Interview with Charles Anthony Gillespie Jr.

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Program

AMBASSADOR CHARLES ANTHONY GILLESPIE, JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview has not been edited by Ambassador Gillespie]

Q: Today is September 19, 1995. This is an interview with Ambassador Charles Anthony Gillespie, Jr., known as Tony Gillespie. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.

I'd like to start this interview off at the beginning. Could you tell me a bit about your background - when and where you were born and something about your family?

GILLESPIE: I was born in Long Beach, California in March, 1935.

Q: Did you miss the earthquake there, or not?

GILLESPIE: I missed the earthquake, but my parents didn't, and I heard a lot about it as I grew up. My parents had come to California from Texas, where my father was born, some time in the 1920s, I guess it was. My Dad was an officer of the Bank of America and had been sort of lured from Texas, where he had been in banking as a young man, to California by the fabled A. P. Giannini, the founder of the Bank of America.

My father was a young, trainee officer in the Bank of America. I think that he actually worked in San Pedro, California, where there was a large community of immigrant Yugoslav fishermen.

Q: Also, the U.S. Navy used to be based there. I had two brothers in the Navy - one on the USS Arizona and one on the USS West Virginia.

GILLESPIE: Long Beach was a big Navy town at that point. My mother was from Colorado, and my father, from Texas. My paternal grandfather had been a railroad engineer for the Southern Pacific Railway. He was an immigrant from Ireland and Scotland, actually. He came from Ireland, but his family went from Scotland to Ireland, I believe, at an earlier time. My mother's family was Swedish. My maternal grandfather was a building contractor who owned a construction company in El Paso, Texas. Shall I talk a little bit more about my parents' background?

Q: Well, I don't think it's necessary. When you were growing up, you were obviously only about five or six years old in 1941, when World War II started for the United States. For the first part of your life this was the period of the Depression. Did this affect your family at all? Being in banking it could have gone either way.

GILLESPIE: No. My father used to boast that he really was fortunate to work for the Bank of America. I think that the most direct way in which my father and mother were affected by the Depression - I am an only child - was, if I remember correctly, an unpaid vacation of a few weeks. That was it. Other than that, he had job security throughout the Depression and, for that reason, remained very loyal to the Bank of America. As my father was a banker, I think that the Depression shaped a lot of his views about the world, finance, money, and those kinds of things. Obviously, the Depression affected his approach, and that of my mother, to finances and money and the way I was brought up.

However, even though I was young when World War II started, it was, I think now, a defining moment for me. At the time of Pearl Harbor in 1941 my father was already 40 years of age. He felt very strongly that it was very important to do something about the war. He volunteered for the Army, which needed Finance Officers. At age 40 he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Army Finance Corps.

His first assignment, for training, was at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. He packed my mother and me up, and we went by train across the United States. I can still remember vividly bits and pieces of that trip to North Carolina.

From there he was assigned to Portland, Maine, to Fort Williams. Again, he took us there. I think that we stayed there for a couple of years. Then he was transferred to Fort Devens, Massachusetts. We moved with him to Groton, Massachusetts. That began a sort of peripatetic life style for me which, I think, has never really stopped. These moves took me to the eastern part of the United States, which was very big in those days - all by train.

By the end of World War II he had to make a decision about his future. By that time he was a Lieutenant Colonel. He had been promoted rather rapidly - because of his age and experience, I think. He had to decide whether to stay in the military service but he chose to go back to California. My mother and I went back with him, of course. There was a period of adjustment to being a stranger in Long Beach. I remember that on the first day at school back in Long Beach, my mother decided that she would have me wear knickers.

Q: Oh, no!

GILLESPIE: You can imagine southern California kids in the mid-1940s - this must have been 1946 or so - seeing this little kid dressed this way. I remember that I had my hair slicked back. There I came to school with these funny looking pants and long socks. I think that I came home rather scuffed up that afternoon.

Q: I thought that I wore my last pair of knickers about 1941 or so.

GILLESPIE: Well, my mother was very much caught up in what she had found on the eastern seaboard. She thought that knickers would just be the cat's meow. My mother always wanted to call me Anthony, which may tell you something. She never really liked the name Tony.

Q: Where did you go to school?

GILLESPIE: I went through parochial Catholic schools in Long Beach, California. I was convinced, and my Dad was convinced, that I was going to be an engineer - mechanical, civil, or some kind of engineer. So I had to make a choice for schools. The son of one of my father's friends was a football player at UCLA, the University of California at Los Angeles. I idolized this guy, and nothing would do but for me to go to UCLA. I went to parochial elementary school in Long Beach, parochial Catholic high school in Long Beach, and then to UCLA as an undergraduate.

Q: Did the Catholic nuns form you...?

GILLESPIE: I was formed, first by the nuns, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, known as the IHMs. Then the high school was run by the Holy Cross Brothers from Notre Dame. So I had the two influences. The high school was not, of course, coeducational. There was a Catholic girls' high school next to the boys' high school. The sisters ran the girls' school, and the Holy Cross brothers ran us. This was interesting, because even in the 1940s and the early 1950s it was already integrated racially, although it was a private, parochial school. We had a very large contingent - and very noticeable to people like me - of Latinos. Again, there were some Yugoslavs, the children of the fishing community, and some Blacks.

Q: Most of the Yugoslavs there were from Croatia, from the DalmatiaPeninsula area.

GILLESPIE: Croatia, yes.

Q: I think that it's kind of interesting to understand the background of the people who ended up in the Foreign Service. Did you get any feel for foreign affairs while you were there in Long Beach?

GILLESPIE: It's hard to find a particular point of focus. However, I guess that I talked about foreign affairs with my parents, who had always expressed an interest in what was going on in the world. Furthermore, I think that I was fortunate to have as truly close friends, both in elementary and through high school, some fellows whose families were just a little different. The father of one of them was an editor of the Long Beach Express Telegram. He was not the publisher or the managing editor - he was a senior editor. He had a good family of five kids. My classmate's mother was a writer. My own mother had fancied herself as a poet and writer. She never published anything but did a lot of writing and read a lot. Then, the father of another one of my fellow students was a naval officer. His son was a dear friend of mine - and both of these two people remain dear friends to this day. His mother was Spanish by birth - born in Spain. That was always intriguing to me. When I would go to either of these houses to spend the night or have a meal or something, conversation always ranged fairly broadly into what was going on in the world and so forth. So I suspect that that may have influenced me toward foreign affairs.

My high school itself - as far as I can recollect - didn't have any major international affairs program. Of course, as soon as I got to UCLA, there was a lot of emphasis on foreign affairs.

Q: What about your reading habits? I'm just curious about that.

GILLESPIE: My mother was the book person, the truly interesting and fascinating person in my family. My Dad was not that interested in books. My mother just kept pushing books at me. I recall that when I was still in what would have been junior high school, in seventh

or eighth grade, I took a book to school. I was still with the nuns, not the brothers. One of the sisters there became very upset because this book was part of a trilogy by Sigrid Undset - Kristen Lavrensdatter. She said to me, “What are you reading that book for?” She seemed to be saying, “You're too young for that.” My mother had just said, “You know, I think that you should start reading these things.”

So I started reading a lot of books early. I spent an awful lot of time talking about books with my friend whose father was in the newspaper business. We became interested in Ernest Hemingway and other writers on the Paris scene in the 1920s and 1930s. I recall that at a certain point, when we were in high school, we fancied ourselves as intellectuals and tried to take on all the trappings of that.

It's interesting how siblings can affect you. This friend's elder brother was just two or three years older than he was. That doesn't seem all of that far ahead of us now, but at that time he seemed much older to us. I recall that the elder brother had had this dream of studying in France. So, while we were growing up, he was a little ahead of us. He was planning, even in early high school, to go to the Sorbonne in Paris, which is where he wanted to do his university studies. So he was studying French, very much on his own. I remember that those were among the influences on me.

Q: When did you enter UCLA?

GILLESPIE: In 1954.

Q: The Korean War was just over. The Armistice had been signed iJuly, 1953. What sort of a degree were you working toward?

GILLESPIE: Well, as I said, I had started out thinking that I was going to be an engineer. I entered UCLA and looked at the requirements for a degree in engineering. I started to take some of the basic, required math courses. I just hated them. It was just awful. I didn't like any of it. I probably didn't like many of the people in the classes. So there I was, caught

up in this big institution, UCLA. At that time, if I remember correctly, there were more than 10,000 students on campus. Of course, it was a big commuter, non- resident school for Los Angeles as well. I lived at UCLA - did not try to commute from my home, which was about 45 minutes or an hour away by car at that time.

After going through some up's and down's and counseling from friends, as well as discussing the situation with my parents and others, I decided that something in the social sciences or the humanities would be more suitable for me. I started out thinking that English would be a good major. I was still an undergraduate, of course, and didn't have to choose right away. Eventually, by trial and error and by talking to a number of people, I ended up majoring in psychology. I got a bachelor's degree in psychology. Toward the end of my course I concentrated on industrial psychology, quite frankly, because I knew that I didn't want to go on in psychology as such. The only options there were to get a terminal bachelor's degree or go on to get a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. That really did not appeal to me. I was much more interested in human behavior on a lower scale.

Q: So you graduated from UCLA in, what, 1958? Then what happened?

GILLESPIE: Well, as you said, I had missed serving during the Korean War, but you couldn't miss the draft at that time. Conscription was still going on. Sure, I was influenced by my father's experience and by my early childhood. It just seemed like a natural thing to do.

There's even more of a story there. Earlier on I had dreamed of going to the United States Naval Academy and had taken all of the competitive examinations for an appointment. After a lot of hard work I had ended up with, if I remember correctly how the system worked, a principal” and an alternate appointment to the Naval Academy and a principal” and an alternate appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, which had been my fallback choice.

I was looking forward to attending the Naval Academy. I went down to San Diego, California, with a friend of mine, who was the son of a naval officer and who had similar kinds of appointments. We were all set to go off to school together at Annapolis, Maryland. Then we both flunked the physical exam. His hearing was not at the required level, and it turned out that I was color blind. Therefore, I could not pass the physical exam for either Annapolis or West Point.

When it came time to decide what to do about the draft, compared to a future at UCLA, it was an easy step for me to take Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) training. And Army ROTC at that, because Navy ROTC was still closed to me because of my color blindness.

Q: Your eyes were a tremendous determining factor in those days.

GILLESPIE: Color was very important. They had just started using these isochromatic plates. I passed all of the colored yarn things, but they had these...

Q: Ishihara charts. I flunked them, too. [Laughter]

GILLESPIE: So you know the story. Anyway, I took Army ROTC and again had a choice, after graduation, between either six months of active duty and a long period in the Reserves or two years of active duty and a shorter period in the Reserves.

Since I wasn't exactly sure what you did with a bachelor's degree in psychology, and I had no other, immediate prospects looming before me, I was commissioned on graduation from UCLA in 1958 in the Army Intelligence Corps. In fact, I wore a uniform instead of a cap and gown, which was the custom in those days.

I came here Washington, DC in February, 1958, during one of the worst snowstorms that they had ever had. I went on to Baltimore and Fort Holabird in Dundalk, Maryland, on the

Southeast side of Baltimore, which at that time was the U.S. Army Intelligence Center. I spent six months there in training to be an Intelligence Officer.

Then I went back to California and got married. During my six months at Fort Holabird I had been intrigued by the work that was being done and the kinds of things that were happening. We were all strongly anti-communist. We felt that there was an enemy out there, and we intelligence people were in the front line.

Q: This was in 1958 in the middle of the Cold War.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I was given another choice. I could either go on with the two-year period of service. However, if I was interested, the Army Intelligence people wanted some linguistically qualified people. They had some very interesting assignments. If I would just sign up for a third year in the Army, they would give me one of those good assignments - and language and area training to go with it.

That seemed very attractive. So I asked, “What do you have to offer?” I think that I went over to the Pentagon to talk to one of the Army Personnel Officers about this. He said, “Here's what we'll do. We've never done this before. You're a Second Lieutenant. We've never assigned a Second Lieutenant to an Attache Office in an Embassy overseas. However, we'd like to start that, because we think that it would be good training for you if you were to stay in military service, and we could get some benefit out of it.” So they told me, “Here are your orders. You are assigned, if you take this deal, to the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, Spain, as a very junior, Assistant Attache. And we will give you adequate language and area training for that appointment.”

Now here was the “hooker.” He said, “We have a language training facility in Monterey, California - the Army Language School” (now the Defense Languages Institute). He continued, “However, that school really teaches the Spanish they speak in Latin America. You would be going to Spain. They speak Spanish with a different accent there. What we've arranged - for the first time ever - is to get two slots at the Foreign Service Institute

(FSI) in the State Department. You would be one of the first two Army officers ever to attend the Foreign Service Institute. They teach a variety of Spanish that would serve you well in Madrid. The other slot is for Italian language training, because we don't have anybody who speaks good Italian. We're going to select another officer from your class to go into Italian training. Would you be interested in Spanish language training at the FSI?"

Well, at this point I was back here in the Baltimore area. I had met all kinds of new people at the Intelligence Center - guys from schools all over the U.S. I was very much involved now in foreign affairs and had begun to have some sense of what the State Department and the Foreign Service Institute might be, though I wasn't sure of all of the details. So I bit.

Q: There's another part of the equation. What did your wife thinabout this?

GILLESPIE: At this point we were still engaged. We were in regular touch with one another, but in those days, as she and I have discussed from time to time, her attitude was kind of "whither thou goest, I go also." [Laughter] While she is in no way a shrinking violet and never has been, it just was the way it was, and she went along with it. It was my commission, and I was earning the $222.30 a month. She thought this was just fine. She had teacher's credentials. We had been engaged to be married for well over a year and had known each other for three or four years. We had met as undergraduates at UCLA. So I said, "Guess what, my dear," and I told her. She said, "Well, that sounds great."

I was talking to somebody just the other day about the whole renovation, if that's the right word - the reconstruction of National Airport in Washington, DC. I was telling this person, as I flew into National Airport the other day, that I looked back with great nostalgia at my first arrival in Washington. I can remember how imposing it all seemed to be when my wife and I first arrived in Washington. It was an August day in 1958 - we had been married just a month. We had gotten on either a DC-6 or DC-7 and had flown from California. My wife was wearing a suit, a hat, had gloves, full length stockings - the whole works. I was

wearing a suit and tie. You and I both know that when that airplane door opened and we walked down the steps in Washington DC, having gotten on the plane in Los Angeles, it meant facing wilting heat.

Still, it all sounded great. I think that my wife didn't know what an Embassy was - certainly, I didn't know what it was. However, it all sounded attractive.

To cut a long story short, I went through 24 weeks of language training - or maybe it was 27 weeks. It was a little longer then. The course was to begin right away, in late August, probably. It turned out that this Spanish language program was under U.S. Air Force auspices. It was the Air Force that had a contract with the FSI. The Army bought into that arrangement. The FSI had been training Air Force people, mainly for the bases in Spain at Zaragoza and Torrejon which were building up then. These bases were just getting under way, which was why the Air Force was training its officers and non- commissioned officers (NCOs) in Spanish at the FSI, which also handled area training for Spain and the Iberian peninsula.

Anyway, as I got into the program, I found out that it was really a mix of people. Some were from the Air Force, the State Department, and from other government agencies in Washington. It was held in the basement of Arlington Towers in Arlington, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, DC.

Q: As an alumnus of the FSI I might also say that the training space was an underground garage of Arlington Towers, which had been partitioned off. You went in there and almost literally never saw the light of day again.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. At that time we didn't even know that there was an area called Rosslyn. This was Arlington, Virginia, and if you look at this area now, it appears quite different. We had a little apartment on N. 16th St. in Arlington, just off Wilson Boulevard. So I could walk to Arlington Towers - to the “garage” - and attend class. The system was basically the same system the FSI uses now. The books that were used were earlier

editions of the books that are used there today. The area studies are the same as those taught today.

They tested me for language aptitude. I scored very high on that. I had studied Latin for four years in my Catholic high school in California. In addition to that, I had studied French. Again, this was high school French. I had not studied Spanish, interestingly enough. Anyway, we were moving along in Spanish, really doing well. There was an interesting group of instructors from Spain. There was, of course, a Latin American contingent of instructors, but we didn't have much to do with them - until about early October, 1958.

Then I was called over to the Pentagon and was told that the whole deal had fallen through. To this day I don't really know what happened, but I could sense what might have happened, with my experience to that point. They told me that my assignment to the Attache Office in Madrid had been canceled. The job was not going to be established. I was told that I was assigned to Heidelberg in the Federal Republic of Germany or somewhere near there. They told me that they would tell me what my unit would be later, but “that's where you're going.” I said, “Wow! Spanish isn't going to do me a lot of good, is it?” The man I was talking to at the Pentagon said, “No.” Then I said, “Let me go back and talk to the people at the FSI and see what they think about this.” At the FSI I think that I talked to Don Bowen, who was the head of the languages program at the time, or at least the Romance languages. Bowen said, “Hey, no problem! You've got a really good aptitude for languages. We'll just take you out of the Spanish class and put you into a German class. You won't have lost anything with the Spanish you've learned so far and, believe me, we'll get you up to our [Grade of]”3-3” (Speaking ability 3 - useful; reading comprehension 3 - useful) in German by the time you leave.” So I told the Pentagon that I wanted to go into the German class. They said, “No. We are paying for the Spanish class, and you will do Spanish.” So Bowen got on the phone and talked to different people in the Pentagon. I remember sitting in his office. It was all very relaxed. So Bowen said to me, “We'll fix them. I've always wanted to try this anyway. There is something you may have studied in psychology called overlearning. We're going to “overlearn” the daylights

out of you. We're going to turn you out of here with a “4-4” [Speaking ability 4 - fluent; reading ability 4 - fluent] in Spanish. It will be so good that you'll never lose it.” He added, “We'll drop the area studies - you don't need that.” The area studies were given in the afternoon. He said, “I will put you with our Latin American instructors on a one on one basis - individual instruction - for the remainder of your time here or as long as you can take it, whichever comes first.” And he did this.

Well, in that process a lot of things opened up, as it turned out. I got a lot more Spanish, but it kind of got me all the way around. I forget exactly how it happened, but through the instructors and others I got to know a lot of people who were students at the FSI. Some were like me - recent college graduates. Some of them were junioForeign Service Officers (FSOs.)

Q: When was this?

GILLESPIE: 1958. All of this happened roughly between August, 1958, and February, 1959. I remember we went through Christmas. Some of my neighbors in this apartment complex we lived in were junior FSOs - Lanny Olinde and Michael Yohn, for example. They were all recently married. One of these couples had one child. Another couple had no children but were expecting. We didn't have any children, of course, as we were just married. Through them we got to know other Foreign Service people. It didn't register at the time, but obviously it must have done so, as a prelude to something else.

Anyway, I ended up with a “4-4” in Spanish just from classroom study.

Q: For the record here, “4-4” means fluent in Spanish. To do that in such a short time means, first, that you really applied yourself, and, secondly, that you had a high aptitude for languages.

GILLESPIE: Yes. To compress this long story a bit, we boarded a chartered Lockheed Constellation plane in Fort Monmouth or Fort Dix, New Jersey and flew via Newfoundland

in Canada and Shannon, Ireland to Frankfurt, Germany, in early 1959. I ended up assigned as the Operations Officer in a small intelligence organization in Mannheim, Germany, just outside Heidelberg and across the Rhine River from Ludwigshafen. I stayed in that job for about three years. Of course, I only had a commitment to serve in the Army for three years.

However, a couple of things happened. First, I really thought that the work I was doing was intriguing. The Army sent me down to Oberammergau for five months of German training. I became pretty proficient in German at that point. We did a lot of work with German contacts and sources and engaged in liaison with the German intelligence people. Then I had contact with a number of agent officers and NCOs who worked for us and who spoke Polish, Czech, and other Eastern European languages. They were working with the various refugee groups. There were “work battalions” - units which had been formed out of Poles in particular. I had to manage that effort and make sure that it was getting done. I developed agents and tried to penetrate Eastern Europe and all of that good stuff. As I learned later, this was all being done by Army intelligence, which is almost a contradiction in terms. However, it was fascinating for me.

I just have to note that the NCOs among the American draftees were very intelligent human beings. They were not necessarily highly educated in terms of formal education. The most junior people were virtually all either college graduates or people who had been drafted out of college.

Q: That's where the Army dumped people that they didn't know what tdo with.

GILLESPIE: They were too smart to be ordinary soldiers. The son of my friend from school years in Long Beach, California ended up in Germany. He was the company clerk in an armored company. He was, of course, a very bright guy. I had about a dozen people like him, who were working below me and for me. They were in the best of all worlds, because they worked under cover as civilians. They never wore uniforms. If I remember

correctly, they were given the status of GS-9 low to middle level, civil service employees for cover. They could belong to Officers' Clubs. So you can imagine these people from Yale, Stanford, UCLA, and other universities. They said, “This is the Army? What do you know?” They lived in Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQs). They were all living a lie, and they loved it. It was terribly romantic for them.

As far as I was concerned, this was all grist for the mill. I thought it was great. The Army was just starting a program called Foreign Area Specialization (FAS.) They had my language aptitude records from the FSI. They recruited me for this. I actively looked into perhaps getting a Regular Army commission, staying in the intelligence business, and concentrating on Russia.

The main purpose of Oberammergau - and especially Detachment R - was Russian language and area studies. The thought was that I might get a regular commission, stay in the Army, go down to Detachment R, and start Russian language training. This would be added to my German and, by now, my dormant Spanish. So I would stay in the Army and in the intelligence business. It seemed pretty fascinating at the time.

I don't know what happened, but some sort of change took place. I began to get the idea that maybe that wasn't for me. I began to think that maybe there was something other than training for and preparing for a war that loomed.

It seemed to us that World War III was at the Fulda Gap, an invitingly flat area in mountainous terrain near the border between East and West Germany. It was on the main route for a potential Soviet invasion of Western Europe. We would be called out in the middle of the night. It was the only time that these young NCOs and privates - and I, who was also living under civilian “cover” - would put on uniforms with no insignia in the middle of the night and go out to our wartime positions to perform our wartime functions. This was all training for something that we hoped would never happen. At some point along the way

I began to question whether this was the best use of my talents and time - and whether there might be something else that would be more useful.

I had been learning more about international affairs and following what was going on. I had occasion to go up to the Consulates General in Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart because one of my jobs was to participate in an annual exercise called Operation Doublestrike in which we really went beyond our civilian employee cover. We were given actual cover documents as U.S. tourists. We had ordinary U.S. passports and tickets. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) supported us in this. We went down to Bavaria near the German-Austrian border and did all kinds of things to test the U.S. Army Special Forces. The Special Forces people would drop in by parachute from France. Each year I was made the head of a team whose job it was to ferret them out in the countryside. They would drop out of airplanes with some communications and other support - but very little of it. Their objective was to carry out simulated sabotage activities, recruit people, and do different kinds of things, as if this were hostile territory.

In this activity we were the bad guys. I was the “aggressor team” chief for a particular sector. On the political side that brought me, on one occasion, into contact with the Embassy in Bonn to receive a briefing on certain activities related to this. I met a Foreign Service Officer whom I had known at FSI. Well, I started to hear more and more about what people did in the Foreign Service and in the field of diplomacy more generally.

I guess that the big kicker in this development, though it didn't seem so at the time, may have been the fact that in 1961 one of the crises faced by President John Kennedy was the construction of the Berlin Wall. My intelligence unit was colocated with the 18th Battle Group in Mannheim, Germany. This was the group which was sent from West Germany to break through to Berlin over the autobahn with the mission of opening the lines. We all got up one night. Everybody else went home the next day except those guys in the 18th Battle Group. They kept on going to Berlin. We thought it was a drill, but it wasn't.

President Kennedy extended all of the Army Reserve appointments. By that time I had put in my application for a regular commission, which had been approved.

We were then expecting our first child. A whole bunch of things conspired which led me to decide that I would leave the Army. I took the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT.) I felt that I needed some more work and refining. There were some other things that I wanted to do. I still wasn't sure of exactly where I was going. However, some close friends had talked to me about law school. They were going to law school and suggested that I might think about law school, also. I ended up at Hastings Law College in San Francisco, California.

Q: When was this?

GILLESPIE: This was in late 1962. Our son was born in January, 1962. We were kept in Germany an extra six months because of the Berlin crisis. All Army Reserve appointments were frozen, and you couldn't get out of the Army.

Q: Were you an alumnus of the 97th General Hospital, by any chance?

GILLESPIE: No, our son was born at the 130th Station Hospital iHeidelberg.

We ended up sailing back to the U.S. during the summer of 1962, when our son was six months old. I entered Hastings Law College in San Francisco in September, 1962. My wife went to work as a teacher at a real ghetto public school in the Oakland Public School system. We left our son with a woman who ran a day care service. Within six months I knew that Law School was not for me. I really didn't like the study of law. I hated it. I didn't like the idea of our son being in this day care center. I wanted to find a way to end that and get into what I thought was a normal existence, with my wife not being required to support me while I attended law school. At that point, although there was some GI Bill money, it wasn't enough, and, of course, she was working as a teacher.

To cut a long story short, I took the Foreign Service exam because it seemed like the right thing to do. I guess that was in the fall of 1962. I thought that some kind of job in the field of international affairs would be good for me. I really made a major effort to get into the Peace Corps, where I looked for a Peace Corps staff job. I felt that I didn't want to be a Peace Corps volunteer. That seemed to be working along well until the Peace Corps found out that I'd been in the intelligence business. That was just the kiss of death. They decided that they couldn't accept me.

To keep busy and because I thought that the field of international affairs was the right one to be getting into, however I did it, I enrolled in a program at San Francisco State College for a master's degree in international affairs. I had taken the Foreign Service written exam, passed it, and then flunked the oral exam.

Q: Can you explain how you found the oral exam at that time? Thevaried, I think...

GILLESPIE: It was funny. There were two things that stand out in my memory. I'm having trouble remembering this, but the guy who chaired the panel, Jay Moffat, was probably 40 years old at the time.

Q: There was a Jay Moffat, a Foreign Service Officer.

GILLESPIE: This was in the 1960s, so he'd be in his 70s by now. Hwas the epitome, to me, of the Foreign Service.

Q: His father had been an Ambassador, J. P. Moffat...

GILLESPIE: Exactly. He was known as “J. P.”

Q: I think that he was an Ambassador somewhere in Africa.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Either J. P. Moffat, who was the chairman of the panel, or his son, wrote a letter to former President George Bush concerning Cuba. Bush sent me a copy of the

man's letter and asked me what I thought of what he had to say. This is a funny little footnote.

Anyway, Moffat and these two other gentlemen on the Oral Exam panel were all very dour. The exam was given in San Francisco. I just have this funny recollection of it. I guess that I had read the San Francisco Examiner or one of those newspapers the morning of the exam. I'd seen a figure on U.S. vehicle production. It was a rather large number. I remember that during the course of the oral exam I used that number. These three people on the panel tried to tell me that I was wrong about that number. I'm not sure that I handled this matter right. In any case, we discussed this and that. However, at the end of the exam, they were very nice but said, “No, you didn't pass the exam.”

That didn't daunt me. I continued to look around. Then, and again I'm not sure how it happened, I learned that the State Department needed Security Officers to work overseas. I went down and was interviewed by the head of the State Department's security office in San Francisco. He was a very nice guy. He said, “Gosh, with your background in intelligence and your interest in languages you're just the kind of guy we want.” So they actively recruited me. I thought that this was interesting and was maybe another way to get where I wanted to go.

So I ended up entering the Foreign Service with an Foreign ServicReserve (FSR) commission, as a Security Officer.

Q: When was this?

GILLESPIE: In January, 1965. I had continued to study international affairs during 1963 and 1964. As it turned out, I didn't get the master's degree but did a lot of study with some interesting people.

So on January 4, 1965, to be precise, I took the oath of office as an FSR here in Washington. I had flown back to Washington from the West Coast right after New Years,

got off the plane, settled down in Washington, and went through Regional Security Officer (RSO) training under a fellow named G. Marvin Gentile, who was then the head of the Office of Security.

Q: He was head of that office for many years.

GILLESPIE: The RSO training was perfunctory, in many ways, but interesting. By the end of February, 1965, my family and I were getting off a plane in Manila, where I was the Assistant RSO. It was a pretty good-sized security establishment. There were also some technical security people in a big Embassy.

William McCormick Blair was the Ambassador. His Deputy Chief of Mission(DCM) was Richard Service. My boss was a long-time Civil Service investigator who had joined the State Department security system. The Administrative Counselor was John Lennon, the uncle of the Lennon sisters who used to sing with Lawrence Welk. Jack Lennon was an FSO who had come into the Foreign Service through the examination process and was a very serious guy. It was a large Embassy with a lot of things going on. The Philippines was a fascinating place. People had told me that I would certainly use my Spanish there. Of course, you don't use Spanish there. Nonetheless, it was a fascinating, even shocking country in many respects. I think that at the end of February, 1965, when we arrived there, the Philippines was in a presidential elections campaign. Unidentified gunmen gunned down the Chief Justice of the Philippines Supreme Court, I believe, on the steps of the Supreme Court building. It was really a kind of wild place.

There was a major U.S. military presence in the Philippines. At thitime the war was going on in Vietnam. My recollection is that...

Q: We were just starting the major military buildup in Vietnam.

GILLESPIE: In Vietnam, in early 1965.

Q: What were your responsibilities in the RSO? One of the things that we don't often get in these interviews is what security officers do. I would like to get your views and any stories you might have in this connection.

GILLESPIE: Sure. I learned that I was supposed to conduct investigations. This really meant conducting background investigations and security investigation updates, which involved interviewing people about other Foreign Service Officers, government employees, or people seeking government employment. So we did a lot of that. We did security briefings for newcomers to the Embassy in Manila about locking up and protecting classified material.

We also had special investigations. At that time, in the 1960s, there was a tendency toward homophobia and concerns about homosexuality and aberrant behavior of all kinds, including adultery, fornication, and sexual relationships between people who weren't married to each other. All of these were very important because they were viewed as opening individuals up to vulnerability through black mail and penetration by hostile intelligence people.

We had a whole range of things on the personnel front. We had all of the procedural security matters, such as the security of safes, security violations, and protecting classified material. We had a subordinate post, the Consulate in Cebu. You had to worry about people going back and forth between Manila and Cebu and whether they were carrying classified material on the airplane - all of those kinds of things. We also dealt with the whole range of physical security matters - the safety and security of Embassy buildings and the classified material contained in them. Because of what was going on in the world, in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, demonstrations against the U.S. Embassy were frequent. There were strong nationalist and some communist elements in the Philippines who saw the U.S. - and particularly the involvement of the U.S. military in the Philippines - in very negative terms. They would direct their wrath at the U.S. Embassy. Crowds of

people holding these views would come marching down Roxas Boulevard (formerly Dewey Boulevard), throw materials at the Embassy, and try to break through the gates.

There were two of us: the senior security officer and myself. We divided up the work. We were also responsible for the supervision of security activities and the security of our installations at our posts in Australia and New Zealand. As things turned out, I never became directly involved in that. The other officer handled that.

We also had a guard force of about 100 Filipinos. The Embassy compound itself in Manila, which was in downtown Manila facing Manila Bay, was a large plot of ground, covering, I imagine, four or five acres. What had been the residence of the U.S. Governor General and then the U.S. High Commissioner was now the chancery building housing the Embassy. Across the street from the Embassy - across Roxas Boulevard from it - were offices housing the Agency for International Development (AID)Mission and the offices of the United States Information Service (USIS.) We were responsible for the security of those places, as well.

Then there was the Seafront Compound, a large complex which included apartments, a swimming pool, housing for the Marine Guard Detachment, a commissary and post exchange kind of facility where you could buy food and other essential articles. I think that it was an extension of U.S. military facilities in the Philippines.

My job was to act as the American supervisor of the Filipinos who, in turn, supervised the Filipino guard force and to make sure that they performed their duties on schedule. We had a large Marine Security Guard contingent. My job as the assistant RSO was to make sure that the Marines were doing their job, that schedules were being met, and to handle all of the dealings with the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Marine Security Guard Detachment. In general, there was a whole range of activities which had to do with the physical security of the Embassy.

That situation changed rather rapidly. I arrived in Manila at the end of February, 1965. In about May, 1965, we received a message from G. Marvin Gentile, the head of the Office of Security in the Department, saying that the Regional Security Officer in Jakarta, Indonesia, the only American security officer at the post, was going to go on an extended period of home leave. The Department assigned me to the American Embassy in Jakarta to fill in for him on a Temporary Duty (TDY) basis for 30 to 45 days. I was told to report to the Embassy in Jakarta by the middle of June, 1965.

That was not welcome news to my family. Vivian, my wife, was pregnant, probably since about April, 1965. She was not happy about this. The senior Security Officer in Manila was very unhappy about it. He felt that this was really going to weaken his ability to do his job. He didn't want to give me up for that long a period of time. He tried to fight the TDY assignment, but it didn't work. Gentile said, “No, Gillespie is going to Jakarta.”

So I did. That assignment turned out to be a very significant time in many different ways. I arrived in Indonesia, got off the plane, and soon, thereafter, met the Ambassador, Marshall Green. The DCM was Frank Galbraith. The Administrative Officer, to whom I would report, was a long-serving officer named Walker. I can't remember his first name now.

Within days I could see that the situation in Indonesia was extremeldifficult.

Q: When was this?

GILLESPIE: It was June, 1965.

Q: Earlier on we were talking about the situation in Indonesia iSeptember or October, 1965.

GILLESPIE: I can tell you that story. Q: We'll come to that.

GILLESPIE: Yes. What happened was this. Indonesia saw the beginning of the Third World movement. President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Tito of Yugoslavia, Nasser of Egypt, Nehru of India, and others had agreed to hold a conference in Bandung in Indonesia in April, 1955. The Indonesians, and particularly Sukarno, saw themselves as the fathers of the Third World movement and the bastion against “Neo-Colonialism and Imperialism.” Sukarno referred to this as “Nekolim.” We had had an Ambassador who preceded Marshall Green...

Q: Howard P. Jones.

GILLESPIE: Howard Jones. The Jones-Sukarno relationship had become very complicated and very difficult. Ambassador Green arrived in Indonesia in June, 1965. I never knew Howard Jones. I met him briefly but never really knew him. I got to know Marshall Green very well. I can imagine that Jones and Green must have been distinctly different human beings.

Q: I think that Howard Jones was a Christian Scientist who thought the best of everything and everyone, no matter what happened. He was insulted right and left but felt that he would keep relations open, which had its points. However, at the same time, the people serving in the Embassy in Jakarta were in almost open revolt against Ambassador Jones. They felt that we had taken enough crap from Sukarno.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. I guess that Ambassador Green had just recently presented his credentials in Jakarta. He arrived in Jakarta very shortly before I arrived there in 1965. Ambassador Green had his agenda and, I'm sure, he had his instructions, which he had worked out very carefully. If he didn't have instructions, it didn't make much difference because he was going to do what he did anyway. Green had been Consul General in Hong Kong and had worked as a private assistant for Ambassador Joseph Grew in Japan before Pearl Harbor. He was just...

Q: We had a good series of interviews with him in connection with thForeign Service Oral History program.

GILLESPIE: I'll bet they were. So Green was right out there in Indonesia, on the front lines. He didn't miss an opportunity to make his presence known, felt, and understood.

Here I was, the brand new security officer in Jakarta. Now I was in charge of the security unit and was now responsible for it. I had an American secretary, a wonderful woman who had been the secretary of my predecessor. I knew that I was in Jakarta on a temporary basis. I had moved into my predecessor's bungalow. He did not have a family. I took over the car that he had - a jeep with right hand drive.

I found that there was a large Embassy guard force. There were all kinds of things to do. I had some Indonesian assistants, but no American help. There was a good crew of people in the Administrative Section. The Embassy staff seemed to consist of people who really knew what they were doing. The staff was smaller than the staff at the Embassy in Manila. Although I had made a number of contacts in Manila, it turned out that the General Services Officer (GSO) in the Embassy in Jakarta was Robert Blackburn, a very dear friend of my brother-in-law. Bob was a good friend of my wife's brother. So that was a point of contact. I got into an international bridge playing group.

There was a young political officer whose knowledge of “Bahasa Indonesia” the Indonesian language was nearly perfect. His name was Franz Misch. Franz and his wife, Mary, do play readings with all kinds of people. I like to read plays, so I got involved with them very quickly.

Things were going along on the work front very well. I knew that this was a temporary assignment and wouldn't be a big deal. Well, I had been there for about three weeks when we had a message from the Department. The man whose place I had taken on a temporary basis had been direct-transferred to Brussels, Belgium, as the supervisory

RSO. The Department did not have a replacement for him in sight, so it was decided that “Gillespie will stay in Indonesia indefinitely,” until a permanent replacement is sent to Jakarta.

This news brought no happiness to my family in Manila, as you can imagine! My pregnant wife was unhappy. The supervisory security officer in Manila was very unhappy. The Administrative Counselor and his wife in Manila, who had become really close friends with my wife, was not happy on my wife's behalf, on the regional security officer's behalf, and on Embassy Manila's behalf. However, there was nothing to do about it, because in July, just as this was happening, someone decided to burn the Indian Embassy in Jakarta, which was very close to our Embassy. At that time we didn't talk about terrorism, but at that time there was a terrorist attack on the Indian Embassy in Jakarta.

Ambassador Green called me in and said, “What's going on here? What are our vulnerabilities and why is this happening?” He added, “It looks as if you are going to be around here for a while. I would appreciate it if you would just consider yourself my security officer, lock, stock, and barrel, until we get this situation straightened out.” I said, “Yes, sir.”

Frank Galbraith, the DCM, was the sweetest, most wonderful guy you could ask for. He was extremely supportive and said, “Any time you want to talk about this security situation, come and see me. This is getting really serious. A lot of things are happening here.”

We had Consulates in Medan Sumatra and Surabaya East Java. A couple of weeks later a mob attacked our Consulate in Surabaya. They threw a bomb at it, tried to burn it, and did things like that. The CIA officer who was there in the Consulate in Surabaya more or less kept the place from burning. I flew down to Surabaya to check into the situation, and we decided that we were going to have to withdraw people from the Consulate because we didn't know what was going to happen. All sorts of things were going on. A big, Soviet cruiser, Sverdlovsk class, came into Tanjung Priok, the harbor in Jakarta.

Q: Hadn't Khrushchev given this cruiser to Indonesia?

GILLESPIE: Exactly.

Q: It's still there, I think.

GILLESPIE: Yes, it's probably still sitting there - in the mud, iTanjung Priok.

Q: Who was doing all of this? At this point Sukarno represented thleFort..

GILLESPIE: Yes!

Q: He was the President of Indonesia. How did we figure out...?

GILLESPIE: Well, of course, Indonesia was engaged in what they called “konfrontasi,” a confrontation, with Malaysia, Singapore, and the formerly British states, territories, and protectorates in Borneo - Sarawak, Brunei, and British North BorneMy office was a Regional Security Office. My responsibilities included Malaysia and the Consulate General in the British Colony of Singapore.

It happened that just before or just after this bombing there was a bombing incident involving our Consulate General in Singapore. I think that a bomb was placed near it but didn't go off. I was told to go up to Singapore. Well, to get from Jakarta to Singapore at that time was about like going from Cairo, Egypt to Tel Aviv, Israel at the height of that confrontation. I was not supposed to use the same passport. I had to go to Bangkok, Thailand. It was really complicated, but I did that. I went up to Singapore and investigated the attempted bombing of the Consulate General and prepared a report on it. While I was in Singapore, I was instructed to go to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to check out the Embassy there, and make sure that everything was ready and that the Embassy was prepared for any problems. So part of the activity going on in Indonesia was driven by the confrontation of Malaysia.

I don't remember exactly why the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Jakarta occurred. It may have been the result of something that someone in India had done or not done. It could also have been, of course, that there really were strong, ethnic tensions in Indonesia itself. There was the tension with the Chinese community, whose extent we later learned of, in every sense of that word - the animosities and the strains. The Indian element of the population of Indonesia...

Q: Were also shopkeepers.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Economically, they were very important and they stood out. So for whatever reason - it'll probably come back to me at some point - a bomb was also exploded at the Indian Consulate in Surabaya, early in the morning. There was the bomb placed near the American Consulate General in Singapore. So all of these things were going on in July and August, 1965. Things were tense.

Ambassador Green was really focused on what he wanted to do, and how he wanted to try to manage the Indonesian-American relationship. That put him on a very clear course. He stood very firmly for these things. He didn't confront Sukarno or the Indonesians, but he didn't take any guff on anything.

Ed Masters was the Political Counselor at the time. I don't knowhether you've met him.

Q: Yes, I know him, and Bob Martens a political officer in Jakarta athat time.

GILLESPIE: And Bob Martens. The Chief of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Station there was Hugh Tovar, who later was Chief of Station in Bangkok. In my view he was an extremely competent fellow. From my vantage point this was a team effort at the American Embassy in Jakarta. I had been in the Foreign Service for all of four or five months. I was truly the new kid on the block.

There were some very strange things going on. We thought that we had been penetrated by hostile intelligence services. We had a technical security inspection and found some radio emissions coming out of the secure or sensitive areas of the Embassy.

Q: You're talking about electronic “bugs” (concealed listening devices.) We were basically thinking that these had been placed there by the Soviets?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Electronic bugs placed by the Soviets.

Q: The Soviets were big on doing that.

GILLESPIE: Sure, they were very big. As far as we were concerned and from my vantage point, they were obviously in bed with Sukarno. That was it. Obviously, it was much more complex than that, but that was the impression that one had. We went through a process of trying to beef up security around the Embassy compound. We put barbed wire in places where there had never been any before. We did a number of things after these incidents occurred. We devoted a lot of time and effort to physical security.

We burned much of our classified material, starting in August, just because of what had happened, primarily in Surabaya. We had tremendous amounts of classified paper. To mention a sort of funny note, I had the Marine Guards burning classified material out in a driveway. None of us noted that a couple of the antennas from the radio transmitter were strung up high above where we were burning material. We managed to burn through the antennas and cut out Embassy communications for a few hours. The communicators had to go back up and string new wires. You should remember to look overhead when you do an emergency burning. Had it been a real emergency, we would have been in real trouble. Fortunately, we were able to deal with the problem.

We did all of these things and got things more or less in shape, because we didn't know what was going to happen. We thought that there could be problems. I wanted to leave the

Embassy in Jakarta clean, when I eventually left it, and in good shape for whoever took over as Security Officer.

Finally, we got the word - I guess it must have been in early September, 1965, that I could go back to the Embassy in the Philippines. I planned to leave Jakarta on the morning of October 1.

Q: Wonderful timing!

GILLESPIE: I remember that someone - the Personnel Officer, I think - had invited me to dinner the night of September 30. I went to this dinner the night of September 30 in my jeep and then drove home. I had my bags out, ready to leave the next morning. I had an appointment on October 1 to say goodbye to Ambassador Green. The Embassy opened early there - about 7:30 AM - and I think that my appointment was for 7:45 AM. I was going to shake hands with Ambassador Green and DCM Frank Galbraith and then was going to get on the plane and go back to Manila, be with my wife and family, and get back to a normal life.

Well, about 2:00 or 3:00 AM something woke me up. There were loud noises and lots of light. I went to the window of my bedroom. I had the air conditioning on, because it was hot outside. I turned off the air conditioning so that I could hear. What I heard was gunfire - no question about it. I looked out the window and saw a dark figure silhouetted against the sky, holding something, with light coming out the end of it. It was somebody standing up and shooting into a yard, about four houses away from me. That was the home of General Pandjaitan, who, as it turned out, was one of the seven generals killed that night, along with his family members and others. The bodies of the generals were taken out into the countryside and dumped in a well on a military base. All sorts of things happened in connection with this.

I think that two doors down from me, in the opposite direction, lived a U.S. Air Force captain from the Attache Office. We got in touch - I don't know whether it was by radio

or by phone. Nothing had happened in Jakarta as whole. There was no tension at that moment. The captain asked, “Are you going in to the Embassy now?” I think that I said, “I'm going to wait until it's light and find out what's going on.”

So we started to call around a little by phone. Clearly, something was happening. We arrived at the Embassy at about 5:30 AM. I think that I drove my jeep, and the captain came with me. Ambassador Green must have come to the Embassy at around 6:30 or 7:00 AM. I vividly remember that his secretary was Virginia Richardson. Virginia, the Ambassador, and I stood around there saying, “Sure, you're going to say goodbye to the Ambassador this morning,” and, “Sure, you're going to get on an airplane, Mr. Security Officer. You're here! Tear up those tickets.”

We had a Defense Attache - I think he was from the Army. He had been in the Bataan Death March in the Philippines in April, 1942. He was extremely well connected. Initially, he was our primary source of information on what was going on.

These events were the opening gambit of a move by the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), aimed, as it turned out, at unseating President Sukarno. They were turning against Sukarno.

Q: There was a feeling that Sukarno was behind the coup d'etat.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Why was he doing this? There was a man named D. N. Aidit, the secretary general of the PKI - the operating head of the party, whatever his title was. My primary Indonesian contact was a colonel in the Indonesian Army, who was responsible for the security of Jakarta. It wasn't right away, but it was within a short period of time, as this situation began to unfold, that he broadcast over the radio in opposition to Sukarno and in support of the PKI at this point. I have not tried to go back and look at notes I had on these developments - or even to refresh my memory very much. Maybe I should have.

Anyway, the situation was that the Presidential Palace guard was penetrated by people who were either operating at Sukarno's direction or at the instance of others in opposition to Sukarno. The seven Indonesian Army generals were killed. I may not have the sequence of events exactly right, but the city of Jakarta was put under a state of siege, martial law, by the Indonesian Army. Curfews were established, and fighting was going on, as it turned out, between troops under General Soeharto and the supporters of the PKI coup d'#tat. The Siliwangi Division was the primary element concerned in fighting the communists. It had been brought in from outside the Jakarta-Bandung area to put down or otherwise deal with a rebellion by other troops whose leadership was not totally clear at the time.

There was tremendous tension and gunfire in the city of Jakarta at this time. This was actually the first time that I had had bullets come so close to me that they might have hit me. The Embassy went on a more or less complete wartime footing. Eventually, all of the American dependents were evacuated - all the family members were sent away. For a period of a few months we in the Embassy were under siege while this whole situation played itself out.

Q: Normally, the Security Officer is the man to be in contact with the local troops and police to secure the Embassy, to make sure that it is neutral ground.

GILLESPIE: Well, this was the case. I tried to get hold of the Indonesian Army colonel, who was my major contact. It turned out that he was among those involved in the uprising. He was on the other side. So I had to deal with a couple of lesser lights in the Indonesian Army. However, they arranged to send troops. At one point we weren't exactly sure whose troops they really were - whether they were going to keep us in or guard us and in what way. So it really wasn't totally clear. We were in touch with the Indonesian Foreign Ministry. I would go along to the Ministry with the Political Officers to discuss the situation

at that time. I can't remember whether I went along with Bob Martens or Ed Masters. Whoever it was, we were doing all the normal things there.

We were in touch with the people in the British Embassy, which had been burned out in 1963, with the Australians, and with others. We were all trying to figure out what was going on. Eventually - and this was all within two or three days - we all moved into the Embassy, including the Ambassador and the DCM. They started out, saying that they were going to take turns - one night on and one night off. However, they wound up by both staying in the Embassy with a small team of Political and Economic officers, communicators, CIA officers, Defense Attache officers, and a couple of people from the Administrative Section. Bob Blackburn and I basically moved into the Embassy and lived there for a period of several weeks. Our meals were either prepared at the Embassy, or, while she was still in the country, Mrs. Green had meals sent in for us. So we did this kind of thing.

From my vantage point it was confusing. I wasn't sure of the situation. All I knew was that it appeared that we had a very serious threat, first of all to our people - our personnel. We weren't sure what would happen out where they lived. There was an Agency for International Development (AID) compound near the airport, close to the scene of some of the coup activity. We tried to take steps to protect that area. We had Indonesian guards who seemed to be willing and able to help us. It seemed that the authorities who actually held power were extremely tense. At times they seemed to give the appearance of acting in an unfriendly way. They were very serious all the time. Nonetheless, they seemed to take very seriously their responsibility to protect us. So the Indonesian guards that we had, guarded us. There were some demonstrations during the day, but they were quickly put down, because I don't think that the Indonesian authorities wanted any demonstrations in the street because they didn't know what was going on. There was some real shooting going on elsewhere.

Q: However, essentially, the area you were dealing with had beetaken over by Soeharto's military and civilian supporters.

GILLESPIE: Yes. What had happened was that the troops from the Siliwangi Division, from the West Java headquarters in Bandung, really did not speak the language used in Jakarta. They did not speak the national language Indonesian. They spoke Sundanese. They were brought into Jakarta. This was a large unit. I remember that Franz Misch and I, with DCM Galbraith's approval, went out one evening to see where these troops were and to try to make contact with them. Franz spoke Indonesian, and I was going to drive. We got through two road blocks and finally talked briefly to an officer, who told us that we couldn't go any farther. So we came back to the Embassy. Troops from the Siliwangi Division were all over Jakarta and had put on some kind of distinctive markings - I think white armbands, if nothing else - to distinguish themselves from the other troops. There actually were firefights between opposing troops going on - not so much in downtown Jakarta but in the outskirts of the city, out toward the roads leading to Bandung and Bogor.

There was a lot going on. The Embassy's ability to know what was going on seemed to me to be somewhat limited. Everybody was trying to find out what was happening. As I said, the Army Attache seemed to be in the best position to find out what was going on.

During all of this Ambassador Green was both active and frustrated, to some extent. However, he ran the Embassy very firmly throughout this period. I remember some of this frustration. We got into the habit, while we were living in the Embassy, of meeting together at 4:30 or 5:00 PM to review what had happened that day. That would then move into a cocktail hour. I remember that he asked me to make drinks at about 6:00 or 7:00 PM. Then we'd have dinner together. I was very much a junior officer, but the senior people included me. I think that my price of admission was to make the drinks. Then, Marshall Green is an absolute nut on bridge. We played bridge every night, if I remember correctly. Bob Blackburn was also a very good bridge player. I forget who the fourth man was, but there were four of us who played.

By about November, 1965, the situation was beginning to calm down, although terrible things were happening out in the countryside. There were a lot of murders and

assassination of the Chinese element. People were blaming different people for what was going on. By this time the Department had identified someone to come in as Security Officer, so I took my leave from Jakarta.

During this time jobs became blurred and confused. A lot of different things were happening. The DCM would say to the General Services Officer (GSO), “Bob, would you talk to someone and find out what's going on?” Then he would ask someone in the Political Section to prepare the telegram reporting what the GSO had found out. He did the same thing to me. He would say, “Tony, you have contacts here. I'd like you to take your Security Officer hat off and find out what's going on from the people you know. Let's figure it out.” So that's probably where I began to see other things going on beside the security part of the situation.

I left Jakarta in November, 1965.

Q: What did we do about the AID personnel?

GILLESPIE: The AID Mission had been shut down. There was an AID compound. We had other official Americans living there. However, AID had not been active in Indonesia from about 1963 or 1964. AID still “owned” this compound.

