union leaders back to the States on these month-long programs, so that worked out very well. USIA and AID were very cooperative in the Caribbean.

Q: Did either of them have labor officers there?

KERN: No.

Q: So you in effect. . . . Did you have it on paper, or were you just acting as a person who tried to get Amparts and visitors' programs working?

KERN: It wasn't on paper. It was just my initiative, I guess, and their receptivity, so it worked out very well.

Q: Who were the backstoppers for your State Department, AID and information work to the extent that you were able to do some? Your backstopper at State obviously was the ARA Labor Advisor at that time.

KERN: I've forgotten the name. From there he went to Rome as Labor Attaché.

Q: Gwynn?

KERN: No, it wasn't Gwynn. It'll come to mind.

Q: Well if it comes to mind, tell us about it.

KERN: I'll inject it later.

Q: Did you get instructions from Washington or you were just sort of a lone operator?

KERN: Really it was free-lancing. Well, I did initially. I got some instructions from the ARA Labor Advisor sometime in the first month. He had come down to the Caribbean just going through the islands visiting. He sat down with me at some point and he said, "Listen, I don't need to know every time the Coca Cola plant goes out on strike." (laughter) I was really reporting every little thing that was happening and not being too discriminating in what I was reporting. But that was the extent of the advice I had.

Q: Of course, if you didn't report it and the Coca Cola headquarters raised hell, you would have heard about it. So it probably was better just to have it on paper.

KERN: Well, the interaction with the employers there was kind of amusing in some cases. For example, Intel had a very large plant in Barbados with a large chain link fence around it. I tried repeatedly to get in and talk with the manager. I was calling up in advance saying, "I'm the Labor Attaché, the Embassy representative, and I'd like to come in to talk to you to see what's going on." I was never successful in getting into Intel. One day my wife Joan was at a party mixing and mingling and met a woman who asked, "What does your husband do?" Joan said, "Well, my husband's the Embassy Labor Attaché." And the woman said, "Oh, that's the man my husband won't meet with!" (laughter) She was married to the gentleman from Intel of course.

Q: Was this guy a special labor relations type or just the head of Intel?

KERN: No, he was the head of Intel. The Barbados's Workers' Union couldn't organize the plant. They couldn't get in the door. Another amusing event in Barbados involved an American plant which employed a lot of women assembling little girls' dresses. The manager really didn't have much time for me, although he did see me. It was kind of a strained relationship until one month I was sitting in my office and I had a phone call from him in a state of panic. He said, "The

women are outside and they've threatened to do bad things to me, if I step out of the plant and I need help." (laughter)

Q: That's usually the time people come to the Embassy.

KERN: That's right. I said, "What's going on?" He said, "Well they're screaming and yelling and calling me names. I need help!" So I said, "All right. Sit tight and let me find out what's going on." I called the Barbados Workers' Union to find out and the union rep said, "Yes, the ladies went on strike, and I have to take some of the blame, because I really haven't been following the developments at the plant very carefully." I said, "Well, the manager is calling and needs help. What do you think I should tell him?" He thought a little while and said, "Call him back and tell him to give the chairs back." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "The clown took all the chairs away from the women feeling that this would make them more efficient. By standing up, they're going to sew faster." (laughter) So I called him back and I told him, "Just give the women back their chairs," and he did that and the strike was over. Isn't that amazing, absolutely astounding.

Q: Absolutely. And how frequently those things happen. Essentially what he objected to was not that they didn't like the idea of standing up. What he was objecting to was the challenge to his authority.

KERN: Exactly.

Q: That's amazing. Did you get involved in other strikes?

KERN: Only in reporting strikes. There was a police strike in St. Vincent. It was like CNN today. I was doing spot reporting over the phone to the Embassy..

Q: It sounds as though you had an enjoyable time. What about the backstopper [Area Labor Advisor] at the Labor Department?

KERN: That was Peter Accolla.

Q: Peter Accolla, right. What was your relationship with the Department if at all?

KERN: Really very little. Frankly, I didn't know they existed in terms of anything that I was receiving in the way of advice or guidance or what they wanted.

Q: What about your annual labor report? Did you file it?

KERN: Yes, I filed it, but there was no guidance, no suggestions as to what to do.

Q: Did you get an acknowledgment of it?

KERN: No, I don't recall even getting an acknowledgment.

Q: I should tell you that the reason I'm going into that is the whole problem of the Labor Department complaining that they don't get enough information and the State Department people saying there's no flow back and forth. I was wondering if you had any comment on that?

KERN: I think that was true of my situation. I really didn't get any guidance.

Q: Yes, in other fields there is.

KERN: The only time I ever received a request was to update the Labor Department's annual Social Security report.

Q: That was not from the Labor Department as much as from HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare] or HHS [Department of Health and Human Services], whatever they called it. What was your relation with HHS? Did they send a man out or were they so satisfied with your social security [reports] that they never sent anyone?

KERN: They never sent anyone out.

Q: They sent somebody out to India once because it's such a large country that they wanted to get. . . And what about the backstopping with the USIA, your relations on the IVP [International Visitors Program] and the AMPARTS [American Participants Program]?

KERN: I worked it all out at the Embassy level with the USIS offices. There was really no interaction with the folks back in Washington.

Q: And lastly the relations with Doherty and AIFLD [American Institute for Free Labor Development, AFL-CIO]? What about that?

KERN: Oh, fantastic. I have always enjoyed [AIFLD Executive Director] Bill Doherty. I was frankly amazed at the man's knowledge of political developments throughout the Caribbean. I was subsequently in the ARA Bureau as Labor Advisor, so I had an even better feel for their activities.

Q: How about the other members of his staff? Did he have one who was specializing in your area?

KERN: Mike Donovan. Yes, let me tell you about that. Mike Donovan was the AIFLD representative in Barbados when I was there. This was early in the Reagan Administration, and he [Reagan] established the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). This was an attempt to open up trade to the Caribbean nations. The AFL-CIO was opposed to it naturally and argued strongly against it. But Congressman Rostenkowski, who headed up the Ways and Means Committee, brought his Committee down to Barbados with the avowed statement that he wasn't going to take any action on the CBI until he heard from the trade union movement in the Caribbean. Now the Embassy had no money. I went and talked with Mike Donovan and I asked Mike if AIFLD could find the money to bring some of the trade unions in for this meeting with Rostenkowski and, keep in mind they were opposed to the CBI. But since their Embassy made the request, Donovan

and AIFLD responded. We had trade unionists from throughout the eastern Caribbean and Jamaica who came to meet with the [Ways and Means] Committee. It was very formal. They provided testimony to the committee members. All the trade unionists said, "yes," that they could take care of their people, that they had strong unions and that the Congressmen should not be concerned that they were going to be steam-rolled. So I think that was a fairly decisive moment in terms of passing the Caribbean Basin Initiative.

Q: That's very interesting. I'll go over the questionnaire about other relationships in this first assignment of yours, but what do you think were the limitations of what you could do? Were they budgetary or functional? Did you feel limited in any particular respect? Or did you feel that it was an assignment in which you were able to do whatever you wanted to do? There were no limitations placed upon you. You know what the problem is. Many Labor Attachés feel they could have done more if this had happened.

KERN: No, I think that in terms of my ability to do things, there were no real limitations at the Embassy level. Where the limitations came was in the availability of programs in Washington. For example, [with] the International Visitors Program, I could probably have used twice the number of slots. That was a real constraint that I ran into.

Q: What sort of difficulties, if any, did you get into in selecting people to get those spots or similarly in attracting people to be AMPARTS? How did they feel with respect to the IVP programs? How were the international visitors selected? Did you select them? Did the unions help you select them? Was there competition among the unions? Were there some people who felt as though others should have gone instead of the ones selected?

KERN: I didn't notice any bitterness among the unions, but I did work in conjunction with the AIFLD representative Mike Donovan at that time, and Rob Torres prior to him, and also with the Caribbean Congress of Labor in selecting candidates. Fortunately, because I was able to travel so extensively, I got to know fairly well the people that were being nominated. As far as I could determine, none of them were losers and none of these were any kind of political pay-offs. They seemed to be hard-working trade unionists who would benefit from the program.

Q: Did you feel, or did you not, because the experience is different in different countries, that you had to make a concession with respect to taking one person because if you wanted another, or was there no such balancing thing?

KERN: No, there was no balancing.

Q: How I envy you!

KERN: I know. I agree. It was a real consensus. We all sat down. We had names and everybody knew the people who were being nominated so it worked out very well.

Q: That's wonderful.

KERN: Yes, as I said, it was a tremendous assignment.

GEORGE A. McFARLAND, JR.
DCM/Chargé d’Affaires
Antigua, Virgin Islands (1983-1985)

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.

Q: But did you get to Antigua?

MCFARLAND: I did go to Antigua in 1983, after my four years in Brasilia. I had, by the way, a total of eight years as political counselor in two Class I posts from two different areas.

Q: Now who was your ambassador. Did you report to an ambassador in the Caribbean?

MCFARLAND: Yes, Antigua was under the ambassador in the Bahamas, and I can’t remember the name.

Q: That’s to hell and gone, not even close.

MCFARLAND: No, it’s a long way away, 800 miles or so. I’m sorry, not the Bahamas. Barbados.

Q: Oh, Barbados. Okay.

MCFARLAND: But it’s still -

Q: But did he, in effect, supervise you?

MCFARLAND: He wanted to, and he was very sensitive to competition and rivalry between the two posts, which actually began with his own embassy down there in Barbados. He had the idea they were a big embassy, and yet they were very small, but they had strange ideas and very, very competitive. Anyway, he was a political appointee from Nebraska, and he visited Antigua just once or twice, I think - not a bad guy. Actually, I was in charge. His visits were only to show his face. The -

Q: Were you chargé d’affaires then? On the diplomatic list?

MCFARLAND: Well, there was not a dip list in Antigua, it's only 2,000 people.

Q: I know, it's only a little spot in the Caribbean. But you had a title of some kind.

MCFARLAND: Yes, I was chargé d'affaires. I was always introduced as the American chargé d'affaires or American chargé. I appeared on televisions all the time. I was Mr. United States down there.

Q: And the ambassador came to town, and then I guess you weren't called chargé.

MCFARLAND: That's right. I was temporarily his DCM.

Q: But you appeared on the, I guess, the diplomatic list in Barbados, or did you? No?

MCFARLAND: I don't know. I never saw it.

Q: Well, I never heard of such an arrangement, but anyway it worked, as far as you were concerned.

MCFARLAND: It didn't work. It was a problem.

Q: The embassy was crowding you.

MCFARLAND: Yes, they were needlessly competitive, got us out on things. I would find an AID officer puttering around town without notifying us. The USIS also, when I asked for things, they wouldn't necessarily supply them. I did have. . . . Well, we had the Grenada operation while I was there. We lined up support from the governments in Antigua and Montserrat, that were in my district, and notified the State Department, and this was a beautiful case of intervention in terms of diplomatic support. We had a request for intervention from all the area governments, unanimously. And my father died just about this time, and I had to leave and go home, and returned after the intervention was well underway, and the embassy in Barbados had charge of that.

We had a lot of administrative problems. I had written the ambassador there about them. I sent him a message to send on to Washington. Well, he didn't send it on. The inspector who came through later said I should have sent it directly to Washington, and therefore it was my fault.

Q: So it didn't work.

MCFARLAND: It didn't work. And I spent a lot of my time straightening out administration. I think the most rewarding thing I had to do there was handling a drought on the island of Antigua. The prime minister waited until the island's reservoir had gone completely dry during the long drought, summoned me to a meeting of his cabinet and said, in a deep voice, "I want the United States Government to give us \$1 million for drought relief." I fortunately happened to have a visiting AID representative, who reminded me that I had authority to pledge \$25,000 on my own. There was a certain shortfall. I did organize the island's response. I got one of the prime

minister's sons, who was a minister, to handle the Antiguan side of things. AID sent in a water engineer, from whom I learned a great deal about hydraulics, such as the meaning of the term "total dynamic head" and the interesting bit that most old water systems leak up to 60 per cent of the water that's put into them. We were able to help Antigua in buying water from other countries, but they had to pay for barging it in. The Seabees, very helpfully, sent in a detachment which worked on repairing water mains and rebuilding water storage tanks, which would receive the water from the barges, and in fact installed a floating water line to connect from the barges in the harbor, such as it was, to the storage tanks. These were very impressive people, just couldn't get enough work to satisfy them. And we got through the water crisis.

Q: I have the impression that it's a very corrupt government, a family.

MCFARLAND: Yes, well, all the Caribbean governments tend to be more or less authoritarian one-man régimes, and this in particular. But the prime minister was a venerable figure, but anyone opposed to him had already long since left the island. There was a token opposition, but out of 72,000 people, you couldn't have too much discontent. The island later became a haven for gun-running and drug smuggling, but not during my time. We had a navy station and an Air Force downrange rocket observing station and, in addition, an AID representative and a Coast Guard representative. So I had a decent-size country team, despite the small size of the embassy. I had a serious problem with the administrative officer that was sent, an African American who had made a career out of suing the United States Government for discrimination and had invested his winnings in his own defense fund. The inspectors cited him for a serious administrative misstep, and on that basis, I asked the Department to reassign him. He instantly applied to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, was granted unlimited time to prepare his own case. He disappeared for approximately two and a half months and returned in an extremely combative mood. After I had retired, still I had to answer questions and make depositions about his conduct there. I understand that he was eventually removed from the Service, but it was a sour note for ending the Service.

THOMAS H. ANDERSON
Ambassador
Barbados (1984-1986)

Ambassador Anderson, an Investment Banker by profession, was raised in Mississippi. After graduating from the University of Mississippi, he became Administrative Assistant to Congressman Trent Lott in Washington, D.C, where he observed and participated in the workings of the U.S. Congress and the government as a whole. After serving as U.S. Ambassador from 1984 to 1986, he managed Mr. Lott's successful campaign for the Senate. Ambassador Anderson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: Then we come to your appointment as Ambassador to Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Antigua...

ANDERSON: And Aruba, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Montserrat. Part of the mission included Grenada after our invasion down there. Our US AID and USIS missions were operated out of Barbados.

Q: How did this appointment come about?

ANDERSON: Quite frankly as I told Senator Tsongas at the hearing, I just hoped that the President recognized talent when he saw it. But, really and truly, about the time I felt that it was time for me to go back into the private sector, a very good friend of mine at the time was head of White House personnel and asked if I would be willing to consider service in a foreign country. I said that I would. He had some thoughts on the matter and the President asked if I would be willing to do it. They knew that I had a very strong desire to get back to business.

They had just come forward with the Caribbean Basin Initiative program and wanted to see it implemented. So they talked to me about doing that.

Q: I take it there was no particular problem with your getting approval?

ANDERSON: Well, as a matter of fact, right after the President had asked me to do this I had gone with another dear friend of mine on a weekend trip down to a place he had in West Palm. We got up on Sunday morning and he was delighted to have on the breakfast table a copy of the New York Times to show where AFSA was going to oppose my nomination.

Q: AFSA is the American Foreign Service Association--sort of the union.

ANDERSON: Right. I came back to Washington and did a little research and ended up meeting with the president of AFSA. We had a luncheon and a long discussion about foreign policy, where we were going, the management of missions, the problems associated therein. He left basically saying that AFSA would not oppose my nomination. So after that was over with, it was clear sailing.

Q: Sometimes you can run into trouble with a member on the Hill. I have just finished this week an interview with Otto Reich who had Senator Helms dumping on him before going to Venezuela. What type of training did you get before you went out there?

ANDERSON: I went through the entire reading that one goes through when you go into a post like that. I went around to...I think I saw every side of Washington DC that I had never seen before and talked to all of the other people that I had never talked to in the Washington area. I went through the Foreign Service Institute's indoctrination two-week course.

Q: How valuable did you find that?

ANDERSON: I found that that was an extremely valuable tool for someone who had been involved in government and realized that you were going into the executive branch looking at it from a different side as to how they viewed it...the way I had always viewed it from the other

side. It was interesting to see it. I thought it was very helpful. I am not certain whether it was the right kind of course for somebody who was coming from the hinterlands.

Q: The focus keeps shifting. But, anyway, you felt it gave you...I mean, you already knew Washington, but from what perspective?

ANDERSON: Obviously I knew how agencies worked. From the legislative standpoint in knowing how the laws come about, how they are implemented. I also had day to day contact with the federal agencies so I knew how they worked. I knew how they worked and interacted by helping individuals that needed help from agencies and then what Congress expected of them and what they needed from Congress. I could make agencies work I just never had worked in the executive branch. So it was helpful from the standpoint that I saw it from their side of the equation, if you will. That was a valuable insight.

Q: What were American interests in that set of islands?

ANDERSON: Well, certainly the situation of Grenada had just ended.

Q: Could you explain what that was?

ANDERSON: That was during the period of time, and I assume go back to your interview of Sally Shelton while she was there, there was obviously the Castro presence in the Caribbean and all of those islands were so volatile. They quite frankly are so small that each government is so susceptible to all kinds of outside influences. You take Antigua with 7700 people. You can take a government like that and work your will with it in all kinds of different ways be it undercover black market, etc. We were concerned, obviously with the buildup of communism as it was moving throughout these small Caribbean nations. The fact that the drug situation from South America, we could tell, was moving up through the Caribbean and they were using these as launching places. Of course, Grenada's actual overthrow by the communists became a concern of all the leaders in the Caribbean because they are democracies. They have a very strong background in democracy.

So after we sent our troops in...

Q: We sent our troops in when?

ANDERSON: It was during the time period between 1982-83. As I went down we were doing the reconstruction and rebuilding in Grenada.

There were agricultural interests. Of changing their views and ways they were doing things. They were dependent on sugar and in today's environment, sugar is not the right thing. You have a real problem economically in the area because their whole economy is based around sugar. Tourism, of course, is a major industry. It has overtaken sugar as the largest industry. So, with the President's focus after the Grenada invasion on the area...how can we best help these people to develop the area?

Q: This was the Caribbean Basin Initiative.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: This was essentially what?

ANDERSON: This is where we get into disputes as to how it should be carried out. AID certainly had some programs which they allowed business people to participate in both on the individual local level as well as some American business people that we tried to get involved to go in and try to develop a business there. The cut and sew business here in the United States has to do with many of the small factories that hired people started looking to the Caribbean because of the cheaper labor, good working environment for the people, and the steadiness and educational level.

That created problems for Congress on the other hand. They wanted to create the Caribbean Basin Initiative but they didn't want you taking jobs from the United States...to move them down there. So, those were problems.

I always cite the American Airlines situation. The President of American Airlines said that he wanted to do something in Barbados. His team was sent down in January and reported back that it was great. They reported that the people were well educated, it was a beautiful area, and would be a great place to do business. A couple of months later the President said, "You guys haven't done anything. I told you that I wanted an operation down there to take our coupons." The coupons you leave at the gate just as you go to get on the plane are collected by American Airlines and flown up to New York and then would be flown to Barbados where all the keyput information would be put in. They would get immediate credit from other airlines which quite frankly helped American's cash flow. If you are ticketed on Delta, obviously you paid your money to Delta and for American to get their money back they had to be able to show that they got their coupon, so this was a way they figured out how to make money, cash flow wise, come back to American quicker.

Well, the team said, "We didn't really think you were serious." "Yes, I am serious, so you go down there and let's get on with your trying to set something up in Barbados." So they went back in April. They came back to the States saying, "You know this is really great. We have had two wonderful vacations--we came in January when it was cold in the United States, and now we are down in April--but we really don't think we should do this." They wrote a little memo about how they found it would be difficult--they had some electrical problems--and told him all the reasons why they basically felt it wouldn't work.

The president called them back again and told them to go back down there that week and come back with a report on who they were going to implement it. So they came back and reported how it could be done but we still said they did not think it was the right thing to do. This was after the third trip. The fourth trip--he told them to go in August and stay there until they identified a site, and started the actual preparation to move the business there. They did. And it ended up that the efficiency rating after they finally got the business established increased from about 64 percent accuracy to around 98 percent. It provided wonderful jobs for the people there--the environment

they had them in, the people liked their work and were satisfied. And it was good for American Airlines.

Q: This obviously took tremendous perseverance on the part of the head of American Airlines which is not the sort of thing you usually get on this sort of thing. Why was he pushing it?

ANDERSON: Well, that is where I had a different view of the policy than what the State Department basically felt and, I think even the President. I did talk with some people about how I thought it should be implemented. This is one of those things that truly becomes a management problem. In business the people who make decisions in business are the chief executive officers. The President of American Airlines. Why he was committed to Barbados I can't answer, other than that he had been there and knew the work ethic of the people. That is the reason that the Caribbean Basin Initiative would have worked better if had we been...the State Department's attitude was that you need to take people down there and show them what you have to offer and that was what they wanted us to convince the people in the islands.

Well, my theory was just the opposite. They should be coming to America. Go to Des Moines, Iowa, or Denver, Colorado, or to New York, or wherever business was that we could have identified, through Commerce, etc., and actually talk with chief executive officers. You could have brought up the prime minister of the country or the minister of finance, someone to go in to talk to them and explain it. Invite the chief executive officer down there and develop it. Those that I was able to convince to do that showed results. They ended up with personal relationships, saw what their businesses needed and how businesses operated in the United States. Wilson Sporting Goods, for instance, in St. Vincent, as well as in St. Lucia, found that the wonderful work ethic of the people was fantastic.

They also needed to target their tourism a little better. During the winter months Barbados targets DC with ads. The same with St. Lucia. If they would pick out another market say like Dallas, Texas and do that same thing, or Denver, places that they don't always get tourists from they would get a new influx of tourists.

The CBI could have been far more helpful and it still can be, if we would have been able to say to the people down there, "Come to the United States and let us set up appointments for you to visit with business people here."

Q: How helpful did you find the Department of Commerce? Obviously this was a major part of President Reagan's policy and what you were after was to develop business ties. Or was it developed to help Americans sell good abroad?

ANDERSON: No. Quite frankly American goods were already sold down there anyway. The Commerce Department, certainly the people that we had in place there were very helpful. I think this is where government causes our foreign policy a lot of trouble when you get out into the hinterlands because it is very difficult when you have to try to coordinate...you have your team in place and everybody is working towards the same goal. There is no doubt about it. It is when it gets back here to Washington that you have the problems with Washington not seeing it the way you do on the ground. You have to constantly massage it trying to bump it up another level in

order to get a decision. When you waste your time doing that you are losing valuable time trying to meet your goal. But the people, and once again back to your point about travel, when you got people to come there, be it Commerce folks or State Department folks, could always see your point when they were there and understood more what you were trying to accomplish. The Department was helpful except when people had their own agenda and you spent a lot of time trying to move it up to the next level.

Q: When you got there how did you find the mission, the staff of the embassy--effectiveness, ability to get around, etc.?

ANDERSON: We were very fortunate in that we had an airplane. We let in coordination everybody use it. So people got around to all the islands, ten of them, on a regular basis. Travel is not a big thing in the Caribbean even though there is a lot of water out there. Islanders go back and forth a lot. Travel is not a problem.

The staff was like any place. You had some that you were glad to move on, but by in large they were a great group of people. They were very professional, understood the people, understood what our goals were.

Q: How about back in Washington, did you find that it was hard to get anybody's attention in the State Department which were giving a good deal of attention to Central America?

ANDERSON: That is interesting--yes and no. The focus in ARA was certainly on Central America because of the times and I can't say that the assistant secretary level was as concerned at that moment--they had just focused on the Caribbean during the Grenada crisis--and they were now looking towards Central America, which I think was natural. But the rest of the Department and anyone else you dealt with who had responsibility for the area, you could get them, but it just took time. It was a time consuming thing.

Particularly for the mission when we wanted to have a regional treaty with all of the islands. I think that could have been put into effect if the State Department had wanted to focus on that at the time, because we pretty well had most of the prime ministers along with it.

Q: What type of treaty was this?

ANDERSON: It was basically an arms type of arrangement, a security treaty, so that there would be a format for the same type of thing that happened in Grenada. It was something that based on what took place in Grenada could have happened very easily and quickly within the first two or three years after it took place. After that you would never get it put together because they are all independent nations. Once you missed that window of opportunity it would be extremely difficult to put such a security treaty together. It would have facilitated us not to have to go through the same type process that we had to go through the last time in making the decisions that we did because it would have been done on a regional level and the governments would have been directly involved all along the decision process as they asked us for assistance and the type of assistance, etc.

Q: Did you find it difficult dealing with these governments because you were located in Bridgetown in Barbados and could only fly out from time to time? Did you keep an ongoing relationship with the other governments the way you could in Barbados--calling on people and all that?

ANDERSON: Yes. You know there have been views that we need separate missions in every individual island nation, which I don't subscribe to. It just makes it a little more difficult on the mission and certainly the people there, but you can very easily keep up with all of the day to day activities and relationships. They are warm, friendly people and you can deal with them forthrightly. They are accessible. You never have a problem talking to them. By the same token they had no problem calling you up immediately. I think back to when James Mitchell was elected prime minister in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He won by a landslide to the point that even some of the other countries were concerned that after 30 years under the leadership of Mr. Cato there was going to be real problems. Of course, there were none and he became a great dynamic force in the Caribbean. The day after his election he was on the phone to me and I hadn't even met him at that point. He asked me to come down and talk to him. We flew down right away and spent the evening with him at his home. As a matter of fact we spent three nights with him. We had a very close relationship with him. You could do that with any of the Caribbean leaders.

Q: We are always looking at the time that you were there, did you see any problems, particularly with any of these small states? Economic, political, etc.

ANDERSON: You have to bare in mind that this was right after Grenada and we were constantly monitoring very closely the activities that were taking place and taking the pulse of the everyday citizen down there as well as the government leaders about what outside influences were there. That we were very concerned about. It was a very tedious time there in the Caribbean. Their economic situation was one that was not good at that time. They were trying to readjust their economics. Their agricultural focus needed to be changed.

Q: For the record, I assume the problem was mostly of a sugar economy when we are moving into an era where people are not using as much sugar.

ANDERSON: Exactly. It was a difficult situation for them from an economic standpoint. What they were trying to do, or what we were trying to do, was to get them to focus on light manufacturing and cut and sew industries to help come up with jobs when they lost them on the sugar plantations. New machinery to cut the decreased sugar also caused unemployment.

Q: A lot of your focus was just on what one could do for these countries?

ANDERSON: Sure, economic development, if you will. That was what we tried to concentrate on. And the opportunities that they had and the things that they could do to make good economic sense and provide jobs for their people.

Q: I was thinking of two sort of major dynamos in that area. Obviously there was Cuba. You also had a situation in Jamaica which isn't very good--a lot of crime and anti-American labor movements, etc. Did you get emanations from these two places?

ANDERSON: Yes, and that was part of what was going on. But in the Caribbean nations that our mission worked with there really wasn't anti-American sentiment. It was a wonderful feeling, they were gratified with what America had done in the region, they were very, very positive about America and things American. It really and truly couldn't have been a better time to be there as far as their feelings towards us. Many of the servicemen would come through and tell you it was one of the first time in their lives where the locals would offer to buy drinks and thank them for what they did.

Q: Did you get reports or concern that the Cubans were trying to continue doing things there?

ANDERSON: Yes. Of course, as I said earlier, that was one of our concerns--Cuba and the aggressiveness that they had in the region. On a daily bases we tried to monitor what was taking place. And because they were such fragile islands in small economies, small governments, the same type thing that would happen in Jamaica with crime, robbery of tourists that were out on the beach...we had those sort of things happen in one of their major industries right there in Barbados. When that happened it hurt the tourism so the government spent a lot of time so that they didn't have crime on the beaches and that sort of thing. Drugs that they felt were basically communist inspired were kept out. They monitored it very closely with lots of our help and they were grateful for it.

Q: How about the drug business? It was somewhat off the main route as far as getting stuff up to the United States wasn't it?

ANDERSON: Yes, but you know if you look at how they come up from Colombia, they ended up...we had pretty well monitored how they were coming and they switched patterns. They moved from Colombia and started moving over to Caracas. Then they would start coming up through the Caribbean chain. I don't think it got as bad as we thought it might, but the pattern definitely shifted. You stamp something out one place and it pops up in another area.

Q: The money is just so overwhelming.

ANDERSON: The money could corrupt a government overnight. They would come in with a \$100,000 which is nothing here in the United States, but that is a fortune in a small country like St. Lucia, St. Vincent, or even Dominica. It is just incredible what they could do if they wanted to buy a government off.

Q: Did you have the Drug Enforcement Agency person there?

ANDERSON: Yes. And monitored all of that very closely. But by enlarge there were not real major drug problems. There were small problems here and there that popped up. I think they have more of a problem today than they did back then.

Q: Did you have any major drug busts or anything like that?

ANDERSON: No, we really didn't. About the only thing that actually happened was a neighbor of mine from where the Ambassador's Residence was, ended up killing his wife. They went into his house and discovered all kinds of drugs and evidently he was one of the kingpins of the drug industry there in Barbados and he was only a stone throw away. But outside of that they didn't have problems. It was more up towards the Bahamas that they had most of the major problems. But that was when they started dropping back a little bit too. So fortunately I left about the time they really started moving that way.

Q: What about Grenada? You came in the aftermath. You had the responsibility of overseeing...?

ANDERSON: Well, for the US AID mission and USIS. What they had done when they actually went into Grenada was to take Grenada out from underneath before I arrived at the Barbados mission and operated it separately and there was a Chargé down there. He coordinated through the AID mission and Information office in Bridgetown and other than that reported directly back to Washington.

Q: Was immigration a problem? Was there a tradition of going to the United States or was that more from Jamaica and other places?

ANDERSON: No, the Caribbean likes to do their shopping in Miami and they go pretty regularly--Miami and New York. There is obviously a very large population of Caribbean people in New York and they move regularly and on a daily basis. Travel for them is like hopping on the subway or metro. They just hop on a plane and take off and do a lot of it. They do immigrate a lot and it was quite a problem.

Q: This must have been one of the major pressures on you?

ANDERSON: Definitely. You couldn't go anywhere that you didn't get confronted with an immigration problem. But I can say that the consular office did a great job down there. They were very good. Even today, I think, that the Caribbean people feel good about the way they are handled, which I think is a credit to the State Department.

Q: How about tourism? Do you get people calling up saying they have missed their boat and you need to do something?

ANDERSON: That certainly, because it was a high tourist area, was a problem from time to time. But not any real problems. We had a couple rape problems that didn't happen while I was there but came back to court while I was there. That was something that you ended up getting involved in that was sort of dramatic from both sides when you would see how their law was going to interact and you would try to explain to American citizens that they were under their laws and would have to operate that way. It was a difficult thing to have to handle American citizens who felt that they needed certain kinds of representation and you could only do so much for them because indeed they were in a foreign country. It was hard for them to understand that. You did

from time to time hear from folks that their son was on a sailing trip down there and hadn't heard from him for days and could you find him, etc.

Q: *All of it was at the manageable level?*

ANDERSON: Yes, I don't think that there were any major problems there.

Q: *No great hurricanes while you were there?*

ANDERSON: Nope. Had a couple of threats, but fortunately they went away.

Q: *One hurricane will ruin your entire day.*

ANDERSON: That's right. Having lived through one that hit the Mississippi Gulf coast, I know what that is like.

Q: *This has been very interesting in giving us your perspective of this. When you left the islands, did you have much of a chance to pass on the information you had gained to your successor, or was it pretty much like ships that pass in the night?*

ANDERSON: No, he happened to be a good friend of mine so I had a very good opportunity to chat with him about the missions, the people that were there, the various prime ministers, their concerns, etc.

PAUL A. RUSSO
Ambassador
Barbados (1986-1988)

Ambassador Russo was born in Cleveland, Ohio and attended Ohio State University. He soon became involved in politics, working first for a United States Senator and then for Bob Dole who was then the Chairman of the Republican National Committee. He worked as head of Congressional relations for the Reagan Campaign in 1979, and then served as Special Assistant to the President for Political Affairs. In 1986 he was appointed ambassador to Barbados. Ambassador Russo was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: *Well, then why don't we move to how you got your appointment to Barbados and when.*

RUSSO: After President Reagan's re-election in 1984, I left the Administration and started my own consulting business in Washington. I was out about a year and a half when the ambassadorial appointment became a possibility. It took about six months from the beginning of the process until I was sworn in as Ambassador in 1986.

As to how I was appointed; my predecessor in Barbados was thinking about returning to the United States and he had made his plans known to me, and a short time later to Presidential Personnel. I had known some of the people in Personnel, obviously, while working there and through past campaigns and so forth. The head of Presidential Personnel thought I could be a candidate for an Ambassadorship, but there was a fairly long line for Barbados. One of the people in Personnel thought that I could fill that role, and that one of the people who was on the list for that particular country could go on to a different country, and I think that's what she was trying to put together. So that whole process started evolving. I went through filling out the papers and doing all the things you do, and became a candidate at that point.

I was extremely fortunate, in the sense that I had a personal relationship with the President. Somebody who knew I was pursuing the appointment told the President that I was interested. I later learned from a Presidential aide who was with the President in the Oval Office at the time, that the President, when he learned I was interested, called the Chief of Staff, Don Regan, and told him he wanted me to be the next Ambassador to Barbados. Because of my personal relationship, I was able to jump over the entire personnel process. It certainly is the recommended way to go.

Q: Well, to sort of sort this out, the process usually is the State Department puts up a candidate or two; the political side of the White House does, and often this is sorted out sort of at the chief-of-staff level without the president getting involved in this.

RUSSO: That's correct. That's exactly how it works, in most cases.

Q: But it is the president's appointment.

RUSSO: There's no question about that.

Q: From time to time the president says, "I want so and so." And this changes the rules of the game.

RUSSO: Right. And, as I say, I was very fortunate and very appreciative. As I mentioned, the President told Don Regan, the Chief of Staff at the time, that he wanted me in that particular job. In that meeting you're describing, which is a joint meeting with White House senior staff and the State Department, when my papers were presented, someone questioned my age. Apparently, a comment was made that "well, he's a little bit young to be an ambassador." And, as I understand it, Regan's response was that he thought my age was irrelevant, because the President wanted me. And that was the end of the discussion. The papers were signed, and they moved on to the next candidate.

Q: Before you went there, what type of briefing, training did you get? I mean, you had not been an ambassador before. When did you get yourself ready, and how did the system get you ready for the job?

RUSSO: The preparation on my part was twofold. I went through a long process trying to decide, first, should I become a candidate, and indeed could I be appointed. The way I approached it was,

could I do the job? I had not spent much time, if any, thinking about being an ambassador, and I had to really focus in on what I thought the job entailed. And then, was it a job that I could perform to my satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the President. I guess that is what my original thinking was.

And I tried, first of all, to read as much as I could about the area that I would be appointed to. And I tried to read as much and talk to as many people about what indeed the job was. Then I tried to honestly evaluate my own past, to try and see if I could make my past fit into the job requirements. And I suppose that there wasn't any way I could approach it other than saying that I thought that my political background matched very closely to what the job was.

I said, "all right, what have I been doing for all of my professional life?" I had been representing, for many of those years, Ronald Reagan personally. I had a fair idea what was in his mind, and had watched him in almost every imaginable situation. I believed I had a good sense of what general issues I would face. I had been through many situations with Ronald Reagan and felt I would have a very high degree of success in judging what his reaction would be in similar circumstances. And I had a very good knowledge of the staff and the people around him, both in the White House and at the State Department, so that I knew that I could work within the system.

As I talked to people, I found that the conflict between the political and the State Department bureaucracy was a major problem for political appointees. And I felt that my past history in government would be very helpful. I understood how government worked. I understood the personnel process. I understood the intergovernmental committees, the workings of State, the workings of Treasury, the related kinds of departments that diplomatic appointees have to be concerned with. I knew the people. I knew many of the cabinet secretaries of the other departments. I knew the lower-level people; many of them. So that I had sources of information. I had people with whom I could work.

And I felt that the knowledge of the President, the knowledge of the government, and also the political side of working with political people, meaning...the islands, would be extremely helpful. There are six different countries there, all with prime ministers, and very political. And I began to feel more comfortable with the prospect of being appointed.

Q: For people who will read this in the future, you might, in rough form, say there are really three different types of people who become ambassador. One is somebody coming up through the career, the Foreign Service, side. Then somebody who basically gives a hunk of money, who often comes from really no particular political experience, they've just got money. I mean, I don't want to denigrate this, because they may come from other sources and all that, but there is no particular reason for them to bring any particular skills other than the desire to be an ambassador and having money. And then there is somebody who comes not from the career service, not from the money service, but from within the political side of the process, such as yourself, who does come with some experience in government itself, which is something that the Foreign Service doesn't have. So you came from this particular branch, which has always been one of the powerful inputters into the ambassadorial ranks, as is often forgotten about when people think of either, oh, it's somebody with a lot of money.

RUSSO: Correct. And my feeling is, after having gone through the entire process, and the experiences I referred to earlier; changes that have been taking place within the Foreign Service itself, and some of the changes in the campaign laws, that the major-contributor ambassador is becoming less and less so because of the limits -- the thousand dollar limit. There are ways to contribute large amounts of money legally, but I think that category is becoming smaller. One of the other arguments is how many political ambassadors there should be, as opposed to career ambassadors. And I think what I'm trying to say is that, after having been through it, I believe that the ratio on the political side, with knowledge; personal knowledge, and the trust of the President, should be a much higher priority than a career ambassador.

And the reason I say that is that I believe that there is too much of a gap in the career side, from who the President is and what it is that he's expecting that ambassador to be doing while he's representing the United States in another country. And I think that what's happening is, and I think this is to me a personally disturbing trend, is that the Secretaries of State seem to be plugging-in to the President and running a separate operation other than using the Department of State, because there's too much of a gap in what that Secretary is trying to accomplish for the President and what the career employee is trying to do.

Q: Well, we're talking right now, James Baker is secretary of state, who has a coterie around him, and there doesn't seem to be any connect with the State Department. You know, I mean, I find this a very disturbing thing, not for any partisanship or anything else, I just think it sounds like trouble.

RUSSO: Well, it does in a sense. And I wouldn't necessarily criticize Jim Baker. I think it was Secretary Kissinger who first began the trend of not working with the Department. If he knew what the President, President Nixon, wanted to accomplish and he knew what to do to achieve the necessary results, then it is understandable that perhaps he thought it best not to get involved with the bureaucracy, in a building where people might have fifteen, or fifty, different agendas and who don't necessarily feel responsible to an elected president. People who feel responsible to a foreign service career. The reason that this situation has evolved is that the State Department is structured so that to become an ambassador through that system, or to be promoted within the Department, you do not necessarily need to respond to a president. That Foreign Service Officer responds to what his superiors (who are also career officers) are rewarding, not what the White House is rewarding. And that gap is where the problem lies.

Looking at it from the other standpoint, from the political appointee's or the political ambassador's standpoint, if he has a critical situation to deal with in his country, what does he do? One option is to scream and yell through the bureaucracy, with little or no reaction. Or he can go directly to the Secretary of State, which a political ambassador has a much better chance of doing. Or he can even go directly to the President, if the situation is critical enough. Perhaps the situation in Iraq would have been different if a political ambassador had been involved..

Q: Oh, no doubt about this at all.

RUSSO: And he or she knows...could you possibly think of calling the President instead of the Secretary? Or would you call one of the President's aides instead of the Secretary? Or how do you deal with the Secretary?

It seems to me that we need to, I think, as a country, look at this trend and see if there isn't some better way of functioning in the future. And I think that examining Secretary Baker's reign will give some real clues, because, as you say, his tendency is to say, "I know what I'm doing; I am in constant communication with the President, so I don't need a lot of interpreters." But you've got thousands of people who are extremely well educated, who have years of experience, and we're missing the benefit of that if we're not plugging them into the system. I believe making the Foreign Service more responsive to the President would be a first step.

Q: Well, now, going back to your specific experience. After you went through the sort of self-examination, how about the system itself? Did the system get you ready for your position, or were you just sort of thrown into it?

RUSSO: Well, I think the system tried, but I think that, no, it doesn't really prepare you. But I'm not sure what could prepare you, to be very honest. Because I think the nature of the job is tailored around your own agenda and how you want to solve some broad categories of problems. There's a great deal of latitude in how you perform your duties.

There's the Ambassadorial School. I believe Ambassador Shirley Temple Black organized it after she was sent out ill-prepared the first time. When she came back, I think she said why don't we get a school together here, a seminar, with the ambassadors and their spouses, to go through a very intensive week or ten days of briefings from the appropriate people in the Department of State and the National Security Council.

As a matter of fact, when I was in the process, the National Security Council had its own school, which was, I think, in competition with the State Department's school. I understand it has since been discontinued.