There were a number of interesting things going on. One of the things that I had to do, as did all of the other Embassy officers, was to count the counterpart funds, which were kept in a secure area in the Embassy. I think that there were hundreds and hundreds of millions of rupiahs, local Indonesian currency, which, I later learned, became part of the Exchange Stabilization Fund. However, they couldn't be and shouldn't have been moved out. There was a tremendous black market rate in a depreciating and devaluing currency. It really was rather weird. That was all a result of previous AID activities in Indonesia. There was all of this Indonesian currency held in the Embassy. It was a treasure trove of currency. Every so often - perhaps once a month - we were supposed to report that we had counted it. This was a joke, because you just couldn't count the quantity of money there. You could

say that it said, on the outside of a box, that it contained five million rupiahs and you said that it appeared that the box had not been tampered with. The seal was still on the box. So that's what you checked - boxes of money. The boxes could have contained tissue paper for all we knew. So that is what we had to do. It was funny. Those were fascinating times.

The Hotel Indonesia became the center point for the foreign community during some of the really tense moments - probably the first two weeks of October, 1965. The foreign community included Neil Sheehan, representing The New York Times, who had been sent down from Vietnam on R&R (Rest and Recreation.) Or maybe it was his honeymoon. I think that he and Susan had just gotten married. We got to know each other there. I would occasionally stop by the bar at the Hotel Indonesia. That's where I was shot at, as a matter of fact. I was driving into the Hotel Indonesia parking lot. I'm sure that nobody was aiming at me, but they were firing right over my jeep. I could see these lights going over my head. It dawned on me that those were tracer bullets. So I stopped the jeep, got out, and got underneath it, hoping that that would be a safe place. Then, when the shooting stopped, I went into the hotel. The father of the British author John Le Carre was there.

Q: John Le Carre wrote a series of novels on Soviet spies.

GILLESPIE: Neil Sheehan, of course, was the principal New York Times correspondent in Vietnam during the difficult times there. There were a lot of correspondents at the Hotel Indonesia. I had gotten to know some of them. I would stop in at the hotel, and we would exchange notes on what was going on. We used to sit outside on the steps of the Embassy at night, when we were living there. We would turn on these old Zenith Transoceanic radios to get the news from around the world by short wave. I think that we had access to some of the wire service tickers, telexes, and so forth, in addition to the official communications. I remember the Time magazine correspondent was one of these fellows who used to hang out at the Hotel Indonesia. Once we went over Time's reporting of his coverage of the situation in Indonesia, we found out that the editors in New York had taken tremendous liberties with what he had written, changing it substantially.

He was furious. He wanted to know whether we would send a message back through our channels.

Q: Time magazine was notorious for doing this. What Henry Luce owneand publisher of Time wanted was what was printed.

GILLESPIE: That was what was printed. If it didn't sound right the way the reporter wrote it, and if it was necessary to change a fact or two or lead someone down the wrong path - that was okay, as far as Luce was concerned. That's what happened. However, Ambassador Marshall Green said, “No, we won't send a telegram for him, but we'll let him use the diplomatic pouch.” The pouch continued to go out. There was still a Pan American flight leaving Jakarta regularly. We would give an unclassified pouch to the Pan Am pilot to carry out with him. So Ambassador Green let the Time magazine correspondent send out a letter of protest to his editors. The correspondent showed us a copy of his letter. He was really furious with these people. This is kind of an interesting footnote on how far you can trust the press. As an aside here, if we ever give up diplomacy in exchange for CNN (Cable News Network) political reporting and analysis, we'll be in bad shape.

So I ended up going back to the Philippines. Our daughter was born in January, 1966. I had gone back to the Philippines in November. By that time the Philippines had had their presidential election, and a man named Ferdinand Marcos had been elected president. He was the great hope of the Philippines, as you may recall. He was a war hero, had graduated first in his class from law school, and his wife, Imelda, was a beauty queen. There could have been no knight in shining armor greater than Ferdinand Marcos.

Vice President Hubert Humphrey was sent out by President Lyndon Johnson to represent the United States at the inaugural festivities in the Philippines. I was assigned the job of shepherding the Secret Service people who accompanied Vice President Humphrey. The man who headed the advance party of the Secret Service was named Jack Parr. He was the head of the Secret Service detail when President Reagan was shot and wounded in

1981 in Washington. The Secret Service people came to Manila in November, 1965, to prepare for an early December visit by Vice President Humphrey. We had all of them out to our house for Thanksgiving dinner.

My wife took me in again after all of this absence in Jakarta. She was still pregnant. My mother was with us. She had come out for Thanksgiving and Christmas, because we thought that the baby was going to be born in December, 1965.

The visit by Vice President Humphrey was quite a moment. He was everything that you would hope he would be. He said all of those wonderful things about our tradition of democracy and our legacy in the Philippines. It was a very exciting moment for Ambassador William Blair, his wife, Deedah, and all of the Embassy staff.

For some reason I was commandeered to sit in on the drafting of the reporting cables on the meeting between Vice President Humphrey and President Marcos. I think that we were still using “cablese” in those days to make the messages shorter. However, you had to type the cable on a manifold form, with carbons between the various sheets. So, if you made a mistake or wanted to change anything, it was difficult to correct, and you usually had to retype the whole thing. This meant that when you thought that you were all through with a cable, it really had to be proof read carefully. These reporting cables were classified Top Secret, because they involved Vice President Humphrey talking to President Marcos. They were important, and the Vice President was going to approve these cables. So everything had to be perfect. I remember that Dick Usher, who was the Political Counselor in Manila and a very senior officer, came to me and said, “Tony, would you please help us with these cables?”

I may be wrong but I think that Vice President Humphrey's chief of staff was Ted Van Dyke, who later went on to do other things in his own right. Van Dyke was the man who was going to check out all of the arrangements for the Vice President. We worked very closely with him. You're absolutely right. It all had to be perfect. The care and feeding of

senior officials is part of the business, and you want it to be right. I had been in the Foreign Service, at this point, for 10 months. I had just come out of one rather tense situation in Indonesia and was thrown into participating in handling a vice presidential visit. It was quite a remarkable experience for me.

Q: You were getting from Vice President Humphrey and everybody else real sense of optimism about the Philippines.

GILLESPIE: A definite sense of optimism. People felt that this was a wonderful development. The previous President, Diosdado Macapagal had been a fairly decent man, I think, but the Philippines had gone through a terribly violent campaign. There were lots of things going on. There was a tremendous amount of corruption. However, Marcos was seen as a man who could deal with the communist, subversive threat, which, in everybody's view, was real. There seemed to be an incipient revolt, a revolution going on. The Philippines has some 73 languages and dialects and thousands of islands. The idea was to try to bring it together.

It was very important to the security of the U.S. because of the bases, particularly at Clark Field and Subic Bay. The situation in Vietnam and in the Southeast Asian peninsula was getting very nasty and difficult. Sure, the view was that the advent of Marcos as President of the Philippines was a great moment, and we should do everything possible to support him. He was the man for the Philippines. It was believed that he would further consolidate democracy in the Philippines and would deal with the economic situation. Of course, no one could express oral support for Marcos better than Vice President Hubert Humphrey. That was the message which Humphrey delivered: that we were with the Philippines all the way. This was a bright moment for the Philippines. There was a peaceful transfer of power.

Q: What was your impression of Ambassador Blair? You were brand new in the Foreign Service, but by then you had also worked with Ambassador Marshall Green.

GILLESPIE: That's right. I had seen Ambassador Blair briefly before going to Jakarta on temporary duty. I must say that the Blair's could not have been nicer to the people who worked with them. Mrs. Blair may have been a little detached, although I don't think that it was in any cold way. Ambassador Blair was extremely outgoing and pleasant. They both had the habit of going to the Seafront Compound swimming pool on the weekends and sometimes for lunch during the week. They were very accessible. To me that was great. Well, he was the first Ambassador that I had ever met. He was a political appointee, non-career, but I didn't know exactly what that meant. In any case he was just a very nice guy.

When I was getting ready to go to Indonesia on temporary duty, nothing happened. However, when I came back, Ambassador Blair made it a point to have me come up and talk to him about what had gone on in Indonesia and so forth. Ambassador Green and DCM Galbraith had sent nice letters back to the Embassy in Manila, saying that I had done a good job, and so forth.

Ambassador Blair, from what I could see - and I'm trying to think of it as I saw it then - seemed to be well clued in. If I remember correctly, there were tremendous difficulties with a resolution condemning Zionism in the United Nations.

Q: This was the resolution that said “Zionism is racism.”

GILLESPIE: I'm not sure if that was the formulation at the time, buit was at least the precursor of that.

Q: The resolution was being used as a way of sticking it to thUnited States.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Filipino support of our position was not a sure thing. The Philippine foreign minister at the time was antagonistic to our position. I think that he was the Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the Macapagal administration. He was replaced when the Marcos administration came in. There was concern that the Philippines might slip into

this sort of third world, anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist camp. So there were real challenges to our Embassy in the Philippines.

The situation in Vietnam was deteriorating and changing. Remember, there were Filipino troops PHILCAG - Philippine Civic Action Group involved there in Vietnam. So the Embassy had its hands full.

I used to go sailing with Dick Usher, the Political Counselor. Dick had a lovely, wooden, Dragon-class sloop. It was a beautiful boat. He learned that I had sailed as a kid in California and invited me to come out and crew with him. We used to race in Manila Bay. During our time on the boat Dick would talk about the political situation. There may have been another Embassy officer on the boat. The political situation was the meat and potatoes of some of the conversation that was going on. These were some of the issues that we were facing at the time in the Philippines. The question was how could we make sure, first of all during that election campaign - for most of which I wasn't present - and later on, that the Philippines would continue to support our position.

Q: As Security Officer, both before you went to Indonesia on temporary duty and when you came back to the Embassy in Manila, what did you think of the issue of corruption? I'm an old consular hand. When I think of the Philippines, I think of massive corruption throughout the society. Obviously, this becomes a matter of concern to the Security Officer. How did you find the question of corruption?

GILLESPIE: We were worried about this all the time. A new, multi-storied building had been put up for the Consular Section of the Embassy and for other U.S. Government agencies in the Philippines. This building was physically separate from the rest of the Embassy Chancery. My boss, Warren Mcmurray, was really concerned about the possibility of payoffs and suborning people - not so much the Americans but the Filipinos who worked there in the Consular Section.

Q: Americans could be a problem, too.

GILLESPIE: Well, they could also. However, his concern was that, given the nature of Philippine society and the way that the people looked at buying and selling things, corruption would be a real problem. So he was really quite preoccupied with that. He tried to figure out ways to check and double check who was doing what, and that sort of thing. The Consul General, Lou Gleek, was sympathetic to our concern. He also felt that this was a problem. So they worked very closely together to keep track of this situation and what was going on.

The overriding impression that I have of that consular operation was the concern about the physical exposure to demonstrators. Because of the way that it had been constructed and where it was located, the building housing the Consular Section and other agencies was probably the most vulnerable place for someone to throw Molotov cocktails and to have other, really damaging and, perhaps, really harmful things happen to the people working there. We were considerably concerned about that.

I came back to Embassy Manila about Thanksgiving time and stayed through Christmas. Our daughter was born on January 3, 1966. It was about January 15, 1966, that I got word that I was being reassigned and direct transferred to the Embassy in Brussels, Belgium. The officer who had gone from Jakarta to Brussels had been fired from the Foreign Service. The job in Brussels was open, and Marvin Gentile said, “Send Gillespie. He did a good enough job replacing this man in Indonesia. Let's send him.” Here I'd been in the Foreign Service for exactly one year. I came in as an Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO). I was 30 years old. I was told, “You're going to Brussels as the supervisory Security Officer. You'll cover the Benelux countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.”

Q: How did this sit with your wife at this point?

GILLESPIE: She was somewhat of two minds about this because, on the one hand, she hated the Philippines. All of the associations with it had turned out to be bad. I had been gone, she was pregnant, and so on. To be honest with you, while giving all the leeway possible to the Foreign Service system, it hadn't dealt with us very well.

Q: It didn't sound like it.

GILLESPIE: I was in Jakarta in the midst of very exciting things. Every day was full of something different. My wife was up in the Philippines and didn't know what was happening. She didn't know when I was coming back. She had few friends. This was her first Foreign Service post. She had lived overseas and is quite a competent human being. However, although people were nice to her, she couldn't get any detailed information about what was going on.

Jack Lennon, the Admin Counselor, turned out to be the real rock of Gibraltar for her. He would get on the phone to the Embassy in Jakarta. Remember that, in those days, you didn't telephone anywhere, as a matter of general practice. Phones weren't used. Communications were handled by cable, and that took days. On a couple of occasions Lennon called both the Embassy in Jakarta and the Department, saying, “Look, what you're doing to these kids isn't right. It's not the right thing. When can we get it straightened out?” He kept the pressure on. He was afraid, and, I think, probably rightly, that the Department had me down in Indonesia and probably thought, “Why do we need to get somebody down there to replace Gillespie?” He kept the pressure on, and eventually the situation worked out to everybody's satisfaction.

Anyway, when my wife learned that we were going to go to Europe, it was with a great sigh of relief, on the one hand, and then, on the other hand, she thought, “My God, now we've got to pack up.” Remember that we had had a full shipment of household effects when we went to the Philippines. We had rented a house. She was living in a big, barn of a place out in the Makati area outside of Manila. We had a couple of servants to help her,

and so forth. We had to pack everything up. This was a direct transfer - no home leave or anything like that in the States, although we did take a few days en route. Then we flew back to Washington and went off to Brussels, where, once again, we would be setting up a new household. So, her reaction was, on the one hand, a kind of relief, but, on the other hand, “My Gosh, what are we doing here?” And with a new baby who was three months old.

Q: I think that this might be a good point to stop. We'll pick up the next time with your arrival in Brussels as Regional Security Officer in 1966.

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Today is September 22, 1995. This is a continuation of the interviewith Ambassador Tony Gillespie. Okay, Tony, you're in Brussels.

GILLESPIE: We made a stop on the way to Brussels. I think that it was really important - at least for me. I think I mentioned that I had been in the Foreign Service for just over a year. I had come into the Foreign Service as a Security Officer. I was direct transferred to Brussels, with consultations en route in Washington.

My first meetings in Washington were with Marvin Gentile, the head of the Office of Security, and his staff. What I learned there was something that I hadn't mentioned before but had reinforced for me in Washington.

The DCM in Jakarta, Frank Galbraith, seconded by Ambassador Marshall Green, had written two evaluations of my temporary duty there. One of them was in the form of a cable from Ambassador Green to Ambassador Blair in Manila, repeated for the information of Marvin Gentile in Washington. The other one was a more complete Foreign Service evaluation. I think that it may have been a memorandum. Galbraith had written it, and Ambassador Green appended some remarks to it. Both of them were really quite laudatory about my work at the Embassy in Jakarta during this period of temporary duty. Galbraith

in particular, both in writing and in conversation, said, “Look, you've really participated in all of this crisis we've had here. You've been an active member of the Embassy team as a Security Officer. I really think that you ought to keep your eyes open for opportunities in the Foreign Service beyond the security area. If you ever want to do that, I'll support you.”

Well, that got back to Marvin Gentile in the Office of Security. Gentile's reaction was, “Look, I know that you had taken the exams to come into the Foreign Service and you came into the security area. My view of that is, the more ex-Security Officers we have in the Foreign Service who understand the security business and what we're trying to do, the better off we'll all be.” He continued, “I just want you to know that if you have an opportunity to move beyond security into administration or other areas, you'll have my support. Just don't 'cut my legs off.' Let me know what's happening.”

Q: That was very far-sighted of him.

GILLESPIE: Yes, I thought so. Of course, I took this as a verpositive development.

The next appointment for me in Washington was to consult with the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR), and particularly the Executive Office of the bureau, EUR/EX. I didn't know very much about Brussels, but what I quickly learned was that we had, not one Embassy, but at that point two Missions. We had the Embassy accredited to Belgium and we had the U.S. Mission to the European Community, or USEC. It had just undergone a name change, because the Community itself had been renamed about that time. I found that I was not going to just another place like the Philippines but rather to a place where there were two Ambassadors, two DCMs, and so forth.

Q: And then there was our Mission to North Atlantic TreatOrganization (NATO.)

GILLESPIE: No, that came later. The big change for me came when NATO moved from Paris to Brussels. I met Robert Brewster - later Ambassador Robert Brewster, who was the Executive Director of EUR, and his deputy, Victor Dikeos. It turned out that Dikeos himself

was an admin generalist. He had been the Administrative Counselor at the Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, earlier. However, he had also started out in the Foreign Service as a Security Officer. He had branched out and had become an Foreign Service Officer through the “lateral entry” process. Vic took me very much under his wing. We got to know each other very well and later on, as you will see, he was my boss on two occasions.

I started to learn much more about what I would need to know as the Supervisory Regional Security Officer. I would be responsible for the two Embassies in Brussels. I would have the Embassy in The Hague (Netherlands), the Consulates General in Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Netherlands), and the Embassy in Luxembourg in my area of responsibility. So I picked up a lot there from Brewster, Dikeos, and their team, as well as from the new group of security people that I was dealing with, who covered Europe instead of Asia. So they got me off on the road.

However, even then I began to learn that there was an officer called the Under Secretary for Management, called “O” in those days and now called “M.” The Under Secretary for Management at the time was Idar Rimestad. He was something of a legend in the Foreign Service.

Q: He had an attention span of 30 seconds, or something like that.

GILLESPIE: Yes. So there was the Rimestad crew. And then, if my memory serves me, they followed a very traditional administrative and management approach. The idea was to get the resources the Department needs - no matter what you have to do to get them. We were going through constant issues and questions about our administrative support for other agencies and reimbursement for those things. I began to see how complex this process was.

The complexity was further compounded because even then, in the mid-1960s, I began to learn that there were people with different ideas. There were Foreign Service Officers who had come in through the examination process who had early stage MBAs (Master's

degrees in Business Administration), who had studied business. They were coming into the Foreign Service and wondered why the State Department managed itself in certain ways. A name that was kind of up in the lights at that time, if I remember correctly, was Tom Stern. New management techniques were coming into vogue. The Harvard Business School and the Harvard Business Review were...

Q: Tom Stern had studied at Syracuse University.

GILLESPIE: Yes, but the point here was that they were introducing things like sensitivity training and behavioral kinds of activity in management. As it turned out, this was anathema to some of the administrators and to some of the security people. Much to my chagrin then, but to my later benefit, I kind of leaned in that direction. I kind of liked some of that stuff because it led back to some of the industrial psychology concepts that I had studied as an undergraduate at UCLA.In any event I went off to Europe with that kind of thing in my mind. The name of John Rooney, Congressman John Rooney, Chairman of the House Appropriations Sub- Committee on the State Department first really entered my vocabulary.

Q: He was a Congressman from Brooklyn.

GILLESPIE: A Brooklyn Congressman who really was the individual who literally controlled the State Department's funding. There was no question about it. It was he - no sub-committee, no committee, no chairman - just Congressman John Rooney who really controlled the Department's funding.

However, I learned that another influential Congressman was Wayne Hayes. Hayes didn't try to deal with the whole Department, but he controlled the budget of the Office of Foreign Building Operations (FBO) in some fashion. So I learned that these two names, Rooney and Hayes, were extremely important to the lifeblood, that is the funding, of the State Department, the Foreign Service, and our Embassies abroad.

Q: Congressman Wayne Hayes was from Ohio.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. He was from Ohio. So I went off to Brussels. The reason that I learned this is that I learned from Dikeos and from Gentile and his people that Brussels was a very popular place. I was told, “You can expect visits from members of Congress. You saw some Executive Branch people out in the Philippines. However, you're going to see members of Congress, and you're the Security Officer. You make darned sure that they're taken care of in whatever way they need to be taken care of. Take your lead from the Assistant Secretary for Administration,” and so forth. The Assistant Secretary for Administration was a fellow whose name escapes me. He just died in 1995 - Frank Somebody. I can't think of it. It will come later, I'm sure. He was a very nice man. He had never been in the Foreign Service. He was a political appointee but had been in the job for years. Unlike today's political appointees, jobs like these were not in and out, short term appointments.

In any event, we arrived in Brussels. There I found that the Ambassador to Belgium was a career officer - Ridgeway B. Knight. The DCM was John McSweeney, another career officer. The Administrative Counselor, Ken Linde, was a career officer and a very nice fellow.

The Security Office was in a mess. The fellow whom I replaced had neglected a lot of the detailed work. That may have been one of the reasons why he had not lasted in the job or the Foreign Service, because he was actually relieved and let go from the service.

Then I found that there was a man named John Tuthill, who was thAmbassador to the European Community.

Q: He is known as Jack Tuthill.

GILLESPIE: He was a career officer. There was a change there and Bob Schaetzel took his place. However, this happened fairly quickly. In any event, I arrived and took up

residence in Brussels in April, 1966. The first event I had to deal with - I'd actually been told about it in Washington - was the NATO Ministerial Meeting, which moved from capital to capital in those days. It was going to be held in Brussels and hosted by the Belgians in May or June, 1966.

Q: At this point NATO Headquarters were in Paris.

GILLESPIE: NATO Headquarters were in Paris. The North Atlantic Council met there. The military headquarters, the true military arm of NATO, was in Paris, although the military forces, for the most part, were in Germany. NATO was quite an establishment. It had been in Paris since the organization was created in 1949. However, Gen Charles De Gaulle had been President of France since 1958. In 1966 De Gaulle decided that France would no longer be the site of NATO Headquarters. The French representatives at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, with Secretary of State Dean Rusk present, made it clear that it would no longer be an active member of NATO. It would remain a member of the North Atlantic Council but would no longer have its troops under NATO command. That was the basic French position.

This was basically an eviction notice to NATO. To this day I have never gone back to find out the details of why this happened, but here I was, a brand new Security Officer, at post for a couple of months. The Secretary of State was attending the North Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels, with his Executive Secretariat(S/S)staff and all of his support people. As we know, when the Secretary of State travels, he leaves someone in charge as Acting Secretary of State. However, the Secretary of State remains the Secretary and is never away from the job, just as our President does not leave the Presidency, wherever he goes. I had to deal with all of this stuff at a post which is not used to having the Secretary of State visit very often. This was the little American Embassy in Brussels, and it was quite a job supporting the Secretary of State.

That was quite an introduction to me. I fairly quickly found out what I thought that I was supposed to do. Apparently, all of that worked pretty well. Then I learned that the whole NATO operation was going to move to Brussels. Belgium offered to be the host, and the other members of NATO accepted the offer. They figured out how they were going to do it all. The idea was that NATO would be out of France by 1968 and established somewhere else, within a couple of years. This set off bells and whistles and set gears to turning, as you can imagine, in the capitals of the 15 countries which belonged to NATO, including Washington and, most assuredly, Brussels. That put a whole new twist on my assignment to Brussels. The European Community, which I was going to get to know, became a secondary consideration at this time. The move of NATO Headquarters became an overriding priority - getting it done and done right.

As an aside here, I might mention my introduction to Brussels and Ambassador Ridgeway Knight, who was my new, ultimate boss. The Security Officer reported to the Administrative Counselor, who headed what was called a Joint Administrative Office, because there are two Missions in Brussels. In fact, we served two masters, but there was one master, i.e., Ambassador who was the supervisor of the other Ambassador. That is, Ridgeway Knight, the Ambassador to Belgium, was my ultimate boss.

Ridgeway Knight is a person for whom my admiration will never cease and never diminish. He is the son of an American artist who took up residence in France at about the beginning of the 20th century. Ridgeway was raised in France and attended school there. He came back to the United States and went through a very traditional, establishment educational process. Although his father was somewhat Bohemian in behavior, I think that he was quite conventional in his views. I think that Ridgeway Knight's father went through a resuscitation in the art world in the 1980s. He has disappeared from vogue since then.

In any event Ambassador Ridgeway Knight joined the Foreign Service, if I remember correctly, just before World War II broke out. He worked as a wine merchant in France before he joined the Foreign Service, so he has had business experience. As I learned

later, he is a true connoisseur of wines and knows the wine business up one side and down the other. Some time after he joined the Foreign Service, he was attached to the staff of Robert D. Murphy, Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the American Embassy in Vichy [The capital of the part of France not occupied by the Germans during World War II], Consul General in Algiers, and a long-time Foreign Service Officer who had a distinguished career. He received a commission in the U.S. Army and joined the staff of General Mark Clark in connection with the invasion of North Africa by the Allies in November, 1942. He was subsequently involved in much of the political-military activity taking place in the Mediterranean area, including North Africa and the Italian campaign, where Gen Clark commanded the Allied Fifth Army Group.

One of Ridgeway's favorite stories, which he didn't tell often, but which was very moving, was when he and Murphy went with Clark to a very secret meeting West of Algiers just before the Allied landing in North Africa in November, 1942. Ridgeway and Gen Clark traveled to Algeria by submarine and then landed by rubber boat. Murphy, who was then Consul General in Algiers, traveled to the site by automobile. Knight was given the job of guarding the boats - making sure that they would be there to take them back out again when the meeting was over. I guess the meetings were with various French military officers.

Q: Actually, the meetings were with French officers appointed by thVichy Government.

GILLESPIE: Knight would tell this story and then show the scars on the back of his hand where he kept himself awake by stubbing burning cigarettes on his hands. They had to wait for many, many hours, and it was very difficult to stay awake on this occasion.

I have to describe Ridgeway Knight because he is not physically very big, although he has a tremendous presence. He speaks English with an accent which is not truly French, but you know that he is not a native speaker of English. It is soft English, and he is a very

soft-spoken man. I watched him work both within our own bureaucracy and with foreign governments. He was smooth as silk and tough as nails. He was my ideal of a diplomat.

In any case the next big event was the move of NATO to Belgium. This triggered an explosion in our Mission in Belgium in every way. Ken Lindy, the Administrative Counselor in the Embassy in Brussels, was told very nicely that he was going to be replaced. If I recall correctly, the administrative people in the Department of State in the U.S. dealt with moving a couple of hundred State Department and other agency civilian employees. In view of the larger number of military people who were going to move into Brussels, many of whom were American, the State Department decided that it had to beef up the Embassy staff in Brussels. Ken Linde was replaced by Ralph Scarritt.

When I arrived in Brussels, the Administrative Section consisted of Ken Lindy, a General Services Officer (GSO), a Personnel Officer, a Budget and Fiscal Officer, a Security Officer, and the chief of the Communications Unit. That was about all. Within about a year, by some time in 1967, there was an Administrative Counselor, Ralph Scarritt, a very senior officer - in today's system, a Minister-Counselor - who had been the Director of Foreign Building Operations (FBO); a deputy Administrative Counselor, Michael Conlin, a very capable man; three Americans in the GSO office; and I, who was replaced in 1967 by a more senior Security Officer, Bob McCarthy. I must say that it was all handled pretty smoothly.

Ralph Scarritt, whom I met before I met Bob McCarthy, had apparently talked to various people about me. The way they handled the situation is that they told me, “All right, you've been the supervisory Regional Security Officer, covering this region for about a year. What we propose is that McCarthy will come in as supervisory RSO. However, you will be fully responsible for the U.S. aspect of the NATO move to Brussels. Your job is all of the security arrangements for the transfer of what is called the 'U.S. Mission to Regional Organizations' - USRO - to Brussels. It will be the U.S. Mission to NATO, as it was in the past in Paris.” That's how the Department took care of the various egos and all of the other

personal matters associated with this move. I turned the supervisory security officer job to McCarthy, but I still had a large piece of the action.

Q: What were the security requirements involved? In the first place you would think that when you think of security in Brussels, it is almost an oxymoron. After all, Brussels is not Beirut. What were the security problems in 1966-1967?

GILLESPIE: The problem involved espionage. We were involved in counter-espionage. At the time, two doors down from our Chancery in Brussels, was the USSR Commercial Mission to Belgium. It is now the Russian Commercial Mission to Belgium. There was no doubt that 80-90% of the inhabitants of that large building were either from the KGB, the principal Soviet civilian intelligence organization, or the GRU Soviet military intelligence organization. At that time in Belgium we had a very substantial intelligence presence. We had very close liaison contact with the Belgian authorities, who had their own intelligence service. This was a time when technical penetration and the recruitment of intelligence personnel loomed very large. At that time terrorism was really not a factor. However, violent demonstrations were a problem, because, even as I arrived in Brussels in 1966, the Belgian and other European Leftist groups and others were violently opposed to what was going on in Southeast Asia. President Lyndon Johnson was sharply criticized for this. Remember the slogan, “Hey, Hey, LBJ, How many kids did you kill today?”

One of my jobs as the RSO was to deal with not weekly but almost biweekly demonstrations directed at one or another of our installations, either the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Mission to the European Community, or an American-owned bank. For example, the Chase Manhattan Bank or another American bank would have people marching around in front of it. The United States Information Service (USIS) would bring in speakers to lecture at the University of Louvain or the University of Brussels to speak. They were denied platforms. Official American Government spokespersons were denied permission to speak by these demonstrators. I had to deal with this problem and tell people whether it was safe or not to speak on various occasions.

However, the real concern about the NATO move, in addition to arranging for both offices and people to be housed right and taken care of, was how to deal with the Eastern Europeans (the Soviets, the East Germans, and all of the others from the Warsaw Pact). They were directing their penetration devices at us, as well as at the Belgians, Germans, and French. Remember, NATO had a lot of shared secrets. This was a major problem and challenge. Without going into any of the detail, I had already had my first major counter-intelligence investigation. This involved someone associated with our communications activities, who had been in Eastern Europe. It seems that, in this case, he had been approached by the Hungarian intelligence service, and might have been recruited. In this case the Hungarians were probably acting for the KGB.

In fact, that case put me into direct contact with our own intelligence and counter-intelligence community in a very intense and deep way. Through them I developed my own contacts with the Belgian intelligence, counter-intelligence, and police authorities. This later turned out to be both interesting and useful as we handled the NATO move. I had studied French in high school. As I think I told you earlier, I think that my language aptitude is pretty good. By the time I'd been in Brussels about six months my French was really quite workable. I was able to go off and deal on my own in French. I have to tell you that this was considered a little rare for a U.S. Security Officer. Unless a Security Officer was already bilingual by reason of birth or upbringing, there weren't very many linguistically qualified RSOs.

Q: This is true, and it represents almost a social class matter. I assume that your coming out of a military intelligence background must have enhanced your credentials. I mean that you were able to work that much more easily with our military and NATO military people. How did you find NATO and also Belgian security?

GILLESPIE: Belgian security was always suspect. The whole Belgian scene, even at the time of World War II, had left itself open to infiltration. The fact was that there were a lot of Belgians who were willing to swing one way or the other for a lot of different reasons.

Our U.S. intelligence people would say, in terms of the Belgians, “Be careful with this, be careful with that. You can reveal this, but don't reveal that.” They gave me that kind of guidance.NATO security was very interesting. You may recall what the situation was before the Cold War ended. We had a full-time U.S. Security Officer seconded to the chief of NATO security. The U.S. officer at this particular time was John Abidian. He was a Foreign Service Officer who had been a professional Security Officer for his whole career. Abidian, I guess, was of Armenian extraction. He spoke several languages: French, German, and, I think, Russian. He was highly qualified in that sense and was a very experienced Security Officer. As soon as the NATO move started to develop, I developed a routine. I would get on the Trans-European Express (TEE) every Tuesday and Thursday morning. I should say that we lived in the vicinity of the battlefield at Waterloo, South of Brussels. I would take a local train from Waterloo to the Gare Centrale, Central Station, change to the TEE, and make the run down to Paris, which took about two hours. I would get to Paris about 9:30 AM. Then I would work all day with our own U.S. people, especially a woman named Mary Mulloy Carmichael. She had been appointed the coordinator for the NATO move by Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, our representative to NATO at the time.

Ambassador Cleveland was a political appointee who had been the Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs. He was a very big name in the field of public administration in the U.S. He had been the Dean of the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University. He was a staunch Democrat and even today, almost 30 years later, is active in the Aspen Institute. He went on to become the President of the University of Hawaii and of the University of Minnesota. Really, he was a super gentleman and very much an intellectual.

I would go down to Paris in the way I described previously and meet with our people there every Tuesday and Thursday. I would get on the train and return home in the evening. I would spend about five hours to and from by the time I did it. I would put in about a four or five hour day in Paris, planning and preparing the security aspects of the NATO move. Some of the questions we dealt with included: how were we going to move the

documents? Would we bring the old safes up to Brussels? Would we get new safes from the U.S.? What building arrangements did we need? A new headquarters was being designed for NATO. We needed to figure out what we needed in terms of space and how this space should be configured. It really was a major planning process covering the physical move of equipment, people, and activities from one place to a new environment.

I got deeply involved, both in the U.S. security side of it and how this fit into the NATO security side, how they meshed, and how this would go over in the Belgian context. I spent a year and a half involved, not exclusively, but heavily, on such matters. So that's how we worked it out with the security people. There was a lot of detail to it, and I spent a lot of time on it.

Q: What did you think of the intelligence people from the Soviet bloc countries? What were some of the threats and actions taken? They must have had to beef up their operation, too. When they learned of this NATO move, they probably had to send a whole bunch of people down to deal with this.

GILLESPIE: Yes. At the time we thought that they saw this, both on the basis of our speculation, as well as something more than speculation, as a tremendous opportunity. We were all quite convinced of this. NATO Headquarters is a very complex organization, leaving aside our U.S. Mission to NATO and our own Embassy. It was complex then and is even more so today, I believe. NATO has what is called an international staff. That staff consists of nationals of member states of NATO who are seconded by their governments or are employed directly by NATO, with the approval of the respective governments. John Abidian, for example, the head of NATO Security, retained all of his U.S. Government employment rights but had been, in effect, seconded by the U.S. Government to this organization. We do the same thing with the United Nations and other international organizations.I suspect that there were about 1,000 - and maybe more - NATO employees in Paris who were French nationals or nationals of third countries employed by NATO as an organization. They had no direct connection with their own, national governments. We

knew that not all of those employees would move to Belgium when NATO Headquarters moved. That meant that there would be an employment boom in Brussels for the Belgians. So this was not only going to strain the employment market, because these positions were at white collar level, clerical type people, semi-professional or professional. There were also all kinds of custodial employees, janitors, cleaners, and people like that. As we knew that the Eastern Bloc intelligence services used a blanket approach, as they had when I was in Germany with U.S. Army Intelligence eight years earlier, we figured that they would try to penetrate the NATO Headquarters staff by recruiting Belgians and others to be employees of the headquarters organization and to do all of the things that low-level, intelligence agents do. For example, spotting people for recruitment, keeping track of people's movements, trying to pick up documents, learning the procedures, and doing all of those kinds of things. This would then allow the higher level recruiters or planners to figure out how they were going to penetrate or obtain top level secrets - including, in the case of NATO, real military secrets.

We might make a short digression here. Diplomatic secrets are something of an oxymoron. Secrecy in the world of diplomacy is a very transitory thing. A secret lasts until you want to make it public, hopefully under your own control. However, military secrets, including plans for a weapon and “what will you do if” kind of thing, are all supposed to be safeguarded. I think that those were some of the principal targets of the Eastern Bloc intelligence services.

So our concern was, first, how would NATO Headquarters be effective? The U.S. tended to take a paternalistic, or at least avuncular view, of an organization like NATO. We did not want to see NATO secrets compromised. We did not want to see problems of that kind. We knew that the Eastern Bloc intelligence organizations would be very actively engaged in trying to penetrate NATO. Every indication was that they were doing exactly that. The Soviet Trade Mission just a couple of doors down from our Embassy was increasing in size. There were indications that agents were entering Belgium under non- official cover. My contacts among the Belgians were concerned about this problem, some of them quite

vocally worried that Belgians were going to become involved in this kind of thing. This meant that there had to be a lot of security checks made and a lot of care exercised. In the security process there isn't a whole lot that you can do, after a certain point, to maintain security.

There was also concern about physical security. That is, how could we lock all of the doors and such matters. By that time these matters were fairly mechanical. Our Mission to NATO had its own communications facilities. We had moved to what is called the on-line encryption system. That is, it was no longer necessary to encode messages off-line as much as had been the practice in the past. In the Philippines the Embassy was still using relatively old-fashioned machine devices. You would type out a cable on paper. That would go to the communications center where a communications operator would copy the communication in the clear - that is, not in encrypted form on tape, much as if you were copying a teletype message. Then you would run that tape through one machine which handled the encryption process. You would get a tape from the other side of the machine, which was the encrypted message. Then the encrypted message was transmitted over radio facilities.

In Brussels I found that, by the time NATO was getting ready to move out of Paris, basically all communications were on-line. That is, you took the telegram, typed it into a machine, and the message went out automatically. You didn't have to do all of the other processing previously required. Eventually, a few years later, we went to a process involving Optical Character Recognition [OCR] technology.

The buildup of the Embassy in Brussels was substantial. The pending arrival of the U.S. Mission to NATO was a major development. Interestingly enough, I learned that the U.S. Mission to the European Community was also growing. There were people in that Mission from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Department of Agriculture who were not like the usual Agricultural Attaches from the Foreign Agricultural Service, as we call it. You had a lot of different people there, such as from the Treasury Department.

To deal with the problems which came up, we developed a cadre of junior officers - on their first or second tours in the Foreign Service. I'd just like to mention this because it was significant to me and may have been to others. We ended up with about two dozen officers on their first or second tour. In those days each Ambassador had a staff aide, and there were junior officers in the Political, Economic, Administrative, and Consular Sections. They were doing rotational tours serving relatively brief periods of a few months in each of the Embassy Sections. I was only on my second tour and really hadn't had much of a full, first tour.

I was tremendously fortunate because both the Mission management - that is, the DCM, Jack McSweeney, and the Ambassador to Belgium, Ridgeway Knight, plus the people from the U.S. Mission to the European Community (USEC), included me in everything. I was included at the professional level, because I was the Security Officer, and they included me as well with these other, junior officers. We would get together as junior officers. I forget whose idea it was - it may have been Harry Blaney's, who was very much of an activist. He used to say, “This is an opportunity we can't afford to miss. We have a lot going on here.” As a group we came up with the idea of trying to figure out what the Foreign Service did - and how it did it. Our device was to go to Ambassador Knight and say, “Would you tell us what you do?” He responded positively and, in effect, helped us begin a process which lasted for the four years I spent in Brussels and into which each new group of junior officers fit.

To manage this process, monthly meetings were held in the homes of the various, junior officers with one of the senior officers of one or more of the Missions in Brussels. By the time I got through the process we had spent evenings, or afternoons, with the three Chiefs of Mission and the three Deputy Chiefs of Mission. At one time, I think, we had had the three Ambassadors and the three Ministers (because each DCM had to be a Minister). Then, in the NATO Mission we had what I saw for the first time, a Minister for Political Affairs and a Minister for Defense Affairs, who was the senior Department of Defense

(DOD) official. If I remember correctly, we had 16 Counselors of Embassy - the heads of the various Political, Economic, Administrative, and Consular Sections. We also had the chiefs of the various offices of the intelligence community, in addition to the FAA people. We would go around, either at a dinner or a dessert kind of affair. By the time I left Brussels, we had met with each of these senior officers. Often it was an evening affair, but it was all business. We asked them, “What do you do, what does your organization do, why are you assigned here, and how can I fit into this?” It was one of the most wonderful experience that I had ever.

Q: That's done so seldom in the Foreign Service.

GILLESPIE: One marvelous thing about Ambassador Ridgeway Knight is that he chose to do this. He said, “Let's do two things at once.” He didn't say it that simply. He probably said, “Well, I think that we can accomplish two objectives here. Why don't we do this? Why don't you come to the Residence two or three weeks from now? While we're talking about what the Ambassador does, let me expose you to some of the wines that I think Foreign Service Officers ought to know.” He set up a very formal and very precise kind of wine tasting which went on while we were talking about what Ambassadors do. He then carried that forward with us, as junior officers. He said, “Any time you have a question about wine, please feel free to call on me.” This was a really superb experience.

As an aside on a non-work kind of activity, at this point in the 1960s your spouse was rated at the same time as a Foreign Service Officer. Part of the efficiency report system was a LIMITED OFFICIAL USE portion which talked about your representational abilities and your family. The family was a big deal. We hadn't gotten into this in Asia, because I hadn't been around enough, and the situation was anomalous.

In Belgium I found that there were people who were called, quite frankly, European wives. The European wives were a force because the young and even not so young American wives were not always in total harmony with the European wives. Many of the American

wives did not speak French with the appropriate accent, even if they spoke the language fluently. They often did not know European culture very well. We had a few British, Eastern European, and Germanic or Teutonic wives. I found out a lot about this from my own experience as Security Officer and from my own wife. Mrs. Colette Knight, who was French, was aware of these differences and managed them beautifully. She took care of all of these wives, particularly the newer, if not younger, American Foreign Service wives. I think she had her moments with some of her French sisters. She probably said, “Look, lay off these kids. They're new to the diplomatic game and they have to do their job.” It would not have been her style to say it that way, but I think that that is what she did.

This led to some tough moments. Handling that kind of thing was noeasy.

Q: What sort of tough moments? You're saying that there were two sort of disparate groups - the American wives and the European wives. What were some of the problems?

GILLESPIE: One of the problems was that if the supervisor's wife and the subordinate's wife were not from the same group, there was often no support system from top to bottom. There was sometimes resentment from bottom to top. Communications were often not clear. Sometimes there was implicit and sometimes explicit criticism - in both directions. I'm not talking about my own wife, but as Security Officer you hear a lot of this stuff. I had a very competent American secretary who picked up a lot of this. An American wife might say, “Why do I have to do this?” You would hear, “What is this French woman telling me to do about representing the United States of America?” Or, “Why do I have to entertain in this fashion and wear this kind of clothes or do this?”

I didn't mention that in Indonesia Lisa Green, Ambassador Marshall Green's dear wife, a lovely woman, was of the “older than old” school. She gave teas in Jakarta in non-air-conditioned rooms at which the women were expected not only to wear stockings, hats, gloves, and a cocktail dress, but were told, “If you're driving your car on the streets of

Jakarta, and the wife of a senior officer in the Embassy is driving ahead of you, don't pass her." That was just part of the behavioral patterns.

In Brussels that same sort of spirit continued to exist. However, in this case there was a sort of ethnic dimension to it. That is, the French wives, or the French-born wives would say, "Well, these uncouth American girls from wherever - whether they'd studied at Wellesley, Stanford, or UCLA - don't know how to act or how to do certain things." There was very little sense of collegiality or belonging to a single group. There were exceptions on both sides. There were cases of exceptionally bad behavior, and there was some exceptionally good behavior. Mrs. Knight worked very hard, as did Mrs. McSweeney, the wife of the DCM, to try to keep relations between the two groups as smooth as possible.

However, it was a very real problem. This was a time when, without any question, wives told their husbands, "That young officer in your Section is no good because his wife doesn't wear the right hat." That could get translated into your efficiency report - not as, "She wears the wrong hat," but as, "He's no damned good." This didn't happen to me.

Q: Frankly, did you have problems with any of the wives in the security area?

GILLESPIE: Not in the strictest sense. I soon learned that there were at least two kinds of Security Officers. There was what I would call, in my lexicon, the professional Security Officer who had a sense of what the mission of the U.S. State Department and the Foreign Service were and how an effort was being made to accomplish that mission in the particular environment. The security function was there to support that effort - to make it happen. Security was important in its own right, but only insofar as it was supporting United States interests and efforts. You tried to gear everything to that.

Then there were other Security Officers who said, "Yes, that's true, but it really doesn't make any difference what the mission is. The security function is a series of commandments: thou shalt not spy, thou shalt not deal with spies, thou shalt not fornicate, thou shalt not have sexual relations with members of the same sex, thou shalt not drink

too much. Or, thou may drink as much as thou damned well please, but thou had better not show it." I ran into Security Officers like that in the security business. For them it was just as important to nail a fornicator as it was to get somebody who might be ready to hand over secret weapons to the communists.

Obviously, I put myself in the first category. There werAmbassadors who were in the second category.

Q: There were a lot of moral judgments made.

GILLESPIE: A lot of moral judgments. So, to return to your question about the wives, there were some security people who were concerned about the views of some of the wives, particularly the farther East their origins were. At that time there weren't many wives of Eastern European origin because we had policies against all of that. There were some wives who were perceived to be vulnerable because they were foreign born. However, I never had any of those problems.

There was some adultery, there were affairs going on. In those cases either the DCM or the Ambassador would ask the Security Officer - me, in this case - "What are you going to do about that?" My answer usually was, "If I may say so, sir, I don't see any direct relationship between this situation and the security of this post. I think that you have a personnel problem." We were not as neat in those days as we are now, where we try to draw a line. Management's responsibilities are pretty broad, but today we don't think that post management should really delve into medical problems and other conditions like these in quite the same way as used to be the case.

Q: This used to be true in the consular field. If we had an American citizen who was causing trouble, the idea was to get him some place where somebody could give him a shot. He would go limp, and we would put him on a plane and send him back to the United States. Really, that was the way to deal with it, but you can't do that any more.

GILLESPIE: Yes, but the spousal question was much more of a cultural, social, and Foreign Service problem. I don't know whether this exists today or not.

Q: While we're on the security question, I'm trying to get into the record how we used to look at these matters. What about alcoholism? Was it a problem, and what did we do about it?

GILLESPIE: Sure. Alcoholism was a problem, or, rather, an incipient or latent problem. What could you do about it? At that time it was all dealt with on a completely ad hoc basis. There was no institutional approach to it. In the mid-1960s the Medical Division of the State Department and, I think, probably into the mid-1970s, to my knowledge, did not have any specific approach to the problem of alcoholism. At that time people were not entirely sure what alcoholism was. Today we all say that it is a disease, but then it wasn't necessarily regarded as such - or maybe that was revolutionary thought.

I can give you my personal experience. The dependents of the staff of the Embassy in Saigon were evacuated out of Vietnam in 1965, not long before I left the Embassy in Manila to go to Jakarta on temporary duty. They were evacuated out of Vietnam and Cambodia - wherever they had been. They were still in Thailand. Manila was set up as a safe haven, which meant that dependents of members of the staff in Vietnam and Cambodia could live there. As I was getting ready to leave the Philippines for Brussels in the spring of 1966, the Security Office in the Embassy in Manila was getting a lot of complaints of drunken, lewd, and lascivious behavior and fornication on the part of married dependents and older children, or minor dependents of personnel assigned to Vietnam and Cambodia in Manila. This was becoming a serious management issue. The first inclination was to point to the Security Office in the Embassy in Manila. People said, “Oh, that's a security problem.” Well, I don't know how they really worked it out in the Philippines because, thank goodness, I got out of there in time.

It never reached that stage in Brussels. We had somewhat similar instances in Brussels. Everybody enjoyed going to parties, and different people party in different ways. I had one or more of the Deputy Chiefs of Mission and supervisory officers call me in or come to see me and say that they were worried about so and so, because he was drinking too much. They asked whether this was a security problem, and did I want to do anything about it? They asked how I would deal with that. We looked at each such case on its merits and treated it on an ad hoc basis.

Q: There was no Standard Operating Procedure SOP.

GILLESPIE: The assumption was that excessive use of alcohol, if not a disqualifying condition, was certainly a warning light and needed to be looked at, because that meant that it was a point of vulnerability to recruitment by another country's espionage service if they knew about the condition. We always looked at the situation and tried to decide how to deal with it.In two particular cases in Brussels we had young-ish, not junior, Foreign Service Officers who were having really serious alcohol problems. Eventually, the tours of both of these officers were curtailed, and they were sent back to the U.S. This was done on the basis of a combination of personal suitability and security grounds. Suitability was the big word. Security always wanted to dump into the suitability basket everything that it could, because we didn't want to get into the Alger Hiss kind of situations where we would have to lift somebody's security clearance. We always wanted the Personnel people to take the case and relieve us. We would give them everything that we had and hope that they would deal with it. That's basically what we did with these two cases that I was involved in. These were personal tragedies, but they show the kinds of things that we had to deal with on occasion.

Q: What about some of the other kinds of cases that were so important, involving homosexuality, for example, during that particular period in the Foreign Service?

GILLESPIE: Sure. I learned when I came into security affairs that there were two sorts of secret or highly sensitive, investigative units - or maybe it was one unit with two parts in the State Department security system. One of these units had to do with real, honest to God, counterintelligence. My later friend and boss, Victor Dikeos, had been the Regional Security Officer in Poland when, I think, the first real Foreign Service Officer penetration case was discovered. That was where he made his mark.

Q: This involved a Foreign Service Officer who had a Polish girfriend...

GILLESPIE: And he was blackmailed by an Eastern Bloc intelligence service and ended up in a U.S. jail. Dikeos had managed that whole investigation on the scene. So this particular unit dealt with cases like that.

Either a separate unit or a part of the same unit dealt with nothing but homosexuality. I remember the first time that when I went into that unit and talked to two or three of the people assigned, I felt almost intimidated myself. They were briefing me on the unit's activities. There were special code words for the special kinds of investigations. These were formal investigations. We use a code word system today on the distribution of sensitive policy messages. We have “NODIS,” which means “no distribution outside the State Department.” This security unit also used “NODIS CHEROKEE,” “NODIS GREEN,” and so forth, which meant that the message dealt with a particular subject. It could involve China, and so forth. In any event, in the security investigative area, communications were labeled. I don't remember quite what the label was, but a certain label meant that it concerned a homosexuality case. The whole idea was to develop enough information so that you could confront the individual and get him to agree that he was a homosexual, if that was what you believed. Then he would resign from the Foreign Service. If he didn't resign, you would pull his security clearance.

I was never directly involved with one of these cases. I don't know what it was really like to handle one. However, that confrontation technique as described to me was to face these

people, get them to admit what they were, and then they would leave the Foreign Service. That was the whole idea.

Q: Did you have any guidelines concerning people you were looking for? For example, did you look for somebody who was unmarried, talked with a lisp, were overinterested in art, or something like that?

GILLESPIE: That was part of the briefing that I received. It was a little more precise than that, although those factors were never far away, because I think that people believed in those days, as they probably have for some time, that in terms of our ethic in the United States, you could probably identify people like that. They were visible if you just looked hard enough. What I was told when I was briefed in this unit was that I should try to find out whether there were any homosexual hangouts e.g., nightclubs at my post. If I heard of anybody from our mission who hung out at these places, I should immediately take the following steps: find out what they were doing at one of these hangouts. Was the allegation really true? If it was true, they told me, notify us, and we'll open a case on the person concerned. So that was it, and this unit would undertake follow-up action.

When you did a background investigation on someone or you were updating an investigation on a Foreign Service Officer - let's say, age 43 or 44 - who had never been married, you were enjoined to make sure that you asked all the right questions which would cover what we today would call sexual orientation. The question might be asked, “Why isn't he married?” “Does he go out with women?” Really subtle, penetrating questions like that - just as we used to ask questions about drinking. When I first started in as a Security Officer, questions on drug use were practically never asked. I left the security area in the late 1960s when questions about drugs became very important.

Investigations of homosexuality were very important matters. They were big deals. I don't think that the homosexuality issue would ever have loomed large in most people's minds. However, for many of them it was a distasteful area.

Q: The theory behind these investigations, as I understood it, was not that we were so much against homosexuality as such. However, homosexuals were regarded as prime targets for blackmail.

GILLESPIE: That was the theory. The theory was exactly as has been stated, I guess, until recently. The idea was that if an individual engages in any behavior which is prohibited by his social or cultural group, and does it surreptitiously - knows that it's wrong - by that very fact he or she is now susceptible to pressure. That was the whole theory of it. Now, I will be very blunt and say that I detected, as a human being talking to other human beings - and this is an intuitive kind of judgment - that there were some people who were firmly and solidly convinced that certain kinds of behavior were not only wrong but abominable. They considered that this kind of behavior should be ferreted out and eradicated. Some of the people holding those views were certainly in the State Department security system at this time. I think that they gravitated to charges of this kind.

Q: You came from a Catholic school background. Although my name is Kennedy, I'm not a Catholic, but I remember going to the security office in 1955. This was when Scott MacLeod was chief of the Office of Security, and it was a difficult time. I noticed that a considerable number of the people in that office had a middle initial of X. This usually meant that they came from a solid Catholic background as X was most likely the initial for Xavier," and they had been named after St. Francis Xavier. I thought that these people probably felt that you were abnormal if you had the lights on when you engaged in a sexual act with your wife.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. I experienced something very much like that in two ways. First, I soon learned, through fairly extensive contacts and investigations, that most, if not all Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) case officers were graduates of Notre Dame, Villanova, or other Catholic universities, and had been in the Marine Corps more often than not. Some of them were ex-military and West Point graduates, and, as you say, their middle initials were often X for Xavier. If you looked carefully, you would find a lot of

Irish-American Catholics. This is a terrible over-generalization of a very complex issue. However, the same thing was true of the officer who was my superior at the Embassy in Brussels. He was Robert J. McCarthy, an “Irishman” from South Boston. His wife's name was Kathleen. I don't remember her maiden name, but it was probably McSomething or O'Something. She was a lovely woman. Bob McCarthy was precisely the kind of person I've described above. In his view, if you were to talk about sexual intercourse, with anything other than a snicker or in a funny way, for example, in man to man talk, then there was probably something wrong with you. If you talked about engaging in sex with the lights on in your room, you were probably deviant also.It was interesting. He was part of a “Mafia” in the security organization that had made it through the Scott MacLeod days. It was a funny mixture of men of Irish and Italian descent who had gotten into one corner of the security organization. Bob, who couldn't have been nicer to me in every possible way, really was part of that group. In his view, our job was to do the investigations, to check the security violations, and to check the locks on the doors and these kinds of things. He would say, “I don't give a damn what relations with the Soviet Union or Belgium are like. That's the job of the Foreign Service. We're the security guys. We do our job, we make sure we know how many investigations we have to do, how many investigations we have completed, including how many pages the reports are, and how many signatures there are on the reports.” This involved a lot of counting. For him that was security. If we had some prominent person coming to town, he would ask, “Have you covered all of the bases? Do you have the right police, and have you done this and that?” That was his approach to security.

Occasionally the Administrative Counselor, who was a very dear friend of McCarthy's and had actually arranged his assignment there, later told me, “Look, Bob's great, but you use him only up to a certain point. Then you can't use him any more because he doesn't know what it's all about.”

Q: I think this is part of what you might have called the social divide in the Foreign Service at that time. Often this attitude could be seen in the Administrative Officer, too. I think that

it's important to get this matter on the record because regular Foreign Service people look on security and sometimes administrative people as people from other ranks, as the British refer to enlisted personnel. They didn't understand the big picture. And the reverse feeling was true. It was unfortunate, because we weren't all playing the same tune. This outlook permeated the Foreign Service.

GILLESPIE: I think that it permeated the Foreign Service. I will never forget the first time that somebody told me about Ellis Briggs retired Ambassador and legendary Foreign Service Officer. He once wrote, “We give these lower class guys our pants to iron and pretty soon they're wearing them.” He was talking about the “Wristonization” program, the introduction or intake of Civil Service people into the Foreign Service in the 1950s through other than the written examination process. He referred particularly to the administrative people who were beginning actually to have some control over the resources and who were telling Ambassadors and Assistant Secretaries, “You can do this, and you can't do that.”

I felt that very strongly when I came into the Foreign Service. There was still a Foreign Service Staff corps. It was quite a remarkable situation, in that, in Brussels, for example, the Administrative Counselor and his deputy were Foreign Service Officers at this point. However, they did not come in through the written examination process. The General Services Officer (GSO), a man named Clint Lauderdale, was looked on with a certain awe because he had come into the Foreign Service as an FSO, through the written examination process and had chosen administration as a field.

Q: I had a nice, long interview with Clint.

GILLESPIE: Clint was considered very special for that reason and, I think, with a certain amount of regard from superiors, as well as from peers and subordinates, because of that. You're right. There was this feeling. The Personnel Officer in Brussels was a Foreign Service Staff Officer (FSSO), as was the Budget and Fiscal Officer. These

were administrative people who, presumably, were never going to leave the field of administration, and probably were never going to leave the sub-specialty that they were in. The fact that they were experts in that field, super efficient and competent and all those good things, in fact meant that, as you say, they were other ranks.

I think that this situation must have begun to change a little, or my own career would not have gone the way it did. The change must have been under way. The system was opening up.

Q: We were all changing. Our society was changing, and the Foreign Service was no longer what it used to be. For many of us this was a fine thing because the old system was a little bit precious.

GILLESPIE: In any event we in the security system were concerned about excessive drinking. You raised that subject, and incidents come up of Foreign Service Officers in various functions - political, economic, consular, administrative, and security - who embarrassed themselves with alcohol. It really was quite remarkable. Sometimes they would get away with it. No one would say or do anything. At other times the “wrath of God” would come down on their heads.

Q: There was no standard policy. It really was up to the supervisors, I think. Sometimes the supervisors would not bring this matter to the attention of the people who were drinking too much.

GILLESPIE: I think that we talk a lot about management and administration in the Foreign Service. Those are two very important things, and some people distinguish between them. Maybe they ought to be differentiated. One of the things that I think we don't spend a lot of time on, as part of our development process, is this thing called supervision.

For example, say that I have one, two, or three people who work for me. I guess that my generation in the Foreign Service grew up with the idea - and I learned this in the military

service - that you have an obligation to exercise good supervision, good supervisory authority over these people. You don't have to get into their lives, but be sure that they know what their job is and watch their performance. If you see something affecting their performance, don't expect them to make a change automatically. You have to get in there and intervene, one way or another, to get the job done.

While I was Ambassador in Chile, a certain situation developed. The chief psychiatrist of the Medical Division came down to discuss it with us. My DCM, my Administrative Counselor, the chief psychiatrist, and I were discussing this case. The psychiatrist basically repeated what I just said. He said, “Look, our primary obligation is to do the work that we are sent here to do. Human beings are terribly important, and we must never lose sight of them. However, our job is to get the work done. When you, as supervisors, see that the individual concerned is unable to do his job adequately, to your standards, then you must intervene. Now, how you intervene and what you do may vary with the circumstances, but you've got to do it. You can't ignore it.”

Well, my observation is that in large measure during my early years in the Foreign Service that was not the rule. We didn't do anything to tell the people who were supervisors then or who were going to be supervisors later on that, first, this is their responsibility and, secondly, here are some ways to do that. We talked about management, objectives, goals, and things like that, which are all very important. We were concerned about resources and policy and had all sorts of neat systems to deal with this. Operations analysis is another area that they got me into later. But we didn't get down to specific cases like, for example, “your secretary is coming in late or she's not answering the phone right.” Or, alternatively, your secretary presents the best image that your organization has. Have you ever told her how good she is, which is the other side of the coin? What have you done to reinforce and spread that kind of behavior? We never got into that.

It was interesting because I think that I was a little ahead of the game. The Number Two admin guy in Brussels had come out of the finance and budget and fiscal area. As a result

of his own intellect, efforts, and interest, because he did not have a lot of formal education, he probably knew as much about why De Gaulle had thrown NATO out of France as anybody else in the Embassy, including the Ambassador. He spoke Portuguese and Spanish. As he was coming to Belgium, he had decided to learn French. He was in his middle 40s. He wasn't a kid. He was an old FSO-2 - today's Counselor - and therefore a senior officer. However, he subscribed to the Harvard Business Review, he followed all of this management stuff, theory X, theory Y, directives...

Q: Straight down...?

GILLESPIE: Yes, and all that kind of stuff. One of his ideas of supervision was to take me and two or three others out to lunch, in the course of which we would take about these things. He would say, “Tony, you've got five Belgians, you've got an American secretary, and so forth. How do you deal with them?”

So we were getting that attitude through his style of supervision. He was drawing us into this sort of thing. Then, as I said, Bob Brewster was the Executive Director of the Bureau of European Affairs. Brewster was quite a figure. He had a big operation, big scope, big bureau, and lots of money. He had to devote a lot of time to Brussels.

He would frequently visit the Embassy. We would get into discussions about management and supervision and how you handle these things - what's important, and so forth. I was very fortunate to run into this crew.

Q: Did you find any aftermath left over from the Crockett days? William J. Crockett came in as Under Secretary of State for Administration during the Johnson administration. He came in with a lot of ideas and shook things up for a while. He was not received very enthusiastically by the Foreign Service establishment. Idar Rimestad replaced him. He was almost the antithesis of Crockett. However, Crockett is still remembered because he was almost the first person to come in and shake the place up. You mentioned Tom Stern.

GILLESPIE: Tom was a Crockett prot#g#.

Q: He was one of the Crockett people.

GILLESPIE: And Michael J. Conlin had not been a direct Crockett person, but he had obviously been influenced by that attitude. That is the “two strain” thing that I kind of referred to earlier. I found that tendency when I first came back to the Department and met other than security people. There were these two strains of management or administration, which were still in vogue. There was still this kind of talk. I can't recall the details now, but, as I said, we'd have luncheons in Brussels, at which we had discussions of this kind. The Administrative Counselor, Ralph Scarritt, knew how to manage the politics of that situation. He was always on good terms with Idar Rimestad. I wish I could think of the name of his Assistant Secretary for Administration. However, Scarritt would always keep those bases covered. He knew Congressman Rooney, he knew Congressman Hayes, he knew all of those people. However, his inclination was to go the Crockett way, in the sense of more modern management. He gave his deputy a lot of scope to work out those kinds of approaches, which we did.

I left the security field in 1967, when the NATO move was completed. I shifted from security to be the Administrative Officer at the U.S. Mission to NATO, but still reporting back to Ralph Scarritt and Michael Conlin. We were all moving in that modern management direction. That was very much a part of what I was hearing and learning about.

Then I learned that Bob Brewster, the Executive Director in the Bureau of European Affairs, and his deputy, Vic Dikeos, were also very much of that same persuasion. So you're right. Crockett's views still...

Q: These were the young Turks.

GILLESPIE: The young Turks. These were the people with more modern outlooks. They were very quick studies, so they could participate in this effort. If they were talking to Idar Rimestad, they knew how to handle that. They weren't cynical, but they knew what to do. They knew how to deal with Congress. They used to say to themselves, “Look, we've got to cut through some of these old ways, make this system move more efficiently, and look to the future.” This was very important. So Crockett's effect was real but, as you say, his outlook had not prospered during his time as Under Secretary of State for Administration in that sense.

The other thing that happened in Brussels which was fascinating was that, because the pressure was on, probably four or five junior FSO's, who thought that they were never going to do administrative work, were assigned to this large administrative office because of the move of NATO Headquarters to Brussels. We had a young officer at the time, Frank Hodsoll, who had come into the Foreign Service from the Sullivan and Cromwell law firm in New York. He was sure that he was going to be an Ambassador on his second tour in the Foreign Service.

Q: Of course. This had been John Foster Dulles' law firm.

GILLESPIE: Dulles' law firm. Frank was quickly grabbed out of the Political Section, assigned to the Administrative Section, and was told, “Go out and get 130 housing units.” He was brand new in the Foreign Service, on his first tour overseas, with nothing but the A-100 course at the Foreign Service Institute behind him. He had no administrative training - nothing like that at all. It turned out that, for whatever reason, he came knocking on my door and said, “I need some help. You're kind of my age. Can you give me a hand?” We started to talk about the Foreign Service regulations. I said, “This is thForeign Affairs Manual (FAM), and this is what you have to look at.” Then I got Michael Conlin, who was, of course, very actively interested in this. I said, “You know, you guys really have to talk. So that worked out, and Frank Hodsoll ended up setting up a unit with 15 people in it which went out and got 130 housing units. He satisfied as many people as you can think

of, so that, by a certain date, when the trains came in from France and the cars came in from Paris, everybody had a house to go to. These houses were furnished, had plumbing, the lights were on, the phones were in, and here was this young FSO who had done it. He was thrown the ball, caught it, and ran with it. We had a lot of cases like that. It was exciting.

However, it seems to me that it says something about the quality of the people we had. We had others who refused to play this game. We had FSO's who said, “No, I did not come in here to deal with janitor services. What do you mean?” Waterdale, to whom this particular officer was reporting, said, “Well, maybe you should just not have come into the Foreign Service at all if you can't be a little flexible.” This officer said, “Well, I don't have to put up with this. I'm going to talk to the Ambassador.” Waterdale said, “Well, go right ahead.” And Ambassador Knight said, “How soon do you want to leave the Foreign Service, because that's your choice.” The man left the Foreign Service a year later. He just couldn't take it. It wasn't what he wanted.

Q: Perhaps just as well. The weeding out process works.

GILLESPIE: Of course, and it has to. However, in that sense, Foreign Service friendships which I developed in Brussels have really matured, because several of us were together for more than a couple of years, at a very exciting time. It also was a time when the U.S. dollar was strong, we were all starting families at the same time, and our children grew up together.

Q: Three children was the size of the normal family.

GILLESPIE: We were rich beyond our dreams, in a material sense, because our housing was provided in Brussels. Brussels is so middle class that it hurts, but it has just enough at the top end, so that we knew which were the good restaurants, we could go to them, we

could afford the baby sitters, and we could do all of these things. These were the halcyon days of that aspect of diplomacy.

Furthermore, the diplomatic community was booming. I can vividly remember that, before the NATO move was announced, it looked as if Brussels was going to be a quiet place. But once the move was announced, all of a sudden the young diplomats in Brussels were all agog and excited and getting to know each other, other diplomats assigned there, and Belgian officials in the Finance Ministry. I had my contacts, some of whom turned out to be very nice people. We introduced them to other diplomats and security and police types. It was really a very pleasant time for us, in that sense. My own move...

Q: Before we go into your own move, at this point had you run intCongressmen Wayne Hayes and John Rooney?

GILLESPIE: Yes, I dealt with them both while I was still the solSecurity Officer.

Q: How did you find them? They were important figures in the foreigaffairs establishment.

GILLESPIE: Congressman Rooney stands out in sharper relief than Congressman Hayes. Rooney came to Brussels, accompanied by the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration. There were probably two or three other members of Congress with him, as well as some Committee staffers. I was told to make absolutely sure that there was an unending supply of Beefeaters Gin available for him. There was a suite for Congressman Rooney and mini-suites or nice rooms for the other members of Congress at the Hotel Louise, or a hotel with a name something like that. This hotel was the biggest, newest, spiffiest hotel in Brussels. The key thing was to make sure that there were at least three bottles of Beefeaters Gin in Congressman Rooney's room. Congressman Rooney was a presence, an August personage when he arrived. The Ambassador went to meet him at the airport. He had a schedule of meetings. I was included in a lunch and a dinner for

Congressman Rooney. However, I stayed on the edges of this visit. I never got too close to this visit.

Physically, Congressman Rooney was a short, balding man who, according to my recollection, was pretty well-spoken. He was not rough or crude in any way but very direct in his observations and comments. He would ask, “Why are you doing this? What are you doing this for? What's this? Why are you doing that? What's happening,” and so forth. There was nothing untoward in all of this that I can recall. I wasn't a part of the late evening conversations, whatever they were...

Q: He drank but he kept his entourage under control.

GILLESPIE: You couldn't call him puritanical, but I don't think thahe was notorious in any way in terms of his behavior.

Q: I've never heard of women being brought in to entertain him. It was just that he was the Grand Pasha as far as the Foreign Service was concerned.

GILLESPIE: And you had better be nice to him. Well, I got into this in greater detail later on during my first tour at the Department of State.

What I remember about Congressman Hayes was that his escort was a young FSO from Ohio, who is now dead. His name was William Dixon Boggs III. Dick Boggs was a Political Officer. I don't know whether it was through family connections or what, but he was a prot#g# of Congressman Hayes. Boggs came to Brussels with Wayne Hayes before the NATO move occurred. We were working with FBO and getting involved in all of these housing arrangements. I vividly remember that there were two secretaries who came to Brussels with Congressman Hayes. I can't remember their names, but they were almost twins. I don't think that they were related, but they looked a lot alike. I learned quickly that they did not need to have typewriters in their rooms. That was not why they were

there. Again, I don't have any knowledge of anything terrible that happened, but these two women were at least adornments and were traveling companions of Congressman Hayes.

Q: Wayne Hayes came a-cropper by having a so-called secretary whdidn't type on his staff.

GILLESPIE: He “met the bridge,” if you recall. She was a dancer froArgentina named Fannie Fox.

Q: It became almost a joke around Washington. He left Congress undea sort of...

GILLESPIE: These two younger women were really rather nice looking. I can remember that. I think that one was named Rita, but I don't remember the other one's name. The two of them went wherever they wanted to go and did whatever they wanted to do. They were at receptions, dinners, luncheons, and things like that. They were always introduced as Congressman Hayes' secretaries.

Dixon Boggs, whom I later got to know very well, married a Belgian woman. He died a few years ago. We got to be pretty good friends. He just had this “grape” fall into his hands and held onto it for a while. Eventually, Congressman Hayes disappeared from the scene, and Dixon continued with his Foreign Service career. Just as an aside, the way things worked in those days, Boggs came to Brussels that one time, probably in 1967 or maybe early in 1968. Lo and behold, in 1969 we learned that William Dixon Boggs was going to be assigned to a newly-established position in the U.S. Mission to NATO. When the Ambassador said, “But I didn't ask for him,” he was told, “Don't worry. Congressman Hayes set this up.” That's just the way it happened. Dixon came out to Brussels. There was some grumbling about what he was doing there, but he kept busy. He created a job where there had been none and he was fine. Those things happened.

Q: You moved over to become Security Officer for the U.S. Mission tNATO?

GILLESPIE: No, I didn't, as a matter of fact. What happened was that part of the deal with Administrative Counselor Ralph Scarritt when this fellow Bob McCarthy came in to take over as Security Officer at the Embassy in Brussels was that I would handle all of the security arrangements for the NATO move. Scarritt told me, “I'm going to call on you, Gillespie, for other, NATO move related activities that may not involve security. I have worked this out with McCarthy, your boss, and with Brewster, our Executive Director in the Bureau of European Affairs. I've worked it out with Marvin Gentile chief of the Department of State Office of Security.” He continued, “If you do a good job, when NATO moves up here, I'll move you out of security and into the Administrative Section, if you're interested.” I said, “That sounds fine to me.”

At that time I wrote a letter, as we used to do in those days, an “OFFICIAL-INFORMAL” letter to Gentile, in which I said, “I just want you to know that this is what Ralph Scarritt has laid out for me.” I gave a copy of this letter to Scarritt and got a nice letter back from Gentile, which said, “Sounds fine to me, Tony. You've done a great job as a security officer. If you continue...” and so forth. He added, “We'll be delighted to have you in general administration because we know you're a friend.”

So that was what happened. I went through the NATO move. Everything worked out very smoothly. I got involved in the housing arrangements and a lot of other things. I became deeply involved, beyond the U.S. Mission to NATO move, with NATO Headquarters construction, financing, and those kinds of things. As it turned out, the U.S. was very interested in those subjects, too - in the international headquarters aspect. We had our own Mission to NATO problems, and then we had the NATO Headquarters arrangements to see to. Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, the U.S. Representative to NATO, had appointed Mary Carmichael Mulloy to see to that move. However, he didn't have an administrative staff of any kind in Paris. He relied fully on the Embassy in Paris for that.Interestingly enough, the Administrative Counselor at the Embassy in Paris had been Administrative Counselor in Manila, John Lennon. Lennon remembered me. So when

I would go down to Paris on my security related trips, I would go to the U.S. Mission to NATO and take care of matters there. Then I'd receive a phone call, “Would you come and see Mr. Lennon?” Lennon would give me material to take back to Ralph Scarritt or would ask me what I thought about various matters and how we were handling this or that. I began to spread beyond security just because it was convenient for everybody. I guess I was able to handle these things.

Anyhow, the upshot was that in 1968, after I'd been a Security Officer for two years - one year completely on my own and the better part of a year working for Bob McCarthy - I received orders which cut my tie to security and assigned me as Administrative Officer to the U.S. Mission to NATO but detailed to the Joint Administrative Office in the United States Embassy in Brussels.

I then had the best of all arrangements in the Foreign Service. I had two Rating Officers and two Reviewing Officers for my efficiency reports. I was part of the administrative structure at the Embassy in Brussels and worked for the DCM and the Permanent Representative at the NATO Mission. I also found that the U.S. military had assigned a senior administrative person as Administrative Officer to the U.S. Mission to NATO to manage the marriage of the State Department civilian and the Defense Department administrative structure.

So there was a very interesting management supervision chemistry in this situation. There were a lot of different people, agencies, and systems coming together. It could all have gone to hell in a hand basket, but we all sort of made it work. It worked rather well. Lieutenant Colonel Jim Soldow was the military person assigned. He was a Lieutenant Colonel, and I think that I was still an FSR-7 [Class 7 Foreign Service Reserve Officer], which is fairly low in grade.

Q: That is about the equivalent of a First Lieutenant.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I was co-located, shared an office suite with him. We had two secretaries, both of whom worked for the Defense Department, but one of whom was assigned to me. His secretary was Peggy Cousins. My secretary was Judy somebody or other. I was the other person in the office. We were the administrative element within the U.S. Mission to NATO. Jim was a peach of a guy. He was a typical military officer from the Adjutant General's Office (AGO.) His professional life had been spent in administrative affairs. He knew authority relationships, knew whom to salute, and whom he didn't have to salute. He knew all of that stuff. Jim knew no foreign languages when he came to Brussels but immediately set out to learn French.

I haven't gone back to check this, but my recollection is that George Vest, the DCM of the U.S. Mission to NATO, may have come up to Brussels with Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, or it may have been somebody else, with Vest taking over the DCM position from that person later on. However, Vest was my DCM. Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, throughout the Johnson administration and into 1969, was the “PermRep,” Permanent Representative, of the U.S. Mission to NATO. You could not have asked for a better boss than George Vest.

Q: George Vest was later Director General of the Foreign Service and one of the nicest guys. I've never heard anything adverse about him at all.

GILLESPIE: He was later appointed a Career Ambassador. Nice or not, he was easygoing and was never in a flap. In any event, Lieutenant Colonel Soldow and Vest agreed on how Soldow and I would divide up the pie in terms of jurisdiction, and I fully agreed with this proposal. Soldow wanted to have his own relationship with the senior officials in the Embassy in the administrative area, because he saw that as being very important. There was a tremendous amount of detailed work to do with NATO Headquarters in the administration and personnel area. They named me as the Mission's representative on the administrative and personnel committee of NATO. Soldow was also on this committee, but I went to all of the meetings, because they were all conducted in French. As I mentioned

before, Soldow did not speak French. It was a lot easier for me to handle this, although it was possible to arrange for translations of the proceedings into English.

That was really a break for me. It got me involved, of course, in the administration of the headquarters of the organization, in addition to personnel matters. That, in turn, led to my involvement in some of the other matters, including budget and finance questions concerning radar, weapons systems, and troops. So I became somewhat of a conduit back to that part of our U.S. Mission as well. This broadened me tremendously.

Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, who was something to behold in action, had come up with a theory, which I always associate with Charles Atlas, called creative tension. You may recall the term, dynamic tension, the advertising slogan associated with Charles Atlas and body building. Cleveland's creative tension idea was as simple as this. Give two people the same assignment to handle and see how they work it out. He had developed this concept while he was the Director of the Maxwell School of Administration at Syracuse University.

Q: President Franklin Roosevelt used this concept extensively.

GILLESPIE: Cleveland probably articulated it in a social science context. Later, during my tour of duty with the U.S. Mission to NATO, I found in the files the monograph which Cleveland had written on creative tension. It explained an awful lot of what was going on.

I'll never forget one day when I was called in by Ambassador Cleveland personally. He said, “I know that your job is not to do certain things but to do other things. However, I like the way you operate. Would you be so good as to look into this matter?” It was something to do with a particular weapons system and its introduction into NATO. I said, “Well, Mr. Ambassador, that's really...” He replied, “I know, but you'd enjoy looking at this. By the way, don't tell anybody else that you're doing it.” Well, I found out that one of my colleagues in the Political Section had been given exactly the same assignment by Ambassador Cleveland. In handling this assignment we ran into each other. I don't know why Cleveland didn't figure out that this would happen, but we figuratively banged

heads at a certain point. I looked at him, and he looked at me. I said to him, “Bob, what are you doing?” He said, “Tony, the Ambassador wants me...” In fact, the Ambassador wanted both of us to do the same thing. So we collaborated on this effort from that point on. We told Ambassador Cleveland about this, and he said, “Well, you see, that's one of the very positive outcomes. The two of you have worked together on this, and I got two people working on it for the price of one! The product is much the better for it.” Anyhow, he laughed about it, but he would do that from time to time. He was a very funny man.

In any event that got me into the field of more general administration, where I learned about procurement and budgeting in the State Department. I learned about the Department of Defense (DOD) side because, when Lieutenant Colonel Soldow would go on leave, I acted on his behalf. When I was away, he handled all of the State Department stuff. George Vest treated us almost interchangeably. A lot of things were starting to happen then, because now we had these periodic, ministerial meetings. At Defense Ministerial meetings we also had experts meetings, we had Under Secretaries of State and deputy ministers of defense meetings, and we had Daniel Patrick Moynihan when he was on the White House staff. Remember that his idea on the Committee on Challenges to a Modern Society was put in the NATO context. This was mainly an environmental project. It was all new and different.

Q: NATO was taking on more than just a military and security role.

GILLESPIE: NATO developed into a political and military alliance. Certainly, in that sense you could underscore the political aspects of certain things. So this was a very exciting time.

Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, DCM George Vest, and Robert Ellsworth. I'm trying to think of whom else I dealt with. We had a change of administrations with the election of President Nixon, and Democrats were out. Bob Schaetzel replaced John Tuthill at USEC [U.S. Mission to the European Community], and John Eisenhower replaced Ridgeway

Knight as Ambassador to Belgium. Some career people were moved. An officer named Timothy Stanley, who happened to be one of the heirs of the Stanley Tool empire, was the Embassy's Minister of Defense Affairs. George Wilson, a political appointee, had been assigned as Minister of Political Affairs. When I got to NATO, Wilson was replaced, interestingly enough, by Larry Eagleburger, later Deputy Secretary and then Secretary of State in the Bush administration. We had a whole raft of people who, I later learned, had very good reputations in European Affairs, Arms Control, and Disarmament. Raymond Garthoff, a true expert in U.S.-Soviet relations, was the Counselor for Political- Military Affairs when the NATO Mission came up to Brussels. Ray Garthoff was a free spirit in every sense of the word. Intellectually, he stretched the boundaries all of the time. He was not a drinker or anything else in a negative sense. However, he would regularly challenge the Ambassador and do all kinds of thing - often with a nice touch.

One anecdote about Garthoff is rather interesting. 1969 was the 20th anniversary of the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty, under which NATO, as an organization, was established. A special NATO meeting was held here in Washington, and the “wise men” of the Common Market and NATO were brought to the U.S. I was given the job in the new position I had of escorting them on Aircraft Tail Number 26000, the VC-137 jet aircraft better known as Air Force One when the President flew in it. Ambassador Cleveland, the DCM of the U.S. Mission to NATO, and I accompanied these high NATO dignitaries to Washington. Ray Garthoff was left in Brussels as the charge d'affaires of the U.S. Mission to NATO and our acting Permanent Representative. Of course, all of the other Permanent Representatives were in Washington, and their respective missions were all in the hands of charges d'affaires. For some reason there was a North Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels while the Permanent Representatives were in Washington. Garthoff wrote up a report on this meeting as a kind of spoof. He reported the statements made by the various people, by nationality. It was a wonderful spoof, which he put in a cable to the Department of State. He actually sent the cable, thinking that it would get laughs.

Well, Ambassador Harlan Cleveland obviously had a threshold of toleration, and this cable went over that threshold. It very nearly got Garthoff fired from his position in Brussels. People who read it on the Seventh Floor of the State Department where the offices of the Secretary and Under Secretary of State were located laughed long and loud. Then I thought, “Don't mention this to Ambassador Cleveland. This will be a very sore point.” Anyway, that was Garthoff - truly, a free spirit. He recovered from this episode. Ambassador Cleveland backed off, and everything turned out to be okay. However, it was a lesson to me that there are limits to how far you can go in the Foreign Service in playing games. You can play games up to a certain point, and then you'd better be careful.

Q: I was told by one of our colleagues that Warren Christopher, at the time of this particular incident, the Deputy Secretary of State, and now the Secretary of State, doesn't have much of a sense of humor as far as telegrams go. His advice was, “Don't be flip.”

GILLESPIE: That's curious, of course, because there was a tradition of telling jokes in Foreign Service cables. My earlier boss in Jakarta, Ambassador Marshall Green, was well known in the Foreign Service for two things - green pencils and puns. In the most serious cable he could find a way to insert a pun. I hope that someone has gone back and collected some of those puns of his. I can recall that during some particularly grim and grisly moments in Jakarta during the Sukarno-PKI crisis Marshall would find a way to turn a phrase. If you looked twice, you might say to yourself, “Oh, oh, the shaggy dog just came into this cable” or, “There's Marshall Green again.”

What this taught me was that whenever you think you have a really bright idea, serious or not, maybe it's best to think about it - to sleep on it - before you do anything with it. Don't get too cautious, but be careful!

There were all kinds of issues coming up in Brussels in August, 1968. I was due for home leave and, of course, that was the time when Soviet tanks appeared in Prague,

Czechoslovakia. I actually had to delay my departure on home leave because our whole Mission to NATO went on alert.

Q: NATO was “cranking up.” No one knew what...

GILLESPIE: We didn't know what was happening. We didn't know where this situation was going to come out. It was scarey and really tense. We didn't know what we were going to do or how we were going to do it. This situation could have led to World War III. I must say that I was fortunate at this time. I've had occasion to work for bosses who say, “Look, I've got resources. I'm going to use them.” We were all given assignments to handle by the DCM and the Ambassador. Of course, 1968 was a presidential election year in the United States. Finally, I had home leave and went home. I think that my family and I traveled on what turned out to be the last scheduled, West to East crossing of the Atlantic by the SS United States. This was in October, 1968 - not a very lovely month. It was a very rough crossing. With my wife and two kids we traveled from New York to Le Havre France. It was a lovely ship, with great service, and all of that. I'm glad we did it. Traveling by ship was part of the old Foreign Service. This doesn't happen very much any more.

The big development in 1968, of course, was the election of Richard Nixon as President of the United States. I had completely missed a visit by Vice President Hubert Humphrey to Europe, which would have been in 1967. Prior to his becoming a candidate for President on the Democratic Party ticket, Humphrey came to Europe. I don't know, Stu, whether this was one of those moments that you look back on. It turned out that during the Humphrey visit in Brussels President Johnson took away the Air Force aircraft that Humphrey was flying it. This had something to do with a fit of pique and anger on the part of President Johnson - directed at Vice President Humphrey.

Q: Probably not being too supportive of Johnson's policy...

GILLESPIE: It may have been something that Humphrey said. You never could be sure. There was Hubert Humphrey, stuck in Brussels. He was supposed to go to Italy from

Brussels. It was really a very tough moment for him. I got involved in this matter because of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) connection in the United States Mission to the European Community (USEC) and the security side of things, including liaison with the Secret Service and so on. Basically, it worked out that the FAA had a plane, a [propeller-driven] DC-6 or DC-7 or something like that. They surreptitiously flew that aircraft into Brussels from wherever it was in Europe and then flew Humphrey down to Italy so that he could meet his schedule. I had had something to do with the Humphrey visit because he had been in The Hague (The Netherlands). He then came to Brussels and was to continue his visit to Europe from there.

There were tremendous demonstrations in Brussels and against Vice President Humphrey over our involvement in Vietnam. I made the cover of Paris-Match because there was a picture of Vice President Humphrey's car with a big egg in the middle of the windshield. I am in the picture, leaning over and trying to clean the egg off. I didn't get hit with anything, but that picture was on the cover of the magazine. Anyway, Humphrey came and went.

The key development was the 1968 presidential election. Nixon won. One of the first stops on President Richard M. Nixon's first trip outside the U.S. was in Brussels. That got to be a very intriguing and interesting series of events. Because of my position as a Security Officer, I was present at events where FSO-7 or FSR-7 officers would not normally be present.

One of these events was one of the most unpleasant moments that I've ever experienced. That was when the advance party for that trip came out to Brussels. The advance party came prior to the inauguration. It consisted of H. R. Haldeman and John Erlichman, the two senior members of the Nixon staff. Haldeman was Nixon's chief of staff, and Erlichman was a counselor to President Nixon. Another member of this group was named Peterson, who was going to be the Director of Personnel in the Nixon White House. Peterson was the chief of the advance party for the Belgium stop.

Anyway, this advance party came to Brussels. I was assigned to Peterson as his control officer and went with him to all of his appointments. We had the three Missions in Brussels at that time. We had Ambassador Cleveland, a Democrat and political appointee, as chief of the U.S. Mission to NATO, and a career officer, Ridgeway Knight, as Ambassador to Brussels. I can't think of the name of the Ambassador to the European Community, who was also a career officer. We all met in the Conference Room at the Embassy in Brussels. The three Chiefs of Mission were sitting together, side by side, at the end of a long, conference table. The three White House people Haldeman, Erlichman, and Peterson were at the opposite end of the table. The senior staff people involved in the meeting sat along the sides of the table. I was sitting in a back row, behind this Peterson guy from the White House who, I think, was a pretty nice fellow.

There were lots of questions about the schedule for the Nixon visit, including what we were going to do about a visit to NATO, which had just moved to Brussels. Also discussed was what was going to be done about a possible visit to USEC and to the King of Belgium. There were protocol and lots of other, major questions to be dealt with.

I'll never forget that at a certain moment over one of these questions which had to do with King Baudouin and the downtown Royal Palace in Brussels, either Haldeman or Erlichman from the White House staff directed a question at the Secret Service agent who was there. Ambassador Knight interjected something like, “I think you'll want to take into account...” I've already described Knight and the kind of person he was. Haldeman stopped everything, turned, looked at the other end of the table, literally glared at Ambassador Knight and said, “Ambassador, when we want your opinion, we'll ask for it.” You can imagine how this affected everybody in the room. I've never heard anything like it.

Q: I've heard of this kind of attitude from Haldeman.

GILLESPIE: From then on this summed up for me the kind of White House that we were going to have. This was really a nasty, mean attitude displayed - and to a person who, to my mind, was absolutely the wrong target for that. It was really quite educational.

The Nixon visit itself was fascinating - getting involved in all that. This was a case where you see the Foreign Service doing the kinds of things which the public just doesn't know about. This was a case where a middle grade Foreign Service Officer was told, instructed, or ordered, “You will be in charge of the White House baggage detail.” He was an FSO-4, whatever that would be the equivalent of in today's Foreign Service - perhaps an FSO-2. He said, “I didn't join the Foreign Service to handle baggage.” His boss and the DCM said, “Look, you will either supervise handling the baggage or you will get on a plane and you will be out of here. What do you mean that you didn't join the Foreign Service to do this?” He grudgingly did it. He screwed it up, as it turned out. He should probably not have been put on the baggage detail. He didn't do a very good job of it. But if you want to see tension or strain, have a Presidential visit on relatively short notice of a brand new administration. This visit included Henry Kissinger then the National Security Adviser to the President, Al Haig, the Deputy National Security Adviser, and Larry Eagleburger, Executive Assistant to Kissinger. Peter Rodman, Winston Lord, and Tony Lake may have been in on this visit, too. This was a team of people whose reputations were made somewhere else. These were mostly junior staff officers at the time, other than Kissinger and Haig, of course.

I'll never forget President Nixon. I rode in the lead car in the Presidential motorcade, with the Secret Service, bringing the President to the hotel. I hadn't really seen Nixon at the airport. It was dark and under lights, and he had made a little speech. When he arrived at the hotel, I was standing inside. Here was this face of Richard Nixon. His pancake makeup was very heavy. It looked as if this man had just come off stage.

Q: I've heard this again and again.

GILLESPIE: He looked like a caricature of himself. He came on through and went on to do his thing. Well, everybody who was involved in handling the visit survived it all. It actually went rather well, but believe me, I learned then and there, as I had learned from other, minor visits in the Philippines, that detail is everything. You can't have surprises. It showed me the importance of personal diplomacy - the fact that the President was coming out and doing these things. How much really gets done during or more likely prior to, because of, or after these visits! This was a very important kind of thing.

That more or less carries us through my time in Brussels.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point? One other question I would like to ask is, did you see any change with the advent of the Nixon administration, in terms of the atmospherics, although this really wasn't your job? Another question is, were you getting any reflections about the American military presence in NATO? This was part of a bad time we went through. We were taking resources away from NATO and putting them into Vietnam. Could you talk about your impression of NATO and the Soviet threat as we perceived it at that time? We'll pick this up the next time.

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This September 29, 1995. This is a continuation of an interview with Ambassador Tony Gillespie. Tony, did you get any sense of “gingering up” or shifting of focus as the Nixon administration came into office in January, 1969?

GILLESPIE: Sure. When I moved into the U.S. Mission to NATO, this followed a very bold step taken by the French, or what appeared to be a bold action. The French said that they did not need to be part of NATO as an organization. They said that they were going to develop their own independent striking capacity, the Force de Frappe, and they wanted NATO Headquarters out of France. That meant both the civilian Headquarters, the North

Atlantic Council, and SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Atlantic Powers - Europe). Both of those headquarters were moved to Brussels as a result of that.

That was, of course, important to people like Secretary of State Dean Rusk and perhaps to President Lyndon Baynes Johnson. However, my observation was that the U.S. Permanent Representative, Harlan Cleveland, was sort of Chairman of the Board of the North Atlantic Council. He was a political appointee of President Johnson's but quite experienced over a number of years in the workings of government - not always in the field of foreign policy but in many areas. The move of NATO to Brussels, I would say, further cemented and consolidated this position of the U.S. as the “first among equals.” Or “first among all,” whether they were equal or not. Remember, Turkey had now come into NATO. Greece was already a member. They were sort of down at one end of the scale. There were also the Scandinavian countries Norway, Denmark, and Iceland, which were not always so enthusiastic about what was going on. Even in those times you detected a sense that perhaps U.S. “hegemony,” control, influence, or dominance of the proceedings within NATO was not always welcome.

You could see this in little things, such as the administration of Headquarters operations. I would never characterize this attitude as resentment, but there were occasional “declarations of independence” that would come out when we went in under instructions to move things in a certain direction. We would find that there was fairly strong resistance to what seemed to us to be a fairly logical move. I would interpret that, and did so interpret it at the time, as a sign of that mood.

Then you had the change from the Johnson to the Nixon administration. After March, 1968 we knew that President Johnson was a lame duck, since he wasn't going to run for re-election. President Nixon came in, charging ahead with his program. As I think I mentioned earlier, virtually the first step that Nixon and his administration took was the visit to Europe in the early winter of 1969. Brussels was one of the first stops on that trip. Brussels was included because it was now NATO Headquarters. There were efforts made

to reflect the U.S. concern and interest in, as well as support for, the NATO alliance. This was important. Henry Kissinger National Security Adviser to the President, whose views are pretty well known, saw this as an opportunity to make a statement about U.S. foreign policy and where we were going.However, as you indicated previously, all of this was happening against the background of events in Southeast Asia. I think that I mentioned that, even before move of NATO Headquarters from Paris tp Brussels, there had been demonstrations against U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. There were constant complaints and editorials, not only in the Belgian press, but in other European publications, on this subject.

I guess that what I saw happening in NATO with the change from the Johnson to the Nixon administrations was the diminution, in practical terms, of the “power,” if that's the right word, of the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO. Robert Ellsworth was appointed Permanent Representative by the Nixon administration. He was a competent man. He did not bring with him the kind of public service and public administration background and stature that a man like Harlan Cleveland had. However, he knew a lot more about defense questions. It was pretty evident that the direction from Washington was becoming more specific as to what we were to do and not to do, with control over Mission operations.

I noticed that, about that time, there began to be increasing discussion of what role Germany - and particularly the Federal Republic of Germany West Germany - was to have in NATO Headquarters and particularly the SHAPE structure. There was a question as to whether a German could ever be the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe (SACEUR). Discussions of that kind began to come up, and probably flowed from the French withdrawal from the NATO command structure. There was speculation that the next country to withdraw might be the Germans. Even then, the Germans were regarded as the up and coming group in NATO. The British always seemed to be there, but almost always had a secondary role by comparison with the U.S. That was my impression at the time.

My recollections are not so good on other changes in NATO Headquarters. The Secretary General of NATO was an Italian. He was important, but not as important as the Secretary General is now. I've noticed that, over the years, the Secretary General of NATO became more important within the organization. At that particular moment he was nothing but an international functionary who sort of kept things going. He presided over the North Atlantic Council meetings as a kind of neutral figure, if you will, like the Speaker in the British House of Commons. The Secretary General kept things on track and kept them moving.

During that particular period, from what I could see, there was a very strong and new emphasis on the command structure of NATO and on hardware and systems. There was a lot of concern about interoperability of equipment. I suspect that this was because at least some of the European economies were now becoming increasingly capable of producing their own war materials. It was then very important to make sure that those materials were all compatible with the NATO idea of a unified command structure across a lot of language and national lines.

Within NATO Headquarters, both on the military as well as the civilian side, efforts were made to try to make sure that systems under development were compatible. That lead, then, to the creation of “super systems” of management, whether they affected information flow, radio operations, or anti-aircraft or anti-missile activities.

I found the relationships between the military and the civilians within NATO very interesting. On the U.S. side we tried to be as integrated as we could. There was a body called the Military Committee of NATO, as well as the North Atlantic Council and SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe). The Military Committee had very high-ranking officers serving on it. If I remember correctly, they were four star generals. The Military Committee didn't really parallel the North Atlantic Council, which included the senior representative of each country. The Permanent Representatives of the U.S. - and I think that this was true of all of the member countries - at least nominally represented the

country, the chief of state, or the head of government. In our case he represented both the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

Within the Permanent Representative structure there was a further breakdown, including the Defense Adviser, a senior civilian, supported by a large staff under his control. He gave advice on defense strategy and major issues to the U.S. Permanent Representative. This whole question of where the U.S. stood in the world and what we were doing in Asia, for example, would come up from time to time, but always tangentially. It was never direct. There were never any challenges, at least as I saw it. There were concerns about whether we had enough resources, whether we would be sufficiently committed to the whole development of NATO, and where NATO should be going in the direction of further “interoperability” and so forth.

Q: Was this a little early, mainly because of the discontent over our involvement in Vietnam, for discipline to turn a little rancid and for the armed forces to be denuded to fight the Vietnam War?

GILLESPIE: No, this was 1969-1970. Our slide into Vietnam had begun. The bombing of the Embassy in Saigon had happened in 1965. We were five years from that, in terms of where things stood. In a more direct way, insofar as it affected the Foreign Service and the State Department, it was while I was in Brussels that it was decided that we would really infuse Vietnam with Americans on a large scale. That's when the program known as CORDS(Civilian Operations and Revolutionary Development Support)was established. There was a call for volunteers from among the FSO (Foreign Service Officer)corps to go to Vietnam. I can vividly remember some late-night discussions with friends about whether we should go or not, and where we were going in Vietnam. However, at this point I think there was still that strong hope that it was all going to be worked out. Remember that President Nixon and Kissinger came into office with the idea that they were going to get us out of Vietnam and that this was all going to be taken care of. So it wasn't until a couple of

years after I had left Brussels that the situation in Vietnam became neuralgic to the degree that you indicated.

Q: During your time in Brussels what was the impression within NATO of the Soviet threat, both military and potential? Were we really waiting for the balloon to go up?

GILLESPIE: Well, of course, Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1968. There was speculation in the press that the Soviets were preparing something, but nobody outside the Soviet leadership really knew anything about it in advance. The reaction to this Soviet action was extremely negative. However, there were also tendencies just beginning to develop during the Nixon years concerning whose doctrine would pertain to what. For example, how much hegemony would the Soviet Union exercise over the satellite countries of Eastern Europe.

I left NATO and Brussels in the spring or early summer of 1970. At that point I don't think that anyone in NATO Headquarters downplayed what appeared to be the real capabilities of the Soviet Union. In the U.S. establishment there was a firm conviction that there was a strategy coming out of Moscow of probe, push, and take advantage of the situation wherever possible. The view was that this was a continuation of the whole trend of post World War II thought that World War III was something to be averted. There was an awful lot of NATO concern, as there was concern by the U.S., about the defense of the Fulda Gap in West Germany near the border with East Germany. There was the fact that the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) appeared to be prepared to move, at a moment's notice. We would get up to the minute intelligence reports on who was moving where and what Soviet Guards unit had gone to what point. There would be meetings of the North Atlantic Council - not always at the Permanent Representative level, although this happened occasionally - to deal with these reports, to analyze them, and to decide whether major hostilities were going to break out. So this concern was very, very real.

I don't recall that there ever was a sense of panic about the situation, but there were very real concerns about Soviet intentions and what might happen. I know that this drove the views of the military and defense people. I had very close friends in the Defense Department and in the Foreign Service who were concerned about this situation. I think that I've already mentioned Francis Hodsoll, an FSO who had worked on arranging for the housing of members of the U.S. Mission to NATO staff who were being moved to Brussels. He had worked as a sort of Assistant General Services Officer for housing.

After this he was given an opportunity to go to SHAPE Headquarters at Mons as the deputy or number two to the U.S. Political Adviser to the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR). The Political Adviser was a senior Foreign Service Officer. I recall going down to SHAPE Headquarters or Frank Hodsoll coming up to Brussels and getting together with me to discuss matters. He had not had a lot of experience with the U.S. military. I think that he had served very briefly as a reserve officer. He would go on at some length about alerts, concerns, and movements, as well as how Allied troops were being moved in response to perceived movements from the other side of the Oder Neisse line. These were all very real concerns, and it is easy to forget how seriously they were taken.

Q: This is what we're trying to recapture.

GILLESPIE: Before NATO Headquarters had really settled down in Belgium, those of us assigned to the Embassy in Brussels and the people assigned to the U.S. Mission to NATO when it was formed in Belgium were authorized to go to the commissaries, post exchanges, and medical facilities in Germany. All of us took advantage of that, to some degree. However, this meant driving over to Bitburg or Wiesbaden, Germany, which were major air bases which came under U.S. Air Force - Europe. You would meet people there in the Officers' Clubs at these bases in Germany and talk occasionally to our colleagues in the Embassy in Bonn or the Consulate General in Frankfurt. The sense of being on the front line, in effect, was really quite strong, because we could see it. We saw fighter aircraft

doing exercises in the sky when we went over to the PX or Commissary. My little sons were very impressed with that.

Q: Before we move from a strategic view down to the personal side, could you discuss the arrival of Larry Eagleburger there, because this sort of annoyed some people? Can you explain that?

GILLESPIE: I don't know how much we need to get into Lawrence S. Eagleburger's background. I learned, in connection with all this, that he was considered a very bright person, a very strong Foreign Service Officer who'd been in the service for some time and who had come out of the Young Republican Movement. If I remember correctly, he was born in Wisconsin.

Q: Former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird who had served for a long time as a Republican Congressman from Wisconsin, was Eagleburger's “sponsor.”

GILLESPIE: Yes. Eagleburger had been active, as an undergraduate, iYoung Republican affairs.

Q: In Wisconsin.

GILLESPIE: In Wisconsin. This all came out later. I think that I've mentioned that when President Nixon came to Brussels in February, 1969, there were at least half a dozen or more Foreign Service Officers accompanying the entourage who were going to be, or who already were, part of the U.S. National Security Council staff which Henry Kissinger (National Security Adviser to the President) had either inherited or was putting together. Among these people was Lawrence S. Eagleburger, although I don't recall whether he actually came to Brussels in February, 1969. He may or may not have come. However, what I did learn, through “scuttlebutt” or gossip, was that Eagleburger had some health problem, a heart condition or something.

Q: A heart shock.

GILLESPIE: Yes, something like that. He was very, very close to Kissinger. So people wondered what he was going to do. I was called in to the office of the DCM in Brussels at a certain point and told that we were going to have a new officer assigned as Political Minister. The fellow who had held that job previously whose name I could not recall earlier, was Ed Streator. He was a real, traditional kind of FSO. He was not a Mid- Westerner or from the University of Wisconsin. Streator was independently wealthy and socially well connected. He was scheduled to be transferred to another post - ceremoniously, not unceremoniously - and Lawrence Eagleburger was going to replace him. There was at least a two and maybe three rank difference between Streator and Eagleburger. So Eagleburger got this job, a minister-level, supervisory position. As I had understood it, “ministers” were big-time Deputy Chiefs of Mission. So here was the number three-ranking officer in the Mission who would have this title. This was interesting in and of itself. There were several officers senior to Eagleburger in rank in the Political and Political-Military Sections. I mentioned Raymond Garthoff, a Soviet expert; there was a fellow named Gerald Helman, who was very knowledgeable about arms control and disarmament matters, as well as political-military strategy of all kinds; and there were several others, including a fellow named Meyerson. In a very personal way, when the word of Eagleburger's assignment to this position became known, the DCM told me, “Tony, we're going to have a problem. The Foreign Service doesn't really shy away from assigning more junior officers to supervise more senior officers, but we don't do it very often. In this instance, we're going to have some problems, so you should be aware of this and do what you can to smooth them out. There's probably not a lot that any of us can do, but we are being told to do this.”

So when the news got around, several of these more senior officers after, I am sure, consulting with others, took me off to one side and said, “Look, this is unacceptable. We

can't have this. This is wrong." I said, "Well, okay, what can you do? What do you want me to do about it, fellow?" They just wanted to talk. They wanted...

Q: This is often what people in administration can do, especially if you talk to people straight rather than as an apparatchik. You represent someone outside their system, so to speak, so they can come and bitch to you.

GILLESPIE: So they came. They bitched. They knew that my connections with the DCM and the Ambassador were good. They knew that my connections back to part of the management staff in the Department were good. Of course, the Foreign Service has all sorts of networks that function. The Personnel system is made up of career Foreign Service Officers, for the most part, so these fellows also had their own private snitches, their patrons, and their protectors to whom they were turning. As it worked out, everyone was taken care of. The situation was managed. Those who simply were not going to abide with this situation were taken care of. They found other jobs in other places and, in due course, moved on.

Lawrence S. Eagleburger eventually arrived in Brussels. Fortunately, I didn't have to give detailed support to these people, though I had to make sure that they received that support. It turned out that Larry, although very brusque on the exterior, had a less brusque interior which had some lighter parts to it. He knew exactly what he wanted in everything, or at least he gave that impression - whether in terms of policy or anything else. He was a very smart guy. He knew that he was working for the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO and the DCM. He already had served, I think, as Consul in Skopje, Yugoslavia.