But, in my mind, it was more of an academic briefing and a status briefing of sections on the world; issues, and foreign policy concepts and so forth, as opposed to what do you do when you get up in the morning, and when you go to the office, what happens, and those kinds of things. And I think that we had enough interrelations with other ambassadors and previous ambassadors and so forth, but I think that the role was defined almost in as many different forms as different speakers that we had. So I think it's very hard to specifically define what that role is. There are very specific things to most kinds of employment situations, but for an ambassador, I think there's a lot of latitude. And I actually believe that that's probably a very good thing. You're going to get some bad ambassadors, like you're going to get in any situation with people, but the ambassador, getting to that point in his career; to be appointed, brought something to the table, either from capabilities or by what some would call luck or chance. Whatever it was, he brought something, and that's something that should be preserved, in my opinion, in the posts. I don't think that the system prepares people enough. But I'm not sure that I think I could have been more prepared.

Q: In the first place, I wonder if you could describe... because when I say going to Barbados, this is just one of... Could you describe which islands you were going to represent, and what was sort of the political situation on those?

RUSSO: Certainly. The structure has since changed, but when I was appointed in 1986, the Post consisted of an island chain in the Eastern Caribbean that had six independent island nations that were all represented by one ambassador: Antigua and Barbuda, which are two islands, one country; Saint Christopher and Nevis, again two islands, one country; Dominica; Barbados; Saint Lucia; and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Q: Was Grenada in there?

RUSSO: No, Grenada used to be the seventh, but was taken out of the chain, from a representational standpoint, when the Grenada invasion, or rescue mission, took place. Grenada was, and I believe still is, reporting directly to the State Department, for a lot of obvious reasons from a military standpoint.

For the most part, Barbados was very English in history and in tradition because it had been an English possession and protectorate throughout its history. Most of the other islands were English and traded back and forth over the years, with some French domination, a little Dutch. But a very high degree of democratic thinking, more Western democracy thought and parliamentary systems. The prime ministers were, in general, dynamic individuals. There was a great deal of education of the upper strata in the islands in either England or in the United States. So you might run into a cabinet officer or a prime minister who was educated in one of the best schools in the United States, or at Oxford, or both, for that matter. So it's not a place like many other smaller island chains in the world. Certainly the Eastern Caribbean is not a place where they're backward or in any sense of the word ill informed or undereducated, from the standpoint of their elected officials.

Q: Well, in the first place, was there some resentment or understanding of why we only had one embassy dealing with them? Was there sort of a general policy or thought process? I mean, did they kind of go pretty much together, or were they a very diverse group of countries?

RUSSO: There's an involved answer to that.

Q: Involved question.

RUSSO: There really were two embassies under one ambassador, which was a unique situation; the only one in the world. From my standpoint, it was very difficult, from a managerial standpoint, to run two embassies in two different countries. Two different, distinct staffs, who could not be used in the other jurisdictions.

Q: Good God!

RUSSO: That's exactly what I said. And I spent an inordinate amount of time and energy trying to close one of the embassies, to create a structure that worked from a managerial standpoint.

This was at a time when budgets were starting to become a major concern. And I felt that we, as a government, couldn't justify having two separate embassies in the Eastern Caribbean.

Q: *Where were the two located?*

RUSSO: One was in Antigua, in the north, and the other one was in Barbados. And it was, in my mind, a nightmare of overspending, overstaffing, and, from a management standpoint, ridiculous to cover that...

Q: *Was that our problem, or was it the problem because of the countries we were representing?*

RUSSO: It was our problem -- we created it. And one of the criticisms I do have with the Department is that it's a horrible bureaucracy.

Q: *Oh, boy, yes.*

RUSSO: And one of the things a bureaucracy has to do is to sustain itself and to keep going. And if you have people being promoted up, you need more embassies, so therefore you can have more ambassadors. So, without criticizing a person, I'm criticizing a system that says if you're going to have more ambassadors, you need more embassies. Whether you can afford them or not, let's have them. And we wouldn't want to close an embassy, because then you're taking a whole group of people and putting them somewhere else, obviously. Or maybe there's no need for them in the system.

And that's one of the problems I had in fighting the bureaucracy. That took up more time than it should have, but nevertheless I viewed it as one of the mandates that I had; to try and push that mountain over a couple of inches. I tried all the while I was there, but I was never able close the embassy.

Q: *With the Antigua one, did they have one subset of islands and then Barbados had another set of islands?*

RUSSO: Correct, and so therefore I was the Ambassador for both. When I was in Barbados, I had a DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) there, and a Charge' in Antigua. When I went to Antigua, the Charge' became the DCM there, and the DCM in Barbados then became the Charge'. And I also had a commercial officer in one, and a commercial officer in the other. It was double staff coverage, with the combined population of all the islands being roughly equivalent to that of one U.S. Congressional District. And, going back to what I thought my strength was, I said, "all right, if I were a Congressman and had a congressional district, how the hell could I justify all of this staff?" All of these people, to basically do a job that didn't require half of what I had. As a matter of fact, the more people, the more problems.

Q: *Oh, absolutely. This is a truism, work expands...*

RUSSO: Correct.

Q: Obviously you had a major managerial problem. How did you view the staffs that you had there? I mean, were they appreciative of the fact that maybe they better join together, or was everybody worried about their job, although they could be transferred easily?

RUSSO: The better ones wanted to work together, and we did form two good working units that I was very proud of. In general, the staff knew nothing drastic would happen concerning the reduction of staff because they were legally locked in, whether or not we closed the Embassy. But one or two were transferred because I felt they were setting bad examples for the others.

Basically, I was approaching the job from a management standpoint, and there were some extremely competent people in both of the embassies to help. My feeling was that if I was going to present an argument to the Department for closing an embassy, I needed to understand all of the arguments that were going to come back my way -- why I couldn't do this and why I couldn't do that. And so I needed to totally understand the consulate function in both embassies, and understand and have a plan for why it would work better if it were one instead of two.

Maybe I should go back to my goals; what I was trying to accomplish. I viewed my responsibility as, first of all, to organize whatever resources I had to promote economic development in the area. I felt that from the standpoint of the United States, why do we have an embassy there? What are we trying to accomplish? What's in our best interest? How does this all fit in with our total foreign policy picture? My feeling was that we needed democratic governments there in those islands. If we had an unemployment rate that was low enough, there wouldn't be the unrest. If people were working, they weren't going to be listening to anything Castro had to say from down the road. So I felt that it was, one, in our best interest; that it was what I wanted to devote a great deal of my time and energy and the energy and time of the embassies to.

The second was the anti-drug situation. As I was taking up my Post, the United States was making progress in cutting off, or at least diverting, the direct drug routes from Colombia straight up on either side of Cuba to our Country. And one effect of this was to push the drug trade toward the Eastern Caribbean islands.

You have to understand that the airports are magnificent, especially the airports in Antigua, Barbados and St. Lucia. The facilities for ships are equally good on most of the islands, and there is a good deal of international traffic. Everything was totally open; there was no fear of terrorism. These are tourist countries, and to encourage tourism the governments wanted open, friendly ports. They didn't want armed guards and the appearance of tight security or stringent checking of cargoes and luggage. In addition, the banking systems are wonderful, and secure. It would be a very natural shift for the drug trade and money laundering operations over into the Eastern Caribbean islands.

When I arrived in Barbados, the drug problem was not imbedded. My feeling at the time was, and still is, that a great deal of the United States' anti-drug activity and efforts are directed at problems already out of control -- after-the-fact activity. I felt that we had a situation in the Eastern Caribbean that was relatively drug free, and if we could stop it before it took hold, we

were way ahead of the game. On the other hand, if we couldn't stop it from coming in, I wasn't not sure we could ever get it out. Most of the Prime Ministers shared this view.

Q: Of course, we had the example of the Bahamas, where it had really taken root, from what I take it. I mean, from the very top on down.

RUSSO: Correct. And the Eastern Caribbean could have become exactly the same as the Bahamas for the same reasons: the excellent banking system, and excellent transportation to the United States and Europe, which are tremendous markets. Another concern was the fact that it doesn't take very much money and organization to elect a person in a small country like that. If someone dedicated large quantities of cash, you could very soon elect some very wrong people.

So I was approaching my job with two priorities; economic development and an anti-drug program. I also had a prime minister in Barbados when I arrived who was extremely anti-Reagan and anti-American.

Q: This was Errol Barrow?

RUSSO: Barrow, yes. And my first priority was to establish relations with him; hopefully suggest that he should not be attacking Reagan.

So my three major priorities were: one, establish a better relationship with the government in Barbados; two, promote economic activity for all the islands; and, three, do as much as possible in the anti-drug area, both on the education side and the enforcement side.

Q: Well, let's talk about the two before we get to Errol Barrow. On the economic side, I mean, one, the general feeling that a healthy economy is good for the United States, less unrest, but it was particularly pointed, too, because of Cuba. You didn't want to have another sort of Grenada-type situation, where sort of the Cubans could be messing around with an economically depressed people.

RUSSO: Correct. And in most of the islands, unemployment was a problem; rates that were unacceptable, some up to forty percent. And that's not a good situation from a humanitarian standpoint, but also from a political standpoint.

Q: What could you do? I mean, what tools did you have?

RUSSO: Here again, we go back to preparation. I don't believe the system can really fully prepare an Ambassador. I say that because some of our best ones have been people who have used their particular skills to solve, attempt to solve, problems that are not necessarily "diplomatic" in nature, but problems that are nevertheless critical to the interests of the United States. In my case, I tried to use the tools I had; my personal experiences and my own friendships -- contacts in the United States -- people I had met along the way.

One example of a difference in policy that I had with my staff when I arrived was the Embassy's emphasis in certain areas. Many in AID (Agency for International Development) did not want to

encourage an economy built on tourism. Well, I took issue with that because tourism is a major part of those economies, and something they know and like. It is part of their culture. I certainly understand that generally tourism may not be something that should be promoted because it's unstable, and all those kinds of arguments.

But not in the Eastern Caribbean. I don't agree with that, because it is probably one of the most beautiful spots in the entire world. Air travel is convenient; it's close to the major markets of the United States and Europe. I know people who go on vacations, I know what they're looking for, and I know it can be found in Barbados and the other Eastern Caribbean islands. And while, yes, tourism can be up and down and does fluctuate, in my mind there are always going to be people in the world with dollars to spend on vacations to an environment such as that.

So I felt that I was going to pursue that in working with the hotels (the hotel organization), the local government tourism people, and the tourism people in the United States. I felt that it was something that I was going to try to expand rather than decrease. Which was a policy decision, not at the expense of other efforts, but not to stop something that was already working and try to replace it with something that we, the United States, believed was better to do. For better or for worse, I was appointed, and I was going to do it my way.

Second, the data processing side of Barbados was worth pursuing on all of the islands, but Barbados specifically, because they had a tremendous capacity in the English language. They had an answer to one of the problems that I knew existed in the United States. I had learned that from all my political years, and from a keypunch standpoint; I think the terms have been updated since I've been involved, but we were never able to get the keypunch function of putting data into the...

Q: It's a data entry system.

RUSSO: Thank you.

Q: It was keypunch, now it's word processing, data entry--the same thing.

RUSSO: Right. I knew that our error rate was always exceedingly high, because you couldn't find an employee who would stay very long with the job if he had command of the English language. Most of the keypunch employees were either Filipinos or Hispanic; newly arrived into the United States, who took this particular job because they wanted to work but couldn't find a better job. They would leave key punching immediately upon finding a job that could be a little higher paying and in which they could receive a little more self-satisfaction and be thought of as having a higher standing in the community.

In Barbados, their literacy rate in their native language; English, is ninety-seven percent. Whatever your measure, that is a heck of a lot higher than it is in most of the U.S. cities where you hire minimum wage workers. Another positive factor was that the one major alternative for employment would be working in the cane fields. So if you have somebody who has command of the English language who all of a sudden gets to work in an office situation with highly sophisticated machines, this person is then someone who is looked upon as a professional, or at

least somebody who is higher than the field worker; and someone who has pride in himself and his work.

In fact, one of my favorite examples is... (My wife would kill me if she heard this story again because she's heard it a thousand times) American Airlines used to do their keypunching in, I guess it was Oklahoma. They decided to try an experiment in Barbados. All the ticket coupons in the U.S. that were handed in each day were flown to New York City. They were then flown out of New York directly to Barbados. Overnight, the information was keypunched into the system; then the data was bounced back via satellite to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Their error rate went down to almost nothing. They saved between forty and fifty percent on the entire operation by doing it that way. And American Airlines was very smart, too, because they took the employees that were working in Tulsa who were displaced by this experiment and worked them into their organization in other places, so that they weren't taking American jobs away.

My feeling was that this was perfect, and the kind of thing that I wanted to pursue, because of the English language as a "raw material." We tried to spread the concept as far and wide as we possibly could, for all kinds of businesses, into industries that were as dependent on that keypunch function as the airline was. And I felt this was something that we should greatly expand.

One of the other things in the economic development area was the idea of an economic union. It wasn't a term I used, but it was what I was advocating, so that the islands could more or less have an economy of scale. For example, the problem was that Saint Vincent would have a little assembly factory that would compete with the Barbados factory that would compete with Saint Lucia, and all the way down the line. And it was difficult to do business because a visa was necessary to go from island to island, plus the currency was different from island to island. American businessmen were discouraged from doing business in the area, because it was cumbersome to work with the different bureaucracies and so forth. And I felt that if they could streamline that somewhat...and I'm very happy to see what's happening with the EC '92, with the European countries, because that, I think, will be a model that will allow the Eastern Caribbean to do some similar things and will help them greatly from the standpoint of economic development.

I also focused on CBI - the Caribbean Basin Initiative. I made it a point to try and clear up some of the misconceptions with the people who were trying to use the legislation to the benefit of economic development.

And I also made it a point to work very closely with Congress in designing or altering the legislation somewhat to allow these economies to benefit from it. The concept is a good one; the actual legislation sometimes was not allowing the benefits to really come through, because of mechanical problems.

And so one of the things that I felt I could do in that regard was encourage hearings and congressional visits. And any Member of Congress that I could get down there or get to stop there, I would, and I'd say, "you know, this is a wonderful place to be, and if we could get you to come down, we'll make sure you could get a day off if that's what you're looking for, but would

you take some time to have a meeting with a specific group or member of Parliament, to help explain the legislation and also its intent." I also believed the Members of Congress would learn a great deal if they listened to what the complaints were from the other side. And we had a lot of Delegations that went through there.

Q: Well, this does show that a good ambassador knows how to use congressional trips, particularly if you've got a place where people want to go to--it's a little harder to get people to Mogadishu.

RUSSO: Yes, I was fortunate to have had a good spot. But, on the other hand, I think that's another void in the foreign service; they don't focus on the importance of Congress, especially to achieve long term goals. It was always important in my background to know whose Congressional district you were in. And as an Ambassador, you can't operate politically without understanding how Congress works, and the impact it has on funding and policy. And I believe the State Department more or less just tolerates Congress. From my standpoint, I felt I understood how Congress could help me do my job. I also knew many Members, and I also felt that it was something that I thought should be part of my agenda. Not "Oh, my God, a congressional delegation's coming through here and I have to take care of them," but "What an opportunity, and couldn't I get more to come? Couldn't I create some event with this Delegation that's going to benefit these islands as well as the resulting CBI legislation?" And, as I say, I think that's a tool that a lot of ambassadors don't use enough.

Q: Well, on the economic side, after you left, did you feel that some things had been put in place or set in train that you were pleased with?

RUSSO: Yes, we focused a lot of attention on economic development, and got quite a few people working together. My way of approaching the subject was with a great deal of accountability. I wanted to know at the end of each week and each month not how many thousands of things we did or how many conceptual things we discussed, but rather did we get one person working this week, did we get one new business started this month. And we did have some successes. Yes.

The task of creating jobs in the Eastern Caribbean is tough, and it's going to take a period of time to overcome some of the traditional problems of the Region. But I certainly think it's worth it from the standpoint of the United States, not to mention what it does for those people affected.

But I feel that we made some progress, because we were looking at it from a jobs creation standpoint. Did we get one little Ma and Pa store going, or one company to locate there? And the answer is, yes, we did do some of that. And did we solve some of the problems that were evolving with new ventures? Here again, we had problems but we also made progress.

One of the cases that I read about in *The New York Times* was a small-shop owner who understood there was a great market for canaries in the United States, so he set up a small operation to raise canaries. You know, he made this small investment of whatever he needed, built the cages, raised the birds, and so forth. He then got to the point where he was ready to ship

them to Miami. The U.S. Government stopped the shipment. U.S. Customs wouldn't let them come into the United States. And so he was very disappointed; very discouraged, and he felt that;

"CBI doesn't mean anything, the U.S. doesn't really believe in all of the things it says about hard work and free enterprise. I go through the trouble of setting up an operation, and they won't let me ship the birds."

Here is another horror story of a good concept and a good law, but it doesn't work, and here this fellow is with all these canaries that he can't sell.

I flew over and talked to the owner. I said, "All right, you have a fantastic idea. Yes, there is a canary market, and a bird market in the United States. Yes, CBI is going to give benefits. Why, then, can't you get in?" His answer was, "Well, I couldn't get the Customs stamp to get in."

So, after numerous visits and calls and so forth, I finally got to the bottom of it. U.S. Customs, as they should, wanted a veterinary stamp certifying that these birds were not carrying a particular disease, which, naturally, we would demand before allowing them to come into our country. Was the disease present in the Island where the birds were raised? No. And because the disease wasn't there, it wasn't something that the owner thought was important. The bird owner knew that the birds weren't diseased, so what was the problem? Once we established the fact that we needed the certificate to protect U.S. birds, we moved on to Problem #2; there was no veterinarian on the island, and the regional veterinarian wasn't scheduled to come through for another six or eight weeks. We could have solved that problem, if there was a mechanism within the island to communicate the need for a veterinarian. I know from past experiences that I could have called any number of veterinarians in the United States and most likely found one to come down at his own expense, solve that problem, certify the birds, and then we could have helped him do whatever he wanted.

Q: Tax write-off or something like that.

RUSSO: Oh no, in the United States, we're so blessed with people who are willing to do things just for the adventure; the satisfaction of helping someone, and as volunteers. But there's no real structure for that individual to fit into our government.

One perfect example was a situation I had with the anti-drug program. Television is a major influence in the Eastern Caribbean. In fact, there's a long-running controversy because the Governments down there don't want a lot of U.S. programming. They do want some, but that's another story. For my agenda, I found out that Sesame Street was an extremely popular program in Barbados, and had been for many years. At the time, I wasn't acquainted with the Program; when it had started and the tremendous impact it has had on children. I learned that it began about fifteen years ago, and therefore had a great impact on the people now in their mid-twenties, as well as with the younger children. Everyone seemed to have a good impression of Sesame Street. One of our anti-drug projects was to air commercials on radio and television that we created locally, using volunteers. So in that regard, I called the Children's Television Workshop, the production company in New York, and explained what I was trying to do. I found that one of the women there...and I think her name is Diane, but I'm not sure if that's from the program or

her real name, but, anyway, I explained what I was trying to do. I said, "You know, I think we could put together a whole program in several of the islands for you, if you would come down." I told her that what I had in mind was for her to work with some of the local television people to create some anti-drug commercials; commercials that would work locally. I told her that the facilities were not as sophisticated as the ones she was used to, but that all of the necessary ingredients were there, and that if she wanted to, we would visit some high schools as well. And that I wanted to host a major reception at the Ambassador's residence, and invite the teachers and school administrators; that sort of thing.

She said, "When? When do you want me down there?" And we arranged the trip right then and there. I was fortunate because I had a desirable place to visit but on the other hand, there are a lot of good people willing to contribute, if asked. We paid for an airline ticket, and received a tremendous service of television and radio commercials.

Q: Still, there's this feeling...

RUSSO: There is still a feeling in our country that we have a lot, that we are blessed in so many ways, and there's a willingness to share things. But you've got to be creative.

Any bureaucracy, I think, stymies creativity by its very nature. But many in the bureaucracy will help, will want to succeed, but they need help. These are rather simple examples of what can be done, and I am certain that other ambassadors, both political and foreign service, have done things like this, and more. But my point is, as a political ambassador, I had a good idea of what the President wanted accomplished, and therefore I could be more creative if I were accomplishing those goals. I didn't have to concern myself with how many forms needed to be filled out, or was I not following a particular procedure, and did a particular division sign-off on this or that or the other. I felt that if I made the decision that this was something that was worthwhile; that it made sense for the U.S. and for the government down there, and obviously was it legal - then I was going to go ahead and do it. And if I could get the bureaucracy to come along with me, that would be fine, but if they decided not to come along, then that would be fine too. I mean, obviously, I was always concerned about obeying the law; that was part of my responsibility. But I'm not talking about laws, I'm talking about forms and...