Q: No, he had been second or third-ranking Economic Officer in Skopje. Before that, I think that he had been Consul in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

GILLESPIE: Yes. So he had been overseas. He had served in various missions, and none of this was new to him. He knew how to play the game the right way. We had a couple of conversations, and he made no secret of the fact that he was a little in awe of the

perquisites which came with his job. He hadn't really focused on the fact that the Streator's had found a lovely, quasi-mansion which they had insisted that the Embassy lease for them. Larry Eagleburger found that he had that house, a car, and a driver. If he knew this before, I don't think that it had registered very much because we used to joke a little bit about that.

He turned out to be a rather pleasant colleague, as far as I was concerned. We talked a lot and did a lot together, though I left Brussels not long after he arrived. However, my sense was that he would rather not have been in Brussels. He would rather not have been at the Mission and he chafed at this, just as he chafed at and eventually disregarded the doctor's advice about things like smoking and eating too much, which he does to this day.

Q: He's got a bad case of asthma. He's been doctoring himself.

GILLESPIE: That's it. I knew that he'd had this heart event, whatever it was. Then I found out that Eagleburger had one of these asthma aspirators, or whatever they're called. When I met him, I smoked then, very heavily. What always struck me was that he almost always had a cigarette in one hand. Then he'd cough a little and pull out this asthma aspirator and pump himself something and go back to smoking. He had been hospitalized with this condition and had just come out of the hospital. I'm going to be with Larry a week from this coming weekend in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at the Broadmoor Hotel. One of the things that he used to wonder about was whether the Broadmoor was a place where you could smoke. So he still smokes. He visited Santiago, Chile, when I was Ambassador there. He knew that I stopped smoking soon after I left the U.S. Mission to NATO and returned to the U.S. When he visited me in Chile, he kind of looked at me and said, “I hope you don't mind if I have a cigarette, Mr. Ambassador.” My house is smoke-free by choice, but he then proceeded to light up a cigarette. I don't know if you'd like to know more about him...

Q: Larry Eagleburger is a well known character in the Foreign Service. I think that you have described him very well. Well, you left Brussels around the spring or early summer of 1970 and went back to Washington.

GILLESPIE: I was briefly at a career transition point again. I had entered the Foreign Service in 1965 under a Foreign Service Reserve Officer appointment, which was renewable after five years. However, in fact, it was not automatically renewed. I had entered the Foreign Service as a Security Officer. Now I had stepped out of that role and was a general administrative officer. The service's systems weren't as formal as they are today. However, that was still kind of a big deal.

So I was told that before I could have an onward assignment, my status had to be regularized. I could go back to security, and there would be no question about extending my Foreign Service Reserve appointment for another five years. I guess that at that point this kind of assignment would have become permanent. Since I had left security, with the blessing of the head of the Office of Security, Marvin Gentile, now I was in this administrative area where there were people in the Foreign Service Reserve category, but not too many. So the question was what I wanted to do and what I ought to do.

I had had a tremendous amount of support in Indonesia and had spent some time in the Philippines and in Brussels. I was very fortunate. By the time I left Brussels there had been at least five Chiefs of Mission and maybe six in Brussels during the four years I spent there. Several of the Deputy Chiefs of Mission and my immediate supervisors - the Administrative Counselor in Brussels when I arrived, Ralph Scarritt, who became the head of the Joint Administrative Section, as well as his deputy - all of them, in effect, urged me to become a Foreign Service Officer. The Foreign Service system opened a lateral entry door to the Foreign Service Officer corps, and I was appointed to a general administration career field. I was amenable to that, so I went back to Washington. Like all things, it took a little while to arrange all of this.

The head of the Board of Examiners and of recruitment for the Foreign Service was a senior officer named John Stutesman. He met with me and said that it might take a while to make these arrangements - maybe 60 to 90 days - and get everything done. Meanwhile, the Department would put me into training at the FSI (Foreign Service Institute). There was a General Administrative Officer's training course available at that time. I was put in that course, giving me whatever extension of my status that I needed. They also set up a lateral entry examination panel to review my file. I was given an oral examination, which I passed. I was then commissioned as an FSO and assigned to a funny little office called Operations Analysis and General Accounting Office Liaison. It was in the Budget and Finance area of the Department.

Q: Good God! That wasn't your strong suit at that point!

GILLESPIE: What I had been able to do and had shown them, I guess, was operations analysis and operations research and systems. I had been doing some reading and studying on my own. I think that I mentioned that some of my supervisors had gone heavily into these matters and promoted these ideas. They put me into that, but it turned out that my main job there was not to do either much operations analysis or even General Accounting Office liaison. At that time in the State Department Richard Will Murray was the head of the Office of Budget and Finance, a Foreign Service Officer who had never served a day overseas. He had received his initial appointment in the government through some kind of political influence. He knew numbers, the budget, the process, and the whole legislative mechanism for getting money. He knew interagency transfers and everything else in detail. He had worked his way up to the top of the chain in the Budget and Finance area. In this process one of his proclivities, which was for Jack Daniels sour mash whiskey or demon rum...

Q: Jack Daniels is a good brand of bourbon whiskey.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Murray had a drinking problem. He was great until lunch. After lunch he wasn't so good any more - unless he had something to do, in which case he didn't go to lunch. In those days, certainly in the administrative area of the State Department, things called two and three Martini lunches were not unusual. I think that this was also true in lots of other areas of the Department, where I believe that it was considered the thing to do.

Q: This was often the case with the senior mandarins of government agencies, as well as with lots of other people, when they would get together. It seems to have died down somewhat.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I attribute its death around the State Department to the fact that at some point, probably in the late 1970s or early 1980s, all of the bars and grills convenient to the State Department sort of closed down. There were few bars within easy walking distance, although the Foreign Service Association Club is still near the Department. I know that, as a young person, I realized that, when people said, “Let's go to lunch,” and they were going somewhere outside the building, it was likely to involve a heavy drinking session. So you had to watch that kind of thing.

Anyway, I was taken aside by Victor Dikeos, the man I mentioned earlier, who by this point was the Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration. There had been a change, and a Foreign Service Office was Assistant Secretary. His name was Joseph F. Donelan, who had come into the Foreign Service. He had done political and consular work and eventually became a senior Administrative Officer.

Q: I've interviewed Joe Donelan.

GILLESPIE: Well, Joe Donelan took this job, and Victor Dikeos was his assistant. Dikeos said to me, “Your job is to get to know Will Murray, the head of Budget and Finance.” Murray and Donelan shared a suite of offices. Donelan was a big shot - an Assistant Secretary of State. However, two doors down but in a suite of offices which connected

internally was Murray's office, which was also nice. Dikeos said, “Your job is to establish good relations with Murray, get him to rely on you, and then make sure that everything that goes into his 'In' box comes out of his 'Out' box in good time, no matter what you have to do to get that done.”

I thought that this was a fascinating thing. Murray was interested in certain things but not in others. However, because of his position, he had to sign off on documents that approved this and denied that. Furthermore, you knew that in the afternoons, if an important phone call came through, he might or might not be there and might or might not be able to deal with it. I don't know that I realized at the time the sensitivity of this job. However, it was a hell of an education in the fields of Budget and Finance, human relations, and the foibles of mankind which I would never have had in any other way. In effect, what I became was a kind of Special Assistant to Mr. Murray and, by default, to Mr. Dikeos and Mr. Donelan. I stayed in close touch with the head of the office to which I was assigned. I did something for him which I found both useful and interesting - the first known, comprehensive study of what is known as the “representation allotment” of the State Department.

Q: You mean “The Whiskey Fund.”

GILLESPIE: The Whiskey Fund.

Q: Congressman John Rooney used to call it...

GILLESPIE: The Whiskey Fund. These were the funds available to the Foreign Service, the overtly, publicly known amount of money available for entertainment and related expenses - primarily overseas. Generally, the money was not to be spent in the U.S., and there were lots of fences, limitations around spending it. By the time I came on the scene the total amount, if I remember correctly, was $970,000 per year.

Q: Very suspiciously under $1.0 million.

GILLESPIE: Not suspiciously. It was by declaration and intent. Congressman Rooney had said, “This number will never, ever reach seven figures,” i.e., in excess of $1.0 million. As long as he was the Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the Budget of the State Department, under the House Appropriations Committee, I don't think that it ever did. However, there were a lot of complaints, both from the Congress, the press, and within the Foreign Service and the State Department about how this money was used - who used it and for what purposes and what did you do when you had a really fat cat, personally wealthy Ambassador? Did you give him money to add to his pocket, or how did it work? The rules controlling expenditures from this appropriation seemed to be very rigid. However, when you read them carefully, they had loopholes in them that were miles wide. So Donelan and Murray said to this fellow who ran the operations analysis program, “We really ought to do our own, careful, in-house look at the representation allowance and find out what the realities are.” My nominal boss was Charles Ellison, who said to me, “Tony, why don't you figure out how we could do that?” To make a long story short, I did a worldwide survey of representation funding and its use and how it was allocated to individual posts. I used a sampling of 57 posts of various sizes in terms of the economies of the countries, the size of the missions, and all of that. I thought, “Boy, this is really going to be interesting.”

What we found out was fascinating. We found that our Ambassador in London at the time was Walter Annenberg.

Q: A man of immense wealth.

GILLESPIE: Immense wealth. The Embassy in London in 1971 or 1972 had a representation allotment of $25,000, which was not inconsequential. I can't remember the exchange rate between the British pound and the U.S. dollar at that time, but in any case this was not a huge amount of money. Anyway, Ambassador Annenberg told the DCM,

“This is for everybody else. I'll take care of my own representation expenditures.” As it turned out, I think that he spent more than $25,000 on his first two representational events.

Every post handled these representation funds differently. Some posts had limits on how much you could spend on a dinner at home and how much you could spend on a dinner at a restaurant. It turned out that the figure allowed for a dinner at a restaurant was so much per guest. This didn't even compare with the amount that Ambassador Annenberg spent on flowers! This was just the way things worked.

We also managed, in that office, something called “The K Fund.” This was a confidential fund, which was not to be used for strictly representational purposes. This money had to be accounted for but didn't have to be covered by vouchers. This money was used, for example, when you'd send someone like Charles E. Bohlen, a career Foreign Service Officer, to Paris as Ambassador, or someone without substantial personal means to an expensive post. In effect, it was possible to augment that person's expense account through that fund. It was also used to cover expenses of the Secretary of State in the United States which, by law, couldn't be covered from other accounts.

After I did that study on the representational allotment and then slipped over to the “K Fund,” eventually I was moved out of that operations analysis program and directly into the office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, as a young Special Assistant. That got me into the nuts and bolts of the administration of the State Department and the Foreign Service. At that time - I don't know exactly how it is today - the Assistant Secretary for Administration, and particularly Donelan, because he was a career FSO, played a tremendously important role. He really could arrange for the assignment of everyone in the administrative area of the Department and usually did so. He was involved in the selection of all of the officers assigned to the senior administrative posts around the world. He was also well known throughout the Department. The Assistant Secretaries in those days were almost all career officers.

As Assistant Secretary for Administration, Joe Donelan was known and, I believe, respected by most of the senior Foreign Service Officers in the State Department. Overseas, Ambassadors knew him, because he traveled a lot. He was someone to whom people turned, when they had a problem - whether an Ambassador, a DCM, a senior Administrative Counselor, or, in the Department, an Assistant Secretary. In effect, I learned a tremendous amount from him by osmosis about administering the State Department and the Foreign Service. In that way I got involved in a number of activities. I think that this shaped the way I have thought about things ever since.

In 1971 the interesting point was that we were beginning to see the “opening up” of the government. By that I mean that “sunshine” was being forced to shine on government operations...

Q: In other words, the public could begin to find out how things were.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. This process generated very strong reactions, including on the Hill (in Congress) on the Committees which oversaw the State Department. In those days one of my jobs was to review testimony of every officer who testified for the State Department before the appropriate committees and sub-committees. I reviewed the prepared testimony before they went up. Then we would get the transcripts back. In those days Congress printed the transcripts of every hearing. Huge books containing this testimony would come out. One of my jobs was to make sure that we edited the texts. Quite frankly, people made no bones about this. The rule was that you could make “minor corrections” of grammatical and syntactical errors as you went through the testimony. In fact, you made sure that the record said what it was supposed to have been, because the officer might have forgotten what he was supposed to have said. My job was to make sure of that, so there was a little substance to it.

I was kind of shocked when I was told to do this. I did it and turned it over to Dikeos, who said, “Wait a minute, that point's wrong. That's not what we're supposed to say.” I said,

“Yes, I know, but what am I to do about it?” He said, “Change it, change the testimony. This is what the officer said initially when he answered the question. He shouldn't have said that, he should have said this. So fix it.” You had to be very careful, because you couldn't just go through and rewrite everything. You had to be careful. It was challenging.

Q: So much for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD - the pristine records oCongressional testimony.

GILLESPIE: As we know, the members of Congress always ask for permission to “revise and extend” their remarks. We took that privilege for granted.

This was also the case with the testimony of the Secretary of State, because at that time the Secretary - in this case poor William Rogers, about whom Ambassador Dobrynin has some sad things to say in his own memoirs - would go up to Congress and testify. I would work with his front office staff, his special and executive assistants, and say, “Look, let's see if we can change this a little bit.” We would put different words in the Secretary's mouth, and that was the way it was.

However, on a national level, and this is really pre-Watergate, things were opening up. People were writing letters to the Department. They wanted to know more about what was going on and who was doing what. Within the State Department - and certainly within the Foreign Service, to some degree - two schools of thought developed. One view was, “Don't tell them a damned thing.” The other view was, “We'd better figure out how we're going to deal with this. We're going to have to live in a new world and we'd better make sure that what we do is right and is defensible,” and so on.

It was interesting. I would say that, not always happily, the men with whom I worked, for the most part, took the course which said, “The world is changing, and we'd better change with it. We'd better make sure that we're 'with it.'” I can remember Dikeos saying, “Damn

it, here comes the sun shining down on this office again. You'd better get ready for it. Put your sun screen on."

The other thing that was happening at that time was a shock to the system. Women were stepping forward. This was the time of Gloria Steinem from MS magazine. Other women were expressing themselves. The 1960s were over and the 1970s were beginning. I became Donelan's "person" who was directly involved with what turned out to be the 1972 edict on the role of the spouses of Foreign Service Officers.

It was agonizingly painful for people to go through this process. You had both officers and many of their wives who were just shattered to think that wives really might not have a role to play in the Foreign Service and that their role might not be officially recognized. They didn't particularly want to be paid for it, at least at that time. It was really a shattering development and a challenge to many people as to how you dealt with that.

Meetings were held, task forces were set up, and so forth.

Q: Were the spouses represented in these task forces?

GILLESPIE: Yes. There were spouses and there were female Foreign Service Officers. Some of them were very outspoken. Allison Palmer, for example, was perceived by many people as a major gadfly. She was a Foreign Service Officer who later led, if you will, a group of Foreign Service women in a class action suit against the Foreign Service for alleged discrimination on the basis of gender. I think she later became an Episcopal minister. She is a very bright woman and a real activist in women's causes. During the time she served in the Department she was viewed as a goad by a lot of people.

By this time Rimestad had left the Department, where he had been Under Secretary for Administration. He was replaced by William B. MacComber former Ambassador to Jordan and other countries. He wasn't shocked by this sort of thing. He felt that he could deal with it and that we had to deal with it.

So we worked at this issue long and hard, and an Airgram was sent out to the Foreign Service in 1972. The Airgram was the basic, communications medium of the time. The Airgram basically said that from now on the Foreign Service will accept that it hired its employees but didn't hire their spouses. There would be no further discussion of spouses in Foreign Service efficiency reports. Senior officers or their wives would at their peril demand that wives do various things!

Q: Speaking of this and looking at the Foreign Service as you did, particularly on the administrative side, were there very many women Administrative Officers? What type of jobs did they hold?

GILLESPIE: There were several women Administrative Officers. I think that I can quickly lump them into two categories. There were those who were Foreign Service Officers and who were perceived as likely to go somewhere. Then there were all the others. Among all the others were some who were really good and some who were not so good. That was true of male offices, too, but female officers in particular were looked at that way.

In general, people in the Foreign Service weren't sure how to deal with women Administrative Officers. It was a tough problem. There was a woman officer whom I had gotten to know very well while I was in Brussels. She was the Administrative Officer at our little Embassy in Luxembourg. Her name was Joan Clark. If I remember correctly, Joan had come into the Foreign Service, as many women did, as a secretary. I think that she was a college graduate. She had worked as a secretary or a clerk and had really climbed up the ladder and reached this Administrative Officer position. Not too many years later she became the Executive Director of the Bureau of European Affairs.

Q: A position of great power.

GILLESPIE: A position of real administrative clout. Eventually, she became the Director General of the Foreign Service. So there were the Joan Clarks of this world and there

were women officers who had come up through the ranks. Many of them were women with real skills in the administrative area in Budget and Finance. There were some women officers in Personnel, but they were less visible.

Q: Yet it seemed that at almost every post the Personnel Officer was a woman, but often a retreaded secretary who had reached the end of the line. That was about it. You knew that she wasn't going much farther than that.

GILLESPIE: The Personnel Officer at a Foreign Service post at that time, and I think that it's still the case, has very little to do with the assignment, the careers, and the futures of Foreign Service Officers. The Post Personnel Officer is there primarily to keep the Foreign Service National contingent under control and to make sure that people's basic personnel matters are managed right. In other words, if travel orders are needed, the Personnel Officer makes sure that they are prepared correctly.So this is a relatively low level job. You're right. A lot of the women in those jobs had clearly moved up the ladder from being secretaries. They were receiving better salaries and had more status, but they were staff support people. Budget people were often the same, but because of the work they did, my own intuition tells me that from time to time they were thrown into discussions, meetings, and decisions where real resources were handled. That brought them up to a different level of play. In many cases they saw something that they wanted, reached for it, and were noticed by someone who said that that person, regardless of gender, is good. “Let's get her into this job.” So that's where you saw this process happening - at least in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was the way things seemed to be moving then.

So we went through all that. MacComber, by the way, had done something in the late 1960s which, I am sure, you've talked about. He authorized a study project called, “Diplomacy for the 1970s.” I don't know who the real architect may have been, because I was all too new and was in Brussels while this study was going on. An Economics Officer, Chris Petrow, who had previously served in Brussels, was then working for MacComber. I don't know whether you've gone into that exercise.

Q: No, but it's been mentioned by some of the people I've interviewed.

GILLESPIE: It was a self-analysis of the Foreign Service and the State Department and our style of diplomacy. It was really quite an extensive and elaborate exercise. There were a lot of things that came out of that which were reflected in the statement on the role of spouses and, more generally, women in the Foreign Service and the Department. I think that we've done other studies since then, but I don't think that any of them has been as extensive or in as much depth as that study was.

Anyway, this whole period was a great learning experience for me. Because propinquity to the Assistant Secretary always counts, I ended up doing things where political and economic reporting and analysis, foreign policy, and substance came together with the administration of the Department and the Foreign Service. Donelan or Dikeos would say, “Go and talk to the Country Director for Iberian Affairs and find out what's going on with these base negotiations in Spain - what we're doing, how that's going to affect us, what it's going to do to our budget, and why we don't know more about it.” So I got a fair amount of that.

Q: A question. The Special Assistant to one of the principal officers of the State Department has a unique job. He is usually a junior going out and talking to more senior officers. Implicit in this is the fact that they are using the clout of their principals behind them. Sometimes this does not sit very well with some people. I think that real diplomacy in the Foreign Service is tested by the Special Assistants, more than it is abroad.

GILLESPIE: I agree with that. I've done a lot of this kind of diplomacy since I was a Special Assistant. That was my first experience. You might say that some of the things I did in Brussels were like that, too. I was very junior in Brussels. I was an FSR-7 and then an FSR-6. My immediate boss was a lieutenant colonel, later a colonel. I reported directly to the DCM. I often found myself going to Eagleburger's predecessor, Ed Streator, a very senior officer, and telling him that he couldn't have this or that. You had to learn

how to deal with that. There are two or three ways to do it. One way is to take all of the assembled power of the position you and your boss hold, or whatever you represent. You barge through the door, carrying that with you. Or, you figure out that the person you are talking to does not have a lot of time to deal with this. He could say, “Get the hell out of here, because I have more important things to do.” You have to figure out how to handle this matter. I think that I was fortunate, in that I worked with people who helped me to understand those things, because I saw a lot of it.

However, you're right. The Special Assistant, even today, has a job for which there is no training. Nobody sits you down and says, “You're going to be a Special Assistant.” Everyone seems to have to learn it for himself or herself. Some learn better than others.

We were engaged heavily on the intelligence front. There were a lot of things going on. To some extent, Donelan knew my background in Army intelligence and may have thought that I would fit, although at this point I'm not sure that it made any difference. He would say, “Go over to the National Security Council and meet with the Director of Intelligence, or whatever he is over there. You're the Department's representative on this issue. Now, go.” I would have to come back and tell the Bureau of Intelligence Research (INR) that I had gone to a meeting at which they were not represented. That was another challenge in internal diplomacy because you realize when you get there that you shouldn't have been the only person from the State Department. Somebodyelse should have been there, so how do you make that up and get along? The substance of these issues was also fascinating. There were a lot of questions...

Q: What would have been the concern of the Bureau of Administratioin intelligence?

GILLESPIE: For example, there would be intelligence operations going on, run either by the Central Intelligence Agency or, increasingly, by some element of the Defense Intelligence Agency which were likely to go wrong. If they went wrong, they were going to cause all kinds of real problems that would require cleaning up. One of the concerns

was that we would hear about a given covert operation. It was clear that it could affect the position of the Embassy in the country concerned or might have resource implications for the Embassy. It might be that someone wanted special cover arrangements for an intelligence operation or operator. People may have wanted to travel in certain ways, and this would bring us in. Or, we would learn of something and would go and find out more about what it was. Often, we found that there was no direct interest for the Bureau of Administration, but often we found that there was.

One of the close relationships between the intelligence community and the State Department has very little to do, on the surface, with the intelligence part. It has an awful lot to do with administration, management, resources transfer, and support. In other words, we have intelligence elements in some countries overseas affiliated with our Embassies. Who's going to pay the bill for these activities? How do you cover the costs of these things? Does the Central Intelligence Agency pay or does the State Department pay - and out of whose budget? Whose pie is cut and in which way? There is an awful lot of that going on. As you've probably covered elsewhere, there are reimbursement arrangements that have gone on over the years between and among US Government agencies and with Ambassadors to do things in certain ways. Wherever these things exist, there is always room for problems.

The Assistant Secretary for Administration would get a phone call from an Ambassador, who would say, “These guys out here are trying to knock me around, Joe. Can you help straighten this out?” Or the Under Secretary for Political Affairs would call Donelan and say, “We've got a problem with an intelligence agency or an office in this or that country doing these things. Joe, can you help us get this straightened out through your connections?” So Joe Donelan would say to me, “Tony, do you know so and so in Administration or at the [Central Intelligence] Agency? Find out what's really going on.” And that would spread around. That was the way you did the job.

Q: You mentioned dealing with women. What about moving female officers into more responsible positions in the Department and the Foreign Service? The spouses were one thing, but at that time were there special arrangements for assigning female officers to more responsible jobs?

GILLESPIE: At that time my recollection is that there were not. It's really hard to go back now and sort it out because there were no formal procedures, as I recall it. I don't remember exactly who the Director General was at that time, but my guess is that he had gray hair and wore pants. He was a gray and very senior Foreign Service Officer. He may have been John Steeves.

Q: I think that Carol Laise was the first woman Director General othe Foreign Service.

GILLESPIE: She came in some time in the early 1970s, but I think that it was about the time that I was leaving this job in the administrative area. As I recall it, there were no specific programs for women, there were no exhortations, but there was discussion and conversation on this subject. I think that assignments like Joan Clark's brought out the comment, “Well, look, she was just a clerk.” However, she was no longer a clerk. What did this mean? It probably meant that we were going to see more women in these more important jobs. I can recall vaguely, even then, thinking, “I wonder what it would be like to work for a woman who was a senior Foreign Service Officer.” Would I have any problem doing that? Those were subjects that came up. I had worked with a woman, Mary Malloy Carmichael, on the move of NATO to Brussels. A friend of hers, another woman, had been an Economics Officer who had served, it turned out, in Jakarta.

You may recall that in those days - and this must be in one of your interviews somewhere - there was the view that, if a woman stayed out of trouble and didn't get married, she could remain in the Service and would be promoted. However, if she got married, she had to resign her commission in the Foreign Service and leave.

Q: Was that a subject of concern when you were in the administrativarea of the Department?

GILLESPIE: There was discussion, but not in the administrative area. As far as I am aware, where that came up was in this terribly rich broth of junior Foreign Service Officers in Brussels. We had enough people and of different generations, for these issues, reflective of questions in American society as a whole through the 1960s and into the early 1970s, to keep coming up. We had continuing discussions of some of these matters. One of the extra-curricular activities when I was in this job in the administrative area was called The Junior Foreign Service Officers' Club [JFSOC]. This organization was a place where a lot of these issues came up and were discussed. These discussions covered “Whither the Foreign Service” and “Who Should Be Involved in the Foreign Service,” for example. All of these matters were being discussed actively in that context.

However, I was sort of a channel back into administration. I would take some of these matters back and say to my colleagues and superiors, “Do you people know that these things are happening?” Often they would say, “Gee, we hadn't thought about that.”

Q: This would be in the spring of 1970, so it already had happened. A group of junior Foreign Service Officers signed a letter protesting our incursion into Cambodia.

GILLESPIE: That happened while I was in Brussels. That really triggered a debate there, and then I came into the tail end of it back into Washington. However, I wasn't directly involved.

Q: Was there the equivalent, as far as you were concerned, of either a black list or a list of troublemakers? By the way, I remember a junior officer who was known as a bomb thrower. This was Genta Hawkins, who was later Director General of the Foreign Service. She was known as one of the more activist people.

GILLESPIE: I never knew her that way. I knew Genta, because she had been on the cover of RED BOOK or COSMOPOLITAN magazine, when she was a staff aide to Ambassador Sargent Shriver in Paris. Now that was a woman in the Foreign Service for you! These magazines were not Playboy or the more modern Cosmopolitan. But here was a picture of a good looking woman who was a Foreign Service Officer splashed all over the magazine. That sort of appearance was looked down on by many senior Foreign Service Officers.

Q: They felt that, “It just isn't done.”

GILLESPIE: Yes. The group that I recall being labeled as trouble makers were more the young Turks of the Foreign Service. They included Lannon Walker and Tom Boyatt. They were mostly men, to my recollection, who either dissented from established policy or expressed concern about where the State Department or the Foreign Service might be going.

Q: There was a group in AFSA (the American Foreign Service Association) which came up with a concept. It wasn't the paper called, “Diplomacy for the '70s.” It was a different paper, but it came from AFSA.

GILLESPIE: That may have come from the young Turks in AFSA. It may have complemented or followed the paper on “Diplomacy for the '70s.” It was interesting. Among the people in JFSOC, of which I was a member, was F. Allen Harris, or “Tex” Harris who is now - I guess for the third time - President of the American Foreign Service Association. Peter Tarnoff was a JFSOC activist, but he left for an assignment to France, to attend the French National School of Administration (Ecole Nationale d'Administration - ENA.) This was a prestigious, high level French Government school for up and coming officials, which a few, carefully selected, foreign government officials could attend. Then he was transferred to the Consulate in Strasbourg, I think.

Q: He is now the Under Secretary for Political Affairs.

GILLESPIE: He left the Foreign Service at the end of the Carter administration in 1981, along with his present wife, Mathea Falco, who had been a political appointee as Assistant Secretary of State for Narcotics Affairs.

Help me, Stu. Who is the guy who is our “spy?” I think that he drives a school bus down in North Carolina now. His name is Felix Bloch. He was never formally tried or convicted but was accused and alleged to have been the most notorious “spy” in the American Foreign Service, working on behalf of the former Soviet Union. He was an activist in JFSOC. There were others. I was not an activist. I was sort of a semi-activist at the most. I would go to the JFSOC meetings and take part in the discussions. I chaired one committee - I don't remember what it was. I found it useful. I had just become a Foreign Service Officer, so I took it all very seriously as converts do. I wanted to be part of the scene, so I got into it.

On the personal, or the personnel-career front, I met a couple of people. One of them was Robert Gershensen, who was the head of administrative assignments in the Bureau of Personnel. Gershensen came to see me, and we had lunch. He said, “I've looked at your file. I see that you were in Army intelligence, and there's a note there that you have expressed interest in Russian language training or specialization. We have a tremendous opportunity, Tony. The Director General has authorized us to send an administrative officer to the full 52 or 54 week Russian language training course and set up an assignment pattern so that that officer would go as Assistant General Services Officer to Moscow. He could come back, work in the Bureau of European Affairs, go back to Moscow either as General Services Officer” or something like that. It was all very carefully plotted out. He said, “You are the guy we would like to have do that. Would you be willing?”

Well, this sounded really interesting to me. I was delighted by it. So I said that I'd like to talk to other people about it. I talked to my wife, and she said that it sounded fine. We looked into schooling and all of that kind of thing. So I said, “Yes,” and this program

seemed to be on the tracks. I thought that it would be neat. In 1972 I was supposed to enter Russian language training and then, eventually, go to Moscow.

Well, along the way Vic Dikeos, who was then the Special Assistant to Joe Donelan, the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, came to me to discuss this assignment. He said, “Look, I know that you're all set with this assignment to Russian language training and the Embassy in Moscow. However, I'm not sure that it's the best thing for you.” I said, “What do you mean?” He then went through a long song and dance about schools, kids, and going back and forth between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. He said that I could not be really sure about the prospects. He said that those EUR/SOV Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Soviet Union Affairs people were really a clan unto themselves. They're young and they do all sorts of terrible things. He said, “I'm not sure that it's right for you.” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “I've just been assigned as the Executive Counselor to the Embassy in Mexico. We have the Embassy and nine constituent posts in Mexico. The Executive Counselor is the formally designated Number Three officer in the Embassy. He supervises the Consul General in Mexico City and/or all the consular activities in Mexico.” He said, “There is an opening in the General Services Office for a Supervisory General Services Officer [GSO]. That's an FSO-3 position,” which is equivalent to today's FSO-1.

Q: It's approximately at the colonel level.

GILLESPIE: At the colonel level. Dikeos said, “You are an FSO-5 or two grades below that. If you agree to take that job, you would have three or four American staff in Mexico City and about 115 Foreign Service National employees under you there. You would also be responsible for all services, purchasing, general contracting, building maintenance, and repair activity at the nine constituent posts of the Embassy. I would like you to come and be my Supervisory General Services Officer and drop this Russian stuff.”

That was really a hell of a situation to be in because the job that he described sounded like a really big deal. It meant skipping being an Assistant General Services Officer, one of several in Moscow, and moving right up. That looked interesting, and the job sounded fascinating. I already knew Spanish, which I had spent all of those months learning at the Foreign Service Institute during my military career. Dikeos said that he really wanted me for this job. I had learned along the way that, in the Foreign Service, a boss who particularly wants you is like a bird in the hand.

I still didn't know these people in the Bureau of European Affairs and the Office of Soviet Union Affairs. I hadn't even begun to get to know any of them. I agonized over that. When I discussed it with my wife, she was very practical. She said, “Look, Mexico City is not forever. Moscow is at least an implicit commitment that you'll go back again. Schools run out in Moscow at a certain stage, which they don't do in other parts of the world. It's your decision, and I'll do whatever you like, but...”

Q: How many children did you have at that point?

GILLESPIE: At that point we had two, who were still pretty young. So, anyway, I chose to go to Mexico City with Vic Dikeos. That set me on another track, another path. That got me into the Bureau of American Republics Affairs [ARA], with which I had not had much to do in the past. It sort of set things going in that direction.

Q: Before we leave the administrative area, we've mentioned the status of women and such matters. What about what we now call minorities? Essentially, we're talking about blacks. During that time was this situation a blip on the radar or not?

GILLESPIE: It was a blip, but it wasn't much of a blip. Things had happened, and I confine them to people, because it was that specific and that limited. There were some things that happened in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs that we might just touch on, because I saw them from this angle. This bureau is what used to be called “CU” (Cultural

Affairs.) It was a bureau in the State Department with its own Assistant Secretary as the head. It managed to fund the Fulbright Program, if I remember correctly.

Q: It did. Actually, the logical thing would have been to put the Fulbright Program under USIA (United States Information Agency). However, I think that Senator Fulbright insisted that the State Department keep this exchange of persons program, rather than let it go to USIA. There was a kind of odd relationship involved in it.

GILLESPIE: A fellow named Richard Fox stands out very much in my minin this connection. I don't know whether you've interviewed him.

Q: I've interviewed Dick Fox.

GILLESPIE: Fox was involved very much in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. He is an African-American who really stood out. When you mention the diversity question in today's terms but basically “affirmative action,” or black-white relations in those days, it's the individuals who stood out. There were perceived to be high quality officers like Fox. You either liked people like him or you didn't, but not at all because of his skin color. You respected them or you didn't.

However, at that point there were clearly some Foreign Service Officers who were believed to be in the Foreign Service because of a deliberate lowering of standards. There was a mid-career entry program which was just beginning, and I don't remember exactly when this was. Some officers were being brought in who were African- American. Some women were also being brought in who were either African-American or simply women.

There were already rumblings that the quality standards had been lowered to bring these people in. There were at least a couple of African-American officers in the administrative area who had come in through some special entry mechanism. They were widely considered to be disasters in terms of their performance. They had done nothing criminal, so they could not be separated from the Foreign Service for that kind of reason. They were

not particularly competent. I can remember people talking about this or that fellow, saying that, “He was just a lazy, good for nothing guy. He just takes advantage of the benefits but doesn't do the work.” Some of the Ambassadors and Deputy Chiefs of Mission complained about this. Joe Donelan's response was, “Well, when they put their complaints in writing, we'll do something about it, but I'm not going to sit here and take action on this person on the basis of phone calls and complaints that I hear about him. That's nothing but a recipe for disaster.”

It often happened that we would go back and tell people, “Look, you've got a problem. Document the problem. Put it in writing.” At times I was the messenger for some of these things. Dikeos was very firm about this. He would say, “Look, if you've got enough guts to tell me that you've got a problem, then have enough guts to put it on a piece of paper, write it up, send it in, and we'll do whatever we can do about it.” It didn't just have to do with racial issues. It might have to do with not having enough money, or some post might be prohibited by the regulations from doing this or that. I always have had the greatest respect for Dikeos because he could always boil these things down to the basics and say, “Look. What are the facts? Put it in writing. Let us draw a conclusion from it. If we need to do something, we'll figure out whether we can do it, how to do it 'right' and do it legally. Don't do something 'wrong' just because you think that it needs to be done.”

There were tendencies in the Department and in business and other government agencies to do things that way. Dikeos was always pretty straight on things like that.

On the African-American or racial issue, in particular, I think that we were at that stage where there were some really high quality African-Americans coming into the Foreign Service. However, you could see things coming. Our society was opening up, the issues of affirmative action and race were becoming more evident. In fact they had always existed. However, at the time I was in the administrative area in the Department - the early 1970s - I can recall no big drive in the administrative area to move things forward.

Q: One last question before we move on to your time in Mexico, which might be a good place to take a break. You were in Administration. You were going to a post in ARA. Up to this point you had never dealt with ARA. How was ARA considered at that time? I've always noticed this tendency in the Foreign Service. ARA is usually considered something separate. What was your impression? There's nothing like being there as the new boy on the block, absorbing all of the prejudices and feelings and all of that.

GILLESPIE: Yes. It was interesting. I guess that there were a couple of things that stood out. ARA was new for me. It was a different area. We had dealt with ARA from the Bureau of Administration, obviously. You're right - it was considered to be different. I think that this feeling of difference had pretty much come to an end by then. I learned that this was the bureau where what is now called the Agency for International Development (AID) had already been completely amalgamated into the State Department. The Assistant Secretary for American Republic Affairs was also the Administrator of the Agency for International Development for Latin America and the Caribbean.

There was, for example, a State Department Office for Caribbean Affairs. There was also an AID Office for Caribbean Affairs. They were like Siamese twins, joined at the hip. The Director of the AID office for the Caribbean more or less knew everything that the assistance people were doing and would report up through his chain of command to the Assistant Secretary, who knew and actually controlled what was going on. He had budgetary, planning, and programing authority for that area. In my mind that set ARA apart from any other bureau in the State Department.

For example, the major area of the Bureau of European Affairs was what was called RPM - Regional Political and Military Affairs. Its specialty was everything connected with NATO. An office called RPE - Regional Political and Economic Affairs - had been established, and I think that it has become more prominent. RPE followed developments in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris and the European Community (EC) or the Common Market. So organizationally, from where I sat,

that was the European Bureau's mark of distinction. This bureau also had to deal with a considerable number of political appointee Ambassadors with great clout and in high cost areas. That created one set of problems for the Bureau of Administration.

The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs [EA] was far away, it was relatively small, it took care of itself, and it was concerned with the war in Vietnam. That was just one hellacious problem which really transcended the State Department. From the Bureau of Administration we would come in on the edges of the Vietnam War.

The Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, which is what NEA really stands for, was considered mysterious and dark, and that's where the Arabists lived. [Laughter] If you wanted to know something that may or may not be relevant, if it said “Oil,” it was really important, because this was in the early 1970s. At that point I don't think that we had begun to be concerned with Islamic fundamentalism, or anything like that. That was just considered the dark side of things.

Then there was the African Affairs Bureau, which at that time was in the aftermath or which was continuing the whole independence movement. There was a lot going on which was seamy, difficult, and far away.

I don't know if I've left anybody out, but that was basically the Foreign Service, as viewed from the Bureau of Administration. What Assistant Secretary of Administration Donelan wanted was to have really good people on the administration and management side. He wanted problems to be local and confined. Don't let them come up into the central administration and management area of the Department, if you could avoid it. Our job was to do that.

ARA had a very elaborate management structure which was more complicated than that of most other bureaus. The Executive Director of ARA, if I remember correctly, may have been the first ExecutivDirector of a bureau actually to carry the title of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. After that I learned that all of the other Executive Directors also wanted

the titles of Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State. However, Fred Chapin was the first Executive Director and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State among management people in the building, if I remember correctly. He was a Foreign Service “legacy.” His father had been an Ambassador. I don't know whether you had an opportunity to interview Fred.

Q: I didn't, but somebody else did.

GILLESPIE: Fred had a very rich Foreign Service career and ended up, I think, as Executive Director of ARA. I think that one of the only reasons that he would take the job was because the Department gave him the title of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. This really hasn't stuck as a title since he retired. However, there was the AID structure to which I have referred, which was part of his responsibilities.

The office of the Executive Director of AID was itself rather large. From our point of view in administration it was pretty independent, because it had access to other resources through AID which nobody else could get at. In fact all of the bureaus were organizations largely sufficient unto themselves, but ARA was even more so. It had clout. At that point I did not know much about the qualifications or the reputations of people assigned to ARA in the political, economic, and maybe consular areas. There were some really hot shot administrative types in ARA, Gershensen being one of them. I know that Joe Donelan would say, “Well, if he in ARA has that, it's taken care of. Don't worry about it.” Or he might say, “If he wants that, get it for him, because he knows what he's doing.” It wasn't always that way in the other bureaus. Sometimes you had to find out what one of the other Executive Directors was really trying to do and what he would do with the money he wanted if you gave it to him. In other words, “are they playing games?” Donelan had not served in Latin America, and his view of ARA was not based on any predilection there. In any case, my impression of ARA's reputation as a bureau was pretty high at that time.

I knew something else, and it struck a chord with me. ARA had a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations. This position was called ARA/OPR. Under Donelan at that time

was a man whom I had first met in the Philippines, where he was General Services Officer and the number two man in the Administrative Section. His name was John Thomas. John was a “lateral entrant” to the Foreign Service. He had come in from outside the service. He had been an FSR (Foreign Service Reserve officer) and after some agonizing the service had brought him in as an FSO. It was not a happy marriage. When I was in the A Bureau (Bureau of Administration), John was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and head of operations in the administrative area. At that time John had administrative responsibility for all of the computer systems and automated data processing, which was still fairly embryonic in the State Department.

Just an anecdote. One of my jobs in that administrative office was to try to help manage the withdrawal of the IBM Executive Typewriters, with their proportional type spacing and “pretty, pretty” black ribbons. They put out really good looking correspondence. The idea was to withdraw them from the offices of the Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretaries, and the Assistant Secretaries and replace them with IBM Selectric typewriters. The Selectrics could produce a type face which could then be read by an Optical Character Reader (OCR). Such correspondence could then be sent out as a telegram, without having to be re-typed by human hands.

Believe me, this was a challenge to management! There were probably 35 to 40 senior secretaries involved in this change. Many of them had been hired into the Foreign Service fairly young and junior and worked their way up because of several skills. First, they took shorthand - they were stenographers. Secondly, they were smart as whips. Thirdly, they knew that their power derived from their boss, although at times they thought that they were the ones who really gave the boss his power. For the most part, they were white, middle aged or a little older, and they were powers unto themselves.

Q: They were mostly unmarried.

GILLESPIE: They were unmarried - or they were married to their jobs. These women never really operated collectively, but they didn't have to. They just said, “No” to the suggestion that “their” typewriters would be replaced. [Laughter] Their power over their bosses was such that they would say, “Don't you talk to my boss about this.” If you did, he'd throw you out of the office. The boss would say to you, “Talk to Ruth or Virginia or whatever her name was about that.” He knew that there would be nothing but trouble for him if the typewriter were replaced. Progress be damned, it was more important to him to have her doing what she did for him, because these secretaries were really good. Somehow, eventually we made the replacements, but that was one of those problems. That was an example of organizational change.

John Thomas, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Operations, was very much a control freak. He was also very well connected with the Republican Party. Basically, Thomas handled White House travel - specifically, the President's travel. When the President goes overseas, even today, the State Department provides the resources, the money, and the support. The White House involvement in foreign affairs has grown dramatically, and even then it was important. Even so, because of legal authorizations and so forth, the White House has to go back to the State Department for various support matters.

Well, John Thomas was well-connected. He was a nice guy. We are friends now - and were then. However, he had a very clear idea of the way automated data processing and computers ought to come into the State Department. He was not the kind of fellow who asked around and said, “Well, what do you think?” He would say, “This is the way it's going to be.”

Well, the Bureau of American Republics Affairs also had some people who were probably more knowledgeable than Thomas and some of his experts in the computer area. A divergence of thought developed that continues, even today, and probably the people in ARA were right. They've always favored what they called “distributed networks,” “E-

Mail" and processing material over in "Post Management." This all goes to show how the administration of the Department and the Foreign Service is not at all monolithic. However, this difference with John Thomas led to some tension, and ARA had its own approach to things. I knew that when I was assigned to ARA.

Another point that came up might be of interest. Perhaps Joe Donelan has talked about it. One of the things that the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration or one of his minions got involved in at that time was the foreign travel of VIPs of various kinds - whether they were members of Congress (CODELs, or Congressional Delegations) or other cabinet officers.

In fact, I have one anecdote that I probably ought to mention. It's interesting to me, at least. It also had to do with Brussels, before I came into the Bureau of Administration.

When I was in Brussels. I had just made the shift from security to general administration. I was at the U.S. Mission to NATO. The Administrative Counselor, Ralph Scarritt, received a phone call from John Thomas and Joe Donelan on about August 1, 1969. This may have had something to do with where I later ended up. Thomas and Donelan said, "The Apollo-11 astronauts (Aldrin, Armstrong, and Collins) have landed on the moon. This was in June, 1969. The decision to make the trip was probably made in July or early August, 1969. The President is sending them on a round the world trip. They are also going to Belgrade (Yugoslavia). They're going to go behind the Iron Curtain. This trip is really important to the White House, to NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), and to the Secretary of State William Rogers. We are very concerned about the capacity of Belgrade to deal with this. We would like Gillespie to go to Belgrade. Get Gillespie down there to Belgrade. We want him to take charge of this. We want him to be our man on the scene."

So I went down to Belgrade and spent, I guess, almost 12 weeks down there. My wife said, "Why do they keep picking you?" In any event this was a fascinating event. The

Administrative Officer in Belgrade was a very nice fellow. It turned out that he was in the early stages of Parkinson's Disease. He was fine but he did not have a lot of energy and couldn't move very fast. I learned that I could best help if I let him be the brains and he let me be the legs. It also turned out that not all of the Yugoslav officials involved in the visit spoke English. Guess what? They spoke German and French. I happened to speak both of those languages. So I was able to deal with Yugoslav Protocol and others on that.

Things kind of come around in a funny way. The Ambassador was Bill Leonhart. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), who had been in Belgrade for about two weeks when I arrived, was Thomas Ostrom Enders.

Q: Oh, boy! The "marriage" between those two was "made in hell."

GILLESPIE: You had Bill Leonhart and his wife, "Pidge," and you had Tom Enders and his wife, Gaetana. You've never seen a case of oil and water so incapable of mixing. It was really everybody's fault. I'll never forget, because it stands out so vividly in my memory, the first morning I was in Belgrade, We had what is called an "Acoustic Conference Room" in the Embassy made of plastic...

Q: I've spent many hours in one of those.

GILLESPIE: As you know, they are rooms within rooms. If you're in a standard sized room, say, with a ceiling of eight feet, the "Acoustic Conference Room" is built up from the floor and down from the ceiling, is isolated in all sorts of ways, and you can see through the walls made of clear plastic. I guess that there may be 6'1" or 6'2" of head room inside it. The door into it is probably about 5'11" high, if that.

That first morning I was there in Belgrade Ambassador Leonhart very nicely said, "Tony, we'd like you to come to the Country Team meeting in the Acoustic Conference Room and tell us about what we're going to face here." I said, "Yes, sir, I'll be happy to do that." Well, the meeting was scheduled, say, for 8:30 AM. As a prompt Foreign Service Officer, I was

standing outside the door at 8:15 AM. The Ambassador came promptly at 8:30 AM. He walked in and sat down at the head of the table. The rest of the Country Team and I sat down. However, DCM Enders was not present. The first image I have of Tom Enders, who is 6'5” or 6'6” tall, was of him bending into a pretzel to get into this Acoustic Conference Room. He was coming in late for the Country Team meeting! I could see at that moment that Ambassador Leonhart was not pleased. I was impressed by both points: big guy, little room, and an unhappy Ambassador. It was that way during my whole time in Belgrade.

I learned something there. I had it engraved on my brain. I think that I had already learned it, but it became important. I became, to some extent, the point of tension here. Enders wanted to make sure that I took care of himself and Mrs. Enders during this visit. I knew that the one person that a State Department man has to take care of on a visit or trip, in addition to the people coming, is the Ambassador. If you don't do this, you and he are going to be very unhappy. The tension became very real. It never flared or got to the point where I had to say or do anything about it, but I went overboard to make sure that Ambassador Leonhart and his wife were really taken care of. I had to convince the Administrative Officer to make sure that the GSO, the drivers, and all of these other people were covering the Ambassador.

Well, this visit ended up as a huge operation, with the Political Counselor, the Director of USIA (United States Information Agency), and three Astronauts participating. I met Marshal Tito. The Yugoslavs were delighted to be part of this kind of thing. They never expected it and had never had anything like this. The Yugoslavs always wanted to separate themselves from the other countries behind the Iron Curtain - the Soviet Bloc countries. This was a wonderful way to do that. It was fascinating.

I learned something about editing the text of the record. I'll never forget that everybody wanted a signed photo of the Astronauts. Every Yugoslav involved, and his son, daughter, cousin, and uncle. Well, for one whole night, from about 11:30 PM or midnight until about 3:00 or 4:00 AM, four of us in the group handling the visit sat signing photographs! We

mimicked the signatures of Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin very well. We did it all by hand with these big marking pens. Then the pictures were framed and handed out to government officials and everybody else. As far as they were concerned, they had these lovely, signed photos which they probably treasure to this day. The photos were signed by me and two guys who came out with the Astronauts from Washington. We never told anybody from the Embassy what we were doing.

John Thomas had sent one of his staff, who was the “bag man” on the trip. I don't know if you've ever dealt with this, but this is the way it was done. The man just brought a bag full of cash. The bag man said to me, “Tony, what have you spent so far, what more do you need, and what will you need after we leave?” I added it up, and it was about $7,000- $8,000. He said, “Sign here.” I just signed, and he handed me the money. I put the money in my pocket and went out and paid off the drivers and the other people - not U.S. Government employees. This money was for purchases which had to be made but which would not have fit within the usual guidelines. Entertainment, for example, which had to be offered. There was a wonderful, big lunch which the Astronauts hosted for Marshal Tito and the other Yugoslav officials. We had to pay for that lunch. The Embassy didn't have the money to do it. So we just paid for it and then were reimbursed by John Thomas' “bag man.” That's a fascinating, little anecdote from this trip.

It also showed me how Embassies can be absolutely riven and divided by personality differences. Ambassador Leonhart and DCM Tom Enders never got along.

Q: Eventually, Enders was “bounced” from Belgrade, but he went on tbigger and better things.

GILLESPIE: That's right. Bill Leonhart ended up at the National Defense University, or some place like that, and I ended up working for Tom Enders much later. It was interesting because Enders insisted, even to this day, that my “outstanding performance” in Belgrade

had nothing at all to do with his hiring me in ARA where he eventually served as Assistant Secretary.

Q: Alright, why don't we stop here?

GILLESPIE: And then we'll pick up with the Embassy in Mexico City.

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Q: Today is November 22, 1995. Tony, you mentioned that before you went to Mexico City you became involved in the Charles Thomas case in Washington. This was a landmark case. Could you talk about it and first give the background?

GILLESPIE: Sure. My recollection is that Charles Thomas entered the Foreign Service through the written examination process. I don't recall the exact time of his entry into the Foreign Service, but I think that it must have been in the 1950s. Charles was not from the establishment. He was one of those people who came in from a more modest background. My recollection is that he had an excellent, academic background. I think that he had a law degree. He had served either in Korea or elsewhere in the military service. He may have been a pilot, though I'm not sure. Certainly, he had been an officer.

He entered the Foreign Service and, from all appearances, seemed to have a good, if not necessarily an outstanding career path. It turned out that in the early 1960s, or possibly as late as the early 1970s, he was summarily informed that he was being “selected out” of the Foreign Service. My recollection is that he decided that he would not take being selected out lightly. So he began to look into why he was being selected out. Somehow, he obtained access to his personnel file. In those days getting access to your personnel file was not at all guaranteed. However, by some means, he found out that efficiency reports had not been prepared on him for certain periods of time. Some of those which had been done were either inaccurate or contained outright “falsehoods” of one kind or another. So he really charged forward with this case, trying to prevent his own selection

out. My recollection is that this was at a time when it just wasn't done that way. This was supposedly not what happened in the Foreign Service. You just didn't fight selection out and you didn't charge forward. You accepted it as philosophically as possible. Charles Thomas was very tenacious. Although I had met him, I was not directly involved but was on the fringes of his case through the Junior Foreign Service Officer Club (JFSOC) and the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA). The JFSOC people really jumped on this case, probably a lot more firmly than AFSA. My recollection is that AFSA itself didn't quite know how to deal with it.

Q: AFSA was still pretty much the old boy network. GILLESPIE: It was the old boy network.

Q: Wasn't this still sort of in the Kennedy era, or perhaps beforthat? Youth was going to be served during this period.