Q: How to mobilize talent without going through all the bureaucratic procedure.

RUSSO: Correct. And usually the answer from the staff is: "No, you can't do that," or "Are you then endorsing a particular company or a specific private enterprise?" And my answer was: "I don't know, but I don't really care. What I'm endorsing is to try to get an anti-drug commercial produced and maybe save a kid from drugs, or to try and get a canary certified as disease-free so that this poor man can go ahead and sell his canaries to the United States -- as we've been telling the world that that's what we're trying to do."

Q: We talked about the economic and the drug business and all, how about the political situation? You were mentioning the fact that you arrived there and a new election had just taken place, bringing the Labor Party in, with Errol Barrow. This was a democratic Labor Party, wasn't it?

RUSSO: Yes. The Barbados Labor Party.

Q: And this was somewhat of a changeover, wasn't it, from a more conservative type government prior to that?

RUSSO: Correct.

Q: How did you view Barrow when you first got there, and then how did you deal with him up until he departed the scene...?

RUSSO: Well, first of all, our Government was concerned with Barrow's election because he was of a much more liberal philosophy than the previous Prime Minister, and also the State Department did not see his election coming. They weren't sure how far he was on the scale of going towards socialism and/or beyond. We were also somewhat concerned because Barrow was a contemporary of Michael Manley (who is now the Prime Minister of Jamaica, and who had a socialist past). Manley at that time was preparing to run against the conservative Prime Minister, Seaga, in Jamaica. Barrow and Manley were from the old socialist school. They could be an indication of a real change in attitude and approach to government in the region...maybe. The fact that Barrow was elected, the fact that he was anti-Reagan and anti-U.S....he did not like Reagan; he was calling him a cowboy in the press, and it was more than just Reagan, it was the United States. And he was a very strong figure in their society. I mean, he was a part of their history, and he was someone who had to be reckoned with; he was not an over-the-hill type in any sense of the word. He was a political force and a very strong prime minister.

My approach to it was virtually again back to my political past. I had a number of discussions with my country team in the Embassy as well as many private discussions with those members who I really felt were "career," in the sense of being long-time State Department employees who had worked with many ambassadors, in many parts of the world; very professional people. And we all said, "okay, we've got a problem. How do we solve it?" "What do I do?" And, from my standpoint, too, I was saying, "well, this would be great, you know, my first day on the job and I've got a hostile prime minister, and the first thing I do is screw it up in some way." That wasn't exactly the way I wanted to start my diplomatic career.

So I put a lot of thought into it. I did a lot of research on who Barrow was, where I thought he was coming from, why I thought he was anti-Reagan, and why I thought he was anti-U.S. And I wanted to try to decide whether that was the same thing, because you could be pro-U.S. and anti-Reagan, certainly. I'm not sure you could be the other way around, but certainly you could be anti-Reagan.

I talked to all of the people that I could find to talk to, and that would be the country team, those professionals. I went outside the embassy as well. I went to people that lived on the island, who were not part of the structure, to find out who Barrow was. And I found out that they loved this man. This was a national leader. There was a national pride that he was catering to; that he represented. The United States was looked upon as a dominant force that was going to do what it wanted. And, from Barrow's standpoint, he was the little guy saying,

"We are somebody and we are pretty good in our own right. We've had a democracy for so many years, we have a tradition of law and order, we have all of those kinds of things. Our people can read and write. And, yes, we want to be an ally of the United States, and, yes, we want to get along with you, but we're not going to sit back and let you tell us what to do."

Okay, that's easy, I think, to understand, or at least I thought so. What was his problem with Reagan? You know, had he ever met Reagan? No. Did he read the papers and watch the international news and so forth? Yes. So he formed an opinion of Reagan, based on some things that were picked out by him in his past from news accounts and probably from some of the other leaders that he knew. I would be dealing with changing a perception.

So I felt that I wanted to go and see him then. I didn't do it immediately, because I wanted to know what I was doing and what was the purpose of it. So when I did go to see him, I just had a talk with him about Reagan. I knew he was going to know who I was. I mean, he read the papers, and he was going to be briefed for the meeting and know that I was coming from a Reagan background. And so I decided that what I would do was approach it by saying,

"I'm here representing the United States. I believe that we should get along. It's in your best interest for your country and the United States to have a good working relationship. I feel that what I can do here during my tenure is work with your structure to try to help the economic situation, and work with you on an anti-drug program."

I went into a little of some of the things I was thinking about. I said I was very concerned about the anti-drug side; that I had seen the problem in the United States. I hoped that I could offer some help to their efforts in combating this, so that some of the things that had happened in some of our cities in the United States didn't happen there. Coordination of U.S. government drug enforcement agencies was a problem, and I knew I could help with this.

I think that I was able to establish that I wasn't coming to his office telling him, "you don't know how to do all of this." My intent was to try to establish a relationship, and then get into Reagan. I told him, "Of course, you know, that I have worked with Reagan. I occasionally read the papers and I've seen some of your comments." And I asked, I said, "Would there be some incident that might have happened that would make you not like President Reagan for some reason? Has he ever done anything to you?"

"Well, no."

"Have you ever met him?"

"Well, no."

"Well, maybe there are some things about him that you really might like if you knew more about him. It's certainly up to you."

And we started to establish a little bit of a relationship. That was the first crack at it, but it was still cold. He was a tough man, and he certainly wasn't going to be sweet-talked by some, you

know, traveling ambassador coming through here. We ended the meeting. It went all right. We went on a little bit, and then, not too long after that, a congressional delegation came down.

Most of the Caribbean leaders follow U.S. politics intently, and the issues, because we have such a tremendous impact on their countries. I used to have conversations with somebody; I'd say, "A Senator introduced a bill to do this or that," and he'd say, "Oh, you mean Senator Hatch," or "You mean Senator Kennedy." They know who you're talking about.

So this delegation was coming through, and one of the events of the delegation was a reception at the Ambassador's residence. And I invited the Prime Minister, for a lot of reasons: one, I thought he should be there; two, I thought it would be very strange, from the delegation's standpoint, if they were there and he wasn't; and, three, from my standpoint, wouldn't people look unfavorably upon me if I was in a country as an ambassador and didn't have a relationship with the Prime Minister? Isn't that part of the job?

And so, through the Foreign Minister, I told Barrow that I thought he should be at this reception, for a lot of reasons. First, because of the Congressional Delegation and CBI, and that was extremely important to Barbados. And if they felt slighted, that here's a prime minister that couldn't take the time to come to a reception and say hello to them and welcome them and so forth, then that could influence their feeling when I'm trying to sell a certain line in the CBI legislation that's going to benefit Barbados. They're going to say, "Well, Barbados; isn't that where the Prime Minister doesn't like the U.S., doesn't like the Congressional Delegation, doesn't like Reagan. Well, then why don't we just let him deal with his problems by himself, if he doesn't like us."

So it ended up where he finally came to the reception; his first public display of friendship toward the United States. And it worked out well. It evolved into a rather uneventful evening, which was good. He was there, he was fine; there wasn't anything really demanded of anybody. He was polite, and the "appearance" was what I had hoped for.

At the time he was there, he had a girlfriend that he brought with him to the reception. And it's not as horrible as it sounds; he had been separated from his wife for, oh, literally fifteen years or so.

Q: I have an interview that I didn't do, but with Eileen Donovan who was down there, who talked about they used to bring their "comforts" often to the...

RUSSO: Okay. Anyway, his girlfriend was in attendance with him. And, at one point during the evening, she came up to me and said that she was having a fashion show in two or three weeks or whatever, and would I come to that. And I said, "Well, sure, send me an invitation or a ticket or whatever I would need." You know, "tell me when and where." And I didn't think too much of it that night because I was worried about other things. I wanted to make sure Barrow and everyone got along. I actually ended up liking and respecting him, but he was very capable of telling off a congressman or whomever, and of course the press was there to report on this first public event.

Q: So there was some concern.

RUSSO: Right, and so I was not a disinterested participant that evening. But the evening went fine and we went on.

Several days later, I got an invitation to a fund raiser. It was a party fund raiser for Barrow. It was the fashion show his girlfriend had talked about. However, it was an evening honoring Barrow as the head of the Party; a personal honor to him and in recognition of his past life. It was a very nominal contribution to the Party--it might have been twenty-five dollars, or what I thought was fairly nominal. And that made it a little different then, "should I accept this or not." One, I had already said I would go, but, two, when I brought it up to the Country Team, to the man, everyone said I shouldn't go because I would then be endorsing that political party and would therefore be viewed as being a participant in one party over another, and so forth. And I said, "Well, I understand that, but I think I have to go, because I was asked to go and I said I would, but, more than that, I think it's the right thing to do to establish the relationship that we're trying to establish with the Prime Minister." And, again, I was new to the system and I didn't know how big of a breach it would be to be dealing with one party as opposed to another. I thought, well, what could the consequences of something like that be? So, anyway, I decided to go. I said, "As long as I pay for this with my own personal money, I just can't see why there would be a major breach of anything." At least I thought the risk was worth it. And, as I say, the Country Team felt that it was the wrong thing to do. Anyway, I said, "Well, okay, I'm on the spot, I ultimately have to make the decision, and I'll certainly take the consequences for it."

What happened was, I went and it worked out just fine. I think the Prime Minister was surprised that I came, for one thing. I think that I pleased his girlfriend, and that was, I think, helpful. But he couldn't have been more of a gentleman. When he heard that I was coming in, he came out to escort me and my wife in to sort of a ringside table, and he made sure that he went over and got a drink or some wine or whatever it was, and that we had the little favors, and that he was acting as the perfect host.

And I believe that night did more for my relationship with him than anything else I did during the time I was there. We became pretty good friends after that, and his rhetoric against Reagan stopped immediately; his rhetoric against the United States stopped. And I don't think that I did anything more than say: "I'd like to work with you. How can we work together? You know and I know that it's in your best interest to work with us. Why don't we get rid of this rhetoric, because that makes my life miserable and I can't work with you if that's the way you're going to act." And it showed, I think, that I was willing to work with him.

But I think that was a political instinct as opposed to a career foreign service instinct. That's a self-serving story, but I'm telling it because of the instinct of where you're coming from and how you can do this. I mean, Barbados isn't the USSR, and it's not France; it's just a small country and one prime minister, but I still believe that people are people, and prime ministers are prime ministers, no matter where they are.

Q: No, I think this has often been pointed out, that somebody who comes from the really political side rather than just the money side can deal with political leaders often better than a career person.

RUSSO: I really believe that. I found that my staff was testing me and saying: "Well, is this just another political hack; the president's third cousin or whomever, or is this somebody that we can work with? And if we have things going well down here, I benefit from it as a career person." I found that it did a lot to show that, well, all right, I had a position, and I took it contrary to their advice. I didn't belittle anybody's advice. I said, "Hell, I don't know what is going to happen." But I found that they then began to use me for what they wanted to accomplish, because they felt that I could help them through the bureaucracy; help them through the system.

I really believe that in the end we've got to figure out a better way to blend the two -- political and career, if we're going to have a system that really functions. And I think that it's going to be a different system than it has been. I think the 1980s changed the playing field, and I think that it's going to be incumbent upon us to figure out how we use the media, the political and the career people in a better mix, to get a better functioning foreign policy mechanism. I think that we need to change our approach, because we are not making the best use of our resources and our limited budgets. And the way the world is moving so fast, I think we have to have a more agile system to keep up with the tremendous changes that are happening and I believe will continue to happen.

Q: Well, one last sort of major thing I wonder if you could talk about would be the consular role. I mean, immigration, Americans in trouble, that sort of thing. How did you find that?

RUSSO: I found that both rewarding and depressing. Americans in trouble were a depressing part of the job, but a part that I felt I should be personally involved in. In an island environment; in a vacation environment like that, it seems that a lot of things that people wouldn't ordinarily do at home, they do there.

Q: I was a life guard at a beach resort where people had office parties, and the things they... You know, once a year they let go, and I'm sure...

RUSSO: It's sad. I'm sure you've seen some of the things I'm talking about. It's mixing alcohol and swimming, those...I was going to say stupid bikes, maybe they're not stupid, but they're stupid when someone is drinking and not worrying about traffic and that sort of thing. Also, when deaths occurred, we had to make sure that, one, there was no foul play involved. We didn't really have problems with that; most of the deaths or severe injuries were due to just carelessness -- one or two strange cases, probably drug related, but not a major problem.

Q: You didn't have the problems that you had in Jamaica, where there was really rather violent crime against the tourist.

RUSSO: No. No. As I say--that goes back to my tourism point--the Eastern Caribbean is a part of the world that likes Americans. There is a softness to their culture that is extremely appealing. In many ways, maybe it's because they have been isolated to a degree from the industrialized world. But it's a very nice place, and the people, for the most part, are good people. They've got crime, but not like Jamaica, and they don't resent the Americans in the violent, hostile way that you might find in a Jamaica, or even in the Bahamas, for that matter, or certainly in some of the Central American countries.

So the tragedies to American citizens were mainly self-inflicted in some way or another. And then it was talking to the families, notifying family members, bodies that would have to go through the process, and so forth.

But it's part of what you do, and I was blessed with a wonderful consul general. He had started in Barbados in his first assignment, and spent about eighteen or nineteen years around the world.

Q: Who was that?

RUSSO: Lou Mangiafico. He's in Sicily right now. Well, actually, he's probably on his way back to the United States. He's retiring in February. But his last posting was there. He was overqualified for the job. Lou had been in the Eastern European countries; he had been in every major post you could think of, so he was a very qualified and experienced person. We had a lot of good discussions and thoughtful exercises -- trying to streamline things, trying to work with the island chain. AIDS was becoming an issue. How do you handle that locally? What about testing those coming to the U.S.? -- those kinds of things.

He gave me some good advice the first week, he said, "Mr. Ambassador, what I would recommend is that when someone wants a visa, that you tell them to go see the Consul General, that you don't have anything to do with it." Which was good advice. You walk through airports or whatever and people are handing you passports because they want visas to the United States.

For the most part, you were able to help people. The U.S. citizens visiting there who did have problems were mostly victims of minor crimes, or, as I say, problems that they'd gotten themselves into. And you're there to sort out the facts; make sure they're being treated fairly. Most of the time they were. The laws function well in those islands.

One reoccurring problem was the arrest of U.S. fishing boat captains. Obviously, the area is rich with many kinds of fish. If a captain was caught fishing in the water of one of the island nations, he would be arrested, fined and maybe even have his boat confiscated. I would receive desperate calls from captains who had been arrested and were in danger of losing their boats. Their story line was usually that they were lost, the fish they had on board were not caught in illegal waters but in legal water, and the catch just happened to be on board when the boat became lost. The Captain was innocent, he was being held illegally, and the authorities were trying to take his boat away. Well, maybe. After talking with them, it usually came out that illegal fishing was a chance they were willing to take because the fish were so valuable and plentiful in the Eastern Caribbean, and the odds of getting caught were very low. The captains were willing to pay the fines if arrested, because they were caught only a small percentage of the time. It was a "cost of doing business" for them. But losing a boat -- that was another story. They were generally good men, and when they finally told the truth, the question was "Am I really going to lose my boat? Do they have to take the boat? Can you help me out?"

But it was nice; unless it was an extreme case, you were able to help.

Q: And you were able to deal with the authorities.

RUSSO: Oh, in an excellent manner. As I say, they have a very strong tradition as far as the rule of law is concerned. They are also concerned about their long-term relationship with the U.S., and the perception of how they deal with us. And so, no; helping U.S. citizens, in this case fishermen, was a very rewarding and satisfying part of the job -- working out a compromise whereby the government could collect a fine, be compensated for the fish, punish the captain but not take away his livelihood; his boat. And we made it clear we would save the boat only once! Being blown off course, with fish on board, did not happen twice; at least not while I was there.

Q: *Well, I take it that you left quite satisfied and with good feelings.*

RUSSO: Yes, I did. It was a tremendous honor to represent my country in six foreign capitols. I enjoyed being in the Eastern Caribbean, and I made some wonderful friends; in the government, in the international community, as well with the people of the islands. Being an ambassador very much enriched my life, especially to have had the opportunity at a relatively young age. My wife and I will carry with us always a joy and satisfaction, and many fond memories, for having served in the West Indies.

NADIA TONGOUR
Political Officer
Bridgetown (1988-1991)

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: I had a full three-year tour there from 1988 to 1991 and gained some valuable insights about "living in Paradise". For starters, it seemed as though nearly the entire post tried to curtail their tours. Apparently, this pattern remains true even to this day, stilling having one of the highest requests for curtailment in the service. Several years before I arrived, it turns out, the Department had sent a team of psychologists to the region to ascertain the reasons for the high rate of attempted curtailments, in other words the nature of the problems in Paradise. The report that emerged was fascinating. What I learned from it was that unlike the case in hardship posts such as Bangladesh, where many not only wish to stay but often extend their tours, this esprit de corps seemed to be lacking in a tropical island with beaches and so on. So the staff was not very happy. The situation in Barbados may cast some light on how we Foreign Service Officers behave in general. In a nutshell, I think, we in the Foreign Service thrive on a bit of "outside difficulty" which forces us to work together as a team and which builds our "esprit". What happens when you are in an English speaking island where one is very much on one's own. Strange as it may seem, many felt isolated. Barbados was not a big island but transportation is a

problem -- the roads are narrow for one thing -- and it takes a long time to get from one part of the island to another and people were scattered. In addition to the lack of a sense of community stemming from this and the fact that individuals from different agencies were traveling constantly to different islands, there were problems associated with the fact that spouses could not work, the natives were not particularly friendly, etc. I was fortunate lucky to make some local friends but many Americans believed you could live in Barbados for three or four years and never see the inside of a local home. So, people started getting island fever. Initially everyone assumed they would be spending a lot of time at the beach, but the reality was that the officers had to work, and with the sun setting around six o'clock year round, that was a quickly thwarted expectation. Overall, it was an interesting learning experience. As I said, I was more fortunate than many in that I enjoyed my work and many aspects of my time there, but after a year, I, too, tried to curtail. And that experience taught me a great deal about how our personnel system really worked. What I encountered was a truly odd situation in which both my Post (Bridgetown) was willing to let me leave and there was an "at grade-in cone" position for me at Embassy Moscow, which apparently wanted me as well. Plus, the European Bureau weighed in to have me assigned to the slot in Moscow. And yet, personnel made a decision that had nothing to do with me or for that matter with find another better suited applicant for that job. Instead, it had to do with the fact that there was an officer working in Washington that had not served abroad in more than six years and Personnel was determined to place that person in Moscow. That is a summary of a much longer story which concluded with their sending someone to Moscow who, although she had the requisite background and language skills, did not want to go and for a time was most unhappy with the assignment -- and so was I. Ultimately, though I'm glad I stayed in Barbados. I learned a great deal and it was all in all a positive experience.

Q: I would think one of the problems there would be, this is, you know, the place where you would put a political ambassador and the political ambassadors in a place like that would not necessarily be out of the top drawer of the selective political process.

TONGOUR: That may be. The first year I was there there was no ambassador at all because the White House wanted to send a wealthy businesswoman from Long Island with very close ties to the administration. Apparently, there were some problems, or some financial issues or irregularities, which prompted some negative reactions to her appointment. Her name was quietly withdrawn. There seemed to be several such problem cases, and we were without an ambassador for some time, and that in and of itself can become a problem.

I should point out that there were also other more substantive reasons for dissatisfaction at Post. If an officer had any ambition or interest in substantive issues and found himself in a part of the world which, no matter how lovely, did not seem to evoke strong interest in Washington, or if you wrote cables describing the political environment in these islands and had the sense that no one was paying attention, it could be quite frustrating. And more attention should have been paid. After all, each of these mini-states has a vote in the UN, just the same as China; yet they were, in fact, often overlooked. However, there were times when we were not neglected, namely during CODEL (Congressional Delegation) season. We did have a number of congressional and other high-ranking delegations, some of which I was able to oversee. In fact, I was the action officer for a vice-presidential visit when Dan Quayle came to visit. While such delegations were, of course, welcomed by the islanders, their leaders were well aware that some of these

delegations did not come for the most substantive of reasons. Some definitely came to play golf and socialize, and the "boondoggle" aspects of these visits were demoralizing for the staff.