GILLESPIE: Thomas was not an old man. He was still in his 40s. He hadn't hit 50 yet. In any event he carried his fight against his selection out forward as far as he could. At some point in late 1970 or early 1971 he basically lost the case. He was told, “You're out of here.” Now, my recollection is that he was a senior FSO-4 in the old system, which is equivalent to today's FSO-2. That is, a middle grade officer. He did not apparently have any means of his own. He was married to an American woman who was dramatic and an artist - Cynthia Thomas.

The two of them Charles and Cynthia Thomas were just devastated by this development. My wife and I got to know the Thomas's socially. We were never intimate friends but we knew and saw them, say, once every two or three weeks during this period. However, it came as a total surprise in April, 1971, when he shot and killed himself. Well, we all know what happens when an incident like this takes place. That event, and not the substance of his appeal from selection out, was the trigger of a major uproar. All of a sudden the Charles Thomas case became a cause celebre. People jumped on it. To make a long

story short, as a result, a number of changes were instituted in the Foreign Service personnel system, in terms of access to personnel files, things that might or might not be said in efficiency reports, the opportunity to present a grievance case initially or eventually about the absence of efficiency reports or the presence of extraneous material in efficiency reports.

Q: I even think that there was some mix-up. There was another Charles Thomas in the Foreign Service. [FYI - The other Charles Thomas was Charles Howard Thomas II, born in New York on June 23, 1934, and married to Lourana SwiForThis Charles Thomas was promoted to FSO-3 in June, 1974, and so was clearly another person.] The personnel files are not always the best kept records.

GILLESPIE: So that happened, and eventually, I think, you could consider his case as a major trigger for this whole idea that a Foreign Service Officer has a basic, 20 year career or time span in which to move through the service. If he or she doesn't get past a certain threshold, such a person is involuntarily retired, but with an annuity, as opposed to dismissal. This is now the reality.

The Thomas Case has another interesting aspect, Stu, and it came up later in my experience. It was the first time that I personally saw how the Foreign Service and the State Department, in its own fashion, dealt with spouses. In this case Cynthia Thomas carried on her late husband's fight. She was not going to let it die. She enlisted a lot of support - lawyers outside the Foreign Service and people inside the service. She is probably responsible in many ways for some of the changes which did take place in the system.

Initially, the Foreign Service and the State Department were certainly not happy with what she was doing, although they didn't try to shut her up. They didn't like it. It wasn't the right thing to do. She went to the press, and there were a lot of things said. Eventually, in its own, inimitable way, the system hired Cynthia Thomas and brought her on board as a

full-time employee, I think initially as a Foreign Service Reserve Officer. [FYI - She was commissioned an FSR-5 in May, 1971, according to the 1974 (the last UNCLASSIFIED) issue of the BIOGRAPHIC REGISTER.) They tried to send her overseas, perhaps with the idea that they would look as if they were doing something nice, and, secondly, they might be removing a little bit of a pinprick from the system or something worse than a pinprick.

This practice came up later in several ways, often done in what I am convinced was a truly humanitarian gesture, or sometimes done, as in the case of Cynthia Thomas, with the idea, “Well, let's do something nice and also solve a problem for ourselves.” There's not a whole lot more to say about this case, except to say that it struck me, during my formative years in the Foreign Service, as a case where you could see, on the one hand and particularly in the way Charles and later Cynthia Thomas were dealt with, a very impersonal or apparently very impersonal way of avoiding rocking the boat or making waves. What Charles and Cynthia Thomas had done was simply not the kind of thing that was done in the Foreign Service of the United States of America if you expect or want to prosper and be promoted.

Q: So you went to Mexico City when?

GILLESPIE: I went to the Embassy in Mexico City in June, 1972. We packed up in Washington and drove across the country with our two kids - no pets - in a big Chevrolet Impala sedan. I recall that we were listening to a song called, “The Horse with No Name,” a song that was very popular then. We drove across the U.S. from East to West and then headed down the West Coast of Mexico. We entered Mexico from California in Tijuana and cut back to the mainland of Mexico, drove through Mazatlan, and eventually, went through the State of Sinaloa, the mountains and the desert. We arrived in Mexico City in June, 1972.

It was supposed to be a four-year tour. I stayed there just abouthree years and a month, for reasons which we can get into later.

Q: Alright. What was your assignment in the Embassy in Mexico City?

GILLESPIE: I was assigned as the Supervisory General Services Officer. That put me at the head of a Section in a very large, administrative organization. When I arrived in Mexico City, there were three American Assistant General Services Officers and about 110 Foreign Service Nationals of different categories. These included the Mexican employees in Mexico City and at the constituent posts. I learned after I got there that I also had all of the General Services responsibilities for what at the time were nine constituent posts, i.e., Consulates General and Consulates.

Q: What had you been told about the job before you went to Mexico City? You always "pick up" both official and corridor gossip about both the job and what you really were expected to do.

GILLESPIE: Well, Mexico was hot stuff in the administrative area, for two reasons. Earlier, we had all thought that people like Tom Stern former Assistant Secretary of State for Administration and some others in the administrative area were modern managers. The concept of an Executive Administrative Counselor had arisen. It had first really come to the fore in Thailand, at some point in the 1960s, where you had the Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, and a huge mission below them. We picked up, as I characterized it, a little bit of the British Head of Chancery idea. This was a third-ranking person or almost co-equal with the second-ranking person. However, his or her job at the time was certainly the administrative management of the mission, so that the Deputy Chief of Mission could really concentrate on managing substantive affairs and inter- agency problems related to policy and diplomatic or other kinds of operations.

I guess that this system had just been imposed in Mexico in the late 1960s, which, at least without the military, was about on a par with the Embassy in Bangkok in terms of size and complexity. In addition to the Embassy itself there were these nine constituent posts, with tremendous immigrant and non-immigrant visa issuing responsibilities. There were also

other agencies in Mexico, such as what was then the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs [BNDD] and which has since become the Drug Enforcement Administration [DEA]. There were other agencies represented in Mexico as well. Our mission in Mexico is unique because of Mexico's proximity to the United States and the nature of our activities there.

As I think I mentioned earlier, I arranged to change an assignment to Russian language training and then to be an Assistant General Services Officer at our Embassy in Moscow to take this job in Mexico and serve with a person who was going to replace Ralph Ribble. Ralph had been the first Executive Counselor in Mexico City and was still there when I arrived. The man who'd recruited me for my job, Vic Dikeos, was coming later. I had been basically sold the job and told that it would be “large and a challenge,” that it was two grades above my personal rank, and so it would be what they now call a “stretch assignment” for me.

I was told that I was going to be expected to manage a major real property, building, and long term leasing program, including new office buildings. There were also pressures back then in 1972 because of the balance of payments problems which had come up earlier during the Johnson administration and continued through the Nixon years. We would have to cut back, so we were probably going to be paring down. One aspect of my job would be to manage that, dispose of things, move things and people, and so forth. I had been led to believe, and it turned out to be the case, that this would be a rather complex job with a great deal happening.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you went to Mexico City?

GILLESPIE: When I arrived, the Ambassador was Robert McBride, a career officer. Ambassador McBride was a quintessential Foreign Service Officer. He had been Political Counselor or DCM in the Embassy in Paris. He had served in Europe and other areas of the world. His DCM was Robert Dean, a Latin American specialist. The Embassy was staffed with what I considered high quality people. H. Freeman Matthews, whose

father had been a rather prominent Foreign Service Officer, was the Political Counselor. There were lots of people on the staff whose names I had heard of and whom I had seen around the Department. They later went on to do a variety of other things. It was a big, active Embassy. At the time there must have been, if you counted all of the American and Mexican staff, probably close to 1,000 people in the Embassy and constituent posts. The Embassy in Mexico City alone probably had a staff of several hundred.

There was a huge consular operation. The Embassy in Mexico City was one of the visa mills where junior officers were assigned to do visa work. We had a large group of junior officers.

Relations between the United States and Mexico were more or less as they've always been. There was a feeling among the Mexicans of superiority over the United States because of their cultural background and an inferiority complex because of their concern about this big, heavy-handed neighbor to the North, the disparity in economic relations, and all of that.

The Mexicans had gone through something which has still not completely disappeared, even in 1995. That is, a very difficult situation which mirrored things happening in the rest of the world, in France, and in the U.S. - the well- known 1968 riots. In 1968 Mexican youth had risen up in protest against the policies of their own government. They wanted political and economic reform. They felt that the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the famous PRI, was too institutional and not revolutionary any more. They were probably right.

Luis Echeverria, the man who was Secretary of the Interior in 1968,basically put down this revolt. There were shootings...

Q: It was during the Olympic Games in Mexico City, too.

GILLESPIE: It was right during the time of the Olympics, so there was a prominent display of all of this to the world. Later, Echeverria became President of Mexico. In those days you

became President because the outgoing President named you the candidate of the PRI. The Spanish term for this is dedazo, which is literally “fingering.” The person so fingered becomes the anointed and then President during elections which were absolutely under the control of the PRI, the governing party.

Echeverria had been President of Mexico since 1970. MexicaPresidents serve a six- year term, with no possibility of re-election.

Other items which were kind of hot on the policy plate at the time included narcotics trafficking into the United States. However, in the multilateral sense Mexico has always had the view that it's big, it's important, and it should have a voice in the world. You may recall that the Mexicans set themselves apart from the U.S. at the time of the Castro revolution in Cuba and refused to go along with anything the United States wanted to do in the OAS (the Organization of American States) regarding the exclusion of Cuba. The Mexicans maintained relations with Cuba continuously, in effect thumbing their noses at us. However, they did whatever they felt that they needed to do with regard to Cuba. The Mexicans had been very much involved with the Non-Aligned Movement and the G- 77 group of 77 countries seeking major reform in the political and economic order.

My strong recollection is that the Mexicans were really playing a key role in some of the things happening at the UN, and specifically in connection with the effort by certain Arab and other countries to promote resolutions stating that, “Zionism is racism.” This issue was deliberately aimed at isolating Israel. I can recall vividly attending Country Team meetings in Mexico City when we considered what action to take regarding Mexico and how to convince them not to take the positions they took.

President Echeverria had a pet project called, The New International Economic Order (NIEO), which was very much part of the North-South controversy of poorer countries of the Southern Hemisphere of the world against the richer countries of the Northern

Hemisphere. The view was that the richer and industrialized countries owed the poorer countries a living and ought to transfer resources to them. That was the policy backdrop.

In addition to global issues there were bilateral narcotics and agricultural problems. There were border problems involving smuggling across the Mexican-U.S. border. Illegal immigration of Mexicans into the U.S. was just as big an issue then as it is now. The maquiladora facilities in Mexico near the border with the U.S. involved the assembly of products in Mexico, with Mexican labor, using raw and semi-finished inputs imported from the United States. The finished product was then re-exported to the United States, essentially on a duty-free basis. They were initially set up as part of a U.S. program during the Johnson administration. Previously, Mexican “guest workers” had been brought into the United States to work, on a temporary basis. This program had been stopped, as many Mexican workers remained more or less permanently in the U.S. So the view was, “If you can't bring Mexican workers into the U.S., send the raw materials to Mexico and have them assemble the products there.” That's how the maquiladora system began, following a Canadian model from the 1950s!

Many U.S. business firms established themselves in Mexico, investing in ways which created problems. Although these firms were to have duty-free status in the United States, if there were any evidence that they were exporting to a third country, there were problems. Getting production inputs into and out of customs bond was a problem.

There was a problem with the trade in agricultural commodities. It turned out that beef in the form of heads of cattle were often moved across the Mexican-American border two or three times, before eventually going to market in the U.S. or elsewhere. That presented a whole range of problems.

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which more or less includes the area South of Mexico City from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean and down to the Mexican-Guatemalan border, is a natural barrier against an insect called the screw worm. This worm is

transmitted by a fly which is carried on cattle. The worm infects the cow, which becomes a vector, a breeding ground for the screw worm. I got involved in this because it required the assignment of U.S. Department of Agriculture Inspection Service people in remote areas of Mexico. My job was to go and help them to get the land on which to construct buildings and bring in cars and trucks for this activity. What these American inspectors were doing was fascinating. However, there were many public relations aspects in which I was involved on the edges, if not directly, from time to time.

The program for dealing with the screw worm involves collecting larvae of the fly itself. You breed the larvae in cattle blood to a certain point. Then you irradiate them with radioactive material. That makes the larvae infertile but does not kill them. You allow the larvae to reach maturity, put them in little boxes, load them onto airplanes - hundreds and thousands of them - and release them over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico and other areas where the screw worm is found. These flies mate with fertile flies, and there are no progeny. You learn a lot in the Foreign Service and you go through some terribly smelly situations along the way. The cultivation or propagation of screw worm flies is something I never want to see again.

Q: So you were a willing participant in a kind of process of coituinterruptus.

GILLESPIE: I think of it now in terms of all of these debates about human fertility control. There I was, out there doing it with flies! This was a big program. As I mentioned earlier, when speaking about Thailand, we didn't have the U.S. military involved in this program. However, there were several hundred USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) employees involved in this program. They were based in Texas and all over Mexico.

Q: I never served in Mexico but I have the impression that Mexican policy has always involved something of a double standard. The foreign policy of the country has been turned over, in effect, to the Left, people who really don't like the United States or took on that coloration. Meanwhile, in the rest of the country a lot of Mexican-American business

goes on, in which everyone is involved. Despite problems, relations between the two countries have generally been good. On the other hand there was this Zionism Is Racism resolution, which basically was an Arab resolution at the United Nations aimed at sticking it to the Israelis. That was the playpen for the Mexican LeForDid you get that impression?

GILLESPIE: Oh, yes. However, I have to say, it became more prominent and more visible as Mexicans, and specifically President Miguel De la Madrid, who was two Presidents ago in Mexico, began a process of economic reform in that country.

However, this was absolutely true in the 1970s, when I was in Mexico, and had been so earlier, I believe. Nonetheless, there was still a lot of political capital to be made if the President of Mexico could appear to be opposing the United States on some issue. (End of tape)

Q: You wwere saying that the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs haallowed the leadership to show...

GILLESPIE: It has become more evident recently, I think, and maybe this is in the process of further modification, that in the field of foreign affairs Mexico's internationalism was going to lean to the LeForThis was part of the political equation in Mexico while, at the same time, a less leftist line would be followed domestically. However, I think that it was established policy for Mexican Presidents, through President Jose Lopez Portillo, who succeeded President Echeverria, to demonstrate their leftist credentials.I remember the periodic display of these credentials vividly. Ambassador McBride would come back from a meeting with the Mexican President and would say, “He's done it again!” The Mexican President would say, in effect, “My turn signal will say 'Left,' but I'm going to go 'Right.'” Then the Mexican President would go Left and didn't go Right. We hadn't trusted him, but we knew that he was going to say that. Ambassador McBride would respond to that with a wry and sort of sardonic grin. Sure, that was the practice.

Mexico really doesn't have cabinet ministers as such. Mexican cabinet level officials are called Secretaries of the various departments, as is the case in the United States. The Secretary of Foreign Relations, called “RE” Foreign Relations in the Spanish acronym, has often been one of the most leftist figures in the PRI. That's where such leftists got into the Mexican Government. The Secretariat of Foreign Relations, which is a mixture of career people and a lot of politically appointed officials, has reflected that mixture. Over the past 20 years or so when I have been associated with the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations its professionalism has increased dramatically. It has a cadre of well- informed, competent, and able diplomats who are politically very sharp. They have been under the political thumb of both the PRI and the Secretary of their department for a long time, and they can't get away from that easily. The Secretary of Foreign Relations was the man on the LeForThis gave the President and the other Secretaries room to move in whichever direction they wanted to go.

In terms of Mexico's foreign policy, President Echeverria, his predecessors and his immediate successors all saw their interests and advantage as best served by not being with the United States. To say that they are anti-American is always a rather inaccurate term. They could also be described as, challenging, not caving in, not surrendering, not under Washington's thumb.

The thumb of the United States in Mexico is remarkably big. In Mexico City our Embassy reflected this during my time there and, I believe, it reflects it today. In Mexico our diplomatic establishment, in many ways - although you can overstate this - is a piece of the Potomac River, moved South. Back in the 1970s you definitely saw that the Office of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Mexico City really didn't feel that it was under the authority, leadership, and command of the U.S. Ambassador. It responded to the INS in Washington and had a lot of direct contact with INS posts along the Mexican-U.S. border.

I've mentioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the screw worm program, which is basically a domestic program translated into the overseas environment. The Animal Plant Health Inspection Service was really a domestic operation. The leader of that group in Mexico, in terms of pay grade and all of that, was a super-bureaucrat in the U.S. Civil Service. He was about a GS-19, or something similar. He outranked a lot of the people in the Embassy in terms of pay and position and reported directly to a major-level person in USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). He was wise enough to keep the Embassy informed of what was going on and took the Embassy's lead because he thought that it was in his interest to do so. However, in terms of program and all that, he felt no obligation to the Ambassador or the DCM. This was also true, as I mentioned, with the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) - now the Drug Enforcement Administration, or DEA. They wanted to be in the Embassy because they wanted diplomatic passports, since they all carried guns and did all kinds of things. They liked the protection provided by a diplomatic passport. However, they didn't think that the State Department, the Ambassador, the Political and Economic Sections, or anybody else in the U.S. Mission knew what should or needed to go on.

Going back to the World War II years the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) had had an office in Mexico City, which was called the Office of the Legal Attache in the Embassy. The head of this office was one of the most senior officers in the FBI. It was a big-time job. The FBI didn't have a lot of overseas posts at that time - Mexico City was one of the few. The FBI officer in charge of this office during my time in the Embassy in Mexico City was a very smooth operator. However, he knew that if the Embassy put too much pressure on him, all he had to do was to pick up the phone and call somebody in Washington. He could get on a plane and go to Washington very easily.

Interestingly enough, Congress paid a lot of attention to Mexico. Congressman John Rooney, who was near the end of his career in Congress, controlled the State Department budget. He was actively interested in what was going on in Mexico. He had a lot of

constituents in New York with contacts in Mexico. There was Congressman Kika De la Garza, Democrat of Texas, a Mexican-American congressman who was very influential on agricultural questions. I remember that whenever the State Department considered closing or even reducing the size of our consular posts in Mexico, such as Mazatlan, Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, and so forth, we'd get a phone call from De la Garza, Rooney, Wayne Hayes, or some other congressman, saying, “You can't do that.” The Senate Majority Leader at the time was Senator Mike Mansfield Democrat, Montana, who had very close contact with Mexico. He had set up a U.S.-Mexican Interparliamentary Group. He visited Mexico at least twice a year, bringing a delegation with him. They would go to Acapulco or one of the other Mexican resort areas. They would meet with their counterparts in Mexico. Mexican legislators at that time were really drones. They didn't have any authority, since Mexico has a presidential system. However, Mansfield and his delegation would come down to Mexico and make all kinds of wonderful statements.

By the way, the GSO supported all of this in an interesting way. One of the things that Senator Mansfield had done, some time in the 1960s - I don't remember the year - was to say, “Well, if I'm going to keep coming down to Mexico, then we're going to have to be supported.” So Mansfield, the Senate Majority Leader, had taken a fellow from New Jersey, known to him in some way, and had him brought into the Foreign Service as what was then a Foreign Service Staff Officer. He had him made the head of the “Visitors' Office” in the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, where he stayed for about 12 years. This man had Mexico wired. I must say that he was of benefit to everyone in the Embassy, because, if we wanted to go to a hotel in some far-off place in Mexico, David would always be able to get us in, usually at a cut rate. He could get us a reservation if space was tight. Certainly, if we had any important visitor from the Executive Branch or the Congress, David took care of all thaHe had a staff of three Mexican employees, who worked with him. All of them were well-connected. I can tell you that at Christmas time and the Mexican holiday of the Cinco de Mayo, May 5, Mexican National Day an enormous number of cases of booze were handed out as gifts by the Embassy. These were delivered to the

very top Mexican figures with whom David and the Embassy worked. There were Baccarat decanters of cognac and all kinds of wonderful things that greased the skids.

In a personal way there was some tension in this connection. My predecessor, who was much senior to me, had told me, “One of your jobs will be managing the Visitors' Office. They don't report to you, but you depend on them, and they depend on you. You both report to the Ambassador, so you're going to have to figure it out.” It was a challenge for the three years that I was there in the Embassy in Mexico City. I think that we handled it adequately. It worked and it worked rather well. This fellow did not like to have any of what he regarded as his prerogatives stepped on.

Q: You must have had to tread very carefully, with the DEA, FBI, and all these other people. Technically, you gave them support. Were you able to call on resources, say, from the FBI. In other words, if you needed, say, a generator, could you get a generator or something like that from them?

GILLESPIE: I find that I have to talk about this situation almost as if it were ancient history. The whole idea of Shared Administrative Support in an Embassy was still being worked out. I had just come out of the administrative area in Washington, from the office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration. I had worked as the clean up guy for the head of Budget and Finance. I knew about all the reimbursement stuff and who reimbursed whom, and how you did this. The answer to your question is, “Yes, we cut a lot of deals.” If we needed something, we got it, one way or another. It was always legal. I learned, early on, that in this business, and we've just seen it in the Anti-Deficiency Act and these furloughs of federal employees during the past week or 10 days, that there are certain real rules in our business if you're dealing with government property, funds, or resources. You had darned well better know what those rules are and follow them. I learned those rules early, I stuck with them, and I had no qualms about saying to an Ambassador or a DCM or another Embassy officer, “You cannot do that, sir. That is not permitted.” One of the main problems is what is called cross funding. This involves

taking money from one pot and trying to spend it on something else. Usually, this is strictly forbidden and not permitted. If you do that, you get into significant legal and maybe even criminal trouble. You have to work these matters out very carefully. What you do always must be able to stand the glare of the Inspector General or an auditor, or you, your bosses, and everybody else will be in trouble.

However, the answer to your question is, “Yes, we can figure thiout.” Can we talk about the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)?

Q: Absolutely. The point is, we're talking about past history, and think that we should describe this as best we can.

GILLESPIE: I had had a very close relationship as a Security Officer in the Philippines, definitely in Indonesia, and certainly in Belgium with various personalities in the CIA. They knew me. When you are dealing with people in that business, particularly from the Directorate of Operations [DO], you would like to think that they always tell the truth, but you never know whether, in fact, they do. And you never know who's exploiting whom and how.

Whatever the case, when I got to Mexico, the CIA Chief of Station (COS) called me and asked me to come to his office. He was the head of the CIA operation in Mexico, which was really big. It did not have a whole lot to do with Mexico. You may recall the Kennedy assassination and all that. The Soviet Union had a huge Embassy in Mexico. It was perceived to be one of the main launching pads for penetration of the United States. There were a lot of things going on. The COS said that he had been told by his colleagues that they had known me as a Security Officer. He wanted to make sure that I understood that he had a big, complex operation and would need a lot of support from the General Services Officer. He was conducting a very smart, interagency, managerial operation.

He then did something that was very interesting and had not happened to me before, in the same way. He said, “I would like you now to meet with each of my officers who are

here under State Department cover, i.e., are listed as State Department officers while still working for the CIA and learn what they do. I'd like you to have a sense of what they're doing. If there's any way that they can help you, in anything that you're doing, and so forth...”

Q: Can you explain what a “State declared cover officer” is?

GILLESPIE: Yes. The CIA, of course, has employees who work overseas. As we know, these are not agents as such. They are mostly what we call Case Officers and technical support people. They are the direct hire, career employees of the Central Intelligence Agency's Directorate of Operations. They are overseas operatives. Their job is to recruit and manage spies who are really the agents. To do that, the CIA uses a system of disguise or “cover,” as it's called. The cover can be either non-official - that is, outside the U.S. Government establishment, perhaps in a business or travel agency of some kind. They could be academics or whatever. Or, they could use official cover. The official cover is either tightly or loosely as a member of one or another U.S. Government agency. Most often, this is the State Department. There are two kinds of cover within the State Department.

In one case the Central Intelligence Agency employee has all of the trappings of a State Department employee, although not usually that of a Foreign Service Officer. It might be as a Foreign Service Staff or Reserve officer. They, of course, have a diplomatic passport and their identity card from the State Department has a telephone number and an office in the State Department building in Washington to which you can refer. Their names are typed on State Department travel orders. They even go to the extent of doing “dummy” efficiency reports on one of their employees, if the person is in the political, economic, commercial, consular, or administrative sections of one of our Embassies.

Then there is a looser cover in which the person just arrives at the Embassy with a diplomatic passport and some rather loose documentation that says that this person is a member of the Political Section. Those are the kinds of cover arrangements.

Each one carries a different kind of funding and support load with it, which is interesting. Obviously, it costs more to pretend that someone really is in the Foreign Service, rather than to have them just ride free on the skirts of the Embassy.

The point here is that the Central Intelligence Agency in Mexico had a big operation. It had a lot of resources and its own administrative structure within the Station. Their Administrative Officer, while junior to our Executive Counselor, was senior to me. He was a very sharp fellow. We quickly figured out how we could help each other. I could help them buy things and do things so that they didn't have to reveal who they were. He could provide various kinds of things that we couldn't get our hands on very easily. We could do this on a proper reimbursement, involving paper transfers, and all of that.

What struck me was the extent of the influence of the Chief of Station and those below him. The Chief of Station has about as much clout as an Ambassador does within the Station. Everyone just said, “Yes, sir,” and started briefing me on what they did and how they did it. Not down to “sources and methods,” but the kinds of things they did. For example, one group of CIA officers dealt with Eastern Europe other than with the Soviet Union. Another group dealt with domestic Mexican affairs. Still another group did technical things. They showed me all of the gadgets that they had. They told me that if we ever needed any of it, just to ask for it. All of this had a point because it came into play about 10 months after I arrived in Mexico. The key point here is that the Chief of Station in Mexico, like Chiefs of Station around the world, had his own lines of communication back to CIA headquarters. However, in the case of Mexico, I think that this was compounded.

The Ambassador obviously cared about what the Mexicans were doing. He cared tremendously about the Station's coverage of the Mexican political and economic scene.

However, he knew that by far the bulk of the Agency's intelligence resources was devoted to the Soviet Union and other communist bloc targets. The Chief of Station had an interesting job.

The Ambassador, the DCM, and the Executive Counselor were the heavyweights of the mission. The position of Executive Counselor turned out to be an interesting arrangement. The Executive Counselor, a senior Administrative Officer, actually prepared the efficiency reports on the Consuls General at the constituent posts when I was there. This was an unusual practice since the Consul General in Mexico City, who was also a very senior, consular officer, usually handled that responsibility, as do Consuls General in our Embassies elsewhere in the world. I think that there was always some resentment about that.

Q: I'm sure there was.

GILLESPIE: In fact, this situation has changed since then. It's gone back to the previous situation where the Consul General in Mexico City prepares the efficiency reports on the Consuls General at the constituent posts.

Q: I'll come back to these other things later, but there is one thing which you have not mentioned here. For any GSO, probably the most important person as far as he or she is concerned is the Ambassador's wife. Normally, the Ambassador's wife is fine, but she can be absolutely hell on wheels. The Embassy in Mexico City has had some hells on wheels. How was Mrs. McBride? Was she a problem?

GILLESPIE: Mrs. McBride, if my memory serves, had been a Foreign Service secretary. I guess that each GSO has to deal with these things in his or her own way. I dealt with Mrs. McBride, to the extent that I was able, in the same way that I dealt with the Ambassador. That is, I was straight. I was “there” for her, whenever she wanted me. I dealt with her in as business-like a way as I could.

The Embassy Residence in Mexico City is a big barn of a place. It has always had its own little support structure. The term we used then was, “a full-time, resident staff.” An American woman was the combined social secretary and manager of the property, staff, and everything else. She was a wonderful woman and she and Mrs. McBride got along famously, which made life much easier for me. First of all, Mrs. McBride didn't have to call me very often. I can't remember any instance when Ambassador McBride called me about something at the Residence. That's a little bit unusual for a GSO.

Q: Oh, yes!

GILLESPIE: It wasn't my fault that things worked well. We had a Mexican GSO staff, a superb Building Maintenance Staff, under Ingeniero (Engineer) Jorge Duarte. He was short in stature, very handsome, and very smart. He was no more a graduate engineer than the man in the moon, but he carried himself well. Everybody called him Ingeniero as a matter of courtesy, because he was the boss of this maintenance staff. He knew how to make things right quickly, if anything went wrong. He was a bug on preventive maintenance.

Q: Sounds wonderful.

GILLESPIE: He would come to me and say, “We have to spend money on the water system in these places because it's going to go bad.” I would say, “Well, let's budget for it.” He would say, “Yes, but we have to do something right away,” so we'd have to figure out how to find the money. Then the bad thing didn't happen because he arranged to have preventive maintenance done.

Anyway, I was blessed with an excellent maintenance staff and I was blessed with Mrs. McBride, as well as her successor as well. These women were very serious. They took their jobs as the Ambassador's wife very seriously.

Q: Who succeeded Ambassador McBride?

GILLESPIE: John Jova. His wife was Pamela Jova. Ambassador McBride became quite ill. Let's see. I arrived in Mexico City in 1972. He must have left Mexico City by the end of 1973. However, during 1972 and 1973 he probably spent weeks in Texas at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas. He was having serious health problems. I don't know whether it was cancer or just other, internal problems. However, he died not long after he left Mexico. Mrs. McBride died recently. I think that her name was Jean. I never got to know her well, but we had a nice relationship. As I said, I don't think that Ambassador McBride ever called me. Mrs. McBride rarely did. It was usually the social secretary at the Residence who would call the right person in the GSO's office and didn't bother me with whatever was needed. I had one Assistant GSO, Tom Linville - Duane T. Linville. He was one of those marvelous people. Not a Southerner, but he spoke slowly. He had a quick mind but a slow tongue. If we had anything going wrong out at the Residence, I'd get Tom to go out there. He would walk through, look carefully, take notes, and say, “Yep [yes], that's the problem. We'll have that taken care of. I can't do it today, but I'll have it done by noon tomorrow, Mrs. McBride” (or the secretary). And he did. So people had confidence in Tom, and thank goodness for that.

Meanwhile, I was running around, going to the Consulates in Merida, in the Yucatan Peninsula, to Mazatlan, Hermosillo, and other places. We had building projects under way. We had buildings falling down around our ears. We had DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) people who needed new office space. My boss felt that the Supervisory General Services Officer ought to be on top of those problems. We had Principal Officers at the Consulates who were active and engaged. We also had other Principal Officers who didn't even want even to think about office space and maintenance problems.

Mexico, because it is Mexico, is close to the U.S. If you have a health problem, you want to go where you can be close to home. So Canada, Mexico, and posts in the Caribbean

are the assignments of choice for those who are chronically ill because they are closest to the U.S.

Q: I worked in Personnel for a time. This is where we put an awful lot of people - particularly single ladies whose mothers were getting elderly.

GILLESPIE: Exactly! Mexico is a large country where we have a number of posts. It could absorb duds. If you had people who weren't too sharp, well, let me tell you. The administrative people who also had administrative responsibilities at some of our posts in Mexico fit that description. So my boss would say, “You'd better get out there and make sure that that doesn't get messed up.” We were doing a lot of new things, Stu. Here I worked very closely with the people from the consular operation. We were dealing with a tremendous increase in the visa work load which was well under way.

Remember Lake Chapala, near Guadalajara, Mexico? There were Mexican securities called “pagares” which were attractive investments, particularly for Americans who had retired. During the “boom days” of which I speak, there were literally thousands of Americans - school teachers and middle level workers who were collecting their Social Security and retirement pensions and living in Mexico. They were investing in Mexican securities and had moved - lock, stock, and barrel - to the lovely area around Lake Chapala, near Guadalajara. Life was cheap, life was easy, and they were living the life of Riley. They were also living in the area around Cuernavaca. They were getting fantastic returns on their money - 30 to 50 percent. They converted their pensions, denominated in U.S. dollars, into pesos, and lived on the proceeds. These people were fine.

Well, they presented problems. They were growing old, were getting sick, and dying. They often had few friends. They were a problem for the American Consulate people in Guadalajara, or the American Consul in Mexico City who dealt with the Cuernavaca area.

So we had a tremendous workload. How would we handle all of thi- particularly the visa load? The fact is that so many people want to come to the U.S. that they line up the night

before, just as they do for a rock concert or a big time football game, and stand outside waiting to enter the Consulate or Consular Section of the Embassy. That looks bad, and it creates security and human sanitation problems of all kinds. In the early 1970s we did not have, to my knowledge, anyone in Washington who was systematically looking at this problem. No one was apparently considering systematically whether there were rules which we could apply, whether they affected Kingston, Jamaica; the Dominican Republic; Mexico City; or Italy, which would deal with people. We had people who were thinking about this problem, but there was no systematic approach to it.

As it turned out, one of my jobs was to do a major renovation and “add-on” in the Consulate General in Guadalajara. The Consulate General was just going to duplicate what was already there. I said, “Wait a minute. We've got to look at how we're going to deal with the fact that the waiting lines have increased 150% in the last two years, and we think that they're going to grow longer. Can we build better waiting rooms, arrange for seating, and bathrooms?” They hadn't thought of doing any of that. I took Ingeniero Duarte and got the consular officers in Guadalajara around a table. We tried to scope out what we thought was going to happen. We contacted Foreign Building Operations FBO in Washington. They weren't much help. Many of the people in FBO were just a bunch of duds and didn't care. All they wanted to do was spend the money they had. We did a lot of that kind of planning. It was really kind of a management job. I thought that this was fascinating and challenging. It was going on all over the place.

There was one event which I want to be sure to cover and not forget about. Maybe we can discuss it in a later session. You'll recall that Ambassador Cleo Noel and Curtis Moore, the DCM in Khartoum, Sudan, were killed by Islamic terrorists. At the time we had what National Security Adviser Kissinger said was a clear policy on terrorism, kidnaping, hostage-taking, and these kinds of things.

That policy was put to the test early in 1973 when Terence Leonhardy, our Consul General in Guadalajara, was kidnaped. He was driving in a car, which was forced over to the side

of the road. There he was snatched by a group which, I think, called themselves “The 21 September Movement,” or something like that. This was a group of radical, Mexican leftist revolutionaries who had been fairly active for some time. They threatened to kill Leonhardy.

By that time Vic Dikeos, the incoming Executive Counselor, had arrived at the Embassy in Mexico City. Vic and I had both had a background in security. We had a Security Office in the Embassy in Mexico City with, I think, a couple of American Regional Security Officers in it. Both of them were competent, but we were immediately faced with a serious crisis. Bob Dean was the DCM and Charge d'Affaires. Ambassador McBride was out of the country, up in Texas. Dean turned to Dikeos, who turned to me. My job was to set up and manage the crisis management operation, not to get directly involved with the security aspects.

So we took over part of the Embassy. We shut it off from the rest of the Embassy and brought in teams of CIA, FBI, and other people. Working through Dikeos, I could tell these people to handle this. I organized it and set the schedules for 24 hour operations, because this went on for several weeks, as it turned out. We got through this operation. Leonhardy was eventually released. We did not pay any ransom. We held firm on this point. The Mexicans, however, made sure that he was released. I saw how you “play the edges” of this kind of matter carefully. We learned about the capabilities of the Mexican intelligence and federal law enforcement services, in terms of wire taps and clandestine activity. Of course, our own CIA and FBI were involved. I forget how many times Vic Dikeos and I flew back and forth between Mexico City and Guadalajara. We set up a smaller operation in Guadalajara - press, public affairs, the whole nine yards. It was really a challenge to handle this operation right. There was a constant battle with the Department in Washington about how far we could go with the Mexicans. Should we tell them NOT to do certain things? Should we close our eyes if they do some things of which we would not approve to get our man out? How would we handle this?

The Mexicans, of course, are capable of terribly repressive conduct. They just squeeze people until they break to get information - whether these people have information or not. It was a very, very challenging time. Bob Dean was really tested. I saw people blaming Consul General Leonhardy for what was happening to him. We learned about many of these comments after the fact. There was the Stockholm Syndrome and other syndromes, such as the one which goes, “Well, if he hadn't been in the car, going from his home to his office, he wouldn't have been kidnaped, so it's his fault!”

Q: Yes. In fact, there was a real problem for a while, early on in this business. Anyone who was kidnaped in this way was, in effect, put off to one side and, in fact, blamed for what had happened.

GILLESPIE: People like Leonhardy. That happened to this man, and that's the point of all of this. As far as I was concerned, all of this organization that I was involved in was kind of mechanical. It's important to get it right and do all of this stuff. I'm trying to remember the name of an officer who recently died and who had been the head of the anti-terrorism office in the Department. He came down to Mexico during the detention of Consul General Leonhardy but didn't want to touch this incident with a 10-foot pole. He was scared to death of it for the very reason that he would be blamed if it went right and blamed if it went wrong. He was a good and nice man but he was no help. Charge d'Affaires Dean finally said to him, “Well, if you want to sit here, that's fine. We'll go ahead with our business.” That was, to try and stay on top of this incident and basically try to answer Washington's questions. Washington wanted to know what was going on, what were we doing about it, what were the Mexicans doing?

In any event, Leonhardy was eventually released. Then two things happened. The first is the thing you mentioned. All of a sudden, people asked, “Why did this happen to this guy? He's been with those commies. He may have been tainted by all of this. Maybe he agrees

with them." The Mexicans weren't so sure thaLeonhardy was quite the reliable person that Leonhardy had been as the Consul General just a few days or weeks before.

The State Department said, "Well, we're planning on getting him out of Mexico. We don't have a job for him." Leonhardy kind of wanted to stay on as Consul General in Guadalajara. Well, he stayed a little while but not long. Eventually, he went off to be a Diplomat in Residence at some university in the U.S.. After that, he just kind of floated around, but nothing much happened to him.

The other thing that happened was Terence Leonhardy himself. I just saw him the other day and had a wonderful conversation with him, but we won't talk about this part. He thought that he was a hero because he had survived. As a survivor of a kidnaping, he deserved recognition. I'm sure that a psychologist or psychiatrist would say, "Yes, you have to figure out how to recognize what happened." Leonhardy translated his experience into, "I want a promotion, a bigger job, or at least an award for having been kidnaped, having survived, and having come back safely." There is logic in that, but when you think about it, you might conclude that what he really needed was something else. However, his interpretation of the event was different.

I watched that event. I saw behavior that was duplicitous, uncaring, and unknowing. Then I saw people saying, "We have to do something. Don't freeze this guy out." The system basically said, "Well, first of all, even if it wasn't his fault that he was kidnaped, he shouldn't have said what he said when he was released," which was nothing other than the fact that the kidnappers hadn't hurt him. He didn't praise them but he said that they didn't hurt him. He said that he was glad to be free and that he didn't agree with what the terrorists were doing. He made all of the right statements. However, the view was expressed by some people in the Department, "He shouldn't have said what he said and, for God's sake, what a resentful ego here. He thinks that he deserves some kind of recognition for this. Forget it!" So they pushed him aside. It was really sad to see that happen. I can't say that I was

in a position to do anything, but I didn't say, “Oh, gosh, let's handle this carefully.” I just watched it all.

Q: I think that this attitude changed, particularly after the kidnaping of Ambassador Diego Asencio in Colombia. This happened eight years later. By that time people had begun to think more carefully about such incidents, particularly after 1973, when the Vietnam prisoners of war were released. When Diego Asencio was released, he was told that he could have any job that he wanted in the Department. People said how well he had behaved. Well, indeed, he conducted himself very well. However, there had been a basic change in attitudes.

GILLESPIE: Remember the 1950s in Korea and the attitudes toward thbrainwashed prisoners of war.

Q: Yes, remember the novel, The Manchurian Candidate.

GILLESPIE: So Leonhardy suffered through that. I watched this process very carefully. It led to dramatic changes in the security situation at our Embassies. At that point the security organization in the State Department began to tighten everything up. We closed off some areas of our posts abroad and began to do different things. Once terrorism strikes, as we all know, you feel that you have to tighten things up. You certainly cannot ease things up. That situation changed a lot of things in Mexico. We'd had these nice constituent posts. I won't say that they were sleepy, because they were busy posts. They were nice places. We had some which were located in office buildings. All of a sudden we had to figure out ways to tighten security. We had intense debates over whether the policy was right and what we should do to get Leonhardy out. Should ransom be paid? Should we negotiate with the terrorists? At that point we did not have Brian Jenkins, who is now recognized as a security expert, to tell us what to do when you have a hostage situation. That kind of expertise was only beginning to emerge.

Q: There is a book on the assassinations in Khartoum written by a Foreign Service Officer named David Korn. This deals with the murder of Ambassador Cleo Noel and Curt Moore in Khartoum. This was a peculiar situation in which Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon tried to show that they had, to put it in diplomatic language, “balls.” They weren't going to make any concessions to the terrorists. They were talking tough and they were not particularly helping the cause. They were engaging in a lot of posturing and they weren't very practical. Did you see that kind of posturing going on in connection with the kidnaping of Leonhardy?

GILLESPIE: Oh, absolutely. We were being told by Washington, “You WILL hang tough here. Charge d'Affaires Dean was on the other end of the phone. We had an open telephone line to the Department. We had no secure telephones in those days. In fact, we were taping everything that was going on and keeping logs of all of these developments. We set up a mini-Operations Center. Dean would be on the phone with an Under Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Deputy Assistant Secretary, the FBI, or the CIA in Washington. Dean would be told, “Don't let them do this or that.” Dean would say, “Well, wait a minute, we have to get this guy out alive. What do you mean, 'Don't let them do that?' You're telling us that we're not going to pay ransom” or do this or that. Then Dean would be told, “Yes, but that's coming pretty close to it. The Secretary...” That was all very much on people's minds. We have a policy and we must follow it. Dean would say, “Look, I hate to do this, but you'd better send me that instruction in writing. I want to see it in writing and then I'll follow your instructions. If I don't receive written instructions by this or that time, I'm going to do this.” You know the old idea, “Unless otherwise directed, I will do the following.” Well, sometimes we'd get a piece of paper and sometimes we wouldn't get a piece of paper. They would check it out in Washington, and people would say, “That's kind of silly. We'll try to interpret the Kissinger instructions.”

It got fairly hairy. For a relatively young, junior Foreign Service Officer in there with a bunch of officials who were mostly older and supposedly wiser than I was, I learned an

awful lot in a hurry about bureaucratic behavior and the internal and interagency politics of such a matter. As far as I was concerned, Bob Dean was absolutely straightforward. He clearly saw that the established policy, that we would not pay ransom, had its merits. Once you begin to pay ransom, you're on the slippery slope.

However, short of paying ransom, we've really got an obligation to the person concerned, whether he's our person or somebody else's. There is an obligation to that person and to those around him. There was Mrs. Leonhardy to deal with. She was in a state of panic. It was just terrible. We had people in the Embassy - Americans and Mexicans all around - who were asking, “What's happening? Who's taking care of our people? How will this work out,” and so on. I thought that Bob Dean handled this matter well. He was on the phone all the time to Ambassador McBride who was up in Texas for medical treatment and couldn't come back. Remember, Ambassador McBride may have been undergoing or recovering from surgery at that time. He wasn't physically able to be there at the Embassy in Mexico. However, he was involved in some of the developments.

I have vivid recollections of moments when somebody in Washington would propose something. One or another of the people in Mexico - either Bob Dean or my boss, Vic Dikeos - would sit back and say, “Wait a minute. Slow down. Let's think about this. What are we doing? What's the objective? What are we trying to accomplish here?” We would be getting instructions like, “Go in there and tell the Mexicans” and “Go see the President of Mexico and tell him this.” If it wasn't Bob Dean, it would be Vic Dikeos who would say, “Now, wait just a minute. Do you really want us to go in and beard the President of Mexico on this” particular point and at this particular time?” I saw how an individual is at least able to manage the event at the moment and get people back on some kind of even keel.

Q: The problem often is that micromanaging a situation from Washington gives people a feeling of power, but it's really not there. In Washington they always want to appear to be going to the top. Anybody who's dealt with bureaucracies knows that if you go to the top,

things gets referred down and watered down. It's a hell of a lot better to go somewhere else.

GILLESPIE: Go to the right level and then have them get the top level on board. Then you leave it to them to figure out how to get the top level officials on board.

So I have to say now that this was a tremendously educational experience for me, although many aspects were disturbing at the time. I know that Terry Leonhardy is still not happy about the way this matter was handled.

Q: Where is he now?

GILLESPIE: He's here in Washington. He's retired and does some international consulting. He doesn't have any great chip on his shoulder. I think that he was released in April, 1973. Then, just before May 5, the Cinco de Mayo, Mexico's national day, they caught some of the kidnappers and shot them. Leonhardy still talks about that with a little gleam in his eyes. He says something like, “Damn it, I'm really glad that that happened.” He says, “It served them right,” and all that kind of thing. He still has that very much on his mind. It hasn't gone away. It's now just one of many cases in the annals of the Foreign Service. We've had some cases, such as Ambassador Cleo Noel and Curt Moore and others, who have been killed.

There was, of course, a second kidnaping in Mexico while I was there. This involved another consular officer, John Patterson. This incident occurred in March, 1974 - just about a year later. It involved another entire series of facts, stories, and policy related matters that affected it.

During the intervening period a couple of things happened. First of all, in March, 1974, the OAS {the Organization of American States) held its annual General Assembly session in Mexico. In the meantime Ambassador and Mrs. Robert McBride left Mexico, and John and Pamela Jova replaced them. We had a new Deputy Chief of Mission, Robert Brandon. The

Administrative Section remained pretty much the same. I think that we had a new Security or Budget and Fiscal Officer. There was a new Political Counselor, Hunter Estep. The rest of the Embassy staff stayed pretty much the same.

Anyway, the OAS held its General Assembly during what I think was the first week of March, 1974. Ambassador John Jova is of Spanish descent. His Spanish forebears came to Cuba and then to the southern part of the United States about 100 or more years ago. John had been Ambassador to Guatemala and U.S. Representative to the Organization of American States. He spoke several languages and was absolutely bilingual in Spanish. His wife, Pamela, was British by birth but is as American as they come. They are delightful people. He is a real gentleman.

As I said, I think that Ambassador McBride was kind of a cool but distant man, in any case. However, of course, he'd been ill and hadn't been accessible. Jova, while not a ail fellow, well met type of guy at all, was accessible to damned near anybody. He seemed to have a lot of confidence in the people around him. He felt that if this confidence was merited, he continued to show it. If it wasn't merited, I guess that he'd withdraw that confidence. However, you couldn't ask for a better boss than Ambassador Jova, as far as I was concerned. He wanted to meet with me right away. I walked through the Residence with him and his wife. He wanted me to look into the condition of the cars, the people, and all the rest of it. He wanted me to brief him on the situation affecting the consulates. When I did that the first time, he said, “Good. It sounds as if you have it under control. I hope that I don't have to get very much involved in it any more, but you can count on me if you need me.” He continued, “You, Gillespie...” (He always called me 'Gillespie.' He said to his secretary, “Gillespie can come into this office any time.” And I think that he meant it.

He had a staff assistant who was a bright, young Foreign Service Officer. Ambassador Jova just let it be known that if the GSO needed anything from the Ambassador and the “Front Office,” that was the way it was going to be. An excellent beginning. It was not all that difficult.

Anyway, the OAS General Assembly met in Mexico City in March, 1974, at a time when the U.S. Secretaries of State went to these meetings pretty regularly. On this occasion the Secretary of State was Henry Kissinger. Kissinger's Executive Assistant was Lawrence Eagleburger. His Staff Assistant was L. Paul Bremer III. I knew both of them. I knew Eagleburger from Brussels. I had met Bremer earlier on other occasions and had gotten to know him.

On a visit overseas the Secretary has to have a Control Officer. Eagleburger and Bremer said, “Gillespie will be the Secretary's Control Officer.” Well, I think that if Jova had not been the Ambassador and Dikeos my boss, there might have been some real heartburn. They might have said, “What do you mean that the GSO is going to be the Control Officer?” Instead, they said, “Look, we know what the Control Officer's going to do for us. We don't care what he would do for some other Secretary. He's going to help us keep this guy under control and make sure he doesn't get into any trouble.” So I became the “gopher” or “get it done kind of guy” for Eagleburger and Bremer, to make sure that Kissinger was satisfied. They brought me in to the Secretary and said, “Mr. Secretary, this is Tony Gillespie.” Kissinger said, “All right, he'll take care of me” and all that kind of stuff. From then on Christine Vick, his secretary, and all of the other people on the Secretary's staff would say, “Get Tony” or, “Where's Gillespie?”

Meantime, a preliminary match for the Davis Cup was being played with Mexico. Bremer and I took off and went to watch that. However, what really happened in March, 1974, if your memory doesn't go back that far, is that Kissinger came back to the hotel. I happened to be there. He said, “I want to leave here right now. I want to go away.” I said, “What do you mean? What's going on?” He said, “These people do not have any concept of foreign policy - neither the Latin Americans nor the Americans. They don't understand what is happening in Europe or Asia. They hardly know what's happening in front of their noses. This has got to change.” So we got the “GLOP” [Global Perspective program].

Q: Actually, I guess that, combined with this, there was an aremeeting of Ambassadors?

GILLESPIE: All of the U.S. Ambassadors in Latin America were asked to meet with Secretary Kissinger in Mexico City. Interestingly enough, the Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs, was a good looking guy. He had sleek, gray hair and was known as “El Tiburon” - the Shark. I can't think of his name. Anyway, he was the man putting on the Chiefs of Mission meeting. He put together the whole program, which was very much focused on Latin America, money, perquisites, and these kinds of things.

It turned out that Kissinger was just fed up with this. I was in the room with him. He was yelling at Bremer, me, and his secretary, taking it out on all of us. He said, “This is crazy. These people don't know what they're doing, they don't know what is going on in the world. The only guy who knows what he's doing is this guy, Jova, our Ambassador to Mexico. I talked to him, and he has a very clear understanding of how this all fits into the world situation,” and so forth. So the Secretary thought that Jova was a good guy, but everybody else was in deep trouble.

The result was that it led to this whole senior officer system of assignments under which people long assigned to a given area were to be reassigned elsewhere. They had to be reassigned out of the area where they had spent a long time. They couldn't remain locked in a given area and all of that. It all happened while I watched the process. It was really wild. I saw how things are done. Eagleburger was saying to Kissinger, “Don't worry, we'll take care of this.” He got on the phone to the Under Secretary of State for Management and the Director General of the Foreign Service, saying that we are going to do this. So the whole Foreign Service can thank the Bureau of American Republics Affairs, ARA, for this.

Some of the ARA people in fact had worked in other areas. There was a number of them, but...

Q: It didn't come out. Of course, there was the other side of the coin. I used to use a quote from Kissinger when I was on a panel giving the oral examination for the Foreign Service. I think this remark goes back to the time before he became a professor at Harvard. He used to say, "Latin America is a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica." In other words, Latin America doesn't amount to anything. So Latin America wasn't Kissinger's field, and our Ambassadors to Latin American countries weren't talking about his favorite topics.

GILLESPIE: However, the circle comes around. Later in 1974, that very same year, or it may have been early in 1975, Kissinger married Nancy. They went to Acapulco, Mexico, for their honeymoon. By then Kissinger had had an intense relationship with Mexico and Latin America. Of all of the major foreign policy thinkers in the U.S., he was as knowledgeable about, and wrote cogently on, U.S. relations with this hemisphere - more so than damned near anybody else. And Kissinger made sense, talking about how important Latin America is, and all that kind of thing, whether strictly for business reasons or otherwise. Nevertheless, we got the "GLOP" program.