That said, as one of my bosses there noted, the fun part of this type of job is that you really are the big fish in a very small pond. And so I had two islands that were -- I have to put these in quotes -- "my islands" and I would visit frequently and attend their political conventions as well as have my own high-level meetings.

Q: For your two islands.

TONGOUR: Well, it was more than two, actually: St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which consists of a whole chain of islands, and St. Lucia. And in addition I followed some political developments in Barbados, as well. It was interesting attending various political rallies and party conventions. Moreover, during that period there was an active movement to unify the region by creating a federation among the so-called "Windward Islands". Such a movement had arisen in earlier periods. In this iteration, the idea was to bring together the four Windward Island nations into a federations. A constituent assembly was created for this new entity, and numerous meetings were held. These four states included: St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Dominica. The last of these was somewhat important then because the Prime Minister was Eugenia Charles, who had been instrumental in securing regional support for our 1983 intervention in Grenada. Grenada, too, was significant because we still had a large U.S. presence there. There were many interesting aspects to this unification process, which did, in fact, result in some common actions and institutions but not full blown unification, even to this day.

Q: Were the Cubans messing around there or had Grenada sort of turned them off that area?

TONGOUR: Minimally. But one unusual development relating to Cuba centered on the current Prime Minister of St. Vincent Ralph Gonsalves. Gonsalves had been a 1960s student leader, an activist-leftist, considered to be a socialist, if not communist. When I visited St. Vincent, I often met with him, as well as other more established politicians, and got to know him fairly well. Since I went to many of the political rallies, I made a point to attend his as well. Gonsalves ran as a candidate for Parliament several times in hopes of one day becoming Prime Minister one day. At that time, however, people insisted "Ralph" does not stand a chance -- not because he wasn't intelligent, capable or even honest, but because of his former leftist background. On one occasion I went out with him on the "hustings" to see how he campaigned. One such outing took us out into the countryside, and I saw that he was , in fact, quite popular. Nevertheless, there was still strong sentiment against electing a former "commie". I mention this in some detail because he was ultimately elected -- despite his former whatever affiliations -- and serves as the Prime Minister today (2008). But then, as an aspiring politician he had traveled so Libya and Cuba, then considered pariah states. He was quite open to me about his travels and explaining why he went and how the Libyans had provided him and his then young bride the wherewithal to have a honeymoon in Rome while in transit to Libya. He was certainly not shy about talking about this, which made him even more interesting.

Q: Well, what about drugs?

TONGOUR: Then or now?

Q: Then.

TONGOUR: I ask because I have served in the region more recently. In the period of the late '80s and early '90s, drugs while certainly available in the region, were not as big an issue for some of the specific islands we were covering. They represented drug transit countries, rather than large scale users or producers. The local governments allowed our vessels to patrol the area and check things out, if you will. Obviously Colombia was the main priority, but the routes used to transport drugs from there to here and to Europe were clearly areas of concern as well. This continued to be a priority throughout the ensuing years. In the case of St. Vincent, I know that it produces a fair amount of marijuana for external sale, not so much for local use. Vincentians may use it as much as anyone, but local consumption is not a significant issue. And Ralph Gonsalves, while not necessarily favoring it, has not done much to stop it. Some of the drug dealers reputedly were backers of his election campaigns.

Q: Again, I am looking to this period, '88 to '91, was Jamaica or the Dominican Republic or Venezuela, I mean, did these countries have real influence or not?

TONGOUR: On whom?

Q: On the islands that you were dealing with.

TONGOUR: Not really, not really at all. I think that we were perceived as the elephant in the room. The smaller states kept wanting us to do more, particularly to provide more assistance, and frankly were not doing very much. Yet, in some ways we really did help. One case in point was that Barbados was then the regional hub for USAID for the Eastern Caribbean. Embassy Kingston had its own AID operation for Jamaica, as did Trinidad. Some years later, we essentially closed down the AID mission in Barbados and conducted regional programs out of Jamaica. Barbados had effectively "graduated" from the world of assistance programs. Over time, however, there was a realization that it didn't really work well to have all programs, especially for the southernmost islands, operated out of Jamaica, and a small satellite office was reestablished in Bridgetown. In short, we recognized their significance in terms of sheer numbers of islands and countries but there wasn't a sustained substantive interest in the region. Back in 1988, however, the 1983 intervention in Grenada was still relatively fresh in people's memories as were preoccupations about what the Cubans might do in the area. Actually, the Cubans are still doing many of the same things as before, building hospitals, providing doctors and medical training and other forms of assistance which are popular as well as relatively low cost, but having a high impact. They did it then, and they do it now, but there remains a certain amount of apprehension about accepting Cuban aid, which may not be as warranted now as before. As for Venezuela, certainly not a major factor then. Hugo Chavez was not a "player" and the entire political scene in Venezuela then was quite different from today. Personally, while I was following political developments on the different islands, I found there were very few distinguishing issues or platforms among the parties. Basically, it was a case of Tweedledee versus Tweedledum. Barbados is a perfect example, having two main political parties, with

miniscule differences currently between them, although historically they were further apart. Today, people speak of the "B's" and the "D's" which are ideologically now almost interchangeable, with families often split between the two, but were once separated by powerful individual leaders.

Q: Although you were a political officer what about the impact of tourism, or were you having these huge ships come in and dump their passengers off for six hours of shopping or not?

TONGOUR: Yes, of course. But more significantly for us as a mission was the visa angle. Embassy Bridgetown was a regional hub, although at the time we did have a few more Embassies in the region than we do today. We subsequently closed our posts in places such as Antigua and Martinique. Yet, even then, Barbados was a visa issuing center. Consequently, we would have all these people coming from a myriad islands, lined up around the block -- the Consulate was then on the main street -- after having flown into Barbados in the morning and anticipating returning the same day. The town of Bridgetown always seemed filled with visa applicants seemingly milling around waiting for the U.S. Embassy to issue them a visa. Between the visa seekers and the sunburned tourists wandering around in their Bermuda shorts, downtown was quite a sight. In the crush of people, someone would invariably get robbed and wind up seeking Embassy assistance in resolving their problems. For us, there was never a shortage of work for us all, and political officers occasionally pitched in during peak season on the visa line. Plus, we did all the things that political officers do elsewhere -- business roundtables, CODELS and delegations, cultural exchanges, and a fair amount of reporting.

Q: How about ambassadors? Did you have a couple of ambassadors while you were there?

TONGOUR: While I was there we only had one.

Q: Who was that?

TONGOUR: His name is G. Philip Hughes.

Q: G.-?

TONGOUR: G. Philip Hughes, which is the name he went by. His is an interesting and somewhat unusual story. Although he sometimes was called Phil, did not want anyone to know what the G in his name stood for. Apparently, his father had been a fairly well-known baseball player for a Chicago team during its only winning season (until recent years) and he bore his father's first name. The Ambassador, however, had no interest in baseball and did not want to be associated with his father's profession. In fact, when people would ask him what he played, he would answer: the organ. Although he came from the Midwest and studied at a college in Ohio before attending graduate school at Tufts, he had somehow acquired a slightly affected British accent along the way. He was actually a nice guy but the accent was initially misleading. So he arrived in Grenada my last year at Post. I went with him on his rounds to the islands I covered, as did my colleagues to other parts of the region. For us, it was quite a change from having had a very traditional Foreign Service Officer serving as the Chargé for two years to having a somewhat different type of individual as our Ambassador. And the new DCM was quite different

from the previous one -- a woman named Barbro Owens.

I mention her because she, too, had an unusual background. Barbro, who is retired now, is Scandinavian by birth -- coming from Finland but of Swedish ancestry. Her first husband was an American diplomat whom she met in that region. She herself was an exceptionally bright woman who even earlier had done graduate work in the U.S. -- at Princeton, I think. At some point after marrying this American Foreign Service officer whose last name is Owens, she entered the Foreign Service on her own. I don't remember whether she actually accompanied him to any of his posts, but they eventually divorced, and she went on to a number of tours in the region, including an earlier stint in the Caribbean. During our intervention in Grenada. So she knew the region. We had an interesting, even colorful group of people at Post then. Barbro, herself, eventually married the Admin Officer, who was there at the time.

Q: I was just wondering, you mention this and the beaches and the people all over, was it one of these things that people started playing around with other people's wives and husbands and things like this or was this a fairly staid-?

TONGOUR: I think Barbados was probably no different from any other Post on this score, with its share of activity but no great scandals. The Ambassador was not pleased that his DCM was going out with his Admin Officer but neither of the pair was married. Still, he seemed to think there was a certain lack of decorum for two of his senior staff to be dating each other, and he asked her to leave. In any case, they subsequently married.

On another topic, it's probably worth mentioning that in some ways it was an awkward period for the staff. After not having had an Ambassador for two years, we had gotten used to "being on our own" and it seemed a bit strange at first. There were a lot of expectations associated with his arrival as well as a lot of preparations, not to mention a shift in status for the political officers, who for some time had essentially been acting as our country's official representative. In my case, for example, I would escort him to islands where everyone already knew me and weren't exactly sure what to make of the "new guy" -- perhaps not providing him the degree of deference he might have expected. It was an adjustment, simply having an Ambassador around. .

On the plus side, when time permitted, there was the sea, sun and the free flowing rum, but to give the islands their due, people did work. We had our share of issues to follow -- often related to combating narco-trafficking in the region and minor bilateral disputes. However, it was certainly not the same as being in Tel Aviv or Moscow in terms of Washington's attention.

G. PHILIP HUGHES
Ambassador
Barbados (1990-1993)

Ambassador Hughes was born and raised in Ohio and educated at the University of Dayton, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Harvard University. His career with the US Government included service at the senior level with the

Congressional Budget Office, the Departments of State and Commerce, and the White House, where he served two tours with the National Security Council. In 1990 he was named US Ambassador to Barbados, where he served until 1993. Ambassador Hughes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: Now to actually talk about Barbados. You served in Barbados from when to when?

HUGHES: I served from November of 1990 until July of 1993 so just a little bit shy of three years.

Q: When you went out there obviously you've been knowledgeable and all, what was the political situation in Barbados and American interests there at that time?

HUGHES: Barbados is a regional embassy that covers a slew of islands. Nowadays Bridgetown, as I like to think about it, has been put back together in the sense that it's natural geographic turf is back under one ambassador. When I went to Bridgetown, as a result of an adverse inspection report that had been done on the post some years before I arrived, there was a plan of the Department to break up the embassy in Bridgetown and put mini embassies on several islands in the Eastern Caribbean. There was a proposal to put one on Grenada, well there was one in Grenada, one on St. Lucia, one on Dominica and one in Antigua. There was some rather hazy notion that the different specialized agency missions that were required to cover the region, would be somehow distributed over these mini embassies. Maybe one embassy would have the military attaché mission, another embassy the Peace Corps mission, another embassy the USIA, another embassy the defense attaché, and another embassy the legal attaché. Somehow all five or so of these embassies would sort of share these personnel. If I needed some help from the legal attaché I needed to call the guy on Dominica perhaps and if they needed some help from the AID people, they needed to call me. This looked like a gigantic Rube Goldberg scheme to me mainly to create useless jobs and useless establishments in county sized countries. These were countries with populations of a few tens of thousands of people where our own strategic interests were rapidly waning, frankly, in the post-Cold War period.

In the '80s our relationship with the governments of the Eastern Caribbean had been extraordinarily close for a whole bunch of reasons. They felt their democracies threatened by Cuba with the Maurice Bishop Government existing then in Grenada. After the Grenada rescue operation when they had joined us in the ouster of the Cord government that overthrew Bishop and this sort of Marxian anarchy that gripped the island for a few days or weeks, we grew especially close to them. This was through the ties of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, through our aid relationships to build up their own special security services and coast guards to give them some capability both to reinforce each other and to keep their own little governments from being toppled by a coup of a handful of plotters maybe landing in some dinghies from another island. Through also their access of the prime ministers of the region to the White House which was regular, intense and close and our interactions with these governments through conferences like the Miami Conference on the Caribbean and our extensive aid to the region that was flowing in those days. They were just used to having extraordinarily high levels of attention from Washington. Extraordinary access, a lot of resources. As we came into the early '90s it was just plain with the Berlin Wall falling, the Cold War ending, with perestroika and glasnost being

policies of Gorbachev in Russia, and then Gorbachev passing from the scene in a coup attempt and Yeltsin taking over, these small island countries were increasingly marginal.

What was the political atmosphere like? On Barbados the Democratic Labor Party government of Erskine Sandiford was in power when I arrived. Sandiford had not been elected so to speak in his own right but he had inherited the mantle of the prime ministership when Errol Barrow, the very popular leader of that party who had led the country to independence in 1966, died. Sandiford was a rather dour, inscrutable and very opaque sort of individual, not unfriendly or unkindly disposed toward the United States but just very, very hard to read. His government was facing increasing economic problems that were being masked by the government's accounting of its economic performance and he was on his way to calling elections. I didn't know that. Elections were called in Barbados within less than month of my arrival.

I was covering directly Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. Grenada which had an independent chargé since the rescue operation had been detached from the responsibility of Bridgetown formally in 1983. Antigua St. Kitts, as the first step in this new posts process that the Department was considering, had been detached from Barbados's responsibility in 1988. I regarded it as one of my challenges to try to persuade the Department that this business of establishing all these mini embassies around the region was a terrible way to go and that what really made sense was to coordinate policy for this little archipelago with a total population of less than a million people, from a regional embassy.

Q: Did these mini embassies have ambassadors?

HUGHES: No, they had chargés d'affaires. At one time we had an ambassador in Grenada. Two people served as ambassador in Grenada: Tony Gillespie at first and then Laurie Lawrence before Laurie passed away. Then the post was downgraded to that of chargé and there were a series of chargés d'affaires in Grenada. Frankly they turned over about every 18 months. Vice President Bush and President Reagan made trips to Grenada in '85 and '86. If I am not mistaken there were different chargé d'affaires on each occasion. They reported directly to ARA. They didn't report to Bridgetown. One of my goals was to try to persuade the Department that it was wrong to go and establish these mini embassies all over the region and in fact that it made much more sense to consolidate operations somewhere - Bridgetown made the logical sense to me - and make sure that at least someone, because it probably wasn't going to happen in Washington, was looking out for what our policy interests were with these small islands in a reasonably coherent way. With respect to the other islands, mainly I think they were thinking that they were feeling more and more neglected, abandoned, ignored and downgraded and marginalized.

What were the guiding ideas if you would of my mission going out there? The guiding internal objectives were to revitalize the embassy itself which had been without an ambassador for two-and-a-half years, to try to upgrade personnel in the embassy to attract some brighter, younger, more talented people because Bridgetown had become one of these posts that tended to attract people who were in twilight tours or who had some problem or other that brought them to Bridgetown. My DCM and I had an idea of how to do that, by trying to make as many assignments as possible stretch assignments. If we could somehow work with personnel and

manipulate the personnel system a little bit and we could stretch more assignments in Bridgetown, we would get higher caliber people who would be looking at this as a leg-up on their next promotion if they were serving in such assignment.

We also needed badly to refurbish the physical facilities in Bridgetown. We internally also needed to get the mission focused on what the hell were we trying to do here in the Eastern Caribbean? What was our hierarchy of objectives in the post-Cold War period with aid levels declining, with drugs problems increasing, with security problems probably not very much on the horizon but having made a tremendous investment in the '80s in a security infrastructure for the region that was going to crumble literally to rust if we didn't make some investment in sustaining it? We had to pull the mission together and coordinate it, because with different agencies pursuing different agendas on several different islands, and also reporting in some cases to two different chargés and the ambassador in Bridgetown, there was just infinite opportunity for agency freelancing, i.e. we're sort of doing our own thing here and we can justify it because we're responsible for two or three different masters and therefore we're responsible to no master except our one back in Washington.

Externally the goals were pretty straightforward, too. We needed to reconvince the tiny governments in the neighborhood that they did still matter to us and that they were not completely marginalized. That was a largely symbolic exercise done through a regular program of visitation to the islands, reporting on the islands and building close relationships with the prime ministers of the islands to try to get focused on the top priorities of the day. What were those top priorities? Drugs I think had supplanted security at that stage as a top priority. Investment in security efforts was more and more being thought of in terms of how can this reinforce our counter-narcotics effort. Our aid mission, our aid effort, was clearly tapering off so we faced an investment challenge of where were we going to make the wisest final investments in our aid program to equip these economies to sustain themselves into the future. These are economies that are marginal at best.

Politically our interests were less and less in sort of Cold War era, free world and democratic solidarity, but more in areas like cooperation in the United Nations and multi-lateral organizations, encouraging economic reform so that the countries would be able to get ready for entering into President Bush's Enterprise for the Americas initiative, sort of a forerunner of our current Free Trade Area of the Americas effort. Also I guess you could say on the political front, trying to work with these countries to see where they could contribute at the margin to helping us foster democracy in other parts of the world. With the Creole speaking islands, could they do anything constructive in Haiti? With the English speaking islands, might they through UN agencies make a peacekeeping or police contribution, or police training contribution to countries in Africa that were becoming independent (I'm thinking of Namibia) or that were undergoing some kind of democratic transition? So those were the kinds of things we were working on.

Q: Most of these islands had been under Great Britain hadn't they at one point?

HUGHES: Yes, actually all of them had. That was their last colonial master.

Q: Was there any Great Britain connection there or had the United States pretty much supplanted them?

HUGHES: No, there was still a very strong British connection. But it used to be said by people who studied the region, that Grenada was a watershed event because it really signaled the shifting of primary responsibility for the Eastern Caribbean region from the shoulders of Britain to the shoulders of the United States. I think that was very much true.

Q: The British oddly enough under Margaret Thatcher had really ignored the problem. It was an interesting development.

HUGHES: Thatcher was of course surprised by President Reagan's decision to launch the Grenada rescue operation. Supposedly the Queen felt somewhat affronted that a member of the Commonwealth was being rescued by the United States without much consultation with Britain. The British High Commission was a strong presence in the region.

British Development Division (BDD) assistance to the region was an important part of virtually every government's budget planning. The BDD did its aid for the region very differently to our aid program. In a sort of thumb nail comparison, the BDD basically gave the islands a five-year projection, or a multi-year projection, of what they planned to budget for assistance to island governments in the region. Government by government they would ask the islands for their spending priorities for this money. The island governments would then basically express their priorities and the British would serve as arbiters of we won't do that but we will do this, or if you work with us on this project and we modify it and refine it, we might do that. They became more the arbiters of how their money would be used to fulfill the island's expressed wishes.

Our approach seemed to be rather different and a little bit more Olympian. We seemed to come up with the ideas of projects we thought the islands needed for sustainable development and then our AID mission task seemed to be to sell those projects to the islands because they were what we wanted to do. Much of the challenge was often trying to repackage what we wanted to do in terms that made it palatable, political or otherwise, to the islands but nevertheless left it substantially what we wanted to do. What we wanted to do was often dictated by what one might call political fashion back here in the United States, certain hot button issues like in the area of population or in the area of environment. It was evident to me that there was a certain amount of pressure, for want of a better word, on every AID mission to show that they had some activity going on in each of a series of politically fashionable areas: in the environment, population control, in perhaps education or certain kinds of health, or women in development. They were kind of trying to build a portfolio that made a certain display to Washington and sell that portfolio to the island governments. I think on the whole it was a less successful approach than the British approach and that on the whole we probably would have been better able to get what needed to be done, done, following a more British model.

The British were less overwhelming and overweening in their influence among the islands, partly because they perhaps exercised it in a little bit more discreet fashion. The British had a resident agent on virtually every island except Dominica but that resident agent reported back to their high commission in Bridgetown. I would say that in Barbados, because the British traditions

were very, very strong and British cultural influence was pervasive, the British exercised if not policy influence certainly a kind of cultural and moral influence quite out of proportion to the size of their establishment or interests. In the other islands I'd say the strong, strong presence of the U.S. was felt but I always had the feeling that when the islands felt overexposed to the overwhelming influence of the United States culturally in communications terms, in tourism terms, and so forth, they could kind of take comfort in their relationship with the British.

Certainly on the issue of bananas, the British influence was pervasive. The islands trusted the British there to look out for their interests and if the British said that this was a good idea then the islands tended to believe that was a good idea. If the British said this isn't a good idea, the islands tended to follow that advice and had little capability when it came to the banana issue to make an independent analysis or judgments of their own.