I saw GLOP at first hand. I saw it emerge. It was really something to see a Secretary of State behave in this way. That is one form of leadership. He came into his hotel room and said, "We've got to change this system. I don't want this to happen any more. People have to be gotten out of their shells and made to understand what's going on." For good or for ill, that was the way it was.

Q: However, actually, it had to have been in the presentation. When you look at this situation, Ambassador Jova had served in the Middle East. Despite his Spanish last name, he was not a pure Latin America hand.

GILLESPIE: Among those affected by GLOP were officers who had worked their way up. They had been Deputy Assistant Secretaries and Ambassadors in other parts of the world. It was probably not totally fair. But whatever happened at the session, I was in Secretary

Kissinger's hotel room when he came back. He walked into the room just fuming. He went on about it. I think that he talked to other people about it. He carried that program forward.

That was early March, 1974. In mid-March this screw worm program which I referred to earlier really started to kick up. I had to go down to a place called Tuxtla Gutierrez State of Chiapas right around March 20 to sign a contract for the construction of a big screw worm facility that we were putting in there. I was the senior Embassy officer talking to the head of the program. I was an FSO-5 and a GSO, and here I was the senior Embassy officer down there. The people running the project had their own plane, so they flew me back to Mexico City on March 22, which was my 39th birthday. I had spent the previous night in Tuxtla Gutierrez. I returned to Mexico City on March 22, in the morning. I went straight to the Embassy, not to my house.

At the Embassy I found out from Vic Dikeos that John Patterson, our Vice Consul in Hermosillo, State of Sonora, had been kidnaped. We had already gone through a kidnaping. Vic, DCM Brandon, and Ambassador Jova were there at the Embassy. Vic said to me, “Okay, we know how to organize for this. In this case, would you stay here at the Embassy?” It was about 9:30 or 10:00 AM. First of all, though, we headed for home. Dikeos said, “I'll drop you off at your house.” We got to my house, and my wife had a huge surprise party planned for my birthday. I walked in, and it was kind of a sad event, under the circumstances, but it sticks in my memory.

We then geared up and organized at the Embassy. Consul General Ford in Hermosillo was a long-time consular officer. His hobby was binding books. He was a wonderful man, and his wife was a wonderful person. John Patterson, the man kidnaped, had probably been married to Andra Sigerson Patterson for not more than six months. She was a young wife, and this was their first Foreign Service post. I had met John. He handled the administrative responsibilities at Hermosillo. He had been to Mexico City and was taking his job very seriously. He was a delightful young man, and she was a delightful young woman. She had come to Mexico City to see the capital of the country and our Embassy.

They were a lovely, young couple from, I think, Philadelphia, or some place else here on the Eastern seaboard.

We received a ransom message of some kind. One of the very few Hispanic FBI agents was stationed in Hermosillo, because there was a lot of law enforcement activity going on there in the Sinaloa Desert area. And he...

Q: Who was “he?”

GILLESPIE: The U.S. FBI agent. So Dikeos and I got on a plane and flew up to Hermosillo. Also with us was Keith Jenkins, the Security Officer at the Embassy, if I remember correctly. He was a very serious, professional security type - not your old time, heavy drinking...

Q: Ex-cop.

GILLESPIE: Jenkins was a college graduate, had been an officer in the military service, I think - in the Navy Intelligence Service, or something like that. He was a very sharp guy. The three of us got on a plane and flew up to Hermosillo. We met with the Consul General and his family and with Mrs. Patterson. All of the people up there, the FBI agent, and the local authorities were hard at work on this incident.

We returned to Mexico City and set up another Crisis Management Center. Then we found out that John Patterson's mother was the divorced wife or the widow - I don't remember which - of a very wealthy or well connected Philadelphia banker. Their attitude was, “U.S. policy be damned.” She was going to get her son out. She was lobbying on the Hill. We had the Senate, we had the House of Representatives, we had everybody and his brother involved in this matter. The pressure was really heavy on the State Department in Washington and on Ambassador Jova and the Embassy in Mexico City.

I really saw John Jova under pressure. If Bill Dean had it rough for the Leonhardy incident the previous year, Ambassador Jova was just getting it from all over. Senators and Congressmen were calling him directly. They wanted a read out of exactly what was going on. I saw Ambassador Jova handle this matter, and I'll tell you, Stu, he's a real professional. He gave them what he had to give them but he didn't let them beat him up. I saw how an Ambassador can deal with such an incident and handle it in a straightforward way. It was tough. These Congressional callers were accusing the Embassy and Mexican Government officials of not doing enough. Ambassador Jova didn't fall into the trap of defending what was being done. He explained what was going on. He said, this is what we are doing, and we are keeping these pressures on.

We really got into heavy pressure. We had calls from Secretary Kissinger, the U.S. Attorney General, and the FBI Director. All of these senior people in Washington were involved in this matter. It was decided that, while the U.S. would not pay ransom, we could not prevent the families of free, U.S. citizens from taking action. However, we were in a foreign jurisdiction, and how would we handle what was done? Mrs. Patterson, John's wife agreed to a plan under which there would be an attempt to make a ransom payment that would be thoroughly covered by law enforcement authorities, both Mexican and U.S. The money itself would be marked in several ways and would all be under control. How would we do this? Dikeos, Gillespie, the Security Officer, and Mrs. Patterson would make the payoff.

I was the driver of the vehicle used and, basically, the facilitator. Keith, the Security Officer, was sort of the “pistol,” the “shotgun.” Vic was the “brains,” and Ann was the family member.

Q: Ann was John's wife.

GILLESPIE: Yes. She was not in complete agreement with John's mother, but she also was not going to fight her mother-in-law. John's mother got the bank in Philadelphia

to provide $500,000. The bank basically put up the money in small bills, which were generated in Tucson, Arizona. The three men - Dikeos, Gillespie, and Keith Jenkins - the Security Officer flew up to Hermosillo in a DEA plane, where John Patterson's wife, Ann, joined us. We then used Consul General Ford's black station wagon. It was nearly new. I had obtained a bunch of new cars for our constituent posts. Consul General Ford's car had low mileage on it, so it was in good condition.

The three of us from the Embassy in Mexico City, Consul General Ford, and Ann Patterson got in the station wagon and drove up to Tucson, Arizona. In Tucson we went to the FBI office, where we picked up $500,000 in a blue, Samsonite cosmetic case. It had a little seal on it. Of course, we couldn't open that seal, but we were told that it contained $500,000. So I had to sign for a case whose contents sight unseen were supposedly $500,000! We put the case in the back, jump-seat well of the station wagon. Keith got into the back seat, and then Vic and Ann alternated between the front and back seats. Then we drove to the first, designated drop point, a place called Rosarita Beach in the State of Baja California. First, we drove from Tucson, Arizona, to San Diego, California. We were doing things which are illegal under U.S. law. We were now taking a half million dollars in cash into Mexico.

We had nothing with us in the car, in the way of a piece of paper. However, we understood that the skids had been greased for us, so that we shouldn't have a problem, but we didn't know who was watching us. There was this ransom demand, and it sounded as if it could involve a gang. We didn't know if they were Mexicans, Cubans, Germans, Americans, or whoever. We went down to Rosarita Beach. We were supposed to see certain signs. We were only to leave the money in a certain place if there were certain indicators that that's what we were supposed to do. We went down there and spent two nights. It was a terribly tense, difficult time. Here was Ann Patterson with us, and we were all worked up. We spent two nights there at Rosarita Beach, but the signs never appeared.

So we went back into the U.S. with the money. We went on a sort of hegira trip across the Southwestern part of the U.S. We went to Texas, to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, and came back that way. We returned to Hermosillo. There was another message there which said, “You screwed up. You didn't give us the money there at Rosita Beach. Now we're going to do it some place else.” So we went to the next place listed. I think that it was back up in the U.S. this time. There was nothing there at all, so we figured either that the kidnappers had given up or something had happened.

Well, to make a long story short, a little while later John Patterson's body was found in a shallow grave right outside of Hermosillo. It turned out that the FBI, using the traditional FBI methods, had sent a team to Hermosillo. They went through every lodging receipt in the town of Hermosillo for a period of three months before he was kidnaped and afterwards. They found the registration of an American, Billy Joe Keasy, a ne'er-do-well, Vietnam veteran, probably mentally troubled, who had tried to defect to Cuba, flying a light airplane from Louisiana. He was a Californian. Eventually, the FBI located him, and it was learned that he was the guy who had set up the scheme to get $500,000.

It turned out that Keasy had gone down to Hermosillo and had met with Patterson as a purported American businessman who wanted to do business in Hermosillo. John, who was also the Commercial Officer, had had lunch with him. Evidence that John had met with Keasy came out in the course of the investigation. Well, that's the way that case ended. The money was returned and so on. Again, this was a case where Washington tried to tell the people in Mexico City what's going on.

I can remember Ambassador Jova having to deal with this case as Bill Dean had done in the Leonhardy case. In the Patterson case we were at least doing something. I'm still not sure in my own mind that it was the right or the wrong thing to do, but we did it. Those were the orders as to the way it was going to be handled. I think that Patterson's mother

still has a lawsuit pending, alleging that the State Department mismanaged or mishandled the case. The fact was that there was nothing to mishandle.

The authorities later learned, or surmised, that Keasy had taken John Patterson out of Hermosillo, supposedly to look at a property which he wanted to invest in. Keasy apparently attacked and tried to subdue John Patterson and, in the process, hit him too hard and killed him. He then buried him in this shallow grave just outside of Hermosillo. Although Keasy tried twice to see if he could get the ransom, he had never gone to the Rosarita Beach site, and the other place was named just to throw everybody off the trail. Keasy had actually gone back to California, gone underground, and tried to avoid arrest. Keasy eventually copped a plea for second degree manslaughter in the U.S. He eventually pled guilty and eventually was sentenced to about eight to 10 years in prison and then was released.

Remember that at this time we were in the midst of trying to protect federal officers overseas. The question of whose jurisdiction was involved came up.

Vic Dikeos left Mexico fairly soon thereafter. In the meantime, he had talked to the State Department, and they put Ann Patterson, the widow, on the payroll in Washington. Eventually, Dikeos became the Assistant Secretary for Security and hired Ann Patterson to work in the security organization. She worked there for a number of years and then, I think, she leFort

Obviously, this was a fascinating episode. You join the Foreign Service but you don't know what you're going to get into. We literally drove thousands of miles, sitting on this money. Think of the discussions you can get into regarding what's going on, what the policy is, and what it all means! Ann Patterson was the youngest of the three of us - that is, the Security Officer, me, and Ann herself, although not by much. Of course, Vic Dikeos was older, and this was a kind of an interesting mix of people. We saw it all happen. You really have to say that it was an amazing situation, but, then, we're an amazing country. We were a

funny group of people. We were pulled into this event, we went off, and it all happened. DEA was flying us around. They brought stuff to us in airplanes. The CIA was doing things. The FBI was doing things. On the one hand they do fantastic drudge work, and it paid off. We saw other things that they tried to do. And then you realize that they have feet of clay like all the rest of us.

In the Foreign Service you see some really strong people and hear anecdotes about some of these things. We went through a period in Mexico City before we got into the actual ransom hegira that I went on. We sat in these offices and then wondered, “Could these young people have set this up themselves?”

Q: I recall that that was a view which floated around for a while.

GILLESPIE: Ambassador Jova, bless his soul, said, “I will not reject any hypothesis. However, we're going to have to see some awfully strong proof before we go very much further down that road. This is something that I simply do not want to believe. If there's any evidence that points in this direction, we'll pursue it, but...” Then he looked at me and said, “Let's get on this and figure it out. What do we know, how can we find out?” Jova had a wonderful remark which he'd use at Country Team meetings or in his office or in a group, where some subject would be up for discussion or decision. He would reach a decision - whatever it was or how it would be expressed. We'd all just sit there. Then he'd say, “You don't understand, do you? If you agree, nod your damned head. Otherwise, get out of here!”

He used this comment in this particular case. He said, “We will not reject any hypothesis, but I'll have to see an awful lot of proof before I'll accept that a young Foreign Service Officer and his wife are doing this.” So we went through the whole record. Eventually, as you say, that kind of talk came out. John Patterson's mother heard about this, and Congress heard about this. You can't reject the possibility that it was right. However, Ambassador Jova was really staunch. There were different members of the Country

Team, some of whom had thought about this possibility and put a lot of intellectual energy into what was going on here, what should we be doing, and how we should do it. This whole episode showed me a lot about our capacities and the people we have. These two incidents in my career were really something.

After the Patterson incident something occurred which was very interesting. I think that it was one of my other career breaks in the Foreign Service. As I told you, I think, I had studied Spanish, and my Spanish was pretty good. However, as GSO, I was using it in the construction trades and so forth. Of course, I used it socially, in reading, and in doing other things.

There is an American Battle Monuments Commission cemetery in Mexico City, which was set up after the Mexican-American War of 1847. Even before that, there had been an American Community Cemetery, because, you remember, there was this strong, religious feeling in Mexico. If you were a Protestant, you couldn't be buried in a Mexican cemetery. The cemetery of which I am speaking is located on a little plot of ground in downtown Mexico City which had really become a lovely garden or park. It may have covered five or 10 acres. In the center of this cemetery was a common grave, in which, I think, the remains of about 1,200 American military people were buried at the end of the Mexican War. Also buried there were the remains of sailors, ship captains, former consuls and vice consuls in Mexico, and their family members. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) took over the maintenance of this site.

Well, Andy Andrews, a retired U.S. Army major general, who had been my boss, though not directly, when I was in the Army in Germany, was the director of the ABMC. He came to Mexico City to look at this cemetery. The ABMC had a resident supervisor in Mexico City, who was a GS-7 - a gray-haired, nice old guy. He had been living in Mexico City and had a Mexican wife. He took beautiful care of this cemetery, like a groundskeeper. However, because I was the GSO, I took Gen Andrews over and saw the cemetery.

Lo and behold, about two months later, we got a diplomatic note from the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating that the Mexican Government was condemning the American Cemetery because it was in the way of a new, high speed highway, which was going to go right through it! We were asked to remove the remains of Americans buried there.

Ambassador Jova, DCM Brandon, Dikeos, Political Counselor H. Freeman Matthews, and I discussed this. We agreed that this was pretty heavy stuff. The Ambassador said, “Well, whose action should this be?” I had known Brandon in Brussels, where he was the Political Adviser to CINCEUR (Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces Europe). Brandon said, “Well, I'm really torn, Ambassador. On the one hand, this could become a major political issue. The Political Section should be involved in it. However, this gets down to the property and what we're going to do. I know Tony, who has worked with the ABMC, and Vic Dikeos. I kind of think that Admin and the Political Section should share the action on this.” Well, Free Matthews, the Political Counselor was not terribly thrilled by all of this. He foresaw that this would involve diplomatic notes and dealing with the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Jova said, “Fine, I'll be involved to the extent that I have to be. However, Gillespie, this is your chance to see whether you can handle serious, diplomatic work here.” Then he said, “Vic, make sure that Tony knows what he's doing.” He said to Free Matthews, the Political Counselor, “Make sure that you help in any way you can and make this a collaborative effort.”

Well, as it turned out, I ended up involved in detailed negotiations with the Regent of the Distrito Federal (Federal District), as the mayor of Mexico City is known, with the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, and with other Mexican officials. I worked on the diplomatic notes and other correspondence. Actually, we worked very closely with the Political Section. It worked well, but it really gave me a chance to get deeply into this. We looked into alternative sites for the cemetery. We convinced the Mexican authorities that this cemetery really was diplomatic property and had the right character. They would have

to compensate us, and all of that. During the rest of my tour in Mexico City this was my major project, in addition to the other tasks of a GSO.

Q: Was there a feeling among the Mexican authorities that they reallwanted to get rid of this cemetery, or was there a feeling...?

GILLESPIE: There were at least two aspects of it. First, they really did have a plan to put a high speed highway through the site. That was part of the Mexico City master plan. As the Mexico City planners were preparing these drawings, they simply did not appreciate the character of this piece of property. It was only later, after the plan was drawn up, that they realized this. It was through this work that I got to know the head of planning for the Federal District, a very nice woman, an engineer. She was very interested in urban planning and had attended conferences in Hawaii and other places. What they wanted to do was just to “cut into” the cemetery to a certain extent and leave the rest. That was what their hope was. They didn't want to compensate us. They just wanted to take it under the right of eminent domain and have us adjust.

General Andrews and the Embassy said “No” to this idea. We took the view that this property was a shrine and that you don't do something like that. Well, in the final analysis we modified our position somewhat. The Mexican authorities jiggered their plan a little bit so that we only had to give up a small portion of the cemetery. We negotiated this matter out to everybody's satisfaction. As it turned out, it cost the Mexican authorities a whole lot less than any of the alternatives. The ABMC was satisfied with this because as part of the compensation they were able to do a lot of other things which they wanted to do. So we basically got some cash and help on other matters.

I felt pretty good about this. We had come up with a good, negotiating package. First we got it through the technical people and then through the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, because they were involved in it, by this time. I can remember vividly attending a meeting on this with Ambassador Jova and the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations.

Ambassador Jova was directly engaged in this matter. On this occasion we were speaking in Spanish. The Secretary of Foreign Relations said something about the kind of people who were buried there or the reasons why the cemetery was there. I saw Ambassador Jova sort of sit up in his chair, with a smile on his face. He said, “Mr. Secretary, I heard what you said but I wish I hadn't heard it, because that is not very caballeresco, gentlemanly.” He used just the right word. The Foreign Secretary considered it, smiled, and said, “Please forget that I ever said it.” That was an example of how a good American Ambassador picked up on something, moved on it, and did it elegantly. I'll never forget that as an object lesson in diplomacy. I've used this story two or three times.

Q: This is all part of diplomatic training.

GILLESPIE: All part of the training. I told Dikeos and laughed about that. Since then I have gone on and done other things. Dikeos said, “Gillespie, you probably don't know how lucky you were to have John Jova as your boss. He really had confidence in you and felt that you could handle this matter. I'll tell you that there were things going on behind the scenes, with some people thinking that the GSO - and a junior GSO at that - shouldn't be given this responsibility. Some people felt that you should be assisting a more senior officer, rather than going out and doing things by yourself.”

I remained on close terms with Ambassador Jova. He died a couple of years ago. We were on “John” and “Tony” terms. He would call me, from time to time, wanting to know how things were going. He was a wonderful man.

Q: Good. Were you there in Mexico when Ambassador Jova's son was arrested on a drug charge - in London, I believe? This was the time when young kids were doing this sort of thing. I have heard, and I have no evidence of this, that Ambassador Jova had been giving the DEA a difficult time in Mexico. There was some notion that the DEA was paying him back. Does this...?

GILLESPIE: John Jova was not pleased with U.S. anti-narcotics policy. There was no doubt about that. He was concerned about the heavy-handed, police type things that were going on. I know that he had a lot of confidence in what the FBI was doing in Mexico and the way they operated. I think that he had a degree of confidence in the Central Intelligence Agency and the way they operated. He did not trust the BNDD Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, later the DEA Drug Enforcement Administration type of operations. He felt that they were too heavy-handed.

Of course, this was all before the Camarena incident and the terrible things that happened. Ambassador Jova didn't know for sure but he thought that the BNDD/DEA might be joining the Mexican authorities in some of this heavily repressive activities in connection with drugs, being present at interrogations, and doing other things - which later turned out probably to have some truth in them. However, he didn't make any accusations. At his staff meetings he would say, “Is this the right thing to do? Are we doing the right thing?” regarding our policies on narcotics. We heard that story. I didn't believe it. I don't know whether it was true that, maybe, the DEA may have seen a chance to rub it in. I know that this incident involving their son affected John and Pamela Jova very deeply. They were disturbed by it. John made no great secret of this or talk about it that much. However, he didn't hide the fact that there was a problem. Their daughter came and stayed with them at the Residence for quite a while - before the incident involving her brother, and she came back and stayed with them afterwards. Like all kids, they were looking for things they might do, what they could do with their lives, and so forth.

I was talking about ambassadors' wives and the Residence. If Mrs. McBride was good, Pamela Jova was truly outstanding. She would call us occasionally. We became involved in a major redecorating scheme for the Ambassador's office. That was one of my objectives. I thought that the Ambassador's office was awful. It was a wonderful room, but the furnishings in it were terrible and poorly finished. I prevailed on FBO (the State Department's Office of Foreign Building Operations) to get enough money to do that. Mrs.

Jova wanted to keep in touch with that. She would call me on the telephone with ideas. I'd get the decorators from Washington to come down to Mexico City and work on it. It's amazing. I was back there in Mexico City last year, and some of the same furniture which I had obtained was still there - nearly 20 years later!

Mrs. Jova was wonderful. She treated the women in the Embassy with great consideration. She couldn't have been nicer to my wife and to everybody - young and old. Ambassador Jova made sure that officers and staff people were invited to the Residence. He always found time to talk to them. To me, Ambassador Jova was what you'd like the whole Foreign Service could be. He was a smart guy, broad gauged, efficient, and highly principled.

Q: In Bob Brandon you had a very professional DCM. He was the DCM in Athens when I served there. He had served under two very difficult Ambassadors - MacArthur in Vienna and Henry Tasca in Athens. I spent four years as Consul General under Ambassador Tasca in Athens, with Bob Brandon as the DCM, my boss.

GILLESPIE: Unfortunately for Bob Brandon, in a sense, the Embassy in Mexico City had an unfortunate reputation. I guess that Bob Dean broke this reputation a little bit. He went on to be Ambassador to Peru. However, not many DCM's in Mexico City became Ambassadors. They came down to Mexico City, worked hard, but didn't go much further. We had known Bob Brandon. His son Butch and my son are about the same age. They went to a Cotillion, a dancing club for kids, in Mexico City. It was part of the Anglo establishment. I remember these two boys just hated it.

Q: Butch Brandon was my son's best friend in Athens, before thBrandons went to Mexico City.

There are two matters which I would like to cover here. As GSO (General Services Officer), you were dealing with Mexican labor. I've often heard that the Mexican labor

movement has been and still is a power unto itself. You practically have to use the Army to get them to do something. The other point is the corruption issue.

GILLESPIE: Yes. On the labor side the Mexican labor situation is distinct, if not unique. Labor, consisting of the working people, has always been a key part of the political organization called the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the PRI. As it turns out, the Mexican working force is not terribly well organized. It has certain power centers. Velazquez, who is now 93 years old, heads it. He has always represented a political force, but it has been a concentrated force in the petroleum sector - following the nationalization of the oil industry in 1938 - and public workers, including teachers and some white collar workers. However, the labor movement has always been a captive of the PRI. The labor movement doesn't do very much that the PRI doesn't approve. So wildcat strikes and that kind of thing are not the order of the day in Mexico. They can happen but they are not frequent.

The Embassy had its own labor force. We worked through contractors, but the contractors never had any major problems, as far as we were concerned. Embassy Foreign Service National employees, as such, were a class unto themselves. They were getting good pay and benefits of all kinds. I negotiated their health insurance program. We had accidental death and dismemberment insurance for the Mexican employees of our Embassy. There is a guy up in Texas, Harry Janette, who still handles these matters for a lot of the countries in Latin America. Of course, we gave employees of the Embassy subsidized meals in the cafeteria. We had an Employees Association. Part of its function was to provide low priced, good meals through a concessionary arrangement. This has gotten better since I left Mexico. So we didn't have a labor problem.

However, Velazquez could turn out what purported to be a labor demonstration of some kind at any time. The PRI could pick up people and bus them in from all over. They would give them some money, food, or drink, and that kind of thing. The PRI would pick them up out in the country and bus them in to Mexico City. They could arrange a march of 10,000

people that would go past the American Embassy, complaining about Vietnam or whatever it might be. It wasn't a traditional, labor demonstration. Basically, we have seen, under both President Carlos Salinas De Gortari and now in the Zedillo administration that people sit down and say, “This is how we're going to manage things.” They are told that wages can be increased this much, and we will allow price increases to this or that extent. So you have pactos (pacts or agreements). The pacts really only affect a small minority of the labor force, but there is a tremendous, organizational ability to put on a show.

Q: Then you could go about your business without having to consider a very touchy labor force which might, for political reasons, go out on strike.

GILLESPIE: We operated through contractors in Mexico City. We didn't buy anything - such as property, for example. We had a device involving a distinction between short-term and long-term leasing. Long-term leasing is for 10 or more years. Long-term leasing, under the law and the authorization of the State Department, allows you to treat the property as if you own it. This means that in the case of a long-term lease you can take U.S. Government funds and spend them on maintenance and repair, as well as capital improvements, which you can't do with a short-term lease.

For example, in Nuevo Laredo State of Nuevo Leon we had an abominable building for our Consulate when I arrived in Mexico. We invited bids and contracted with a contractor to put up a building to suit our needs. The arrangement was that we would then lease the building for 10 years, renewable for 10 more years and then renewable for another 10 years. He would put up the building exactly to our specifications, with all of the security specifications, the wiring, and all that stuff. This was all in the lease. It was his job to get it built. Ingeniero Duarte, my engineer and an Embassy employee, was the primary point of contact on that building. He and I had to review all of the plans, as did FBO (Office of Foreign Building Operations). People from FBO in Washington came down to do this. The contractor in this case, named Marcos Russek - and this gets into your next question - would go up to Washington and review all of the plans with FBO.

You asked about corruption. I never had any serious doubts that Mr. Russek got a lot of things done, at a competitive price, because he knew how to get things done in Mexico. This meant that he had to have certain people on his side, however he did it. We were not involved in any of that. We were contracting for a delivered product. The price was fair, as far as we were concerned. He won this contract in a competitive bidding process. We don't think that he bought off his competitors or anything like that. However, the fact is that he got the bid, he got the job done, and he made money on it. We brought some equipment and materials into Mexico, under diplomatic customs duty free entry arrangements. He had to provide materials up to specification, and we checked on them. He got these materials in Mexico or somehow had them delivered in Mexico. We didn't get involved in this. My guess is that he made the necessary payoffs.

All of our Embassy cars had diplomatic license plates. We didn't get into the mordida (Mexican slang for a bribe) business of paying off the cops. The cops would stop our drivers. The drivers would be careful not to thumb their noses at the cops. The drivers would show the diplomatic identity cards showing that they were driving an Embassy vehicle and that they were Embassy employees. We never got into the corruption business.

We asked ourselves if we were doing the right thing. I mentioned the Visitor's Office. I had a person in the GSO office called an expediter. For everything that we brought in we had to have the necessary documentation. It might be necessary to cut down a small tree to obtain the wood pulp to make the paper to prepare all of the forms for diplomatic entry. However, even with diplomatic entry the bureaucracy in Mexico was very slow. We'd have goods coming in that were perishable, important, or which were “needed yesterday.” My expediter knew how to get that stuff moving. I didn't give him any money, but he had access at Christmas time to quantities of booze and other goodies, to be given out as gifts. You can ask yourself questions about the morality of the system there. The fact is, that's the way you did it.

We knew that there were other Embassies and business firms which did not hesitate to make payoffs in one form or another. I don't think that there were very many U.S. companies involved in paying bribes. They all proclaimed their innocence, but we all knew that foreigners really paid people off to get things done and to get them done fast.

However, we were the big, American Embassy. American visas were never given out as favors at all. At least, to my knowledge they were not given out in any knowing way, contrary to U.S. law or regulation. But you and I both know that when the Director of the Mexican Customs Office needed to go to the U.S. to see his aunt, or something like that, he would call me and say, “Ah, Mr. Gillespie, could you help me?” I would say, “Send the papers and fill out the forms,” by arrangement with the Consul issuing the visas. My expediter would either go and pick up the completed application forms from the person involved, or they would be delivered to the expediter. I would never see them.

The Consular Section would check the application out. If the person were eligible for a visa, he didn't have to stand in line, and the whole process went on. So this was kind of our stock in trade.

By the way, the Embassy in Mexico City was the first post where I actually issued visas. Later on, I did a little of that at the Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua. We got into a kind of crisis in Mexico City, and Vic Dikeos (the Administrative Counselor) and the supervisory Consul General in Mexico City arranged that every commissioned officer assigned to the Embassy would spend a certain amount of time on the visa line, including heads of Sections and, in my case, the Supervisory GSO. So Mexico City was my first visa-issuing post.

I felt that expediting the issuance of visas to particular Embassy contacts was not in any way corrupt. I thought that the matter was being handled to everybody's satisfaction. However, there was corruption going on in Mexico City. I can remember sitting in a Country Team meeting with Ambassador Jova. Richard Smith was our Agricultural

Attache. He later became the head of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) in Washington. Then he retired and is now making lots of money as a consultant.

Anyway, Dick outlined for us one day how Mrs. Echeverria the wife of the President of Mexico at the time, made a lot of money. President Echeverria himself was squeaky clean. However, I mentioned before how beef moved back and forth across the Mexican- U.S. border. Every time a head of Mexican cattle crossed the U.S. border, coming or going, $2 went into the personal account of Mrs. Echeverria, by a circuitous route. Now, there was a lot of beef involved and a lot of crossing of the border. Dick sat there and explained it all one day. So there was some corruption.

Q: Corruption often winds up impacting on the GSO office, more than anywhere else. Did you find that some of the consular posts were "getting off the range" a little bit in this connection? There our consular officers were, living in the local atmosphere. It's easy to get overly cozy with local people. Did you find this a problem?

GILLESPIE: It never came to my attention. I know that in Brussels, for example, in the GSO Section, some really long-time British national employees of our Embassy in Belgium were eventually found to have been involved in a thoroughgoing scam. However, to my knowledge nothing like that happened in Mexico during my time there, and I've never heard of it since. I am speaking now of the early 1970s, which were kind of a boom time for Mexico.

Q: Of course, they had oil exports.

GILLESPIE: Mexican oil prices were way up, but their impact had not yet hit the economy. Mexico was also borrowing large amounts of money in the early 1970s. I remember Roberto Coeto, my chief local employee. He was one of the sweetest, nicest, and smartest guys. I tried to treat him that way. I had arranged for him to go to the States and take courses in general services administration, property management, inventory maintenance, and all that kind of thing. I had an American subordinate, Brent Olson, who was really into

ADP, (Automated Data Processing.) That was a time when you really did get end of the fiscal year money.

In late August or early September of a given year our Counselor for Administration would get a call from the Bureau of Administration asking “How much additional funds can you take?” Or they would ask, “How much money do you have on hand?” They would say, “We've got $40 million available for allocation” - a large sum of money at the time.” Vic Dikeos, his deputy, Jim Leaken, and an excellent Budget and Fiscal Officer, Rodriguez, and I would sit down to discuss this matter. They would look to me to find ways to spend the money. They would ask me, “What can you do, what can you buy this fiscal year for use next fiscal year?”

Well, Brent Olson and I had set up a system under which he could project about how much we could really absorb: purchase furniture and furnishings, buy supplies, and pay electricity and other utility bills in advance. He had this all in a computerized data base. So Vic Dikeos would ask me how much we could take. I would give him a number - “Up to $1.7 million. We would really like to have an additional $750,000, but we could take an additional amount. I can assure you that it is legitimate, and we can justify it.”

That's the way the system would operate on the U.S. side. It was a fascinating time, because they really had this money available for allocation to us. If you didn't spend the money, you lost it. It went back into the General Treasury accounts. The Bureau of Administration would call us and say, “Thank you so much for having taken the money.” It then was in the “base” for the next fiscal year.

On the corruption issue I don't recall anything involving ouconsular posts.

Q: Well, it obviously would have been in your field.

GILLESPIE: I'm trying to think. We had some questions, once in a while, about some of our people getting too close to some of the vendors. However, we would usually move

our procurement around to various suppliers. We tried to arrange for competitive bidding. However, what we found in Mexico was that, for example, North American Van Lines and Mayflower Transportation and Storage Company had their own agents in Mexico. Of course, household effects were going back and forth overland to the U.S. They were competing with each other. They wanted to know whether our procurement practices were clean. It wouldn't have taken much effort for my people to find out whether somebody was playing any games. We would try to “buy American,” “fly American,” and all of that. To my knowledge we never got into any kind of smuggling deal or anything like that.

Occasionally, there were some strange developments. It turned out that back in the 1960s, for whatever reason, the Mexican customs authorities in the port of Acapulco on the Pacific Ocean side of Mexico had confiscated a whole shipment of wine for the Embassy Commissary. This shipment had been sitting in Acapulco for about 10 years. One of my objectives was to get this matter resolved. We finally did. It took a lot of work. It turned out that, after they'd been sitting in Acapulco for 10 years, the wine wasn't very drinkable. It hadn't been a corruption matter. It had just been a result of bad bureaucratic practice. There were no major, corruption scandals.

The Embassy in Mexico City was a big post, with a lot of things going on. We were talking earlier about behavioral matters. There were a few issues of that kind. It was a tough post for single women, but a wonderful post for single men. Housing was pretty accessible, and the allowances structure was pretty good. It was a matter of bringing your own furniture. There were no government-owned or leased housing, except for the most senior people. People lived well. Gasoline prices were low. There was a kind of crazy import scheme on cars. You could only import a car of a kind which was produced or assembled in Mexico. There were people who tried to get around that provision all the time, but we had no difficulty in controlling that.

We weren't able to sell cars at the end of a tour for a profit, so that didn't enter into the picture at all. Later on, that was somewhat relaxed, but the restrictions were subsequently reimposed. We didn't have that to worry about.

Q: You said that you left Mexico City a little early.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I was there on a four-year tour of duty. In July, 1975, my wife and the kids were in the States, and I was about to go up and join them for local leave. It wasn't home leave. We were just going to take local leave in the States.

I had a phone call from Personnel in the Department. They told me, “You've always indicated your interest in mid-career university training. We have an unexpected opening. Would you be available?” So I went to see Vic Dikeos, my boss. He asked, “Do you want to do that?” I said, “I think that I'd like to have that advantage. I've had a great career.” He said, “Go for it!”

Q: When was this?

GILLESPIE: In July, 1975. By the way, just before I got to Mexico City in 1972 there was a big earthquake in Nicaragua. A lot of the people in the Embassy in Mexico City had to go down and help out in that. I was not involved. Another thing that happened in South America which affected us slightly in Mexico City was, of course, the overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in Chile in 1973. A lot of Chilean refugees started to come to Mexico. I didn't get deeply involved in that, although I met a few of these Chileans.

Q: This must also have had the effect of souring relations betweeMexico and the U.S.

GILLESPIE: Yes, our relations with Mexico were affected by all of that, because of the suspicion that we were involved in the overthrow of Allende and the fact that we had been involved in the attempt to keep Allende out of office.

But to return to my tour of duty in Mexico City. In 1975 it had been three years since I arrived there in 1972. I got this phone call from the Department regarding university training. So I said, “Okay. Where do you want me and when?” We worked it all through, and I was assigned to the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University in August, 1975.

Q: This is a good point to stop. We'll pick it up the next time i1975 with your experience at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

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Today is November 29, 1995. We are continuing our interview witAmbassador Tony Gillespie. Tony, let's talk about the Maxwell School.

GILLESPIE: May I interrupt and mention one other point about Mexico? Stop me if you don't want to get into this, but, very briefly, Mexico was very important not only for reasons of my own career but it was also very important for my wife. I would like to mention that.

Q: Please do.

GILLESPIE: My wife, Vivian, was a 1950s wife. That is, we had a 1950s marriage. She had graduated cum laude from UCLA University of California in Los Angeles after having studied education. She had taught school and helped support me when I was in graduate school between service in the Army and joining the Foreign Service. Then she had gone with me to the Philippines, bore a child there, and then went to Brussels. In Brussels she studied French assiduously. She got what was eventually rated a “3-3” Speaking Knowledge, [3 - Useful; Reading Knowledge, 3 - Useful] in French. She enjoyed that very much but was still very much of a housewife.

When we got to Mexico, she became fascinated by Mexico's history, as well as its anthropology and archaeology. These are not unusual things for foreigners to become

interested in when they come to Mexico. To the best of my knowledge, she was the first Embassy wife ever to be admitted to and to study seriously at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, or UNAM, as it's called. That was a hotbed of social unrest. It was a typical Latin American university, in this respect.

Q: Particularly at the time of the Olympic Games of 1968.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. We talked about the 1968 series of events anthe repression and killing of hundreds of students.

In any event Vivian was able to enter to a program of study in Spanish. She studied - and here's a plug for the Mexican-American Cultural Institute, which was run with a combination of USIS (United States Information Service) and private money. She studied Spanish intensively for three hours a day, five days a week. She got her Spanish up to a level where she could enroll at UNAM, where she took graduate level courses three days a week in anthropology and archaeology in Spanish and in Mexican history. So in the course of three years she accumulated a lot of credits.

This helped us a lot in knowing and understanding more about Mexico and it played very directly into what happened at Syracuse University and how we took advantage of the year that the government gave us there. I wanted to mention that.

Q: I'm glad you did. I want to ask another question. You had been in some hot spots in East Asia and in EUR. Now you finished your stint in ARA. There is a kind of pecking order in the Department of State, although this depends on whom you're talking to. EUR is in first place; NEA and, maybe, EA, are in second place; AF is almost nonexistent as a Bureau in this sense; and ARA almost always comes out at the bottom as far as career prospects and personnel are concerned. This is the way many people look at it. I personally find this disturbing. You must have absorbed some of this before you entered

the State Department. Now you'd been in ARA. How did you feel about it after your time in Mexico?

GILLESPIE: Well, Mexico was my first post in ARA. You're right that I'd been in East Asia in the Philippines and briefly in Indonesia. Then I'd been in Europe. Finally, I'd gotten to Latin America, after a stint in Washington, D.C.

I guess that I didn't recognize that kind of ranking of the different areas of the world. I guess that I wasn't very sharp, or it didn't figure very much in my own thinking. I think that we've touched on Secretary of State Kissinger's reaction to what he saw as the insular or insulated Latin Americanist view of the world - or the failure to have a view of the world, whichever was the case. Whatever ticked Kissinger off, it made me think a little bit about it. However, as I've said, there were people who were involved in Latin American affairs who were, I think, well regarded in the rest of the Foreign Service. There was Harry Schlaudeman, who has been the Secretary's Executive Assistant. He was a Latin Americanist. There were several others at the time that I was in Mexico. Of course, we had just been through the negotiations over the Panama Canal. Or perhaps those took place later on.

Q: Yes, those were later.

GILLESPIE: I guess that my own reaction to service in ARA then was not very strong. I didn't give the matter a lot of thought. I had been in East Asia, in Europe, and in Washington. Latin America was my fourth area of service. I left Mexico, not having the slightest thought of going back to Latin America. It never occurred to me that I would, although I didn't know where I would go. I went off to a year of university training - mid-career training, as it was called. That was, perhaps, going to be useful in my professional development. However, quite frankly, I didn't have any specific plan or program of my own, under which I was going to do this and then that.

At this point I had clearly moved into the General Administrative cone. My thought was that I wanted to be the best Administrative Officer that the Foreign Service has ever had. If I had any thoughts on my career, those were the kinds of thoughts that I had. At that point I hadn't given my career that much thought, so I guess that I didn't really have any strong feelings regarding ARA. It probably wasn't until later, and we can talk about it now or then.

Q: We can talk about it later on.

GILLESPIE: It began to dawn on me that, all of a sudden, I was type cast in ARA. This happened, but, in my thinking, rather late in my career.

Q: You were at the Maxwell School of Public Administration aSyracuse University from 1975-1976.

GILLESPIE: The other matter which we didn't touch on, and it didn't bear directly on Mexico but it obviously was a major consideration for our national life, was the Watergate affair. The Watergate affair was going on while I was in Mexico.

There I saw the cultural slant. The Mexicans, given their background and the way their politicians and political system operated, found it hard to understand the thrust of Watergate. Mexico was a country where cable TV was just beginning to come in and the Dallas Cowboys football team was extremely popular. American style football was already developing a certain popularity, in addition to soccer, which was so important to the Mexicans. We were getting a lot of the news from the United States directly from television. It was fascinating to me to see the Mexicans look at a situation where an American President was under tremendous fire for having done or not having done various things. He was accused of having done things which seemed pretty mild by Mexican standards or standards that were applicable in the rest of Latin America. Or, for that matter, in other parts of the world.

Q: In Europe, for example.

GILLESPIE: Anyway, I went off to Syracuse University. En route I stopped off at the Foreign Service Institute and took their university preparation course. Basically, I was told that I could have this year off and, in effect, do what I wished to do. It was my call, and the Maxwell School of Public Administration sounded pretty good. I was a late entrant. They called me in July and asked me if I could be there in August. Had I had more of a choice about where I would go, I might have chosen otherwise. Initially, I thought about the University of Southern California, which has a good faculty and school of public administration. Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Public Administration looked interesting. The Maxwell School at Syracuse University was clearly in the top three that I considered a year or so earlier when I put university study on my preference list. I don't think that we bid then for positions in the same way that we do now. Anyhow, the Maxwell School was the place where there was a slot for me. It turned out that they had a very active, mid-career program. They did a lot, not only with the State Department, but with AID (Agency for International Development), the Internal Revenue Service, the General Accounting Office, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a lot of state and local governments. I think that they had a group gathering at one point. There were 60 or 70 of us who were mid-career, government officials, and, as I say, from all of these different levels - state, federal, and local. There were some foreigners. We had Canadians, I think that there were one or two from France, but none from Latin America. There was another group which was not composed of mid-career officials but regarding which the people who ran the mid-career program had a finger in the pie. That was a group funded by AID, composed of government officials from aid-recipient countries in Africa, Asia, and a few from Latin America, but not many. These people were also getting training at the Maxwell School, all managed out of this one, mid-career office. This office had a grant from AID, and these programs worked out of that office. If I remember correctly, there were three Foreign Service Officers in the program with me at Syracuse University. The other two were both

from the consular cone: Norman Singer and Bill Pilney. As I later learned, these two were perceived as Consular Officers on the rise. They were “comers” and had been selected for mid-career, university training. There were some U.S. military personnel there in this very good group.

We were all in this program. As I say, we did our own course selection. We didn't have to work toward a degree if we didn't wish to do so. I chose to leave that question open until the end. Others started off, saying, “Oh, I'm definitely going to do this and that.”

The upshot was that I talked to people at the FSI and then to others in this mid-career program. They had some good counseling arrangements. I developed my own program, which involved some administration courses such as budgeting and personnel in public bureaucracies. I studied a little bit of organizational design, development, and so forth. I also studied operations and systems analysis approaches that were intriguing to me.

Then I thought that an area that I was really not very strong in was economics. So I took a series of courses, both for credit and on an auditing basis, of fiscal policies, monetary analysis, and some international development economics. I wanted to get a sense of that. I figured that this is what we were about in the Foreign Service and I ought to know something about these things. If I was to be a good Administrative Officer and work in a foreign environment, I ought to understand the economics of the place where I was working.

I developed a program which, as far as I was concerned, turned out to be very rich in all of these subjects. I had an excellent year of study. This was 1975-1976, the beginning of a presidential election year. The campaign grew steadily during this period. It was also the end of the Watergate period. Of course, as a result of some of the things that President Nixon had done, Congress passed in 1974 the Anti-Impoundment Act. This was the law which set up the new fiscal year beginning on October 1 instead of July 1. It set up the overall budget resolution and reconciliation approach, under which Congress

could only appropriate money within the budget levels already approved. There was a rigid time table. The first budget resolution had to be approved in March, the next resolution by June, and the fiscal year now ended on September 30. Whatever came out in the way of appropriations bills had to fit under what amounted to a cap. Everything had to be reconciled under the budget ceiling. That was all big news for people in public administration.

Because of the Watergate affair there was consideration of ethics and their role in the academic curriculum. The idea was that ethics should be taught or covered in the academic program. I got into a very interesting seminar in which many of the examples used turned out to have a connection with the Foreign Service and the State Department. They included kidnaping cases and certain Kissinger-Nixon policies. We had the case - I think that it was in Zaire or the Congo at the time - of a kidnaping. Our Ambassador there faced what appeared to be an ethical dilemma. Would he take certain steps to get the people released or would he hew to the policy line.

Q: This involved Ambassador Todman.

GILLESPIE: I don't think that it was Todman. It was a black officer.

Q: I was interviewing his DCM, who was talking about it.

GILLESPIE: I think that he was a black, political appointee. He basically went against the established policy and was criticized for it, if I remember correctly. However, if you were discussing this matter with the DCM in the case, you would know more about it.

Q: It was a very foggy thing. I think that an Embassy officer actually went along with the ransom money. The family actually was going to pay.

GILLESPIE: Well, we did that in Mexico.

Q: The officer went along and got involved. He actually met the kidnappers face to face. It was very close to what you later did in Mexico.

GILLESPIE: It's what we would have done. We would not necessarily have met with the kidnapper face to face but we certainly would have delivered the money. There was another aspect of the case involving Ambassador Todman, but I'm sorry that I can't remember it.

However, we got into these kinds of ethical questions for public administrators, civil servants, policy makers, bureaucrats, or whatever. We struggled with these matters. Were there situational ethics or inviolable principles involved? It was a fascinating course.

Q: I would also have thought that it would be a very rich course because there is always a problem when just academics consider it. You were sitting there and you might have been thinking, “I was in one of those situations.” Somebody could say, “I have to make up a budget.” It brings everybody back to earth in dealing with the real world instead of the “artsy-fartsy” academic world.

GILLESPIE: The real world situation was like this. First of all, you're right. I was a little apprehensive about going back to school. At that point I had been out of college for almost 20 years - and so had my wife. She had more recently been back in an academic setting, in Mexico. She was pretty proud of what she had accomplished and felt good about it. I'll give you the story on her side of it, first.She decided that she wasn't going to mess around, whereas I had not made up my mind about whether I wanted a master's degree or anything else. She said, “I'm going to put this year to good use. The government is good enough to put us here. They're basically paying for it. I'm going to take advantage of it. I'm going to get a master's degree in cultural anthropology this year.” She had an excellent, academic record. She is extremely work-oriented and dedicated. However, she was 40 years old, and she hadn't taken the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). I don't think that it existed when we graduated from UCLA. She hadn't worried or thought about that sort

of thing. She got a copy of one of the guide books. She felt, “My God, I can do a lot of this stuff, but when it comes to quantitative math, I'll be dead.”

However, she said to herself that Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, and the other leaders of the women's movement are going around saying, “We have been oppressed, we have been squelched.” She smiled and said, “I'm going to skip the GRE. I'm going to be admitted to this Graduate School. I'm going to get my degree and I'm going to do it on adult, feminist terms.”

So she went to the chairman of the Anthropology Department, who was a very nice guy. He said, “My gosh, I don't know if we can do anything like that. The rules are...” But he said that in many things, not only in terms of our federal bureaucracy but also academic institutions, there's always room for exceptions. To make a long story short, she said, “I'll come in, I'll write what you like, and anything else that has to do with the courses I take. I know that I'll have to take Statistics, and I know that I can pass Statistics. However, I'm not going to sit here and do quadratic equations and that kind of thing. I want to be admitted without taking the GRE.” So they let her in. She petitioned the school administration or did whatever you had to do, but it was quite an exception. Her situation was described in the campus newspaper: “A 40-year-old woman is admitted.”

In any event, she went ahead. She was a full-time student. Both of our children were old enough more or less to take care of themselves. We settled in a very nice, rural neighborhood outside of Syracuse, New York, called Baldwinsville. It turned out to be peopled by lower white collar or blue collar employees, many of whom were supervisors at the Carrier Air Conditioning plant. We rented our house from a couple who went to Florida every year. He was a retired Carrier air conditioning mechanic. He was a very skilled, high quality, master mechanic. They had a three acre plot of land with lots of grass and trees and a very nice but unpretentious house on it.

We rented the house for the academic year. All of our neighbors not only owned their own homes but had an acre or two of crops they were growing. We got right into that kind of environment. Our children went to the high school. On the weekends, with our school schedule, we were around home a fair amount of the time. We got to know a whole, other part of America. It was wonderful - as rich as the academic experience, quite frankly. Syracuse, it turned out, was a major test marketing area for consumer products because this area is apparently very representative of the Northeast. Believe me, we really got to see that first hand. It put a lot of things in perspective for Foreign Service people like us.

Q: We tend to grow up in a fairly limited world. I'll bet that the other thing that you found was that if something went wrong with your car or your house, there were people who could do something about it. Our intellectual friends and we ourselves look at a technical problem and sort of throw up our hands. Here were people who could really do something about it. One has tremendous respect for people who can do something...

GILLESPIE: Yes. Some of the people in the Foreign Service and some of these other agencies that we deal with are able to go out and get their hands dirty. Retired General Colin Powell is a good example. He works on his Volvo automobiles. I have known a Foreign Service Office, Rodney Mason, who restored old cars. He did it in South America and he's done it in India. So such people exist, but they're not all that common. In that neighborhood of Baldwinsville, New York, if anything happened, you could find a neighbor who could fix it. They might say, “No, I don't do this, but Jack or somebody else does, and let's go get him.” Then they'd go down to Jack's house and say, “Hey, Tony has a problem.” Then Jack would say, “Well, have you thought about doing this or that?” I think that it was about that time that the book, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance was published, with the idea of a holistic approach to life. The idea of doing these things sort of fit into that concept.

In any event, I have a strong feeling that a lot of our colleagues in the Foreign Service live in a rarified atmosphere and tend to forget that there is a real world, wherever we are, or

in the United States, and that it's outside the Beltway around Washington, D.C.. A lot of people have other things on their minds, the pace and rhythm of their lives are different, and they don't wake up each morning, looking to see what the front page news, above the fold of the paper, is. They don't really spend a lot of time watching the news on television or the talk shows. That year was rich in that respect.

The other aspect was the one you mentioned. I said that I had been apprehensive about going to graduate school, because I had been away from the academic environment for so long. I thought that I would be dealing with a lot of bright, young people in my classes. Well, as it turned out, when you are in your 40s, you really are viewed by the younger students as something like a faculty member. If the wiser faculty members didn't find you threatening for some reason, they thought that you were a wonderful resource person. In terms of the actual experience this year of graduate studies was pretty good, because you could add the real life experience aspect of things. Somebody would say, and I had this experience, “Did you ever see anything like this?” The ethics class was a case in point. There were some of those questions and the whole matter of federal budgeting.

However, it was also an opportunity for me to learn something about our own political economy - about the United States. When you're in the Foreign Service and are an administrative, economic, or political officer, you never do that. I had seen it in detail when I have been working in the administrative area in the State Department. However, it had been very narrowly focused, and what I learned about the context was by a process of assimilation. Here I studied the whole thing. I could take my personal experience, translate it into these courses, and we'd talk about this. The other students would say, “Here's the theory.” I would say, “Okay, here's the way things really work.” So that turned out very well. As it turned out, some of the professors I had were, in many cases, hired by federal or local government agencies as consultants to work with them. So they weren't unfamiliar with the real world. However, it was attractive for them to have practitioners in their classes on whom they could call.

I would say that the richest part of the course, in addition to what I learned in pedagogic terms during that year, was the study of our foreign assistance program. I think that I almost learned too much about the Agency for International Development (AID) - perhaps too much about its weaknesses and the various points of pressure and strain. This disturbed me at the time, but it turned out to be helpful in later assignments. I really went deeply into AID and the origins of the Economic Cooperation Administration ECA, the predecessor agency of AID, how it had developed, and particularly how Congress got its fingers into the foreign assistance area. I was able to see that this was a troubled aspect of the whole program. Anyhow, I had some good associations at Syracuse which lasted for a long time.