Q: What was the banana issue as far as we were concerned?

HUGHES: It stated out as not much of a much and it has become in the last several years a pretty big deal. The British had always maintained a protected market for West Indian bananas in the UK. The trade in bananas ended up being dominated by, oligopolized by, two companies, Fyffes and Geest, which operated banana boats between Jamaica and the eastern Caribbean islands and Britain. These companies had ripening rooms there and they basically supplied the British market with bananas from the West Indies as an aid scheme. British housewives paid much higher prices than anybody else on the continent or in the world for that matter, except maybe in France where France had a similar scheme for their overseas departments of Martinique, Guadeloupe and so forth, and former French territories. There were estimates that the implicit subsidy to the islands of the Commonwealth from which they got these bananas was up to 50 million pounds a year. That was a lot of money coming out of the pockets of British housewives.

That system was fine as long as the Europeans were not maintaining a unified market. Once the European Union set the goal of achieving a unified internal market by as I recall 1992 or 1993, now a scheme had to be developed that would protect British suppliers of bananas, French suppliers of bananas, Spanish suppliers of bananas, in their previously separate markets while at the same time accommodating the fact that the rest of the continent, Germany in particular, basically bought their bananas from world operators, dollar fruit operators like Chiquita and Dole and Del Monte, and paid lower prices for them and got bigger, higher quality fruit. Higher quality at least by some lights. The EU had to devise a protection scheme for the banana trade that satisfied the requirements of the unified market and at the same time protected the traditional banana suppliers.

They came up with a scheme which American suppliers regarded as highly discriminatory, through a scheme of licenses to import dollar fruit bananas. The European Union devised a scheme to protect the so called ACP (African, Caribbean, Pacific) banana market that encouraged operators to operate in the ACP region by giving them a bonus in the form of a license to import dollar fruit. Dollar fruit is cheaper and more profitable fruit from Central America or other large sources of supply. They would give them a license to do that for every box of bananas that they brought in from so-called protected markets. American companies

regarded this as just a straight out reallocation of market share away from the American suppliers and to their European competitors. They objected to the licensing scheme strongly.

Earlier even before that in the Uruguay Round, the bananas were one of the last issues to be resolved, because the Europeans were holding out for a quota system for bananas. We objected highly to the idea of a quota system because the whole Uruguay Round negotiation was predicated on the idea of tariff based, not quota, regulation of trade. We felt that admitting an exception for bananas would just be the thin edge for their reintroducing quotas on rice, beef, and a whole range of other agricultural products, so we were dead set against the introduction of quotas.

Finally we proposed to the Europeans a formula called the tariff rate quota which would use tariff mechanisms but differential tariffs at different quantity levels of importation of bananas to achieve through a tariff mechanism fundamentally the same thing that they wanted to achieve through the quota scheme. When we proposed this to the Europeans they weren't initially very receptive. When we briefed the islanders on it, they were decidedly negative. I remember briefing prime ministers on the idea of a tariff rate quota for bananas and they were wholly negative to it and it was plain why. They British had told them that this was not something that was in their interests and they were holding out for a quota arranged in the Uruguay Round. If they just stuck with the British the British would protect their interests. So our tariff rate quota idea was a real lead balloon in the Eastern Caribbean. Then we had some further discussions between the USTR and the Brits and persuaded the Brits that the only thing we would go for was a tariff rate program and a tariff rate quota would work.

There was also at the same time a lot of background noise discussion about other ways to handle the banana problem. The World Bank put out a couple of reports which someone said were the only two humorously titled reports in the history of the World Bank. One was called EC Bananarama I and the other was EC Bananarama II. These reports basically suggested a totally different approach. The idea was to free up the market in Europe for bananas and put some kind of tax on the bananas. Accumulate a sort of compensatory fund from the banana tax and rebate the proceeds of the fund to those former banana producing islands that now would be uncompetitive and basically be out of the banana business. They would get a sort of largess out of the world banana trade. That idea didn't find favor but those were kinds of things that were debated in the background.

USTR had some conversations with the Brits and persuaded them we would never go for a quota scheme in the Uruguay round, that a tariff rate quota would do the trick for the Eastern Caribbean. We persuaded the Brits that a tariff rate quota would do the trick. The British sent a delegate through the islands in as I recall late '91, or early '92, or late '92 to brief a new idea that the British had come up with for how to handle the banana problem in the unified European market. The scheme was a tariff rate quota and the island suppliers to a government thought the idea was a terrific one and signed onto it. Point being it had everything to do with who was the messenger and much less to do with what was the message. They had really bought into the idea that the British would always protect their interests in the banana area and the U.S. was always going to sell out their interests in the banana area because of the power, if you would, and market dominance of companies like Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte and so forth.

Q: How did you bring yourself up to speed on bananas and the banana market? I don't imagine that this was something that you picked up at school.

HUGHES: No, not at all. A certain amount of misinformation was available locally by listening to what was said by the politicians and the people active in the banana trade. The rest was basically briefings that we received from Washington on this, the studies like the Bananarama studies from the World Bank and the investigations of a very able economic counselor and political counselor that I had at the embassy at the time. The combination of those things left me reasonably well informed about the banana trade issue while I was there. I got even better informed about it once I got back as the debate deepened.

Q: You have the chargés on all these islands but were they under you or not?

HUGHES: No.

Q: How did you deal with other governments?

HUGHES: There were two chargés. There was a chargé in Grenada and a chargé in Antigua and they were not responsible to the embassy in Bridgetown when I got there. Very soon after I got there, we had our inspection in Bridgetown. This is my interpretation, but I believe that the inspection team that came to Bridgetown had come with an instruction from one of the senior deputy inspectors general who had been responsible for the earlier adverse inspection report on Bridgetown, that whatever you do don't put Bridgetown back together again. Don't allow the extension of Bridgetown's authority out to more of the islands. My DCM and I set it as our goal that if they were going to leave with no other message, they were going to leave with two messages. One that we were rapidly turning this embassy into a first class professional operation with a very definite plan for doing that. And two that the only sensible arrangement for managing our affairs among these tiny island countries, of as I said county sized proportions, in a post-Cold War era of increasing Washington uninterest was indeed to coordinate policy toward these countries through one embassy for the region.

I believe we succeeded in persuading the inspectors of that but because of, I believe, a constraint they faced with their boss back home they couldn't go so far in that inspection report as to recommend that Antigua and Grenada be folded back under Bridgetown. But they could go so far as to recommend that Bridgetown be made responsible for coordinating policy for the whole region in certain identified areas. The identified areas as I recall were counter-narcotics policy, security policy, aid policy, and there may have been another. In any case, that gave me a measure of coordinating responsibility now over those two embassies which was, from my point of view, a step in the right direction. Eventually Bridgetown would get back together and that indeed happened for my successor when we decided to close Antigua and the Department put Grenada with a chargé under her aegis. The Department tried to close Grenada as an embassy but some political forces on Capitol Hill within the Black Caucus particularly opposed that, so it was necessary to keep Grenada open but it is nevertheless now under the responsibility of Bridgetown.

Q: Prior to your being there, do you think the rationale to disassemble Bridgetown and to come up with a really very awkward situation, had to do with just a bad situation in Bridgetown when they arrived and thus trying to defang Bridgetown or something like that?

HUGHES: I will give you my personal interpretation. I think it had a lot to do with personalities. When the inspectors arrived in Bridgetown for their earlier unfavorable report in the late 1980s they, I think, encountered a politically appointed ambassador who they may have felt was not particularly qualified. They encountered an embassy that had a lot of morale problems and complaints about particular habits and foibles of that ambassador. There were some personnel problems inside the embassy of people refusing to talk to each other and refusing to communicate like, so I'm told, the ambassador refusing to communicate with his secretary and removing her to some other assignment and bringing another secretary from another part of the embassy to his office. It gave the impression that things were not running smoothly.

These complaints joined with others about the embassy's leased aircraft at the time. The aircraft was leased by AID but used by the mission as a mission aircraft and sometimes used in ways that people criticized. These all gave the inspectors plenty of ammunition. There was also pleading from the other islands for more attention, particularly from Dame Eugenia Charles of Dominica, probably my best personal friend in the region. I haven't spoken to her for a whole week now I think. She was very sort of keen on "we need to have somebody here in Dominica to look out for us and our interests. I'd like to have somebody to talk to who isn't over in Bridgetown." She may have had in mind what the British had, that is these resident agents.

I must also say that I think the guy who was leading that inspection team was an admin officer. He had had an embassy. It was a minor embassy. I think he would like to have had another embassy. I think he regarded the number of ambassadorial assignments particularly for people who are admin counselors to be not very numerous and shrinking and that it's harder and harder, and more and more competitive to get embassies. The more ambassadorial assignments you can create the better it would be for people who wanted another ambassadorial assignment, or others like them coming in their wake. He is in absolutely perfect happy hunting ground for those kinds of opportunities. I think all of those forces, the pleas of the islands, some of the management problems that could easily be pointed to in Bridgetown and the personal interests, or a set of institutional interests reflected in the personal experience of the senior inspector, all went into that recommendation. I happen to think it was a terrible recommendation.

Q: Let's talk about drug prevention. This I imagine was probably your highest priority.

HUGHES: Yes, definitely. It was hard to get systematic intelligence on the drugs flow through the Eastern Caribbean but anecdotally everybody was convinced that it was becoming more and more of a problem. That is not to say that the main highway for drugs traveling from the producing countries of South America toward the United States wasn't still through Mexico or wasn't becoming more and more through Mexico and up the isthmus. There was a lot of suspicion of drugs trafficking through the islands in the Eastern Caribbean on several fronts, with a DEA office that was fairly newly established in Barbados before I arrived and with a legal attaché office that was restaffed for Barbados just as I arrived. The first legal attaché had had some problems there of a legal nature and he was replaced by a first class professional. With our

security operation there, that is to say our military attachés and our military assistance group increasingly focusing on trying to help the countries equip themselves to deal with the counter-narcotics problem and frankly with, if we can talk about that on these tapes, the station.

Q: We can talk about the station. It is unclassified but obviously we're talking about the CIA and how helpful it is.

HUGHES: With our station's activities being reoriented from bloc targets, the Cuban target, the threat of insurgency and so forth, to the drugs problem. Much of the mission was refocused on the drugs problem. What were we talking about? We were potentially talking about several things. The drugs problem manifested itself in the islands in several ways. First there was a local smuggling, local consumption problem which concerned every government because of the corruption potential, the health impact on the society and productive parts of the society, and the drain on the tiny economies that it would represent. It was clear that there was a danger of increased drugs use on virtually every island.

Most of the islands had no tradition of drug use unlike Jamaica where there is a tradition of growing marijuana and smoking ganja and so forth. Most of the islands do not have strong Rastafarian communities, certainly not in Barbados. Most of the islands did not have a tradition of growing ganja and smoking ganja for pleasure and so forth, with the exception of St. Vincent. In the northwest corner part of that island where it is truly trackless and mountainous, there is no road that goes to that part of the island, Rastafarians and others would go up in the hills and walk there out into the bush a few miles and carve out plots on the sides of hills that you think couldn't support anything. They would make a clearing and grow marijuana plants and they'd sell them or smoke them or whatever. There was that small tradition in St. Vincent. That was really the only local growing problem of any proportions that one had to deal with. There may have also been a small enclave of such habits in the very southern tip of Dominica, in an area called Grand Pay. Otherwise, growing was not a habit in these islands and using was not a habit.

As drugs like cocaine began to be transshipped up the island chain or shipped into the islands, use was increasing, dealers were starting to appear and the islands started to feel threatened by this. Of course the governments were very vulnerable to corruption. We were all so worried that if drugs corruption became entrenched on any one of these tiny islands it would be almost impossible to root out because in the governments one is dealing with a few dozens or hundreds of people at the most senior levels. A few of them get corrupted, they make all the decisions. You'll never find out about it and you'll never get them replaced. They would be easy to buy off. Just lots of problems will surface from that.

In each of the islands we concentrated on helping to build up their drugs enforcement units. We concentrated on helping them to share intelligence about traffickers and trafficker movements. About getting a hold on who was moving in and out of their territory, the name of boats, the name of individuals and cross checking them against data bases to see if traffickers seemed to be moving through the region so that they could notify the next island or whatever and grab someone.

Each island's drug problem manifested itself somewhat differently. In Barbados what we mainly encountered was a local importation for use problem, not very much of a transshipment problem. Barbados didn't make much sense as a transshipment point. It was sort of out of the chain of islands and you had to go out of your way to get to Barbados. It wasn't a very convenient place for transshipment. We worked there with the police force and with the counter-narcotics units to strengthen their enforcement capability both against smuggling and against local drugs dealers.

In Dominica the problem was a different sort. There were known drugs dealers on the island who were importing and transshipping through the region. There was a notorious little place toward the northern tip of the island called Tan Tan where a woman and her family were involved in drugs. The police were quite convinced they were involved in cocaine shipment but they could never quite get the goods on them. Everybody knew who the police were, even plainclothes police, because these are little communities. In fact the habit was if you were from the north part of the island you got assigned to police duty in the south so people might not recognize you. Or if you were born in the south part of the island you might get assigned to police duties in the north so people might not recognize you. But everybody knew who the police were so by the time the police got there all the evidence was invariably gone of a boat landing drugs. The Dominicans tried to keep after the people at Tan Tan and they never succeeded I believe in shutting them down.

They did succeed in finding through our aid a major cache of cocaine on a boat that had been brought into Roseau harbor. They did a search of the boat and they found I forget exactly how much but it was a huge amount for the region of cocaine. As I recall the crew of the boat were Colombian merchant men and I think that had come into Roseau because their boat had gotten into trouble. Eventually the crew were let go. After a trial it was found that they really were innocent of where this stuff was hidden in the boat; it had been welded into the bow of the boat. The cocaine was found and destroyed by the Dominica police in a big ceremony. That was Dominica's big drugs bust while I was there. Eugenia Charles was petrified as long as the cocaine was on the island because of the fear that somebody would take it off, somebody would sell it, or otherwise.

St. Lucia's drug problem was still different. It was more of a transshipment problem. I am trying to remember if we had any significant drugs successes in St. Lucia. I think maybe only minor seizures. We never found anyone who was a systematic trafficker in the way we did in Dominica.

The really interesting activity occurred in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The St. Vincent government had become very close to a family called the Non-no family. They came from Italy and they owned a bank that was originally called the Owens Bank until the Owens Bank showed up on our surveillance list for strange, suspicious institutions. Someone rearranged the letters on the facade of the building which was more or less diagonally across the street from the new government headquarters, to New Bank Ltd. It was the same building, same people, same everything. The Owens Bank, or New Bank Ltd. in St. Vincent was strongly suspected, in fact we had information that it was used for drugs money laundering by the Non-no family.

There were also some major drugs hauls. We had a ton seizure of drugs in St. Vincent in an operation done by the drugs squad actually without higher authorization from the police

commissioner whose two sons had mysteriously died outside of the island in drugs related violence incidents. One was in New York and one was somewhere else but both of the police commissioner's two sons had died violently in things connected with drugs. We had no reason to doubt Toussaint's fortitude in fighting drugs. In the ton seizure episode that I was mentioning the main guy involved in the seizure somehow got away and got off the island. He was found in St. Lucia and returned to St. Vincent to stand trial. His lawyers in St. Vincent were notorious drugs defense lawyers who were brought in, hired guns so to speak, from neighboring islands. There was some guy named Richelieu who was one of his defense attorneys who came down from St. Lucia. Actually the opposition leader, Ralph Gonzales, was one of his defense attorneys.

The government's attorney in this case, the prosecutor, wasn't the normal prosecuting attorney but an attorney named Karl Hudson-Phillips, as I recall a Trinidadian, who was the attorney of choice for the Mitchell government when it came to a lot of things. It was Karl Hudson-Phillips who ran the government's commission of inquiry on police commissioner Toussaint when he was suspected of involvement in drugs matters, and he found no evidence. The commission of inquiry had been ordered some time after, in the midst of a drugs investigation, a portion of the police headquarters that was right in the same compound as the main fire station caught fire and burned down destroying all the criminal records. Toussaint was investigated by Karl Hudson-Phillips and found utterly blameless. Then Karl Hudson-Phillips was put in charge of prosecuting this guy Cottle and the other chief culprits in this ton cache of cocaine that was discovered by the drugs squad but not by the whole authorities of St. Vincent. As I recall the prosecution was unsuccessful.

There is just a lot of suspicion of the depth of drugs involvement in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in those years. There was an island in the south of the chain, very close to Grenada, called Union Island, which was a wide open place. The owners of the Union Island yacht club and hotel were suspected of themselves being involved in drugs trafficking. I believe one of the owners turned up dead under mysterious circumstances on Union Island. The Mitchell government made a substantial improvement in the airport at Union Island though Union Island received negligible visitors. There was probably a legitimate tourism reason for the airport improvement but just the whole scene in St. Vincent reeked with there is something wrong with the drug scene here.

We put a good deal of pressure on the Mitchell government to crack down on drugs. We did some aerial surveys of the northwestern part of the island where the ganja was grown and so forth and found vastly expanded marijuana cultivation. We flew the prime minister and the attorney general up to see these marijuana fields. You could pick them out of the terrain even though it is very mountainous and undulating. They were just shocked at the extent of the marijuana explosion in northwestern St. Vincent and so they immediately agreed to cooperate with us. We ferried their special forces teams up there and they pulled up thousands and thousands of marijuana plants and burnt them. They burnt the shacks where the ganja men were growing this stuff, drying this stuff and so forth.

It quickly became a matter of political comment, and press comment, and debate in St. Vincent that what the government was doing was basically cracking down on all the little guys to please the Americans. The little guy who is growing a little marijuana for recreational use or earning a

little money in a place where you don't have many opportunities to earn some money up in the northwest part of the island, and letting big fish go free. That is letting people smuggle drugs on boats and whatnot in and out of the island quite freely. That was sort of the theme of the commentary about the anti-drugs campaign there.

There was one episode, I was trying to remember, with respect to St. Lucia that was fairly significant. But that gives you a flavor for our efforts.

Q: You mentioned Eugenia Charles. She played quite a role in the Grenada business as sort of the leader of the movement to do something about Grenada. This was during the Reagan administration where she carried an awful lot of weight in Washington. Can you talk about your relations with her?

HUGHES: She was a delight to deal with and probably even among many able leaders of the Eastern Caribbean which for the most part were cultivated leaders who were bigger intellectually, in personality terms and in every other sense, than the countries that they led, she certainly fell into that class. She was the only prime minister of the region, who in my judgment, was of course herself a strong national leader with a very definite vision for the further development of Dominica.

I've often thought of her as maintaining a mental checklist of projects that Dominica as a little nation needed to advance and that she was going down that checklist one after another checking off accomplishments. Need new maternity wing at the hospital, go talk to the French. The French agreed to build a new maternity wing at the hospital. Check. Need new electric supply for the island, we need more generating capacity. Talk to British Development Division and get a couple of hydroelectric dams built on the island and distribution. Check. Need new streets in Roseau. Talk to the Canadians and get them to agree to re-pave the streets. Check. So she had this sort of little mental picture of what she wanted to develop in Dominica and she went about it methodically, aggressively, meticulously.

Her government was very well run. She ran the governments accounts. I think she was herself finance minister, she held that portfolio, and would recommend that I think any prime minister in the Eastern Caribbean also hold the finance and defense portfolios. I think that would probably be her advice to leaders. She ran the country's finances like she would run her own checkbook. She will tell you stories today about how every month at the beginning of the month she'd call the controller and ask how are we doing this month and are we going to make payroll? If they weren't going to make payroll, she'd call the port. What can we do to get customs revenues up or what can we do to juggle finances so that we always had the civil servants checks in their hands on time. We did this with PC's and very limited equipment but we always paid the civil servants on time and we always paid our obligations. That's a very serious minded leader.

She was and is sort of a grandmotherly matron figure to the island. She helped foster the preservation and conservation of the island's native traditions. Dominica has, unlike most of the other islands, some deep rooted native Creole culture with distinctive ways of native dress for the women, two different customs in fact, and dance, music and so forth that have deep folkloric roots. She helped, I'm sure by a lot of her own personal effort, conserve these things. She would

be personally responsible for launching the year of the environment which was basically about something in Dominica as simple as picking up trash and putting it in containers rather than leaving it by the side of the road. That makes a tremendous environmental impact in Dominica.

She was of course widely respected in Washington because of her role in the Grenada rescue operation, even though she really was not THE leader of the rescue operation. Tom Adams convened all the prime ministers on Barbados. She was one of the prime ministers that said we, the Eastern Caribbean, must act about Grenada regardless, and we must tell the U.S. that we are acting and ask that they come and reinforce us. She was brought to Washington as the spokesman for the region. I'm not sure whether that was Washington's request or her request. She ended up being the only person who could upstage Ronald Reagan and take one of his news conferences away from him when she stepped up to the microphone and sort of pushed Reagan aside. She answered a question about the region that she felt best qualified to answer. She was a sort of grandmotherly figure for the island.

Just before I arrived her government had won reelection narrowly and she had something like a one seat majority in the parliament. She had faced a new opposition party that had just sprung up from business interests there called the United Workers Party. She had a reasonably cohesive government but the only government in the whole area as far as I could see where there was not only a strong leader figure at the center, Eugenia Charles, but she also had very able ministers working for her. Almost every other government was characterized by one man rule with one strong prime minister campaigning with a slate of much, much weaker personalities, none of whom posed any threat to the prime minister intellectually or in any other way but who were sort of along for the ride. They were given ministerial portfolios as political favors but fundamentally they didn't exercise much authority, any authority practically, without the say-so of the prime minister. The prime minister was the whole show. In Eugenia Charles' case, she had able ministers to help her carry out her plans. She had some divisions in her cabinet with some people who disagreed, some people who were hungry for power, some people who thought she had perhaps stayed on a bit too long but hers was perhaps the most ably run government on the slenderest resources of any in the Eastern Caribbean.

She was also fairly visionary. She had a relationship with the Queen, a relationship with Margaret Thatcher, relationships in London, and relationships in France. She was an internationally recognized figure on the stage and she was a delight to work with because she was so frank. She was absolutely firm, when it came to the issue of bananas, that the interests of American companies and Chiquita were just inimical to the interests of the island and so if the British said it was good for them then it was good for them because 60 or 70 percent of her export revenues came from bananas and she wasn't going to jeopardize that industry for anything. She was absolutely with us on virtually every issue of substance in the UN, in international relations generally, on the Gulf War and so forth. If we would ask her to do something or her government to do something that they just couldn't do, she wouldn't necessarily say no, she would just gradually never get around to talking about it again.

At one stage during one of the Haiti refugee effluxes the Bush administration was flummoxed about how to handle these Haitians. We didn't want to bring them to Miami, we couldn't put any more of them into Guantanamo and we couldn't put any more of them on ships. They were still

coming and what were we going to do? The administration came up with the bright idea of asking these tiny impoverished islands around the region, including Jamaica, “How would you like to help the poor United States out by taking on a few thousand Haitian refugees?” Most of the islands responded to this with something on the order of “are you out of your mind?” In Eugenia’s case she said “I’ll think about it and get back to you,” and of course she never did.

The instruction on that that came from Washington, maybe it is worth commenting on. Eugenia had one long standing and still unfulfilled ambition and an ambition that probably doesn’t make economic sense. That is to have an international airport on Dominica. She had enough pull in Washington. She had gotten several different military survey teams to come down and examine building an international airport for the 70,000 population island of Dominica.

There was a funny report that we unearthed when we were doing a history of the consulate in Bridgetown for the bicentennial of the consular service. It was sort of our contribution to the bicentennial celebration. It was a report from a consul in Bridgetown back in the World War II years when there was some thought that the British might trade these islands to us for destroyers. He was evaluating their strategic significance. It was basically saying these things are all a liability and they are not of any economic or commercial value whatever. Part of his assessment was that Dominica was too rugged as an island to support any aviation activity whatsoever.

Now here we were talking about seriously building an international airport on Dominica. I took a survey team myself up to look at it. She paid a visit to the White House and went in to see President Bush. With Bush, Baker, the advisors and Cheney there she made a pitch again for the international airport and the President said that we’d take another look at it. They sent a survey team down and we walked up and down these undulating hills looking at where they proposed to put this runway. It would have involved moving millions of cubic yards of earth and environmental impacts of all sorts.

When the Haitian instruction came from Washington it was phrased in a very different way. It said that we can’t promise these governments anything but read them these talking points. Then the last paragraph said basically and let them know they can name their price. The front end of the telegram said we’re not offering anything, while the last paragraph said, as I read it, basically they can name their price just to get us out of this mess. Eugenia when I called her had a perfect opportunity to say “Well I think I could manage to take a few hundred or maybe a thousand or 1,500 of these people if I had a flat surface on this island that was about a mile-and-a-half long and about 150 yards and that was graded and lighted properly on which we could erect some tents for them.” It would look remarkably like the runway for an international airport. She didn’t even rise to that bait. She decided it was just too politically hot to handle to bring Haitians to Dominica and try to explain in local domestic political terms why they got free housing provided by the United States or the UN or something, and they got water, facilities and land while her own citizens in Dominica weren’t getting these benefits.

Q: What about Cuba? Did Cuba play any role by this time as a threat or a problem, from your perspective?

HUGHES: Our main challenge in those days was no longer the Cuban threat to the stability of governments. We kept a little bit of an eye on what Cuban activity was. Some governments like Barbados had technical diplomatic relations with Cuba but they were non-resident relations and they had practically no contact. The other islands didn't have relations with Cuba. Cuba in those days was questing more and more for recognition and participation in the Caribbean institutions and breaking down its isolation. We were trying to keep Cuba isolated to the maximum extent possible and to keep the governments from treaties with Cuba and convince them that they had basically nothing to gain from this.

The main issues therefore over Cuba in my time were typically the annual debate at the UN Human Rights Commission over Cuba's human rights record, and whether we would appoint a special rapporteur or upgrade the rapporteur's status and once again call on the government of Cuba to let the rapporteur enter Cuba and actually examine the human rights conditions in Cuba and so forth. For the most part we saw eye-to-eye on Cuba with the governments of St. Lucia and Dominica. More or less also with St. Vincent and the Grenadines although [Sir James] "Son" Mitchell, the prime minister there, was a very free thinker and might well come up with some heterodox viewpoint out of the blue like you guys would be better off to let the barriers come down and trade with Cuba. The free interchange with the outside world would poison the Castro regime.

The government of Barbados was another matter. They had campaigned for a seat on the UN Human Rights Commission and we had strongly supported them because of their democratic record and right thinkingness and all of that. We had appealed to them to vote a certain way in the UN Human Rights Commission on both Cuba and the People's Republic of China. Both of these posed problems for them. Cuba they wanted to duck because they didn't want to do anything to offend the Castro regime. I think they sensed that the direction the political wind was blowing in the Caribbean was less and less isolating of Cuba and they didn't want to be seen as kind of rubber stamps for, or vehicles for, the U.S. view of Cuba in the UN Human Rights Commission. The PRC was an even more acute problem deploring human rights conditions in the PRC, because the PRC with whom Barbados and Antigua had diplomatic relations (the other islands had relations with Taiwan) was busy building on Barbados a huge gymnasium for the government. It was not for free but for concessional financing that they pay for way off in the future supposedly. The PRC were delivering some very tangible benefits to the Barbadians.

The Barbadian government, after numerous appeals from me, finally decided to duck. They came up with this rather lame idea that their representative at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva had run out of money and had to come home the day before the vote on these critical issues. We were very disappointed and we appealed to them to get somebody else to the meeting. We tried various ways to do this. Send their representative from Brussels if you have to but be there for the vote. They let us down. Subsequently we had a big dust-up with the Barbados government over a travel advisory that the U.S. government felt obliged to issue because there was a very unaccustomed crime situation that had developed in Barbados. The idea got around that the travel advisory was kind of a pay-back for the UN Human Rights Commission thing even though we explicitly denied that, and it wasn't the case. Come the next year the Barbadians found a way to be at the UN Human Rights Commission and to vote the right way.

In the course of that, by the way, I got one of the senior officials of Barbados out for a social outing, actually it was on the golf course. I asked him “Why are we having so much trouble on this human rights thing? This doesn’t make sense. We keep making representations to the Foreign Ministry and we kind of get nowhere. The prime minister doesn’t seem to pay much heed to us.” I learned something very interesting. He said “We in the Foreign Ministry don’t have responsibility for human rights. The prime minister has given that responsibility to the Ministry of Justice.” We’d never have known this otherwise because there was no reason to think that the minister of Justice had this responsibility. The Minister of Justice was actually a very cooperative guy and a close ally and friend of ours. It turned out that in his earlier days he had had rather different ideas that were reflected in the names of his sons: Fidel and Che. It helped explain why we were having such a sticky wicket on getting condemnation of Cuba’s human rights record out of the Barbados government. We were talking to the wrong people and the right people were somewhat differently disposed.

Q: One other thing that occurs to me, what about American tourism on this place? Did you get involved in that or not?

HUGHES: We did in a way. But let me go back, you asked about drugs. We had one other significant event with St. Vincent that is perhaps worth mentioning because it was the first event that actually, I think, finally got Washington’s attention focused on the possibility that St. Vincent may indeed be a mini drugs problem. I happen to be at the CARICOM that was happening in St. Kitts in 1991. While we were at that meeting I received word from Barbados that the navy had encountered on the high seas a concession registered freighter, St. Vincent’s a flag of convenience, that was loaded with something like 20 tons of hashish. It was an unbelievable amount of hashish. The largest amount of hashish we had ever found on any vessel up to that time. They asked permission from the government of St. Vincent to board, search, seize and arrest so they would be able to take immediate enforcement action. We made this request through official channels and there was no reply. The government of St. Vincent was taking forever to reply.

The navy through the State Department got in touch with me and asked if there was anything I could do to get the government of St. Vincent to get on with it and give us approval to board, search, seize and arrest. Everybody does this. The Bahamas does it, Colombia does it, Panama does it. Why is the St. Vincent government having so much trouble coming up with this authority? I went and saw Son Mitchell because we were there together at the meeting. I briefed him on the situation, told him all about it and he said he’d call his people and they would get right on it. Well he didn’t have an answer for me that day and the next day he flew home but he said we’ll be in touch by telephone. The next day I called him and he still didn’t have an answer. “Why can’t you follow the ship to port and whatever port it enters, ask them for the permission to board, search, seize and arrest?” I said “We can’t do that. We want to do it now. We want to do it on the high seas. We want to do it with your permission and we don’t understand why we aren’t getting cooperation.” We went up the escalatory ladder.

I called Son at home on yet another day for permission to board, search, seize and arrest. This was taking about three days. I said that Washington is taking a very quizzical view of why it’s taking your government so long to decide this very routine matter. He said “Look, I don’t know

who's behind these drugs. I don't have anything to do with it. I don't know who's behind this and for all I know it could be the Mafia. If I give you permission to do this, this is a wide open place, somebody might come here and assassinate me. I have no protection. I am worried about myself. They could come over to the Frangipani Hotel in Bequia where I live and do away with me. Go handle this some other way. Take the ship to Hawaii. Follow it to Manila. Do whatever you want but stop asking me for this permission."

I knew he was at his home so I called Bernie Aronson in Washington and said "I've just gone to the limit with Son and he said I can't believe I'm being subjected to this unbelievable pressure. I've never been subjected to this kind of pressure from your government before. I can't move him, Bernie, maybe you can. Do you want to give him a call?" Bernie picked up the phone and called Son Mitchell on Saturday, Bernie was in the office. Someone answered the phone and Bernie asked for Son Mitchell and was told "He's not home". Click. Of course the only person who answered the phone in Son's house was Son.

As it turned out eventually after a long negotiation, it took four or five days, we finally got permission from the Vincentians to go aboard this vessel and board, search, seize and arrest. It finally raised people's suspicions in Washington that there was something radically wrong with this government. This was just not normal behavior. Subsequent to that we found the ton of cocaine through the operation of the drug squad and we saw how that case was handled in St. Vincent.

After coming back from the Eastern Caribbean, I guess it was about a year ago, I was participating in a round table discussion at a think tank here in Washington that was focused on international law enforcement problems. The round table began with a presentation by someone commenting on the drugs situation in the Eastern Caribbean and although we never found the smoking gun really when it comes to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, this person just spoke matter of factly that "well of course the St. Vincent government's given over to drugs trafficking now." It seemed to have finally penetrated that there is something wrong here. We may not be able to put our finger on what exactly is wrong and how deep it goes and just who exactly is implicated, but there is something wrong.

Q: If it had gotten to the point where you felt that the government really had gone over, what could we have done?

HUGHES: What could we have done if we really had a smoking gun that the St. Vincent government had gone over to drugs trafficking? I suppose we could have tried to set up arrest scenarios if we were able to pinpoint individuals in the community, perhaps even in the government, that could have played out when these people traveled overseas. When you came right down to it, we didn't have a lot of economic leverage with the Vincentians. Our aid levels were pretty minimal. Our trade was mainly export trade to St. Vincent. We did not import a great deal from St. Vincent so trade sanctions didn't have a lot to do with it. We could have possibly ostracized them in the international community by sort of calling attention to what evidence of corruption we might have and that would have an adverse impact on their tourism and so forth.

At the end of the day there wasn't a lot of leverage that you really had over St. Vincent. You couldn't go into the country and arrest people. You might have been able to get some cooperation from other jurisdictions in arresting them if they went in and out of the country, as long as you could tie it to a crime that was committed in or directed toward the United States. We could perhaps have isolated them regionally or help put some regional pressure on them. I think there was a measure of regional pressure put on St. Vincent to clean up its act.

We got surprisingly easy cooperation from Prime Minister Mitchell to carry his special forces units up to the northwest of the island and pull up all this marijuana stuff and destroy it. He may have regarded that as an acceptable political cost. Later on, by the way, when St. Vincent was facing an election year and we wanted to renew the eradication operation, during the election season that was definitely not on. There was just one excuse after another for why it wasn't convenient to have the helicopter come back and ferry people around and so forth. Once the election was over and Mitchell won handily, we were back to eradicating. It was very politically timed.

Q: Let's move to tourism. From your work, did you get involved in tourism? I think of one tourist ship after another cruising in, docking for a day, dropping its people and then out again. I don't know if those islands are on the tourism route.

HUGHES: They are very much on the tourism route. In a good year Barbados could get three times the number of visitors as the population of the island. St. Vincent discouraged the visiting of cruise ships particularly in the Grenadines because these large volumes of people would come ashore and spoil the islands, these fragile little keys south of the main island. Except for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, every island in our area was a regular cruise ship port of call. Even Dominica got a few cruise ships and they were quite important to their economy. Of course stay-over visitors are much more important economically for the islands than cruise visitors.

We were, I think it would be fair to say, involved in tourism in a few ways. Obviously the consulate was involved in delivering services for American tourists and I can talk a little bit about what kinds of things the consulate would encounter in that department. We in the embassy were involved in sort of watching or charting the tourism trends and their impact on the economies of the region. We tried also to stimulate some thinking within the governments about how to get more out of tourism as an economic generator and how to do tourism smarter. Not that we were tourism experts but frankly once you've lived in these regions for a little while it just becomes so apparent, compared to other parts of the world, that there are a number of opportunities that are going begging. Change comes slowly in the region. I was just back in Barbados and a number of things that seemed to me to be wise things to do have been done, but of course it has taken several years for them to have been done. It has probably been a process of people coming to these ideas all on their own.

In terms of tourism services, of course cruise ships were coming to port. Sometimes there would be deaths on board cruise ships. We had repatriation cases. In one case one spouse died on a cruise ship and our consular folks helped get the spouse's body off the cruise ship and repatriated to the United States. The living spouse was reluctant to get off the cruise ship and go home with the corpse. They wanted to know why they couldn't complete the cruise which was a little bit

odd. There were sort of the usual sundry cases of tourists who needed emergency repatriation loans or tourist who got into trouble. Every once in a while there would be tourist problems in the other islands as well. There was the classic arrest situation where a tourist has been found with marijuana or something like that and has been locked up in the local prison and awaiting trial. Our people would have to go visit them, try to ensure that they received a fair trial. The courts were fairly stiff on drugs penalties there but I think they were inclined to be a bit lenient on individual American tourists who might have bought a joint of marijuana or something and weren't obviously engaged in large scale criminal trafficking.

The biggest tourism problem that we were involved in as an embassy concerned Barbados. In the course of late 1991 or early 1992 Barbados had had as I recall six capital felons escape from custody. Four burst out of the Glendairy Prison in an escape from the maximum security wing under conditions that later prompted an inquiry that showed that the TV cameras in the maximum security wing had been malfunctioning for months and hadn't been fixed. A guard was alerted to their tunneling and went to investigate. He was overcome by the escapees, tied up, and put in a cell. He succeeded to untie himself and was about to go and sound the alarm when he heard someone coming. He thought it was the escapees coming back for him so he tied himself up again and waited until they made their escape. So four burst out of Glendairy Prison. These were all people who had been involved in murder or comparably serious crimes like rape, things like that.

Two escaped from the high court. One escaped on one day when he was brought into the defendant's dock in the high court building which was right in downtown. As he was put in the dock, he saw a nearby open window on the second story of the building. He jumped out of the dock, jumped through the window and ran off down the street and escaped. The second person escaped the next day from the high court when he was brought into the same courtroom; this was after the newspapers publicized the previous day's escape. The defendant was brought in and taken to the defendant's dock. He saw the same open window, jumped out of the dock, jumped out of the window and ran off down the street. I think after that they closed the window. It is very hot there.

These guys remained at large on the island. The worrisome part was that they remained at large on the island for several months. The most serious of the felons had actually escaped previously and had been captured in the island of St. Vincent and repatriated to Barbados some years earlier. He had murdered a man in his home in the middle of the island. Some people suspected he got off the island right away or that maybe he hung around for a few weeks until the carnival celebration happened and while everybody had their attention focused on that he quietly slipped off the island. No one ever found him. He is gone. The other five were still on the island and there was mounting evidence of their depredations. One in particular kept mounting attacks mainly on isolated houses in the countryside. He invaded these houses and tied up the occupants. Mainly his victims were white. Rarely was anyone really hurt but there were thefts involved. He might hang around and cook himself a good meal and then leave. There was one case where a very brutal rape of a woman was involved.

The other marauders were either personally implicated in or helped spawn copycats who started creating what for Barbados was a fairly serious crime problem. There were some barricade

situations on roads in the interior of the island where it was very popular for tourists to ride around in these little open dune buggy type vehicles called mokes. If you were driving around the island at dusk or even after dark in your moke trying to get back to hotel, you might come across some barrels, or rocks, or tree things strewn in the middle of the road. You stop to figure out how to evade them or whatever and some people would jump out of the bushes and rob you. These kinds of things never happened in Barbados and all of a sudden they were happening with alarming frequency.

We had some discussions with the government about what was going on here and what did they think about this problem. All of the people that we talked to in the judicial and law enforcement side of the house said it was all because of these escapees. They are causing all the problems and once we round them up the problem will be solved. We believed that this was a wrong diagnosis and that it was much more systemic than that. Barbados's economy was in a deep slump thanks to the structural readjustment program that the IMF had imposed when the Sandiford government went to them for help. The economy being so down in Barbados and the government being so lax about some things were leading to an atmosphere of lawlessness and the tourists had reason to worry for their safety. A British tourist, actually he was a Royal Marine, was stabbed in the chest in an effort to save his wife's or girlfriend's purse from being snatched on the south coast tourist road. He lay in the gutter until emergency help came. It started to get very worrying. Fortunately no one was killed but a significant number of people were hurt.

We went back and forth with the Barbados government about this and consulted with Washington about our practices, and also our liabilities, with respect to travel advisories. Barbados made its living off of tourism so one had to treat this with care and discretion. But at the same time we learned that the federal government had been successfully sued in the case of a travel advisory not issued in Kenya for political reasons. Subsequent to the travel advisory being considered and not issued because of political objections from the embassy, an American tourist had been killed in one of the game parks. Weighing all this out we felt something needed to be done; so in dialog with Washington with the Bureau of Consular Affairs we came out with a very mildly worded, not travel warning, but travel advisory. In those days we had a three stage warning, advisory, and all clear kind of thing. We came up with what we thought was a very mildly worded travel advisory and offered even to consult the Barbados government about it. They were just so outraged at the whole idea that they wouldn't really have any dialog about it. Finally the travel advisory was issued. I was called to the foreign ministry to explain this hostile action.