We moved from 1975 into 1976, the beginning of the Presidential elections campaign. Jimmy Carter, the man from Plains, GA, won. Mainly for my wife's sake, I went through the spring and, I guess, the first summer session. She needed to complete the first summer session to make sure that she had the requisite credits. I ended up three units short of what would have been required for a master's degree. I thought to myself, “Well, some day I'll go back and get that” master's degree but never did.”

About five or six years later, when I was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, I talked to the head of the program at the Maxwell School. I said, “Gee, Bob, maybe I ought to take a correspondence course and get that degree.” He said, “Look, you're a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and a senior Foreign Service Officer. Why do you want a master's degree? Either spend the money or take the time to do it. If you want to take the time to do it, we can arrange it, but I don't think that it's necessary.” I didn't need much convincing on that.

So I didn't get a master's degree. Vivian, my wife, got her master's degree in anthropology. That really changed her and our lives. It really had an impact on the decisions - which we both made - about my career path from then on.

The State Department had a group at the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) which monitored this career development training, or whatever they called it - I guess mid-career training. There was an officer from the FSI who would come up and interview us at the Maxwell School. I think that he came up a couple of times and eventually wrote efficiency reports on us. We went through all of those trappings, which worked out fine.

The argument used to be that if you took university training, you were taking a year out of your career, were losing time, were non-competitive, and all of those things. That didn't carry any weight with me. I felt that this year at Syracuse University was an opportunity for real growth, if I wanted to take advantage of it. I never worried too much about it. That made me far less than sympathetic a few years later when young officers came to me when I was more senior. They would say, “I'd really like to do this or that but I don't dare to take this assignment or do that.” I said, “You're crazy. If you really want to do it, you ought to do it. Don't worry. The rest will take care of itself.”

I'm sure that there are cases of Foreign Service Officers who have not necessarily prospered in their careers after taking mid-career or university training. I think that I would be hard-pressed to find evidence that they didn't prosper because of the mid-career training. I think that there were a lot of us who took such training and went on and had successful careers.

Q: I think that, sometimes, people get to be awfully precious about every step in their careers. They feel that you have to do just the right thing. The ones that do that are sometimes rather limited. They keep their fingers on their number too closely and do not take advantage of what is going on, which may represent a particular kind of character.

GILLESPIE: A little digression, and maybe it fits here. Ever since I was associated with the Foreign Service as an Army officer back in the 1950s, I have observed people who have come on board. It's like the Army or Navy or has trappings resembling the military service. Our ranks are assimilated to or are equivalent to ranks in the military service. I know that,

as we discussed our personnel system and what's wrong with it - its shape, size, and all that - it often was contrasted with the U.S. military services. Well, I'd been in the military service, had seen it for five years, and thought of making it a career.

Syracuse University was a perfect example of this process. There were military officers there, getting master's degrees as part of their career development. There were others who had been selected, not only to get a master's degree but to get a doctorate. There was one officer in the Anthropology Department with my wife - a very bright, young Army captain - who had an assignment to go to West Point and teach social sciences. They told him, “You can't go until you have your doctorate. Which social science will you take your doctorate in and where will you do it?” He was given his choice. He said, “Well, I choose anthropology, and the Maxwell School at Syracuse is the right place.” So he was there on what was not just a one-year program. He was there on a two to three year program. He was taken out of his military career. He was an infantry officer, he thought of himself as a soldier and a war fighter, but he also had a brain and was exercising it. It seemed as natural to him - and to me - as anything that he could think of.I've always thought that that kind of human development, looked at in institutional terms, has to be a plus. I think that you can “overdo it,” and there are all kinds of things that you can say about it, but I really believe it. I think that later, when Ambassador Paul Boeker took over the Foreign Service Institute for a brief period, we tried to get into a debate on that. In other words, what was the function of the Foreign Service Institute? Should the Foreign Service Institute train or educate people? Which should it do? We got into the question of whether the Foreign Service should have - as the military clearly does - a process of ticket punching. If you want to get on a certain advancement track, you had better have certain kinds of assignments, which are really a mix of tough, command jobs in the military and some academic, intellectually challenging kinds of assignments. If you want to reach the top, you have to do both. You can't go just one way. It's exceptional if one does it just one way.

If you look at Gen Colin Powell, Gen Shalikashvili, the former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the unified commanders, whatever their service, they have gone up through

a combination of command, staff, and some heavy doses as White House Fellows, have taken university training, and obtained advanced degrees, either a master's or doctorate. Maybe it's an M. B. A. (Master's of Business Administration), maybe it's in history. It can be any one of a number of things. But look at the letters after their names. It's not just, “GEN, USA.” There's usually also an M. A., a Ph. D., M. B. A., or something else - all done at government expense. They do it in their own services. You have to go to the Command and General Staff College.

I'm not sure that the Foreign Service needs all of that. However, it certainly indicates to me that in a disciplined, hierarchical, competitive system, where you're trying to have people reach the top who are doing things spread over a pretty broad area, that is, generals, there may be some recognizable waypoints that you can find and push people through.

Q: Then where did you go? You got out of Syracuse University i1976.

GILLESPIE: At that time there was no rigid rule about onward assignments. However, by about December, 1975, or January, 1976, I was basically told, “Look, the job of Administrative Officer in Managua, Nicaragua, is coming open.” Managua was the place where a terrible earthquake had taken place in 1972. It housed the largest AID Mission in the Western Hemisphere and one of the largest in the world at the time. Interestingly enough, there was more money going through there than anywhere else. It was the biggest aid pipeline in the world, because of the earthquake-related relief effort. At the time it amounted to something like $150-200 million annually.

The Administrative Officer had a joint administrative responsibility. There had been all kinds of discussion about duplication of effort at Foreign Service posts and who was going to manage what. There was also a little bit about ambassadorial authority.It turned out that Managua was one of the few places where the Administrative Officer at the Embassy was also delegated the appropriate authority by the Agency for International Development and by the U.S. Information Agency to be Administrative Officer for those agencies and

to handle their administrative work. At other places you often had three Administrative Officers. There was a USIS (United States Information Service) Executive Officer, an AID Administrative Officer, and a State Department Administrative Officer.

Anyhow, I was approached by some people, including a man named Carl Ackerman, who was a very senior administrative type, and Joe Donelan, for whom I had worked previously. Donelan said, “We'd really like to put a good officer in Managua. Would you go down there and take that combined Administrative Officer job?” This was one of the reasons why, during my second semester at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University I paid a lot of attention to the AID programs there, because I knew that I was going to be involved with AID in a very real sense. So, at the end of the first summer session at Syracuse University in 1976, we packed up and went off to Managua, Nicaragua.

Q: You were in Managua from when to when?

GILLESPIE: We got there in mid-summer of 1976 and left in August,1978.

Q: What were the political and economic situations in Nicaraguduring this 1976-1978 period?

GILLESPIE: As I mentioned before, Nicaragua was still heavily involved in recovering from the earthquake of 1972. It had been devastating. Some 10,000 people had been killed, and the whole city of Managua had been virtually wiped out. The population of the country was about 2.0 million. Its economy, which was basically agrarian, included the production of cotton, some sugar, some beef, coffee, and not much more. These were the main products, the main exports, and the mainstays of the economy.

The country's history, and particularly its relations with the U.S., have been troubled and difficult, by most people's accounts. Back in the 19th century and in the early part of the 20th century we had no compunction against intervening directly in the country. If customs duties were not being collected or other things were not It had been taken over by people

called “the buccaneers” and an American in the 19th century who thought he would set himself up as...

Q: “The grey-eyed hand of destiny.”

GILLESPIE: Yes, Walker. The situation was difficult, at best, like that in a lot of the Central American countries. Nicaragua itself had been ruled, if that's the right word, by two groups which competed for power. They were the Conservatives, who lived on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, especially near a town called Granada, and the Liberals, who were anti-clerical and lived near a town called Leon Northwest of Lake Managua. They were really groups of warlords or gangsters who administered the law however they wanted to do. They vied for power and fought with each other. Eventually, Managua which is located more or less half way between Granada and Leon was settled on as the capital. It was supposed to bring the two groups together, but never very successfully. There was a nominal democracy, with lots of corruption, and so forth.

I guess that modern U.S.-Nicaraguan relations have to date from about 1936 or so - the immediate post-Depression era - when there were real problems there. Basically, to quiet things down, we sent in the Marines. The Marines trained a body called the Guardia Nacional, the National Guard - kind of what we're doing in Haiti. But it was in a much more unilateral and bolder way.

I had gotten into scuba diving up in New York, as a matter of fact, and did my qualifying dives in Lake Erie. However, there is a lake called Lake Managua - not the big lake, Lake Nicaragua - into which the Marines managed to crash a couple of planes in the 1930s. I did some scuba dives to bring out some pieces of wreckage from these aircraft. In any event, we probably helped to create two monsters in Nicaragua during the Marine occupation or presence there. The first was the National Guard and [the second was] its leader, who was named Somoza. He was the beginning of the Somoza dynasty, because

that is what it was. The Somoza family controlled Nicaragua under an almost hereditary succession process from the 1930s until 1979.

The reason that the U.S. intervened in Nicaragua in the first place in the 19th century was that there was a rebellion taking place, led by a man named Augusto Sandino. By our actions we probably at least contributed to the creation of Sandinismo, which turned out to be the National Sandinista Liberation Front, Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional, whose Spanish acronym is FSLN. I got to see sort of the end of all of that during the period that I was in Nicaragua from 1976 to 1978.

I am not an expert on our ambassadorial succession there in Nicaragua, but the two Ambassadors for whom I worked and their immediate predecessor were political appointees. Two of them were appointed by Republican administrations and one by a Democratic administration. They were all the wrong man in the wrong job at the wrong time. The Embassy in Managua itself was an interesting place. It's where I began to see and to question why there weren't better Foreign Service Officers in these jobs. I suspect that my question could have as easily been asked in some places in Southeast Asia and Africa, but these happened to be in Latin America.

I arrived in Managua in 1976, initially serving under a Republican-appointed Ambassador James T. Theberge, whose Deputy Chief of Mission was Walker Diamante, a career Foreign Service Officer. We had a wholesale turnover of the staff of the Embassy. The Political Counselor, the Administrative Counselor, the Economic Counselor, the chief of the Consular Section, and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) Chief of Station were all replaced. The turnover in the Public Affairs Officer from USIA(United States Information Agency) took place a year later. All of them arrived at post in 1976. The DCM, Walker Diamante, stayed on for about six months and was basically let go by the newly-arrived Ambassador.

Ambassador Theberge's predecessor was interesting and worthy of book: Ambassador Turner B. Shelton.

Q: Oh, God, yes!

GILLESPIE: Ambassador Turner B. Shelton was quite a man. He was appointed by President Nixon. The reason for his appointment was that he had contributed heavily to the Richard Nixon political trajectory over many years. Turner B. Shelton was called a Hollywood producer. Now, I'm not an expert on Turner B. Shelton, but my understanding is that what Turner really produced best were what were called “blue” movies. Whatever else he did, he made a lot of money in the movie business, whatever kinds of films they were, and he contributed chunks of this money to Richard Nixon's campaigns over the years. He obviously merited an appointment and he got the Embassy in Nicaragua.

Q: I also understand that he not only produced movies but alsprovided solace and comfort for Congressmen and so forth.

GILLESPIE: Oh, yes. He knew how to take care of people.

Q: Tell me, because there must still have been reverberations in the aftermath. I haven't previously interviewed anybody on this, but there has been comment throughout the whole Foreign Service on the conduct and that of Ambassador and Mrs. Shelton during the earthquake of 1972. Could you discuss this?

GILLESPIE: Sure. I could mention it from two aspects. I heard about it when I got to Nicaragua, but I had already heard about it when I was in Mexico.

Q: I heard about it in Greece!

GILLESPIE: We had sent people from the Embassy in Mexico City down there. They came back and told stories that one found hardly believable. No, that's not true. They were believable. However, they really were bad - kind of horror stories.

In Nicaragua we owned - and still own - the House on the Hill. The House on the Hill is a totally lovely, out of proportion mansion on what I think is the highest point overlooking downtown Managua. I used to know all the details on it because I used to carry a little card on it, because it was fascinating. I don't remember all of the details, but it's probably an eight bedroom house, covering a couple of hundred thousand square feet. I may be exaggerating, but it's one of the largest Embassy residences in terms of square feet of space in the world.

When the 1972 earthquake hit, our Embassy sat on the edge of a lake, which was a former, volcanic crater. The Embassy building itself, the Chancery, crumbled. The Ambassador's secretary was killed. I don't remember if it was in the Embassy building itself or in her home. However, she died. About 10,000 people were killed in the city, which was devastated. The economic base of the country, the Central Bank, and all of that, came tumbling down. The situation was awful.

There was a huge, humanitarian relief effort undertaken. Ambassador Shelton set himself up as the general in charge of this whole operation. Mrs. Shelton insisted that she was going to make sure that everything was handled right. We shipped in temporary duty American staffers and brought in Foreign Service National or local employees from other countries to help out to do our own work and to help with the national recovery effort. The logical place, which had not been touched by the earthquake at all, was the big House on the Hill. It's on a big piece of ground - I think that it covers about 12 acres. It contains the Ambassador's Residence, a very large, second house, which is not grand at all but is nice and spacious. It had been the home of the Deputy Chief of Mission. There is a swimming pool, a big tennis court, and some outbuildings - all nicely arranged.

The U.S. military from Southern Command Headquarters [SOUTHCOM] in Panama saw the House on the Hill as the logical place to set up the base of our part of the recovery operations. Mrs. Shelton would have none of this. She wanted to carry on as if nothing had happened. I heard stories about how we had people up there in tents near the tennis court and here and there on the property. Mrs. Shelton wouldn't let them use the bathrooms and would not allow the cooks to prepare food for these people in the kitchen of the Residence. Really, this was quite unacceptable from my stand point. I heard all of those stories about the Shelton's shortly after they happened. People were still talking about them when I got to Managua.

The House on the Hill, in my view, given its size and everything else, could have been a wonderful example of the form fitting the function. It was a big house, but, obviously, it had been designed, probably around the turn of the century or not long after. The walls were very thick. It was a modern kind of construction. It wasn't adobe, or anything like that. The design seemed to fit into the grounds and context. Architecturally, it was attractive, and the grounds were well laid out.

What was especially good about the Residence was that it was designed to take advantage of the prevailing winds. It was sited to take the best advantage of the sun. It was designed to take advantage of natural insulation and climate control. I read accounts of men and women who lived in that house in earlier days who really wore woolen flannels. They wore gray flannel slacks, flannel blazers and suits, tight collars, and all of those things. They didn't die of the heat. And the reason that they didn't die of the heat was that the house was on an elevated position. Secondly, it was situated so that you got the best out of the wind and the sun. It had a deep, deep verandah on, I guess, the South side of the house and another verandah on the Northwest side. The living quarters of the house were deep inside those verandahs. There was a lovely series of louvered windows, doors, and shutters, so that you could control the air flow. There was no glass. They eventually installed screens in the upstairs area for the short period of the year when you had to

worry about insects, because usually the wind was enough to keep them from being a problem.

The roof extended well beyond the house so that when it rained - and there were torrential downpours - the rain never got into the interior of the house. Everything else was tiled, so that the servants could clean up the rainwater easily. And the house was cool. I saw other houses like it in Managua.

I'm told that Ambassador Shelton never wore anything in public but a black suit, a white shirt, and a black tie. He was a heavy smoker. He and Mrs. Shelton had insisted, and it had been agreed, on sealing the house up. When I got there, I found out that the air conditioning bill for electricity was $25,000 a month. That's a lot of money, especially in terms of 1970 dollars!

When I arrived in Managua, I guess that Ambassador and Mrs. Theberge had been living there for a year. There was still tobacco grime on the ceilings and the walls which had never been cleaned. It was left over from Ambassador Shelton smoking! I could hardly sit in the car which Ambassador Shelton had used and which Ambassador Theberge inherited. I had stopped smoking six years earlier and wasn't allergic to smoke. However, I just couldn't bear sitting in that car. I told Ambassador Theberge, “I'm not going to ride with you if I can avoid it, because this car still reeks of cigarette smoke.” Ambassador Theberge said, “I know. Can't we do something about it?” We eventually replaced the darned car - for other reasons, but nonetheless it was replaced.

The Shelton's were bad news in that respect. Ambassador Shelton hagotten into trouble. He'd wanted to go to Bermuda as Ambassador.

Q: I think that that was afterwards.

GILLESPIE: He'd wanted to go to Bermuda.

Q: He was originally scheduled to be sent to Bermuda, which was a “European” post which, at that time, was reserved for Consular Officers. Bermuda had been set aside as a consular post. I remember that the Consular Officers objected, but that wouldn't have had any effect on Ambassador Shelton. What I heard was that the Governor of Bermuda said, “It's up to the U.S. Government, but if that son of a bitch comes here, I will not receive him.”

GILLESPIE: I think that that was reported in the press at the time. Well, Turner Shelton, being whatever he was, still has a certain reputation because, as far as I know, he is the sole Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America whose image appeared on the national currency of the country to which he was accredited, that is, Nicaragua - while he was accredited there!

Q: Oh, my God! How did that happen?

GILLESPIE: There had been a tremendous dispute, dating from colonial days and the time of the Spanish viceroys, about the Quita Sueno or Nightmare Bank. It was a group of keys - little dots of rock out in the Caribbean Sea, about 100 miles East of the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and about the same distance from Honduras. Costa Rica and Colombia also had a residual claim to them. Remember, Panama used to be part of Colombia, when it was called Gran Colombia. Sovereignty over Quita Sueno Bank, surrounding keys, and other bits of rocks had been in dispute.

During Shelton's tenure as the Ambassador of the United States in Nicaragua, the United States dropped its claim to those islands, which allowed each of the other parties to the dispute to say, “We win! They are ours!” The Nicaraguans also said, “We win,” and Somoza and the other Nicaraguan leaders thought that Ambassador Shelton had arranged for the United States to do this. Along with Somoza, Ambassador Shelton had a number of close friends in the U.S. Congress. You said that Ambassador Shelton took care of visiting U.S. Congressmen, which he did. He'd worked with people in Congress on the

idea that, if the U.S. would withdraw its claims, that would allow the Nicaraguans to say that the islands were theirs. It would also allow the Colombians and others to say that they belonged to them. The dispute still goes on between Nicaragua and Colombia, but the U.S. is out of it. In a great fit of gratitude Anastasio Somoza de Valle, the last of the Somoza dynasty in office, put the picture of Turner B. Shelton on the Nicaraguan 20 Cordoba note. This was no mean feat. It was really something, and they circulated all over the place, with the Ambassador's picture on them. Somoza never asked Washington's permission. I don't think that Somoza ever asked anybody's permission for anything. In any case, there was Ambassador Turner B. Shelton in his black coat and black tie looking out at the world from a 20 Cordoba note.

Q: We're talking about Ambassadors. Who was your first Ambassador iNicaragua and how did he operate?

GILLESPIE: He was James D. Theberge, a Republican. The Theberge family came from Belgium years ago. He has a brother, I think, who is a wealthy businessman. Ambassador Theberge had been what I later came to call an “organizational academic” or a “foundation academic.” He was nominally affiliated with Georgetown University. However, I don't think that he was ever a member of the Faculty at Georgetown. He sort of operated out of Georgetown, putting together conferences. He may have headed up some sort of study organization or group - it wasn't concerned with Latin American studies. He wrote extensively on the Soviet Union and war and peace issues. He wrote a lot about Soviet naval forces in the South Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, and the Americas. He had a lot of short, occasional papers published. He was also the editor of a number of anthologies on strategic subjects which were the product of the conferences which he hosted. People paid to attend these meetings. He was kind of an organizational man.

He was a thoughtful person. You would have to call him an intellectual, and I don't mean to demean him in any way. He saw things pretty much in black and white terms and was staunchly anti-communist. He was not a right wing reactionary. He was a conservative

Republican, not a Rockefeller type liberal Republican.He was married to an Argentine woman, Giselle Theberge. He spoke good Spanish. He had done a lot of consulting for the United Nations, the World Bank, and the InterAmerican Development Bank. He sort of moved in that circle. He had also worked for AID as a consultant or contractor, as a much younger person. I remember this, because when he got ready to leave Nicaragua at the end of the Ford administration, he wanted me to get him credit for retirement for his ambassadorial service so that he could get a federal pension. He wanted us to jump through the hoops. I turned the matter over to the OPM, the Office of Personnel Management, and we learned that there was no way that he could do that. They wouldn't give him credit for what he had done for AID. Jim Theberge died of a sudden and totally unexpected heart attack while playing tennis in Jamaica in about 1988 or 1989. He had left government service and then come back as Ambassador to Chile, where he was one of my predecessors.

In terms of our policy toward Nicaragua under Somoza either Secretary of State Kissinger, President Franklin Roosevelt, or someone else once said of one of the Somozas, “He may be a son of a bitch, but he's 'our' son of a bitch, and let's keep it that way.”

Ambassador Theberge was anti-communist. He had done a lot of work in connection with the Bay of Pigs incursion into Cuba in 1961. Nicaragua was one of the places where the brigade which landed in Cuba had trained. During the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 Nicaragua was one of the places where we could do things that we wanted to do. That had all been done with the acquiescence of the Somoza regime. Somozas vote in the UN was always available whenever we needed it. It was one more of so many votes, and so forth. As I said, Ambassador Theberge was a thoughtful person but clearly believed, or acted, as if his job was not to cause problems with the Somozas. I think that he felt that he was following the policy line of the administration in power in Washington in this respect.

During that period from late 1974 onward that policy line had begun to shift a little bit. Interest in promoting democracy in the Western Hemisphere was coming alive in

Washington. The whole question of what would best fight communism, repression or democracy, was something that people were beginning to talk about during the Ford administration 1974-1977, if not during the previous, Nixon administration 1969-1974. Certainly, after the Presidential elections in 1976 brought in the Carter administration, this change in policy line was well under way.

In any event I arrived in Managua in mid-summer of 1976. I had learned when I was getting ready to go to Nicaragua and after I had arrived there that the Department of State had instructed the Embassy to begin to establish contact with the Democratic opposition to Somoza. The non-communist, Democratic opposition to Somoza, was perceived to be different from the Sandinista Front, which was considered revolutionary, communist, and Cuban-supported. The non-communist opposition to Somoza was a mix of some business people, and very weakly organized non-somocistas, i.e., people who did not support Somoza. They used party labels which had existed for a long time but which really did not mean very much. They were essentially debating societies and gadflies. They were serious men and women but they didn't they didn't count for very much.

Until that instruction came out from the Department in the summer of 1976, I think that Ambassador Theberge and the Embassy itself had not had any or very much contact with the non-communist opposition to Somoza. It turned out, when I got to Managua, as I learned from the departing Political Counselor, Gerry Sutton, that, in fact, the Embassy had tried to establish contact with these people, but Ambassador Theberge really frowned on even informal contacts.

Q: This is one of the very serious things that we find in the Foreign Service. During this whole Cold War period some Ambassadors - and not necessarily only political appointees because they come from an ideologically oriented point of view - cut us off from quite legitimate opposition or even emerging, political forces which might not yet be quite legitimate, but we still had to reckon with them.

GILLESPIE: Stuart, I think that such attitudes go back much before the beginning of this century. I haven't studied this matter in detail, but this is my intuitive, rough view and conclusion. The traditional role of the Ambassador was to represent the King to the King, the power to the power. His job was NOT to represent the King to the Opposition to the King, the rebels or whatever other forces there were in the country. To me, as you say, this tendency may be more visible with political appointees or non-career ambassadors, I've known a lot of ambassadors, particularly to countries which are either not basically democratic or only quasi-democratic. Non-career Ambassadors usually say, “Look, our job is to represent the United States to the people of this country.” This may be a change from several centuries ago. These ambassadors often say, “My real job is principally to manage the relationship between the U.S. and this government. I want to influence this government to advance or protect U.S. interests here. I don't think that I can be effective if that government sees me spending too much time with the opposition to it.”

I disagree with this view as a starting principle. You may be forced into operating somewhat on this basis, but it seems to me that you should always try to keep your contacts as broad as possible and your contingency planning up to date. You never know what is going to happen. I think that in some of the European societies - the British being, perhaps, the most obvious - you always want to be in contact with the “outs” as well as the “ins.” That is accepted behavior in Europe. However, in some countries, which do not have that tradition, there is a tendency to avoid the opposition. That attitude has been changing, particularly in the past decade or two.

Q: You mentioned Britain. A very interesting thing happened at the end of World War II, when Churchill went out of power. Clement Atlee and the Labor Party came into power. The only person in the Embassy in London who really had contact with members of the Labor Party was Sam Berger, the Labor Attache. He made quite a name for himself because he knew all of the leading figures in the Labor Party. There was no problem with the rest of the Embassy. Other Embassy officers could have had that kind of relationship

with Labor leaders, but there was a natural drift or affinity toward the Conservative Party leaders. The conservatives took regular showers. They were regarded as not being as smelly as the Labor Party people.

I've often heard that in Latin America our Embassies can easilbecome the prisoners of the top 10 families, or whatever it is.

GILLESPIE: Sure. When you're in a country, where the disparities are so dramatic between the elite and everybody else, there is nothing in the middle. The majority of the visible elite, as in the case of Nicaragua, supported Somoza. So a lot of Embassy contacts are with this group. Unless an Embassy officer is told to go out and establish contacts with other parts of the society, at least at that particular time, it didn't seem to me that people were going to do much more. I can tell you that, for my own part, I learned a real lesson from this. I thought back on this experience. I wasn't looking forward or anticipating things. When I got ready to go out as an Ambassador, I went to Grenada and was suddenly named chief of mission. I realized that the society there was not coherent, was not terribly cohesive, and that it would behoove us to make sure that we knew everybody who could conceivably be a player on the political scene. I followed that principle in Grenada, in Colombia, and in Chile.

I believe that I thought back a bit on what I had seen, not so much in Mexico, where two, outstanding career Ambassadors managed a very tough relationship. However, basically, they didn't spend much time with the outs or what one might call the opposition. They had broad contacts. Today, if you go to Mexico City, as I have, you will find that our Political Section actually has officers who are trying to manage the relationship with not just the principal, political party, but with the other parties that are now coming up. They are trying to keep the Ambassador and the senior people in our government in contact with the opposition. A good Ambassador like our current one, a political appointee named Jim Jones, listens to their views. He's got a good sense of that.

If I may continue, I think that the situation is changing in these countries. As I say, at a certain point, there are limitations when you're dealing essentially with a single power group.

There was a wonderful institution in Nicaragua called INCAI, the Central American Institute for Business Administration, which was run by the Harvard Business School. Interestingly enough, it was established and operated during the Somoza years. It trained people from all over the Western Hemisphere in business administration in Spanish, using the Harvard M. B.A. (Master's in Business Administration) curriculum. INCAI attracted a lot of people who prepared a lot of studies concerning Nicaragua. In a country with a total population of about 2.0 million there were about 6,000 human beings, roughly 1,000 families with an average of six persons each, who really controlled the country. That was the elite of the country. Stop and think of it. 6,000 is the population of a small town! There are probably people who live in towns where 6,000 people live who probably know half of the total population. The 6,000 people include children as well as adults. The majority of them probably at least nominally support the people in power. Just maintaining contact with these people leads you in certain directions.

As I say, if it had been the prevailing view in our Embassy that we had no reason to make Somoza particularly unhappy with us, the inclination would be to stick with the ruling party and try to influence it one way or another.

Q: When you arrived in Nicaragua, you said that you questioned the caliber of some of the Embassy officers. You were the new boy on the block and had a little different perspective from that of other Embassy officers. Particularly since you were not a Political Officer, you could sit back and be a bit like the fly on the wall on this subject. What was your impression of the Embassy, its contacts, and how it went about doing things?

GILLESPIE: As I say, I arrived there at a time of transition, so I only saw for an instant what it had been like before. As I said, I think that a policy shift was occurring.

Ambassador Theberge had been told, “Open up Embassy contacts more broadly.” That was a time in our own life when things were happening. I remember the Political Counselor, Gerry Sutton, who was handing over to Jack Martin. The going away parties - they're called despedidas in Spanis- that we went to were really unusual. We arranged to have the heads of political parties invited to the Ambassador's residence, the House on the Hill, who were in opposition, nominal or otherwise, to Somoza.

I vividly remember one of the invitations extended because it caused quite a stir. I think that Ambassador Theberge was nervous but not hesitant about this invitation. This was at one of the very first social events I went to at the Embassy Residence in Managua. The Ambassador had all of the new chiefs of section in the receiving line. A man came in limping - and I can't think of his name right now. He had been released from one of Somoza's jails only weeks before we arrived. He was an oppositionist who had been arrested, beaten up, and tortured by the Guardia Nacional. I remember on that occasion going out onto the terrace of the Residence. It was a lovely evening. There was a man there who affected a British style. He was, in fact, a Latin American. He took snuff and offered some to me from a beautiful, silver snuff box. He looked at me and with a sort of British accent, with a little bit of a Spanish accent behind it, said, “What on earth is Ambassador Theberge doing, having that fellow at this reception?” This guy was an ultra-conservative.

Another funny thing that happened. Everybody knew that changes were taking place and that one of the changes was the Central Intelligence Station station chief. All of the four, new section chiefs arrived within a couple of weeks of one another. We had to find our own housing. There was no Embassy housing that you moved into. All of us temporarily moved into the Intercontinental Hotel, the only hotel in downtown Managua which had survived the earthquake of 1972. It was a funny building which looked something like a Mayan pyramid. We all moved in there, with our families, and ended up staying almost two

months. We became very close friends because we'd have our meals together with our children, and so forth.

In any event, as we all learned later, everyone was convinced that I couldn't be the Administrative Officer. I really had to be the CIA Chief of Station. My Spanish was too good and my knowledge of things was too good for me to be the Administrative Officer. So it was widely believed that I had to be the Chief of Station. Well, the real Chief of Station was delighted to hear this. He was a little jealous but he was really happy about this confusion. He told me later that this was actually good for him, because it took the pressure off him. He didn't have to defend himself. He just identified himself a new Political Officer, or something like that. Those who needed to know, knew that he was the Chief of Station. The ones who didn't need to know, thought that I was the Chief of Station, and so on.

The new Chief of Station was on his first tour as the senior CIA representative. That's a big deal in the CIA, and Managua was considered an important station.

Q: It followed the Cubans and all of that.

GILLESPIE: It followed the Cubans. They didn't care about the Soviets because there were no Soviets anywhere near Managua, as far as anybody knew. However, the CIA Station followed guerrilla movements, revolutionaries, Cuban support for revolutionary activity, and all of that.Jack Martin, the new Political Officer, had been on the staff of the Executive Secretariat in the Department. I think that he'd done a good job there. He was not a weak sister.

Q: The Executive Secretariat was a road to advancement.

GILLESPIE: I don't know that he was too junior for the position, but he was junior in grade for the position. He'd only recently been promoted. He was kind of pleased to be the chief of a section which, if I remember correctly, had one other American officer and one

American secretary. There may have been two American officers in the Political Section, or maybe a junior officer rotated through the Section from time to time.

Jay Freres, the Economic Officer, had another Economic Officer and a Commercial Officer in his Section. He was a solid citizen who was later selected to go to the National War College. He was promoted eventually to the Senior Foreign Service and retired as a DCM. He was never appointed Ambassador.

Mary Marchany Daniel was the Consular Officer. She was from Puerto Rico. She never rose very high in the Foreign Service but was a very capable officer.

The AID chief was there when I arrived. He turned out to be kind of an odd ball, and so was his successor. Both of them were senior AID people. They had a big operation with about 60 Americans, including contractors, plus a large Foreign Service National staff.

I don't remember the comparative numbers of people assigned, but the Administrative Section was the largest in terms of both American and Foreign Service National employees. I had three or four American subordinates and a lot of Nicaraguans. However, I had to support USIS (United States Information Service) and the AID Mission as well.

What struck me was that the quality of the reporting - the written product that I saw going out of the Embassy - seemed to me to be not nearly as good as at the other places where I had served. Not as good as the reporting in Belgium - neither from the Embassy or the NATO Mission - and not as good as the reporting from Mexico. I know that the circumstances were different, but the quality of the product in terms of how and when it was produced seemed to me to be not up to snuff. I don't know whose fault that was. The officers themselves seemed to be pretty good. They worked hard. We had some highly operational stuff in Nicaragua, which we'll get into later. Some of it was really weird, and people acquitted themselves quite well at the section chief level and below. We had

serious ambassadorial and DCM difficulties while I was there in Managua - and which affected me and, indeed, all of us, in some ways.

What struck me, particularly toward the end of my tour there, was that the situation in Nicaragua was really deteriorating. I saw some strange things going on between the Embassy and Washington, involving the Bureau of American Republics Affairs, the National Security Council, and the White House. This was some time in 1978 when President Carter and Robert Pastor, his NSC (National Security Council) adviser for Latin America, became personally involved in some of the activities involving Somoza. It was very curious.

It would be a mistake to try to make too many judgments, in view of the way the U.S. operates. In the course of a two or three year tour you deal directly and most often with six or seven people. You can't judge the whole area, the region, or the Foreign Service on that basis. All that you can say is that, in these instances, these people performed well or didn't perform well. You wonder how they ever got into the Foreign Service or stayed in it. However, it's the individual involved and it's hard to judge.

Q: I know nothing whatever about Nicaragua, but in talking about some of the things that were going on, what about the Catholic Church? This was still the period when liberation theology had a certain vogue. I can't remember now, but are you a Catholic?

GILLESPIE: I was baptized a Catholic and went through Catholielementary and high schools.

Q: So this would be a matter that you have an affinity for.

GILLESPIE: Sure. I wondered about it all the time.

Q: Could you talk about the role of the Catholic Church in Nicaraguas you saw it during this period?

GILLESPIE: This was a time when theology oriented to “community bases” as the essential element of the Church or liberation theology was beginning or, at least, becoming evident to me. In Nicaragua during the 1976-1978 period the Catholic hierarchy was really torn between alternatives. The Church is essentially conservative and takes the long view. The hierarchy in Nicaragua looked out over time and felt that paternalism, dictatorship, and authoritarian governments were not inherently bad, under those circumstances, even if people might like to see change.

What had been going on, beginning in the late 1960s - 1968 to 1970, before the Managua earthquake of 1972 - was that the Sandinista Liberation Front had become more active. There was an attempt to kidnap Ambassador Shelton. I don't think that they actually held him but I think that they came very close to getting him. They had taken over a U.S. Embassy residence, and he was supposed to have been there at the time. I don't remember the details too clearly. The Sandinista base of operations was primarily in North Central Nicaragua, up near the Honduran border. This was mountainous and difficult terrain. As we learned in the late 1970s and later, a small scale rebellion or guerrilla war had been going on. The Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional was involved in attempting to put this down.

The U.S. had a Military Group in Nicaragua whose job was to provide assistance to the Guardia Nacional. We had had a close relationship with the Guardia Nacional for many years.

Nicaragua was marked by corruption. You could almost see it and touch it, all of the time. By the early 1970s, after the Managua earthquake, reports began to come down out of this mountainous region about atrocities, including murders and massacres. Torture by the Guardia Nacional and attacks by the Sandinista Liberation Front were reported involving what we would call today guerrilla terrorism, or human rights violations by the Sandinista guerrillas. The preponderance of the reports was that the Guardia Nacional

was the oppressor. The sources of the reports were Catholic priests from that region. They would bring down these reports.

The Catholic hierarchy in Managua didn't reject the veracity of these reports but was uncomfortable with them. The American Embassy in Managua had accepted and, later on, actively sought, access to this reporting by the Catholic priests. The reports were often considerably delayed. You might hear of 150 people involved in an attack on the garrison of 100 troops of the Guardia Nacional in a town. Well, it would turn out that this had happened three months previously. But there would be a headline somewhere - either in the U.S., Europe, or somewhere in Central America - portraying it as if it had just happened. It was very difficult to handle the reporting on these incidents.

As far as the U.S. Government was concerned and, I think, as far as the Catholic hierarchy was concerned, the people engaged in the rebellion against the Nicaraguan Government were godless communists supported by Fidel Castro, the Soviet Union, and other bad people. We later learned of training of these revolutionaries in Libya and Communist China. There was a lot of that going on. Next door to Nicaragua, on the other side of the Gulf of Fonseca, in El Salvador, where the “14 Families” allegedly ruled, the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) had assassinated government officials and cabinet ministers. I think that the Salvadoran Foreign Minister had been murdered. All of this was happening in the 1976- 1979 time frame. There was a lot of support for the FMLN from Cuba.

Honduras was relatively stable but was a dictatorship. Guatemala was under an oppressive, military regime. Costa Rica, to the South of Nicaragua, was the bastion of democracy in the area. It had no Army as such - just the Civil Guard and Rural Assistance Guard. The Costa Rican Constitution prohibited armed forces.

The Catholic Church in Managua took the long view. It was clearly anti-communist but did not embrace Somoza personally or closely. Later, this developed with the appointment

of Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo as Cardinal. He then became known as the anti-Sandinista, but also pro-democracy Cardinal of Nicaragua. He was known as a kind of bastion against the Sandinistas and against the Ortega family who emerged from this situation and took over the country in 1979 as leaders of the Sandinistas, after I had leFort

The Catholic Church was not at all united. There were supporters of liberation theology. Nicaragua, by the way, is divided, culturally and ethnically. I guess that you could say that the eastern two-thirds of the country consist of a lot of swamp, mountains, and river basins running into the Caribbean Sea. The population there is Caribbean, composed of Negroes of African descent and indigenous, native peoples, including the Miskito Indians and others. They didn't like people of Spanish descent. It turned out that they didn't like the Sandinistas because they were of Spanish descent. The western one-third of the country is where most of the economic activity takes place, where the people consist of the descendants of Spanish settlers and persons of mixed blood.

There were racial divisions in much of that area: white skin is fairly rare. There was one medical doctor whom I met there, a friend of the man who offered me the snuff and whom I mentioned before. At this point this medical doctor was about 85 years old. He was said to have sired 63 children. Politically, he was quite conservative in his thinking and was of Dutch descent. All 63 of his children wanted to have his name, although only one or two of them were legitimate. There was a lot of that. There were many people of mixed ancestry.

Q: When you arrived in Nicaragua, what was your impression of Somoza - both your own and that of other Embassy people? Which Somoza was this?

GILLESPIE: Anastasio Somoza del Valle. He was also known as “Tacho” Somoza. He had a son, “Tachito,” who was in his 20s. Of course, “Tacho” had been “Tachito” to his father in turn, who had also been Anastasio Somoza. “Tacho” Somoza, the man in power when I arrived in Nicaragua and who left when the revolution took place, was later assassinated in Asuncion, Paraguay. He was married to an American woman, Hope. I don't remember

Hope's maiden name, but she was from a good East Coast family. “Tacho” Somoza was a West Point graduate. Every year he would attend the reunion of his graduating class at West Point. It would be in two parts. They would go to West Point for whatever the ceremony. Then they would all go to the “21” Club in New York and have a wonderful lunch.

When things started to get hot and heavy between the Somoza group and the U.S. during the Carter administration and as these reports from the mountains kept coming down, it became very evident that “Tacho” Somoza knew the U.S. and could read us politically like a book. He was a very smart, international political operator. This is a truism, but although a lot of these tin horn dictators may be dictatorial, it is a serious misjudgment to believe that they are not savvy, quick, and well connected. “Tacho” Somoza's particular buddy, if I am not mistaken, was Johnny Murphy, a Republican Congressman from New York. He was well connected at that time. Yes, he was in the Republican minority in the House of Representatives but was really well tied in. Somoza also had his hands in the pockets of some Democratic Congressmen. For example, Somoza absolutely captivated Charley Wilson, a Democratic Congressman from Texas, a graduate of the Naval Academy. I got to know Congressman Wilson rather well in Nicaragua. He was absolutely convinced that the name of the game was anti-communism. He felt that Somoza might be a son of a bitch, but he was “our son of a bitch.” These guys were very protective of Somoza.

I don't want to make too much out of it, but Ambassador Theberge had a problem with Walker Diamante, his DCM. He had inherited him from Ambassador Shelton. Theberge was not comfortable in an organization. He did not like being a manager. He might like being an executive. For example, he would go to a meeting with Somoza. He would come back and dictate his NODIS (No Distribution Outside the Department of State) cable reporting his meeting with Somoza, usually to Virginia Richardson, his secretary. He would send that cable off to Washington and would not let anyone else in the Embassy see it. His DCM wouldn't see it, and nobody in the Political Section would see it. He did not allow

Embassy officers, including the DCM, to meet with certain members of the government. He considered them his contacts, and nobody else was to talk to them.

This practice of Ambassador Theberge was not particularly well received by people in the Embassy. At a certain point there was a blowup with his DCM, Walker Diamante. I don't remember exactly what the issue was. All I know is that I was called in. For whatever reason, Ambassador Theberge said that he would like to pick a new DCM and would I find him some candidates for the position. He said, “Mr. Diamante will be leaving” the Embassy in Managua.” By the way, it is the Administrative Officer's job to take care of these things.

I went back to the Department and talked to some people and gave Ambassador Theberge a list. He selected Irwin Rubenstein, a Labor and Political Officer who had been in the Foreign Service for a long time. He was a long-time Latin American hand who was well- connected in the AFL/CIO (American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organization). I thought that it was a strange choice for a Republican academic to make. I thought that Irwin Rubenstein was a very capable officer, but he was right out of the labor mold. He would be right at home down in Bal Harbor Florida at the AFL/CIO convention. He tended to wear sport jackets. Ambassador Theberge was not a black suit, white shirt, black tie guy as Ambassador Shelton had been, but he was a very careful dresser. He did not wear open collar shirts comfortably. Rubenstein didn't wear ties comfortably. How they got together I don't know, except that Rubenstein was smart and quick.

Anyway, Ambassador Theberge hired Rubenstein. Rubenstein had talked to me in Washington, and I had described the situation. I didn't know Rubenstein from Adam. I said, “You should understand that this is the situation that you're walking into. The Ambassador doesn't confide in anybody. Whether he doesn't trust them or not is irrelevant. He doesn't tell anybody anything about what's going on. There are staff meetings. The Ambassador listens to everybody, but he doesn't tell anybody anything. He doesn't really comment.” I found out that he didn't, for example, call the Political Officer in and ask him what was going on.

Jack Martin the Political Officer tried to do his best. The Economic Officer, Jay Freres, would go in to see the Ambassador and talk about economic or business issues. The Ambassador would listen, but there was no two-way conversation. The CIA Chief of Station had pretty good access and didn't much care what the Ambassador thought or said. At least, that's what he told me, and I think that he meant it. However, I think that he was very careful to keep the bread buttered properly with Ambassador Theberge. There may have been a little more, two-way communications there than I was aware of.Anyway, Irwin Rubenstein hadn't been there more than two or three weeks. He invited me up to his house one night for a drink and said, “My God, it's much worse than you said it was. This is awful! I can't get the Ambassador to tell me anything about what's going on. What can we do?” I said, “What do you mean? I don't know what we can do. You're probably going to reach a point where you're going to have to confront him and say, 'This is or isn't going to work,' if that's what your judgment is. This is something you're going to have to do at a certain point.”

That situation went on from some time in the fall of 1976 until some time early in 1977, after the election, when Ambassador Theberge left Nicaragua.

He was replaced by a political appointee of the Carter administration in May or June, 1977, a man named Mauricio Solaun. He was one of the not very many Cuban-American Democrats from Florida. He was born in Cuba. He had obtained an undergraduate and then a doctorate in sociology from Yale University and was on the faculty of the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, IL, as a professor of sociology. He had done a lot of consulting with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in places like Colombia, Argentina, and other places. As it turned out, he knew virtually nothing at all about Central America. He had written almost incomprehensible sociological treatises on behavior, but nothing to do with Central America or other parts of Latin America. It seemed to me and to a few others that he had almost no political sense at all. He didn't understand the bureaucracy and had never managed more than, at most, a secretary.

His wife was not a Latin, She was just a “house afire.” She had managed the international student program at the University of Illinois at Champaign- Urbana. She was a terror - not a tyrant, but a terror. She ran him and she ran everything. God, that would set up a wonderful equation.

Ambassador Theberge had dealt with Somoza. The scuttlebutt that we all kind of kicked around was that either Theberge was supremely confident about his ability to handle Somoza and to deal with these growing, human rights and Guardia Nacional behavior problems, and other difficulties which were growing in late 1976 and into 1977, before he left Nicaragua. Either Theberge was supremely confident of his ability to deal with these problems, and therefore needed no help from the Embassy, or he was totally insecure and didn't want to tell anybody on his staff what was really going on and how he was handling things. We had some feedback on some of these things that seemed to indicate that it may have been more of the latter than the former. There was a lot of the former, but some of the latter as well.

He would come back from a meeting with Somoza in a rather encouraging mood, but we would then hear of things through the grapevine. Everybody heard some scuttlebutt or gossip that Somoza really cleaned Ambassador Theberge's clock in that conversation or that Ambassador Theberge had not really carried out his instructions. By the way, the Ambassador's instructions did not come in from the Department in a NODIS cable. They might come in a restricted channel, but the Political Officer and others saw these cables and knew what the Ambassador was supposed to do. Then we would hear a story that the Ambassador had not made his presentation to Somoza in quite the way that Washington hoped he would do it. In fact, we didn't know what Ambassador Theberge reported about the meetings with Somoza.

It soon became apparent that Ambassador Solaun was extremely “nervous in the Service,” dealing with any President, but especially with Somoza. His heart and his head were both in the right place, but I don't think that his spirit or his spine were necessarily there.

Or maybe it was just a matter of his experience. How do you deal with a President? Ambassador Solaun, just like Theberge, probably had a confidence problem. He probably thought, “I don't want to do anything to admit that I don't know what I'm doing, but I'm not very sure of myself.” What do you say to a President? How do you deliver a demarche? He never took anybody with him to these meetings. Of course, we later found out that the meetings with both Ambassadors had been taped by Somoza. The tapes were released, and it turned out that the transcripts indicated that both of our Ambassadors had been very weak sisters in the meetings with Somoza. Ambassador April Glaspie's problems with Saddam Hussein in Iraq were nothing, compared to these two political appointee Ambassadors, one a Democrat and the other a Republican. So I can say that with a totally non-partisan attitude.

Q: It sounds as if Ambassador Solaun was not well plugged-ipolitically. He was a sort of token Hispanic.

GILLESPIE: He was a token Hispanic. His main supporter in Washington was a Puerto Rican named Mauricio Ferre, who had been the Mayor of Miami, FL. Ferre was not Cuban but was a LatiAmerican who had been Solaun's roommate at Yale University. Ferre was extremely well plugged-in to the Democratic Party organization. He was told, “Look, we want to get a Cuban-American.” In those days, like today, Democratic Party leaders said, “We have to get an Hispanic. Send him to Latin America.” If you get a black, send him to Africa. If you get a Swede, send him to Sweden. And the Republicans are the same. You know the game.

So Ambassador Solaun ended up in Nicaragua. It was really a sad situation. He didn't like Rubenstein, the DCM. He was unlike Ambassador Theberge, who, I think, was pretty decisive. When Ambassador Theberge decided that he wanted Walker Diamante to leave as DCM, he did it. He wasn't unkind, and it's never a nice situation. However, he did it. He probably told Diamante, “Look, this isn't working out, and I want to replace you.” So that was it.

Well, over a period of weeks Ambassador Solaun discussed this matter with me. I'm compressing this, obviously. He would talk around and around about how things were going. He would ask, “How are things going? What's your view?” I found out that he was talking to other people in the Embassy, doing the same kind of thing. Basically, he never confronted Rubenstein with any of this. It became evident that he did not have confidence in Irwin Rubenstein, but Irwin didn't see this coming. When I finally saw it, I told him that he was going to be replaced. I went to Rubenstein and told him, “Look, you've got a problem with the Ambassador.” By that time I think the situation was probably irretrievable, anyway. At that point I blame Irwin, because rather than figure out what to do about the situation, he went into a confrontational mode.

I can vividly remember a conference in the Ambassador's office, a large office in a Butler-type building, a temporary structure. There was a big, long table at one end of the room. We had our Country Team meetings in there. I had studied behavioral patterns at the Maxwell School. I said to Irwin Rubenstein when he got to Managua, “You know, Irwin, one of the things that I learned at Graduate School was that if you're the deputy to the chief, you never want to set yourself up physically opposite him, in confrontation with him. If you ever have to question him or raise something negative in a public way, you don't really want to be head to head with him.” He said, “That's a bunch of bull.” I said, “Well, you might want to think about sitting next to him.” I'll tell you. Ever since my time at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, I sat as close to the right hand of my boss as I could. When I was Ambassador, I insisted that my DCM sit immediately to my right.

Q: I think of my colleague, Tom Stern. When he was DCM, he sat tthe right of the Ambassador. He'd learned the same thing.

GILLESPIE: I can vividly picture some of these meetings. I don't remember the subject matter, but it often involved little stuff concerning scheduling - should we do this or should we do that? This would involve an open, free discussion. However, here was this DCM and this Ambassador. There was antagonism between them. Rubenstein was in a no

win position. The minute he said anything negative, everyone looked away from the Ambassador and toward him. Or at the Ambassador, wondering how he was going to take it, and so Rubenstein was at a disadvantage.

In any event I got a phone call one Sunday afternoon from Ambassador Solaun. He asked me to come to the Residence and have a swim at the swimming pool. Incidentally, Ambassador Theberge had never let anybody into the Ambassadorial swimming pool or on the Ambassadorial tennis court - not even Diamante or Rubenstein, who lived in the same compound! Rubenstein had the guts to ask if he could use the tennis court and was turned down! He was told, “You can play when I invite you to play.” That's the way Ambassador Theberge was.

Ambassador Solaun had said that anyone that wanted to could use the tennis court, but the pool was basically the Ambassador's. He didn't say that nobody could use the pool, but that was the result. As the Administrative Officer, I had said to both Ambassadors, “I think it would be a good idea to work out some kind of program for use when you don't need to use these facilities. Then others could use them.” I was turned down flat by Theberge, in both cases. Solaun didn't hesitate to make the tennis courts available but said, “You know, I really need to unwind. Joan and I” - they had a little girl- -”need to unwind, and the pool is just right for that.” I said, “Well, it's your call. I suggest you think about it.” What he did was to invite people to come to the pool from time to time - and he spread the invitations around. He'd invite secretaries, communicators, and different people.

As I said, I had a phone call to come over to the pool one Sunday afternoon. There was nobody else there. My wife didn't go, because she was doing something with our children. When I got there, I found out that Solaun had gone to see Somoza that morning. Solaun had received an instruction from the Department the night before. I wouldn't have had any reason to know about it. Solaun was instructed to go in and see Somoza about something. Solaun said: “I'm really disturbed by all this. I've just had this meeting with Somoza. It didn't go particularly well.” He continued, “I have the feeling that I have not been doing a

very good job, reporting to Washington. Would you help me draft a cable reporting this conversation?" He said, "You could help me. I know that you write well. I've seen what you write. You know how to say things." I said, "I don't have any problem with that, but there is a bureaucratic problem with Washington." I said, "Look, you have Irwin Rubenstein just down the road, you have Jack Martin, the Political Officer. That's what these guys are supposed to do."