Just before I was called to the foreign ministry, I had been off the island for less than 24 hours in Antigua to make a speech to the Republicans Abroad of Antigua that had been precleared with the State Department Legal Bureau [L]. I had gone through all the necessary hoops to make sure that I'd do this for Democrats if Democrats wanted to hear from the American ambassador and so forth. The whole trip was totally aboveboard. It was on a weekend, on a Saturday on my own time. It was not paid for by the taxpayers. I was off in Antigua giving a political talk or what could be characterized as a talk to a political group.

I got back and was met at the airport by the regional security officer and my acting administrative counselor. This was unusual. I said "what's up?" They said "We almost lost Terry

last night.” Terry was the acting DCM, the political counselor. At first I thought that something had happened and he had gotten really pissed off with some situation in the embassy or something and had threatened to leave, that he was going to curtail. They said, “He could have been killed.” I remembered an accident that his wife had recently had where she was run off the road on these narrow roads out in the country where their house was so I thought maybe he had been involved in a car accident. It turned out that wasn’t the case at all.

One of these escapees had invaded his house. Not to tell the whole long story of how this was done, but basically he ended up being made to kneel down in the driveway of his house execution style with this shotgun at the back of his head. He ended up being hit in the head with the shot gun and knocked to the pavement. He was patted down by the escapee who then not finding money on Terry went into the house and chased his wife and infant child through the house with the shotgun in and out of various doors and rooms while two other children vainly struggled to get security grates open so they could escape into the yard. Terry went running to the neighboring house to try to get help. The wife kept having a sort of almost Alfred Hitchcock experience of pushing the panic button, (both the remote control and the hard-wired panic buttons) and having nothing happen because the salt air had corroded the contacts and the alarm system wasn’t sounding. She was trying to work the radio to reach the Marines except she forgot exactly how to work the radio and the gunman was coming. Part of the scene ended with the gunman coming to her bedroom door. She’d thrown the infant under the bed at the time and the gunman was leveling the gun at her ordering her to put the phone down as she was calling the local equivalent of 911. He demanded money and she said “I haven’t got any money”. Instead of the gunman blowing her away right then and there which he might well have done, he turned and left.

Eventually the Marines were rallied. The Barbados police sent about 30 officers out. They surrounded the house and did some kind of investigation. A neighbor boy offered to show the police where he was fairly confident the gunman was hiding in a nearby gully. He loaded three policemen in a jeep, he was riding and the policemen were driving the jeep. They went down the road past the little bridge that passed over this gully. Further down the road they turned around and came back. As they came back the second time the gunman opened fire on the jeep from the gully wounding three of the four occupants, fortunately not the driver. Despite the fact that 30 policemen were less than a hundred yards away and perfectly able to come scout the gully and try to find this guy, without any further ado or notification to anyone, the driver drove all the way in to the capital town of Bridgetown so that everybody could be treated at the hospital. The gunman escaped and remained at large for several more months.

Needless to say, going in to see the foreign minister the next day after this whole episode put the travel advisory in an entirely different light both from the embassy’s point of view and from his point of view. There really wasn’t very much he could say about it. Although in peaceful sunny Barbados we could have had a tragedy on our hands of a diplomatic family of five being wiped out by some shotgun wielding desperado, we and they fortunately dodged the bullet or it could have been a real tragedy. Needless to say I think it wasn’t lost on the Barbadians that if Barbados had suddenly in the midst of all this made international headlines by “Acting Chief of U.S. Embassy and Family Murdered in Barbados”, this would not be an economic boon for the country. Did we have something to do with tourism? That had a bit to do with tourism.

Q: Was there anything else that we should discuss?

HUGHES: On Barbados and on the embassy? No, not that I can really think of. Barbados as an embassy to me poses some inherent lessons for the Foreign Service and lessons for chiefs of mission taking over embassies like this. There are parts of the world where we really do need to think about doing things smarter, cheaper, better, in an age when we're not going on sailing ships, we are going on airplanes and when there is instantaneous communications with telephone and fax and electronic mail. In small regions like this, our policies towards each of those governments had more in common. We were trying to do the same thing on every island but with governments which each were maybe slightly different. The things the islands had in common with each other and the things our policies toward these islands had in common with each other swamped the very nuanced differences between this island and that island. Therefore there is every reason to think that a regional embassy is the cost effective way to go.

I at the time believed, and continue to believe, that if we looked around the world we might find some other areas of the world where because populations are particularly small or countries have a lot of the same things we're trying to do in several neighboring states, regional embassies might be the way to go. The use of resident representatives or individual officers sort of in a representation context reporting to a regional embassy. Or the more extensive use of consular agents which of course were used quite often in the 19th century but have kind of fallen out of favor today as something to employ. These things might be worth looking at again. From a management point of view I think Bridgetown poses that lesson or that food for thought for the Department.

The other management lesson or grist for thought that Bridgetown as an embassy poses for the Department is the whole question of how do you keep our embassies at a more nearly uniform level of professionalism, recognizing that all embassies are not created equal. Beijing will always attract a different kind of talent than Bridgetown should. Bonn or Berlin will always attract a different kind of talent than Montevideo. Moscow will always attract a different kind of talent than Tegucigalpa. How do we keep some embassies from becoming literally professional backwaters or dumping grounds where people regard this as the place to go to retire and put your feet up or not do very much, or this is the place you go when you can't get an assignment anywhere else or this is the place where you dump your problems and hope that they never surface again? I don't believe that we should allow dumping grounds or retirement posts and so forth in the service. I think we should try to spread the turkeys, if you would, out more evenly. I think we should have enough respect for every country that is important enough for us to have a resident diplomatic establishment in, to have a first class diplomatic establishment. One that represents the first class, indeed practically the only world class country that exists. My biggest challenge in Bridgetown was how to bring this rather neglected, out-of-the-way embassy, up to that standard. I think we made it. I hope Jeannette Hyde, my successor, is continuing to make it, but it is a challenge.

I guess that would be the two points on which I would close.

Q: You left when?

HUGHES: I left in July of '93 and I came back to Washington and left the service. I went to eventually run the National Council of World Affairs Organizations and then the Council of the Americas. I am now at Manchester Trade.

It may be just a curious story to conclude on. In leaving Bridgetown obviously the Clinton administration was coming into office and I wasn't going to serve under President Clinton, being still an appointee of the Republicans. I was thinking about what I was going to do next and it looked like I had on line one, possibly two, teaching assignments at military war colleges but they were going to take up in July or August and I didn't want a break in all my federal service. Tom Foley, our Speaker of the House at that time, was a periodic visitor to Barbados. Actually I thought of a funny story that I should also tell you, speaking of Foley. I assume that this eventually gets rearranged into something sensible, but I'll tell you the funny story because somewhere in all of this your readers might want some comic relief.

Tom Foley was a regular visitor to the island and I brought the National Intelligence Daily to Foley periodically for briefing. When he came to the island we picked him up and he was always available to do a diplomatic dinner while he was on the island. Anything to promote the interests of the mission he was happy to make himself available for. Knowing that I had these couple of teaching opportunities in the offing when the administration changed and so forth, I was meeting with Foley who happened to be on the island and I said, "If I were to take one of these opportunities and I didn't want a break in service, would it even make sense to inquire whether I could be extended at post long enough so that I would bridge to one of those teaching opportunities and how would I make that inquiry?" He said, "I don't know but I'll check." I think he came back to the island once subsequently and the subject came up and he said he didn't have any further news for me but just stay tuned.

Time passed and nothing happened. My wife and I assumed that we were just going home as per normal on the first of March which was when all ambassadors who had not been otherwise so notified, which meant all the political appointees and some career ambassadors where the Clinton administration had new people in mind for those big jobs, were supposed to go home. As March first approached, we're obviously going home. We got our tenants out of our house, we ordered the movers up. The moving van came and they started carting up our stuff and we were getting ready to go home. I was at the house watching them crate up my organ and literally push the organ through the front door of the house onto the moving van when the phone rang. On the phone, I don't know if I should tell this story, was Heather Foley. She had been referred out to the house by my office. She said, "What are you doing packing?" I said, "We're packing because we are supposed to leave by the first of March." "You mean they didn't tell you?" "Tell us what?" "You've been extended until July." "No, no one told us we had been extended until July." "Well you have been extended until July." I said, "But we're moving. All of our stuff is packed. I can't possibly stay." Now if I had known a few weeks early, but now I am committed. Our farewell parties have been held. We've done our farewell calls on the islands. She said, "Don't go away. I'll talk to the State Department. You'll be getting a cable shortly."

I called the embassy and said I understand a cable is going to be coming in. Let me know when it comes in. I don't know what it is going to say though. By and by a cable came in and it said

basically you've been extended at your post by order of the President until July. Then I got another call from someone who is one of Foley's aides and said, "Did the cable arrive?" I said "Well, yes it has." Then I discussed our predicament with this guy and said the farewell parties and so forth have been done, how can I possibly stay? A few minutes later the phone rang and it was this guy on the phone again. The nature of the conversation was (it was more polite than this) "You don't understand. You have been extended to July. The Speaker of the House has been involved and you are being extended to July so you are going to be there through July." Vicki, who was otherwise committed to come back to Washington for a professional engagement, at that stage left and I was then bachelor ambassador from March through July.

The funny story about Foley that I wanted to share was that when Bush was in Japan for that trip in which he got sick, I was at the airport saying goodbye to my father, who had been visiting us. I got a call from my wife who said, "Have you seen CNN? The President has just taken sick." I said, "No, I haven't seen CNN." We actually couldn't get CNN in the visitors' lounge so I went out to an upstairs lounge where I could get CNN and I saw the footage and so forth. I said we've got to notify Foley. He is in the line of succession. We didn't know what this meant but we needed to notify him.

Q: You might tell what the sickness looked like.

HUGHES: President Bush in Japan sort of keeled over and vomited at a banquet because of strains in his schedule, or a virus he had, or something. It was depicted live, or nearly live, on TV and it looked quite alarming because he sunk under the table and people came and administered to him. We didn't know what it meant. He had been taken off for treatment. The next task became to advise Foley who was on the island. I called the embassy and spoke to them and then I called Pamela Harriman's house where he had been staying. He wasn't there. At that stage my driver was somewhere near at hand and he said he saw Foley bicycling into town on his way out to pick me up that morning. Speaker Foley frequently bicycled around Barbados. I was dressed for the office in my suit, with my briefcase and I said, "Peter, do you know where Foley usually goes when he goes into town?" He said, "Sometimes he goes to the beach at Jemets Lane and sometimes he goes to Brighton Beach and sometimes he goes to this weightlifting place where he works out." I said, "Okay, let's go to Brighton Beach. Let's start at Jemets Lane and we'll work our way around to all these places and we'll see if we can find him."

We go to the beach at Jemets Lane and pull up in this parking lot. I get out. I am in my suit and I carry my briefcase with me because I didn't want to leave it in the car. I walk out onto the beach and Peter does as well. He walks in one direction and I walk in the other direction. We are looking at the bathers and we're looking at the people in the water for somebody who looks like Tom Foley and there is no one there. We walk back to the parking lot, I have sand in the shoes and everything, and there is this very aged lady there sweeping the parking lot, a black Barbadian of course. I was always trying to be utterly colored blind and never made reference to whether someone was white, black, Asian or whatever. I walked up to this lady and she said, "Can I help you?" I said, "Yes, we are looking for a gentleman who might have come to the beach. He's about as tall as I am or a little bit taller, 60-ish, older with white wavy hair and a sort of craggy face, a bit stooped shoulder, riding a bicycle." She said, "What color?" I said, "Green, I think."

Peter spoke up and said, “He’s a white guy.” Foley’s bicycle was green. So anyway, then we went on to the other beach and we went on to the weightlifting place and we couldn’t find Foley. Finally, finally he turned up back at Pamela Harriman’s house and we were able to brief him on what had happened and so forth. By then it was clear that there was no threat to President Bush and so forth. But strolling the beaches of Barbados in a suit and a briefcase looking for Speaker Foley was one of my more amusing mornings.

MOSINA H. JORDAN
Director, Regional Caribbean Program, USAID
Barbados (1991-1995)

Ambassador Mosina Jordan was born in Brooklyn, New York. She earned a BA from New York University, attended Howard University Law School, UCLA Law School and received a JD from American University. She was a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and served as ambassador to the Central African Republic. She also served at USAID as counselor. Ambassador Jordan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

Q: OK, let’s go to Barbados.

JORDAN: Barbados was a very small island, 21 miles in length and 14 miles wide with a population of 250,000. Like Belize, it’s a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The structure of government is based on the British parliamentary system, and the legal system is modeled on the common law of England. Barbados had a functioning two-party political system, the Democratic Labor Party and the Barbados Labor Party with elections held regularly and democratic principles adhered to.

Q: Who was the prime minister?

JORDAN: Erskine Sandiford of the Democratic Labor Party was the Prime Minister. The streets in Barbados were immaculately clean and safe. It was a model for the region in terms of governance with a progressive agenda and an engaged private sector and civil society. They definitely epitomized their nickname, “Little Britain.” USAID and most of the other donors didn’t provide development assistance to Barbados because their GDP and social indicators were good – per capita income, literacy, maternal and child mortality and morbidity. The donors were all located in Barbados because it was a hub for travel to the Eastern Caribbean and an ideal place to live.

Q: What about tourism?

JORDAN: We weren’t focused on tourism at that time. We were focused more on agriculture. We were really trying to look at ways in which we could strengthen the region’s exports.

Q: Was there much room for agriculture on those islands?

JORDAN: The agriculture sector was seeking to diversify, but the prospect for improving competitiveness was very limited, due to low yields from small farms on sloping lands with very limited potential for irrigation. Bananas were the major export. Even with the restructuring of the banana industry, there would be a two-thirds decline in employment in the banana industry. Which meant 12% of the labor force would lose income along with those who benefit indirectly from the banana industry. In the absence of alternative livelihoods and social safety nets, this would lead to increased poverty. A major conundrum for the Eastern Caribbean countries was that the European subsidies were eroding, and they needed alternative competitive crops but their focus was on convincing the EEU not to remove the subsidies rather than aggressively explore alternative crops for fear of this massive level of unemployment. USAID's job was to work with the governments to develop and implement a transition plan.

Q: Did Martinique play a role there?

JORDAN: No, Martinique is actually an overseas department and region of France. It was a tourism destination for international tourist and the French. Although it was located in the Eastern Caribbean, it really wasn't a part of the Caribbean.

Q: How about Trinidad and Tobago?

JORDAN: USAID funded an HIV/AIDS outreach program in the University of the West Indies located in Trinidad to strengthen the ministries of health in all of the Caribbean with a special focus on the Eastern Caribbean countries. It was the CDC (Center for Disease Control) for the Caribbean. Our support strengthened the University of the West Indies that happened to have a campus and the Caribbean Epidemiological Center in Trinidad. We didn't provide development assistance to Trinidad. Trinidad was very developed with strong growth from oil revenue and so they didn't need our direct support.

Q: Did Venezuela play any role there?

JORDAN: No, not at that time

Q: What was the program for the Eastern Caribbean?

JORDAN. The Eastern Caribbean countries faced special development challenges. The islands were small and vulnerable to natural disasters and other external shocks such as international economic crises. With populations varying from 45,000 in St Kitts and Nevis to over 150,000 in St. Lucia, institutional capacity is limited and cost of basic social services were very high. Hurricane and floods regularly reverse economic gains by destroying infrastructure and disrupting key economic activities in agriculture and tourism. The private sectors were relatively small and had limited human and financial capacity. The economies were dependent on preferential trade arrangement for bananas. These development challenges contributed to the rise in poverty levels. About a third of the Eastern Caribbean households lived in poverty. Income inequality was also relatively high in the region.

The objective of USAID's program was to strengthen the Eastern Caribbean countries so that they could remain viable economies as they transition out of bananas. Although, the region had relatively high literacy rates we were providing support in the education area, we were assisting the islands in developing curricular for their secondary and tertiary education programs. In health, HIV/AIDS was now prevalent in the region and we assisted the islands in establishing HIV/AIDS program, working with the Caribbean Epidemiological Center at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad. In the area of health, we were also supporting maternal and child health programs. We also had a robust participant training program where we provided scholarships to the young people in the Eastern Caribbean to attend universities and colleges in the U.S., and at the University of the West Indies. We were also trying to strengthen the private sector, providing them with research tools and linking them to the U.S. Executive Corps, a group of retired U.S. executives that provide technical assistance to companies to improve capacity and profitability. The goal was to enable the private sector to play a greater role in the growth of the economies in the region. We also supported a significant Caribbean justice reform program working through the University of the West Indies campus in Barbados and Florida State University to computerize the case law in the Caribbean, provide training for the clerks and justices, and standardize the commerce laws for the Caribbean, so that they were all working within a common system.

Q: Were we involved in tourism?

JORDAN: USAID didn't get involved in tourism at that time. We were focusing on education, health, alternatives to bananas, and strengthening the private sector. When I returned to the region in 2000, we developed a very dynamic tourism program for the region.

Q: How did you find sponsoring people to go to the States for training? Did they come back?

JORDAN: Yes. This was a challenge and it still is a challenge. We had a contract with the participants that required that they return and work for the government for 2 years. They would return and stay for a short period of time and then leave. We were training these participants in all of the Eastern Caribbean countries to get jobs in Europe, Canada and the U.S. They left because the economies were weak, job prospects were limited and wages were low, barely above poverty levels. Even though they signed commitments for two years, the governments had a hard time enforcing them. The challenge was to have more vibrant economies with more opportunities for employment, employment at a living wage so that their citizens would remain in their countries. In addition to the participant training brain drain, there was significant legal and illegal immigration especially to the U.S. The challenge was to develop strong viable economies so their citizens would want to stay in their countries. It's still a challenge.

Q: How did you operate? Did you have an office in Barbados?

JORDAN: Yes, we had an office in Barbados staffed with technical experts in health, education and agriculture. We had agronomists, educational specialists and health specialists with masters and PhDs in public health. The staff was involved in the design and monitoring implementation of our projects in all of the Eastern Caribbean

Q: The Cubans have always put a great emphasis on doctors. Were they involved in the Eastern Caribbean and did we cooperate with them?

JORDAN: All the islands had significant support from Cuba in terms of doctors. They were in the hospitals and clinics throughout the Eastern Caribbean. Cuba provided a significant training program for doctors and a significant participant training program in a variety of technical areas. USAID's contacts were with high level government officials in the health sector, the minister of health, the vice minister of health and the Permanent Secretary for health. We were not in contact with the Caribbean doctors or the Cuban doctors. We were assisting the governments in developing health strategies and systems, and cost recovery methods, issues addressed with high-level government officials. Not the doctors that worked in the hospital and clinic systems. We knew that there were Cuban doctors in the region, but we didn't have anything to do with them.

Q: Were you there two years?

JORDAN: I was there for three years.

Q: How did things go?

JORDAN: We had successes and we had challenges. We had successes with the education and health programs. We also set up a system of buying pharmaceuticals for all the Eastern Caribbean countries from one source so they could save money and have a central location for distributing the pharmaceuticals to the Eastern Caribbean islands. We supported the Secretariat of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), an inter-governmental organization dedicated to the economic harmonization and integration of the Eastern Caribbean countries. They were responsible for the protection of human and legal rights in the region and promoting good governance. Strengthening the Secretariat enabled them to perform their role more efficiently and effectively. We have had phenomenal success with the Justice Reform project - case law was codified, commerce laws harmonized, justices and clerks trained. The private sectors in the region were more engaged with the governments in addressing options to sustain their economies when the banana subsidies were eliminated. We were not entirely successful in developing a robust program in alternative crops to bananas for the region.

Q: In the long term, do you feel there is much of a chance of the Eastern Caribbean islands forming together into a single unit?

JORDAN: No. They are sovereign states and they want to maintain their sovereignty. Established in 1973, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organization of 15 Caribbean nations and dependencies. CARICOM's main purposes are to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate foreign policy. Its major activities involve coordinating economic policies and development planning; devising and instituting special projects for the less-developed countries within its jurisdiction; operating as a regional single market for many of its members (Caricom Single Market); and handling regional trade disputes. They have been discussing since its inception uniform approaches to how all the islands can work together with similar systems to reduce cost and redundancy, and even that is a challenge. There have also been discussions on a

single Caribbean state and there are reams of white papers on the subject, but those discussions haven't lead to any decisions.

Q: When did you leave Barbados?

JORDAN: I left Barbados in 1995 to go to Guyana.

End of reader