Ambassador Solaun said, "Well, yes, but I don't want Rubenstein anywhere near this." I said, "Come on, you can't do that. That's not right." He said, "Well, just help me with this." So what could I do? I sat there with a long, yellow pad. He basically told me all about the conversation which he had had with Somoza. All I did was to take dictation. I wrote it down and I said, "Let's just report this the way you say it happened." I said, "However, you're going to make my life impossible with this. You have to tell Rubenstein that this is what you're doing, and we have to have Irwin look at this piece of paper. And Jack Martin," the Political Officer, "needs to know about this. Couldn't we have them come over, and we'll just talk this through with them and then see what comes out?" Well, Ambassador Solaun agreed to do that. Jack Martin, who was a very smart guy, read the situation rather quickly. He said, "Okay, Gillespie, you've got yourself some kind of a new relationship with the Ambassador. I don't think that you created this, but it happened for whatever reason." Irwin Rubenstein, who had a lot of confidence in me, and in whom I had a lot of confidence, too, said, "Well, I guess that this is the way it's going to be. I'm glad you kept me informed about it. Let's see if we can continue to do it."

As it turned out, what I was able to do was to get out of that scene by getting Angel Rebasa involved. He was a Cuban-American, junior Political Officer, and not a Democrat. After talking to Jack Martin and Irwin Rubenstein, I said to the Ambassador, "Look, I could come over and take these notes for you. However, really, Angel Rebasa can do this just as well as I can. But if you want to talk to someone about your meetings with Somoza, if you need someone to talk to, I'll be glad to do so." Ambassador Solaun said, "Would you talk

to me about that?" I said, "Yes, I'll be glad to do so, but why not let Angel Rebasa take the notes?" The Ambassador said, "All right."

That was a weird situation. That continued until my departure from Managua. I became a guy in whom this Ambassador had some confidence. I'll be honest about it. There were some things that happened, where we had some bad situations. We had a problem with the AID relationship. The AID people didn't like the Ambassador. They didn't think very much of him. I protected his relationship with them and made sure that the chief of Mission was deferred to and so forth. There were a lot of things happening on which, I guess, he felt that he could trust me and that I would be looking at the institutional and the Ambassador's interests in the proper way.

I found myself in that situation. It worked out well with Jack Martin, the Political Officer. It worked out well with Freres, the Economic Officer. Eventually, Rubenstein and I became totally estranged, as he was leaving. He couldn't believe it when the Ambassador finally called him in, fired him, and said, "You have to go." At that point Irwin turned on me and accused me of at least contributing to this situation, if not inciting it. I reminded him that this had started long before the Ambassador had fired him. We have never been able to have any kind of a friendship since then. The other people and I have all stayed fairly close.

That situation gave me some insights into Solaun, the Ambassador, Somoza, and the rest of it which were really fascinating. In the long run it probably helped me.

Q: Sometimes this kind of relationship happens. However, you acted in a professional way in trying to act as a bridge. I have run into some cases where an Ambassador will take a junior officer under his wing, or something like that, and bypass the chiefs of section. And the junior officer glories in this, or brings in a confidant who is a good friend of his from outside the Embassy. The whole Embassy is cut out of the relationship with the Ambassador.

In Mexico on one occasion there was this “temple dog” relationship when John Gavin was Ambassador. He had two officers who were called “temple dogs.” They basically kept everybody away. They were not in the Foreign Service. The point was that the Embassy was not clued in on what was going on.

GILLESPIE: Stuart, this situation worked for me basically because of my military experience. I believed then, and I believe now, in the chain of command. Wherever you are, you have an overall boss and intervening bosses. There is a chain of command. In the Foreign Service, in an Embassy, in an Office, or in a Bureau there is a chain of command, or you don't know where you are. I felt very strongly that you ought to follow the chain of command. If you don't do this, you're asking for trouble. You said that I had acted in a professional way, and maybe that's what that was. However, it seemed terribly important to me that I try to get the Ambassador to try to follow the chain of command if I could. But if he wasn't going to do that, I still had to recognize the chain of command. I had to make sure that my immediate boss, Irwin Rubenstein, knew what was going on, or Diamante before him, or the guy who replaced Rubenstein.

Then the Political Officer, who was a colleague of mine, the AID Director, and all of these other people who were in the chain of command somewhere, needed to be kept informed. Otherwise, the organization would fall apart, resulting in a terrible situation. Remember that I had lived with this kind of situation to some extent in Brussels. I mentioned that Ambassador Harlan Cleveland had this practice of giving the same task to different people at different levels. That kind of practice may have some benefits, but if it isn't handled well, it can also be terribly disruptive.

I saw this process happen in Managua, which was a hardship post. It was not an easy place for people to live in. The American School was okay, but life wasn't all of that easy. There was a rebellion going on in the country. We didn't think of it as terrorism in those days or life threatening to us. However, things were happening, bombs were going off, and other problems came up. Later on, in 1978, there were battles going on in the countryside.

There were cases of killings, torture, and things like that. It was not an easy place to live and work in. Furthermore, the relationship with Somoza, on the one hand, was not all of that smooth. A lot of people in the Embassy didn't like what they saw. So morale was a factor, and the Administrative Officer has to think about morale in both general and specific terms. So I thought that the way to deal with that was through this chain of command approach. I felt that this was the best that I could do.

As we all learn in life, there sometimes are no other options. You just have to tell it the way it is or the way you see it. That's what I ended up doing with Rubenstein, Martin, and the Ambassador himself. I said, “This isn't right, but this is the way it is, and how are we going to deal with it?”

Eventually, it weighed so heavily on Rubenstein that ultimately it soured our relationship dramatically and finally. That's too bad, but it happened that way. I don't know whether he ever really recovered from that professionally, either. He eventually retired. He'd been Consul General in Guadalajara Mexico. He had always seen himself as ultimately being a Chief of Mission and getting an Embassy somewhere. He fought hard to do that. I helped him draft some memoranda to the incoming people in the Carter administration.

Q: While you were in Managua, did you see a growing estrangement between Somoza and, now, the Carter administration? Human rights were a very big issue with the Carter administration. For example, did Pat Darien Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs ever come down to Managua?

GILLESPIE: No. It's interesting, because Pat Darien was always a distant presence. What happened between the departure of Ambassador Theberge and the arrival of Ambassador Solaun, when Rubenstein was in charge, was Somoza's heart attack. Anastasio Somoza suffered a major coronary attack and was at death's door. Terence Todman was the Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs in the Department of State. Somoza's

son, “Tachito,” called the Embassy. Rubenstein was the charge d'affaires. This could have affected his relationship with Ambassador Solaun later on, although I am not sure of this.

There were two aspects involved in this. First, Rubenstein had been charge d'affaires for several months. Secondly, Somoza's heart attack occurred on his watch. We had the option of sending Somoza to Gorgas Army Hospital in Panama or Brooke Army Medical Center in Houston, Texas. Somoza's son called the Embassy, talked to Rubenstein, and said, “You have to help my father. He needs to go to the States. We'll do anything, we'll pay anything, but we have to get him into the hands of De Bakey or one of those heart specialists.” We started getting calls from Somoza's West Point classmates. They were big guns in the U.S. I can't remember their names, but they were senior executives in big corporations. They were all older men by this time. Many of them had left the Army. Anyhow, the pressure was really on to take care of Somoza.

Irwin Rubenstein, who was without any doubt a staunch Democrat, and I would say with both a small and a big D, was torn. He thought, well, on the one hand, it wouldn't hurt the world if this man died. On the other hand, Nicaragua is a friendly country, he is the President, and we have done this for others. So Rubenstein took the ball and threw it to Terence Todman, the Assistant Secretary of State for ARA. I'll never forget Todman. Rubenstein called me over to his home in the evening. He was trying to reach Todman. Finally, he contacted Todman at a dinner party in Washington. Todman didn't know quite what to do. You could tell this from the telephone conversation, as heard from Irwin Rubenstein's end. Todman said, “I'll get back to you.”

Todman called back and said, “All right. We'll send a medevac plane from the U.S. Air Force down to get Somoza. But make sure that this is not being done for free. They, the Nicaraguan Government, are going to have to pay the bill.” Irwin Rubenstein duly called Somoza's son and told him, “We'll do it, but you have to understand that you will have to pay the tab, and it will be expensive. It will be in the tens of thousands of dollars.” Rubenstein had asked me to listen in on this part of the conversation. Somoza's son

replied, “Don't worry, we'll take care of it.” Well, Somoza went up to the U.S., was treated at Brooke Army Medical Center, and he recovered. He came back to Managua, moved out of the “Beach House,” and went into seclusion at a place called Montelimar. This all happened before Ambassador Solaun got there.

Being Latin, whatever else they were, the debt of gratitude of the Somoza family was to Irwin Rubenstein. And Rubenstein didn't mind this at all. He would be called down to see Somoza, who was recovering. This was also a moment when the people in Nicaragua, both those in favor of Somoza and those not in favor of him, saw his mortality. He ended up losing 50 or 60 pounds. He was a tall man but was a shell of his former self. Anyway, they could see him, and there were lots of problems involved. Irwin Rubenstein, as charge d'affaires, had a fair amount of contact with Somoza.

Nonetheless, we had done all of this. This happened during the transition between the Ford and Carter administrations. It was the incoming, Democratic Party administration that had helped Somoza.

Other things were coming up. It turned out that the U.S. had sold to the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional, as part of the FMS, or Foreign Military Sales, program, and at a subsidized price, but a purchase, nonetheless, a considerable number of M-14 rifles, the predecessor to the M-16 rifle. These were Army assault rifles. The rifles had slings, or canvas straps which are used to carry them over the shoulder. There was a manufacturing defect in the sling swivels. A big, political issue arose as a result, with human rights involved. The Nicaraguans said that the U.S. must replace the sling swivels on 15,000 rifles. There were two sling swivels required on each rifle, so a total of 30,000 sling swivels were involved, at a cost of two to three dollars each. It was not a big deal, but they went on a rifle, and the reports of the conflict between the Guardia Nacional and the Sandinista Liberation Front were bubbling up in the early days of the Carter administration. The first thing we heard from Pat Darien and the human rights people was, “No, we will not replace the rusting sling swivels.”

Well, this was silly. We had a colonel who was the commander of the Military Group in Nicaragua, with about ten officers and NCOs. They were saying, “Come on, let's get real. We sold them this, and there is a defect.” This was Nicaragua where issues of this kind had not been on the front burner in this mechanical way. Everybody had been concerned about atrocities and all of that, but my recollection is that Pat Darien and her supporters all of a sudden concluded, “We're going to stick it to the Somoza regime and the Guardia Nacional. We're not going to replace the sling swivels.”

So the cables flew back and forth. Ambassador Solaun arrived, and the controversy was still going on. Robert Pastor was the National Security Director for Latin America. He was 29 years old, an academic from Georgia, and was President Jimmy Carter's man on Latin America. He was a major activist. I first met Bob Pastor before Ambassador Solaun arrived. In June, 1977, Rosalyn Carter the President's wife decided that she would make a trip to Latin America. She would carry the human rights word with her. The target was mainly Brazil and a lesser target in Peru. But the first, overseas stop for Mrs. Carter as First Lady was Caracas, Venezuela. Just as they had done with me in Yugoslavia, we received a telephone call or cable that said, “We would like Gillespie to go to Caracas to help to manage Mrs. Carter's visit to Venezuela. The Embassy in Venezuela is not strong in the administrative area, and we'd like to have Gillespie go down and do it.”

So I packed up, and in June, 1977, I went down to Caracas and stayed for about six weeks, getting ready for the visit of Mrs. Carter. This is where I found out about Bob Pastor. Bob, who is now a friend of mine, was something out of a book. Everything was changed three times. Something was approved, then disapproved, a new thing was approved, and all kinds of things happened. It was all Pastor, Pastor, Pastor. Here was this young guy going around and making things happen.

At the time Caracas didn't have any major problems. There was a President, Pete Vaky was our Ambassador, a really strong, career Foreign Service Officer. Diego Asencio was his Deputy Chief of Mission, another very strong career officer. Myles Frechette,

now our Ambassador to Colombia, was the Political Counselor and a very strong Latin Americanist. So the Embassy in Caracas, on the substantive side, was fine. A little weak on the administrative side, but I was sent there to help them out. The administrative guy was a little slow-moving, and all it took was to say, “I'm here to help you,” and we moved it all. Diego Asencio was great. Mrs. Carter had a good stop in Caracas, but there was where I saw Pastor. And I could see how this guy worked. His mind was moving a mile a minute or faster - maybe with the speed of light. Everything was changing from minute to minute and hour to hour. Everybody was tearing their hair out - Ambassador Vaky, the DCM, and so forth. They said, “My God, we just arranged this. Now we have to change it!” Pastor began with, “Mrs. Carter wants this.” Then it became, “I want this.”

Pastor was the actor in Nicaragua about the time that Ambassador Solaun arrived. Not Pat Darien. Darien's office was in the State Department. The scene of the action was really in the NSC (National Security Council) in Washington. The Nicaraguan situation began to build. In the course of Mrs. Carter's trip to Latin America, after going to Peru and really hitting them hard on the human rights issue in Brazil and, I think, Argentina, she returned to the U.S. and didn't visit Nicaragua. However, at a certain point, Pastor became involved, as 1977 ended and 1978 began. I guess that the first thing that hit us was that the publisher and owner of La Prensa, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, was assassinated - gunned down - early in 1978.

Everybody suspected that Somoza was behind it, but there were just enough things “off” that you could not be sure. Some really bad actors had entered on the scene in Nicaragua. They were Cubans. Not Cuban-Americans, but Cuban exiles. They were running a blood business - literally. They were buying human blood, converting it into blood plasma, and selling it on the international market. The murdered man, Chamorro, had sharply criticized these vampires in the press. There is no doubt that as Cuban exiles who were anti-Castro, they, Somoza, and all of those around Somoza, had a great affinity for each other. But there was some suspicion that these Cuban exiles either got Chamorro because they didn't like the publicity, or it may have been a little bit of “Who will rid me of this

troublesome priest?" Perhaps they didn't hesitate and just said, "We'll do it!" The idea may have been that the Cubans wanted to make sure that they would always have a nice home for their blood sucking operation in Nicaragua.

One or two of these Cubans may have either had American connections, or there was a business connection. I can remember that they came into the Embassy. At this point I vividly remember Ambassador Solaun asking me to join him, the Economic Officer, and the DCM, because he wanted lots of people in the room when we met with these guys. I sat in on this meeting. These Cubans were not savory people. They were not nice men. You could tell that these were tough guys and were not in this blood business for any humanitarian reason but because it was a profitable business. Anyway, Chamorro was killed, and Ambassador Solaun and all of us went to the funeral. We met his widow, Violeta, now the President of Nicaragua, and their children. I had never met Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the murdered man.

As a chief of mission Ambassador Solaun handled himself very well, I have to tell you. He would include people in the Embassy, and not just section chiefs, at social events. He would invite political figures to breakfast. One time he'd have a Political Officer. Another day he'd have an Economic Officer. He'd ask the Consular Officer. He'd ask me to come. Maybe he'd have a couple of us. He'd have a working dinner. He would include people from the Embassy in his guest lists all the time, so we all got to know the cream of the cream of Nicaraguan society, directly through Ambassador Solaun or on our own.

We were trying to sell this House on the Hill. FBO (Office of Foreign Building Operations) had decided that it would be a good idea. One of my constant jobs was whether we could market it. Would anybody buy it? Was it saleable? It was bigger than we needed. There were all kinds of considerations like that.

So Pedro Joaquin Chamorro was assassinated, and that changed the whole complexion of the Nicaraguan political and social scene. This was something that had NOT happened

before. And there was Somoza's heart attack the previous year, in 1977. Everything was changing. The Sandinistas were becoming stronger in the North. Municipal elections were scheduled for March, 1978. All of a sudden it sounded as if there might be some kind of political competition for these mayoral and municipal council jobs. In the past Somoza's supporters would just kind of win these elections, mainly because nobody would run against them. So these elections had been half-hearted.

We worked out a way of covering these elections, which were of interest to everybody. It turned out that I was appointed to cover the municipal election in a town called Rivas on the western shore of Lake Nicaragua in the southern part of the country. So one of the FSOs who was doing visa work, one of the military officers from the Military Group, and I went down to Rivas, where we spent about three days - the day before, election day, and the day after the election. We collected views on everything we could on the atmosphere and how the elections had gone. It was fun for me, because I had not done much of that before. I was the senior guy, so I was in charge of this team of three people. We went back to the Embassy and reported that the elections had taken place but that there probably had been some hanky panky. The Somocista candidate won, as almost everyone had expected. However, it seemed that some fairly strong opposition to the Somoza government was building in Rivas.

It wasn't much later than that, perhaps in May, 1978, that a terrible incident occurred in the town of Masaya, just South of Managua. A detachment of the Guardia Nacional, claiming that it was going after Sandinistas, really shot up one whole, poor section of the town. Ambassador Solaun and DCM Asencio asked me to go out to Masaya with the Political Officer to see what was going on. We got there within hours of the time this had happened. I can remember vividly walking down the street and seeing a child's foot in the middle of the street. We looked into the huts lining the street and found blood splattered around and cartridge casings from the M-14 assault rifles. The bullets had clearly gone through the thin walls and killed anybody who was inside. They had hardly expended any energy

getting through those walls. It was really gory. We talked to the people there, the local priest, political people, and residents of the town.

We described this clearly unprovoked incident in a report to the Department which Washington was bound to react to. Things were going bad in Nicaragua. The Chamorro assassination seems to have triggered this deterioration. There had been the show election and then the Masaya incident. The question began to be asked whether the Somoza government could survive. What was really going on? The Sandinistas who had been in northern Nicaragua had promoted the establishment of a group of 12 non- Sandinista members of the National Assembly who were opposed to the Somoza government. It was now no longer just the Sandinistas opposed to the government. There was a non-Sandinista opposition to Somoza, operating in Costa Rica.

One of the political leaders whom I had gotten to know fairly well, thanks to Ambassador Solaun, was a businessman who was also interested in purchasing the House on the Hill. He was now a member of this group of 12 down in Costa Rica. He had, in effect, exiled himself from Nicaragua. There was growing pressure against the Somoza government. The town of Rivas, where I had gone to observe the elections, was attacked by an armed group from across the Costa Rican border. Rivas was on the main road, about 30 miles North of the Costa Rican border. This armed group used rocket launchers to shoot up the military garrison in Rivas. The Army officer from the Military Group went down to Rivas, talked to the garrison, returned, and prepared a report on what had happened. A lot of that kind of thing was going on.

The next incident which I recall must have happened in May or June, 1978, soon after the Masaya incident. Jay Freres, the Economic Officer, and his wife, who was originally German, had a couple of sons, one of them the same age as my son, and a couple of daughters. We were pretty close friends. Marie Freres told her husband that she had been to the dentist, a Nicaraguan bearing a U.S. passport who was living in Nicaragua. I assume that the dentist and his family were dual nationals, with both Nicaraguan and U.S.

citizenship. The dentist told Mrs. Freres that his sister, who was also a U.S. citizen, had a son who, with a friend of his who may have had a Mexican connection, were fugitives from the Guardia Nacional in Nicaragua. They had been with the Sandinista Liberation Front up in the northern mountains of Nicaragua. The Guardia Nacional was reportedly getting close to them. These two young men were staying at the dentist's house. The dentist wanted to know if the Embassy could help them.

So Jay and I went to see Ambassador Solaun and a recently-arrived DCM named Frank, whose last name I can't remember. He was a big, red-haired guy who had been DCM in Malta. Frank was a chain-smoking, heavy drinking, professional Political Officer, an FSO. He was a no nonsense type of person. Mary Daniels, the chief of the Consular Section, was also present at this meeting. We asked the Ambassador and DCM what we could or should do about this. These kids were fugitives, and the Guardia Nacional was after them. Quite frankly, Stu, I don't think that we ever reported this case to the Department. We decided to do what we could to help these young men escape the Guardia Nacional. Jay Freres and I, with me driving, took the Ambassador's Cadillac at night and picked up these two kids at the dentist's house. Meanwhile, I had contacted the Mexican Ambassador and discussed the case with him. With the agreement of the Mexican Ambassador we took the two kids, had them lie down in the back seat, and took them to the Mexican Ambassador's house. They got of the car, ran inside, and had asylum from the Mexican Ambassador, as Nicaraguans, not as U.S. citizens. They were moved out of Nicaragua the next day. I don't know whether this was ever a matter of official record.

Q: You were right. That's the type of thing you do in the field. If you don't do it there, the news of the incident gets all over the place...

GILLESPIE: If you don't do anything, you have lawyers inquiring, the Bureau of Consular Affairs gets involved, and by the time you make a decision, whatever it is, you may have lost any chance to be effective. Well, Ambassador Solaun, bless his soul, and Frank, the DCM, reviewed the situation. Frank asked what our options were. If we called the

Department on the open telephone, the Nicaraguans might hear us. If we sent a cable, it would be two days before we got an answer. These kids were in the dentist's house, the dentist raised the matter with us, and what could we do? We discussed the matter and decided to contact the Mexican Ambassador to see if he would offer asylum to them. As I mentioned above, I think that the other kid had some Mexican connection. The Mexican Ambassador was the logical person to call. I had previously met the Mexican Ambassador to Nicaragua. He had been in the Protocol Office of the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs when I was the GSO at the Embassy in Mexico City. I had met him in connection with one of our property deals - maybe the American cemetery matter I mentioned previously.

I called the Mexican Ambassador and asked if I could come and see him. Freres and I went to see him and presented the problem. We asked him, “Would you help? We have not discussed this with anyone.” He said, “Yes, if you can get these two young men here after dark and pull into my driveway with a car having diplomatic plates.” Ambassador Solaun agreed to this course of action. There was no Nicaraguan surveillance that we knew of at the Mexican Ambassador's residence. So we did it, and that was it, as far as we were concerned. The dentist was always grateful to us, and, I suppose, so was the kid's mother.

Another fascinating thing happened. I mentioned the Intercontinental Hotel, where several of us stayed for a time after we arrived in Managua. It turned out that Somoza and his government, because it was considered so corrupt, was believed to be easy plucking for con men.

Q: By “con” men you mean “confidence” men...

GILLESPIE: Yes. They would take people for their money. They want to make some easy money. It turned out that there was a man from South Carolina, whose name was Arthur something. I cannot remember his last name. He had been in the textile business. He

had a scheme for some kind of a textile operation in Nicaragua. He had probably come to Nicaragua either in late 1976 or early 1977 and had been living in the Intercontinental Hotel. Initially, he had paid his bills, which amounted to some tens of thousands of dollars, and everything was fine. By late 1978, about the time that all of these other things were going on, he was still waiting to see Somoza and get approval for his investment scheme, which would have required the Nicaraguans to put up some front money. He was now unable to pay his bill at the Intercontinental Hotel, so the hotel people eventually went to the Police or the government. The police arrested this guy, an American citizen from South Carolina. He was put into jail for non-payment of his bill, which amounted to about $30,000. He couldn't get together the money.

Somehow, he escaped from jail and appeared at the door of the U.S. Embassy - inside the gate and past the guard. I was called to come down to the door because I was in charge of security and all of that. The Assistant GSO was there, because he was also the post Security Officer. Art was a not very attractive human being, from the physical point of view. He turned out to be even less attractive in every other respect. He said, “I'm not leaving. You can't get me out of here. I'm not walking out there. I'm not going back to that jail. They beat me.” He alleged human rights violation and said that he wanted “asylum.” I explained that we don't give asylum to American citizens. I said, “Get out of here.” Anyhow, we reported this case to the Department. He spent six weeks living in the little dispensary that we had on the ground floor of the Embassy. Our nurse, Patricia Jaramillo, was an American citizen married to a Nicaraguan doctor - a lovely woman. It turned out that Arthur had serious problems with diabetes. He needed insulin and all of that. He smoked cigars - couldn't live without cigars. He needed a special diet. We had a little snack bar or cafeteria. He was living at the Embassy. The Nicaraguans were sending us diplomatic notes, requesting that we turn this guy over to them. We didn't particularly like the Somoza government, but Arthur gave us special problems. We went through 2 FAM, the Foreign Affairs Manual, which tells you how to deal with cases like this.

Finally, after six weeks we got the right instruction that we had been asking for, which was permission for the Embassy to give him back to the Nicaraguan authorities. We had considered every option. Could we fly him out? How could he get to the airport? He couldn't leave legally. If we got him out of the country, we would be violating Nicaraguan law. He had no diplomatic immunity. Of course, he was a constituent of some member of Congress. The instruction from the Department authorized us to hand him back to the Nicaraguans. He said he wouldn't leave, which we had reported to the Department. In turn, the Department authorized us “to use whatever reasonable force is required to eject him” from the Embassy building.

We had these instructions from the Department. We had a back gate to the Embassy, which is pretty exposed all the way around. The press wasn't in sight. They were around initially, when they thought that there was a story in this. However, interest had dwindled. We worked it out that we could take this guy to the back gate of the Embassy and turn him over to the Managua Police. Not the Guardia Nacional, although the Police really came under the Guardia Nacional. We would ask the Police to drive up to the back gate to the Embassy at a precise time and we would turn over this man. We would tell the Foreign Ministry that this was how we proposed to handle the matter.

This was our plan, but at this point we still had not informed the Nicaraguan authorities of what we planned to do. I think that it was Jay Freres, the Economic Officer, who said, “You know, I've been through something like this before, and you'd be amazed at how many unexpected things can happen. Why don't we rehearse what we're going to do before we talk to the Nicaraguans?” We all thought that that was a great idea, so we scripted this show from start to finish. We would tell Arthur that the Ambassador needs to talk to him, because the instructions from the Department stated that, “The Ambassador is to inform him directly and personally that he is no longer welcome at the Embassy and that he has to leave. If he doesn't go voluntarily, he will be ejected.” This was all Miranda language cautioning him about his rights. In effect, we would read him his rights.

So we said, “Okay, Jay, this was your idea. You get to be Arthur.” We would bring him into the Ambassador's office. He would stand in front of the Ambassador's desk. The Ambassador would remain seated at his desk. Maybe he would stand up to talk to Arthur, but we didn't want Arthur to reach over and hit the Ambassador or do anything crazy. The Ambassador was to keep his desk between them. We had 12 Marines assigned to the Embassy. We decided to have the Gunnery Sergeant the NCO in command of the Marine Guard detachment and three of his stronger Marines in the back of the Ambassador's office and not immediately visible when Arthur walked in the door. I would be there with the Assistant GSO. The nurse would be right outside the door of the Ambassador's office, if she were needed for any reason. When we brought him over to the Ambassador's office, she would put all of his belongings in a bag and bring them with her to the door to the Ambassador's office.

So we started our dress rehearsal. I went to get Jay Freres who was standing in for Arthur and took him to the Ambassador's office, standing him in front of the Ambassador's desk. Ambassador Solaun himself was sitting there. Everybody else except Jay Frere, standing in for Arthur was a real person, standing in his or her appointed position. The Ambassador stood up and said, “Well, Mr. So-and-So, I now have my instructions from Washington. You are to turn yourself in to the Nicaraguan authorities, subject to Nicaraguan law.” The Ambassador read from a prepared script. Jay looked around in panic, reached over onto the desk, grabbed a letter opener, and lunged for the Ambassador. He said, “You'll never get me out of here!” Then the Marines ran over and grabbed him. Well, we ran through this dress rehearsal twice more. We made sure that there would be nothing within this guy's reach with which to threaten the Ambassador. We actually practiced with Jay Freres how the Marine Guards would hold him with the minimum chance of hurting him, so that we restrained him but would not break an arm or anything else.

So we told the Nicaraguan Police and the Foreign Ministry what we were going to do, and on the next morning we did it. I went to get this guy and brought him to the Ambassador's

office. He sensed that this would not be good news, although I tried not to indicate this in any way. He started running around the Ambassador's office, yelling, “You will not get me out of here! I am a dying man.” It was a real drama. The Marine Guards came over and grabbed him. The Nicaraguan Police were at the back gate. We had Embassy officers as witnesses all along the route to the back gate, so we could say that we hadn't hit his head against the wall and that nothing had happened to him. We had towels on hand so that he couldn't hit his head. Well, that rehearsal really prepared us for what happened. Thank God that we had Jay Freres with the good sense to say, “Let's try this out in advance.”

It was truly a traumatic event. We don't like to turn over American citizens to foreign governments. This guy was not going into nice people's hands. They weren't going to let him go easily. Well, as it turned out, we then pursued the matter with the Nicaraguan authorities. We said, “Look, you don't want this guy sitting around your jail. Deport him.” And they did.

Q: The secret story about consular officers is to appeal to the other side and say, “Okay, you've made your point. But if you keep him, we'll be coming in to visit him. We'll be reporting and protesting on this matter.” Our objective is to get him out of our consular district.

GILLESPIE: Mary Daniels, the Consular Officer, did a superb job ithis matter.

Q: I've never heard of anything like this. That was an excellent wato handle it.

GILLESPIE: As I look back on Nicaragua as a tour of duty, I tend to look at it from the point of view of the internal politics within the Embassy. As we approached summer of 1978, the Sandinista movement had grown. The end of the Somoza administration was coming at some time. In the spring and early summer of 1978 we had the sling swivel controversy which I have described, some shootings and killings, and other incidents. There were Americans in jail. The body of a person who had apparently been killed was found on the street leading up to my house. One of the Foreign Agricultural Service screw worm guys

lived with his family over the hill behind us. There had been some shooting up in there. There was a lot of serious business going on, and the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional, if not out of control, was handling internal security matters with a very heavy hand.

One of the most serious things that happened involved Nora Astorga, the secretary of another potential purchaser of the Ambassador's Residence. Her boss was a very non-political businessman, a building contractor who had worked all over South America, not just in Nicaragua. Nora Astorga, who was rather a nice-looking woman, had been the mistress of a Nicaraguan Air Force general for about a year. He was either the chief of staff of the Nicaraguan Air Force or the number two and was a “toad” of a man in terms of his appearance. She had him over at her house in the spring of 1978 for an assignation. She punctured him a couple of times with an ice pick, and a bunch of Sandinistas came into the house through the doors and windows and finished him off. It was a bloody, gory affair, and Nora Astorga took off for the hills. The businessman, who was a friend of mine by now, said, “My God, I never knew that she was a Sandinista.”

The Sandinistas were coming out of the woodwork, and you could just see the whole Somoza government begin to fall apart. The succession issue had come into play because of “Old Man” Somoza's heart attack. He had a half-brother named Jose R. Somoza, who was an illegitimate son of their father. The half-brother was the commander of the armed forces and thought that he ought to be the logical successor to the Old Man. There were lots of things going on. Old Man Somoza kept saying, “No, my successor is my son.” There was another brother of the Old Man, who was a wealthy, Yale-educated man. He and his friends were building some political pressure. You could see all of this happening.

The U.S. Government was saying, “Somoza is going to have to go.” What should our position be? About that time there was an exchange of letters between Washington and Managua, which had to do with military equipment which we were not going to give or not going to sell. Then there were letters about Somoza and the succession. This has all been written up by people like Anthony Lake now the National Security Adviser to

President Clinton, who was not directly involved in it but did research on it. It was written up by Ambassador Solaun to some degree and by others. I can't pretend to have the facts entirely right, but there were several exchanges of correspondence. What struck me about it was the degree to which coordination within the U.S. Government in Washington was so weak.First of all, I learned from my own conversations with people in ARA (Bureau of American Republics Affairs) in the State Department that there was a widely held view that Ambassador Solaun did not have a complete grasp of the situation, to put it charitably. According to this view, Ambassador Solaun did not really understand how Washington works, so his communications which he would occasionally send in privately, like Ambassador Theberge, would kind of bounce around back in Washington. Whenever we could, we would advise the Ambassador not to do certain things or to do them in certain ways. However, he didn't always take that advice. I'm not sure that the advice was always right, either. Nonetheless, I don't think that he understood some of the power stuff that was going on. I don't think that he ever really grasped the role of Bob Pastor in the NSC. Ambassador Solaun kept trying to deal with people in the State Department. We would say, “You ought to send that message to the NSC, or call them, or do this or that.” Maybe he would and maybe he wouldn't.

In any event the result was that Somoza received very mixed signals about the Washington view of him and the situation in Nicaragua. He back played this through Congressmen Murphy and Wilson and other people on the Hill, getting their views on what was really happening. Somoza was in touch with his classmates from West Point. I remember that, at one point, I suggested that the U.S. Government ought to go to Somoza's classmates and suggest that they tell them to straighten up and fly right. I learned several years later that, in fact, the U.S. military had indeed done that, but to no avail. Somoza didn't listen to those classmates.

The institutional learning part of this was that there was an Ambassador and an Embassy moving in one direction. There was a gulf between what they were doing and thinking and what Washington was doing and thinking. Whose fault this was I wouldn't try to guess. As

I say, it's covered in several of the semi-official accounts of the period. That was a key part of it. It was confusing. Ambassador Solaun felt that he was not being supported. I think that Washington felt that it was not being well supported. There was a cast of characters in Washington of varying quality.

In Washington there were, in some order, a career Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central America and a non-career political appointee who was intelligent and smart but not experienced in handling Central America as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. There was a lot of room for confusion, and there was, in fact, some confusion. This confusion was transmitted to the person on whom we were, I think, trying to exert influence, that is, Somoza. We wanted to have the situation come out the way we wanted it to, which was to have a democratic and peaceful transition to another government. One of the things that we did not want, as a goal, was to have rebellion spread or to have violence in the country. We did not want war, but things were moving increasingly in that negative direction. We were trying to achieve a peaceful solution. That effort went on through 1978.

I left the Embassy in Managua in August, 1978. Just about the time I left, or a few weeks later, one of the revolutionaries, a man named Eden Pastora, and a small group of supporters took over the National Assembly building in Managua and held a number of members of the National Assembly hostage for a number of days. That really signaled the beginning of the end of the Somoza regime. The war or the battles began after that, between the Guardia Nacional and the Sandinistas. I mentioned that, while I was still there, the Sandinistas had attacked Rivas. I think that there was also an attack on Leon a town about 60 miles northwest of Managua. There may also have been an attack on a town called Chinandega about 74 miles northwest of Managua, where there was real fighting. However, heavy fighting was sporadic, with gaps in between. This took place between August, 1978, and July, 1979, when Somoza was defeated and finally left the country. In that interim period the Embassy got into all kinds of difficulties that I was not present for. When I came back to the United States in August, 1978, I was waiting for an onward assignment. The assignment that I received, because the job that the Department

wanted to assign me to would not be available until later, was in the Office of Management Operations in the Department. I was going to be assigned to the Foreign Service Institute to take a relatively new course, called Political Economy or political-economic training. However, just a week or two before that course was to begin, the takeover of the National Assembly building occurred, and I was assigned to be Deputy Director of the Nicaragua Task Force in the Operations Center of the State Department. This occupied me until the course at the FSI started, so I stayed in touch with Nicaragua during that period. That situation solved itself. The hostages were released, but you could tell that everything was going downhill from that point.

I guess that I came away from the assignment to Nicaragua with mixed feelings. My previous diplomatic post was in Mexico City, where I had served under two highly professional career diplomats as Ambassadors. I had a big Embassy staff with some very capable people to handle some very difficult, management problems. There were difficult policy issues involved and difficult policy management issues because of the proximity to Washington and so forth.

With regard to Nicaragua, I haven't even touched on AID.

Q: We might stop at this point. The one thing that we might touch on with regard to Nicaragua, because we have covered just about everything else, is the AID connection while you were there. Also, when you came back to Washington, in the very short time that you served on the Nicaragua Task Force, you might describe the difference in perspective between a small, beleaguered, and almost dysfunctional Embassy and looking at Nicaragua from the perspective of the Department of State. Let's do that another time.

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Today is December 1, 1995. We are resuming the interview with Ambassador Tony Gillespie. Tony, we were going to discuss the AID program in Nicaragua.

GILLESPIE: I think I mentioned earlier that in the mid-1970s the Agency for International Development program in Nicaragua was one of the largest in the Western Hemisphere, in terms of money in the pipeline flowing through to the recipient. I think that this program was the largest in terms of personnel, including both American direct hire employees and Foreign Service National (Nicaraguan) employees.

Q: Also, when you were at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, you said that you learned more than you probably ought to know about AID.

GILLESPIE: I learned about the Agency for International Development. Just as a quick flashback, the first Minister for Economic Affairs in the U.S. Mission to NATO, when I was assigned to Brussels, was an Italian-American gentleman, whose name I can't remember. He had worked with the original Economic Cooperation Administration ECA, the predecessor of AID during the period of the Marshall Plan. He had told me some things about assistance programs and how they should or shouldn't work. Anyway, when I was at Syracuse University, I looked at assistance programs. I learned that I was going to the Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua, and would be responsible for administering some of the AID activity there. That is, not the AID program as such, but some of their administrative arrangements.

When I got to Nicaragua, I found a really quite complex operation. There was a very complex bureaucracy in place. It was not totally inefficient. I had talked to the AID people in Washington to find what I was getting into. They were suspicious. They did not think that a State Department Administrative Officer was going to do much good for them. They were sort of reluctantly in this joint administrative arrangement which had been set up in Managua. It was in place in just a few Embassies or Missions around the world. I learned that the AID program efforts were basically related to the aftermath of the earthquake of 1972, plus some regular development assistance programs to try to help the poor in Nicaragua to live a better life. On the whole, AID activity was fairly wide- ranging.

This was at a time when AID was still getting involved in what were called “capital projects” - that is, major investment areas, including roads, bridges, and those kinds of things - in addition to social, health, and development areas. So the AID Mission in Nicaragua had a little bit of everything. I quickly learned, and this was not inconsequential, that the AID Mission Director was designated, according to the Foreign Affairs Manual - and I guess that this reflected statutory law - as a principal representative of the United States overseas. As such, he was entitled to the same kind, if not the same quantity, of perquisites that the U.S. Ambassador had. The Mission Director, of course, had housing, at a time when other people in the Mission and Embassy may not have had housing. That involved an Official Residence Expense (ORE) allocation, under which money was available to run his residence and pay the domestic staff. He had a car and driver.

I learned that not only was this the case in fact, but the Mission Directors really saw themselves as virtually co-equal with the U.S. Ambassador.

Q: That must have been a “comfortable” relationship!

GILLESPIE: It always was a terribly comfortable relationship. [Laughter] One of the challenges for me was going to be to make clear to the Mission Director that I saluted most sharply toward the U.S. Ambassador because he was the President's personal representative. I was not so much concerned about the Mission Director as the AID representative. However, I appreciated that I also had to serve the AID Director for Nicaragua, who was one of my principal clients. I was supposed to work for him, too. So I was supposed to figure out how to balance...

Q: This was a period when what we used to call “the AmbassadoriaLetter” was in force.

GILLESPIE: It was.

Q: You might explain what the Ambassadorial Letter was all about.

GILLESPIE: President John F. Kennedy had initially sent out what was called the Ambassadorial Letter in which he basically said that the Ambassador was his personal representative and had the authority to direct the efforts and to be accountable for, as it later turned out, the actions of all Executive Branch employees assigned in the country concerned. An exception was made because of relationships, primarily in Europe, though in a few places elsewhere in the world, for military personnel assigned under the Theater Military Commander, whoever he might be.

Q: This related to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), SEAT(Southeast Asian Treaty Organization)...

GILLESPIE: Those exceptions have become more extensive over time because the U.S. military, after the passage of legislation a few years ago, was reorganized, and there now are what are called Unified Military Commands or Theater Commanders in each of the geographic areas. That has created problems since then. However, at that time, the Ambassadors had their letters, which were sort of a license which made clear that they were responsible for all of the civilian employees of the U.S. Executive Branch in the country concerned, whether permanently or temporarily assigned. That letter was supposed to give the Ambassador authority.Well, structurally, we had, as we know, a Deputy Chief of Mission, who serves as Charge d'Affaires when the Ambassador is not in the country. Ambassadors usually look to Deputy Chiefs of Mission especially to coordinate interagency matters at the post, to make sure that they know what's going on, and to manage the establishment, however that establishment is defined.

The AID Mission Director also has a Deputy AID Mission Director. As it turned out, in many of the smaller posts, when AID was big and strong, regardless of whether the State Department representation was big or strong, the AID Mission Director, more often than not, was either the rank equivalent of the Deputy Chief of Mission or senior to him. At small posts, like Nicaragua, quite frankly the AID Director was a couple of grades senior to the Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy. His Deputy AID Mission Director also

outranked the Deputy Chief of Mission. Rank, like contracts, is something like contracts. You only need it when you need it. If things are going well, you don't need to worry about it. However, this issue turned out to be a sore point in Managua because, I think, the AID people sensed, as I think I mentioned earlier, that relations between both of the Ambassadors under whom I served and both of the DCM's were not all of that great. The AID people saw in that whatever they saw. However, the result was that they didn't take the DCM's authority very seriously. On the surface they went along with a lot of rulings by the DCM's, but that didn't make for smooth relations in management.

There were disparities in benefits. If I remember correctly, State, USIA, and other Executive Branch American employees at the post had to go out and find their own housing. AID found housing for its own people, rented and furnished it, and paid the utilities charges. It turned out that one of my jobs was to provide different levels of service to different kinds of people. I was the Administrative Officer for both AID and State. One of my assistants was an AID General Services Officer, who knew all of AID's regulations and made sure that I knew what I had to know. I had the advantage over him, if that's the right word, that I wrote his Efficiency Report. There was no question about that. The Deputy AID Mission Director reviewed my report, but I had some leverage on the man, who turned out to be an excellent officer and absolutely loyal to me and to the Embassy as an organization. So we didn't have any problems. That was the way I saw these differences.

I learned the distinction between program and operations money at Syracuse University, but I came to understand how this worked out in actuality in Managua. The AID Mission had a huge program, amounting to millions of dollars. It was very easy for AID to cover certain kinds of things which, in the State Department, we would consider administration, management, or support expenses, out of program funds. Program funds were fungible. That is, you could move them around. You could spend program money on a lot of different things. That led to some disparities in support levels that were remarked upon occasionally by some of the State Department people. There were morale and institutional

issues that would come up. There was not a lot of mixing between the State Department and the AID people.

The AID Mission had one officer who was nominally an economist. However, it turned out that that officer looked to the Embassy Economic Section for a lot of his information, so there was some interaction there. AID personnel included program and project officers, plus a lot of other kinds of people with interesting titles. The reality was that the AID Mission was putting direct hire agency officers or contract personnel - and there were a lot of people working under personal service contracts - right into government ministries in Nicaragua. I learned later on that AID operated in other countries in much the same way. These AID personnel would set up shop in these government ministries, where they would counsel, lead, coach, instruct, direct, or whatever the right verb was, the local Nicaraguan bureaucrats in operating particular programs. I am oversimplifying it. There was a process under which projects or programs would be developed in a collaborative way between American and Nicaraguan personnel. However, there was a tremendous amount of penetration of the local government structure by American Agency for International Development bureaucrats.

It was interesting that in a process like that, in a situation that was politically hot, as it was in Nicaragua, there was, of course, a lot of information collected about what was going on in the government. It was also interesting to see how some of our Development Assistance Officers were able to put on total blinders and ignore a lot of this and focus exactly on the task at hand, which was, say, to come up with a better system for marketing goods from the country in the city. They were really almost ignorant about what the Nicaraguan people in the country were telling the Nicaraguan people in the market places of the city about what was going on with the Sandinista revolution in the countryside. If you pushed these American Development Assistance Officers hard enough, they would often say, “Well, I just don't want to get involved in that. It will confuse things if I get involved in that. It will interfere with my ability to work with these Nicaraguan bureaucrats and get these programs completed.” They would continue, “While I might have some curiosity

about these matters and, yes, it is a matter of concern to the United States, it would be counterproductive for me to get involved in that."

Others were not as reticent or withdrawn about this process. They were collecting information and were passing it on to the Embassy Political Officer and so forth. There were two AID Mission Directors while I was in Nicaragua. The first one was a fascinating man whom I got to know rather well. We played tennis, climbed mountains, and did other things together. He was a hard-bitten lawyer from New Hampshire or Vermont. He had been in AID for a long time after graduating from either the Harvard or Yale Law School - I forget which one. He was a very nice guy, with a very nice family. He was very definite about his prerogatives and perquisites relative to the Embassy and the Ambassador. He used an interesting vocabulary, which always juxtaposed the Embassy versus the AID Mission. We talk about a Chief of Mission. The Ambassador is designated as a Chief of Mission. AID doesn't use this terminology at all. What we call the Chief of Mission, they call the Ambassador. He runs "the Embassy." "The Mission" is what the Mission Director directs. We used to joke about that, after we got to know each other. Later on, when I was back in Washington, he was also here in Washington, where we saw each other socially. We would kind of laugh about that kind of thing when we would get together, but always with a little wry note in the humor.

In any event there were real problems with corruption in Nicaragua, in the sense of payoffs and kickbacks. One of the responsibilities of the AID Mission Director was to try and make sure that appropriate precautions had been taken and that U.S. aid money was not being siphoned off into payoffs. Well, the trouble is that money is fungible. If you get aid money for one thing, it frees up government money elsewhere, and that can go into people's pockets. It turned out later on, after the Sandinistas had come in and taken over the government, there were lots of allegations about AID money having been used improperly. I don't believe that any of these allegations ever blew back directly onto any U.S. AID

personnel. I think that the succeeding AID Directors did a pretty good job, to the extent that they could.

The problem was that they were running some big programs. They came up with a fascinating approach to low cost housing. They were trying to make sure that the occupants of the housing had some kind of ownership stake in it. Well, it turned out that all of that was working very well. However, later on we learned that the land on which the housing had been built belonged to one of the Somozas. The Nicaraguan government bought the land, using its money. The money was then transferred from the U.S. to the Nicaraguan government for this program. Money then went into private pockets, probably at a rate higher than market forces would have predicted. We got into all of that.

The relationship between the AID Mission and the Embassy and State Department was never terribly warm. It was always a little distant. I think that it may have characterized some of the operational versus analytical reporting and representational kinds of activities, which we get into everywhere. I must mention that we had similar strains with the U.S. Military Group in Nicaragua. There had been a Military Mission or Military Group for decades in Nicaragua. This was headed by an Army Colonel, a very good, honest, and upstanding man who was not very sophisticated in international relations. He had been sent to Nicaragua to do a specific job with a nice mission statement. He had people working for him who were mostly field grade officers - majors and lieutenant colonels. As I've said, the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional had all U.S. equipment. There were programs to maintain and replace this equipment and make sure it was used properly.

I think that it would be unfair to try to characterize the attitudes of U.S. military personnel toward the Somoza government as anything but highly skeptical and very realistic. Maybe this is just a function of people who wear uniforms, but the U.S. military tends to feel an affinity and to give the benefit of the doubt to another person who wears a uniform. I got to know some of our military officers assigned to Nicaragua very well and still have close friendships with a couple of them to this day. They knew full well that there was corruption

and violence and that bad things were happening. However, they were able somehow to deal with that and maintain their working relationships with the Nicaraguan military. They also were very careful to make sure that the U.S. was not tarnished by any of this. They made sure that they were not involved, but they had a job to do, which they were trying to accomplish.

At that time in the mid-1970s the issue of human rights was only beginning to be a concept known very well out in the field, at least in Central America. Some people asked, in effect, “What do you mean that we're supposed to tell these people to stop beating up the Indians or do this kind of thing.” But it was a learning process that seemed to be going on.

I had another insight into the AID operation. I mentioned earlier that, while we were at Syracuse University, my wife had obtained a master's degree in anthropology. She had an opportunity to take some of her anthropological technology into the field. She competed for and entered into a contract with a group called the International Center for Research on Women to conduct a base line study of rural women's economic activities out in the countryside in Nicaragua.

This study, which lasted for about a year, involved sending field workers out into the countryside. My wife hired researchers, or field workers, from the local university who would go out into the countryside. She would go out periodically, monitor their work, and stay with them for a time. That was being done under an AID contract. I learned, through her, about the whole AID contracting process and, from that angle, what it was like to be an AID contractor. Incidentally, this also helped us to understand what conditions were like in rural Nicaragua, because both Vivian and I were interested in this. She would go out and be gone for a week, traveling in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, living in a tent, or in these very inexpensive bed and breakfast establishments of a certain kind. The food available mainly involved a diet of beans and rice, and her bed consisted of a plank with her sleeping bag on it.

That program gave us a basis for understanding that AID was up against tremendous, bureaucratic barriers. This came back to me later in Washington, when I was involved in other matters.

I believe that we have 11 volumes in the Foreign Affairs Manual - the regulations under which the State Department operates. We tend to think that they are mostly a lot of words. However, these regulations are important because they provide some guidelines and some rules which must be followed.

AID's regulations covered - I don't know how many volumes. They include, literally, tens of thousands of pages. Everything was covered in them. I had learned at Syracuse University, and then saw it demonstrated in Nicaragua, how different elements in Congress owned different parts of the programs of the Agency for International Development. In the State Department we basically had to be concerned about two authorizing committees in Congress - one in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate, as well as two appropriations committees. Those were the main concerns - four committees. Under those four, principal committees were some sub-committees. You could multiply that by God knows how many committees, which AID had to deal with.

Q: Could you give a few examples of what you mean by Congressionagroups having part of the action concerning AID programs?

GILLESPIE: Sure. In the House of Representatives the Foreign Affairs Committee was the authorizing committee for both the State Department and, separately and under a different appropriation covering the Foreign Assistance Operations of our country, for AID. Then, in the Appropriations Committee area, there was an an appropriations sub- committee which dealt with the Departments of State, Commerce, and Justice. It initially dealt with the Judiciary and then was renamed to cover the Department of Justice.

AID had a sub-committee of the House Foreign Operations Committee to deal with. That was all pretty clear, but then it turned out that, because AID was involved in agriculture programs, the sub-committees in the House and Senate that dealt with the Department of Agriculture on agricultural issues also had their fingers in the AID pot. They wanted to know and said that they had a legitimate right to be involved in decisions concerned with U.S. taxpayer money that would go into promoting or developing agriculture in countries overseas. Similarly, there were Government Operations Committees and Sub-Committees which were concerned with how money is being spent. Money is the honey that draws the flies. The flies, in this case, are not so much members of Congress but Congressional staffers who see opportunities and challenges in these areas - for their Members of Congress or for the policies which they advocate. The Department of the Interior was involved with dams, water, and electricity. Think of all of those things where you'd be developing a nation's infrastructure and economy. Our Agency for International Development took a philosophical and therefore operational approach early on, as we know. Some of the international institutions and some other governments said, “Look, we'll just write you a check. You spend the money and tell us what you spent it on. That's enough for us. That will help your development.” Obviously, I am oversimplifying.

For a lot of different reasons we Americans, because of the way we manage our federal funds, apparently cannot do that. We have to follow a hands on approach right down to the bottom level and we can't leave anything alone. That's a Gillespie observation. If there's a chance to extend electric power into a rural area, and we think that that is going to help and it seems to make sense, we want to be there. So that doesn't merely involve saying to the local government, “You ought to do this, and here are some ways of doing it.” It probably means getting some people with spikes on their shoes to go out, climb a palm tree, and make sure that the wire was put up correctly.

It's the same thing with Congress. It involves micro management. I don't remember what the numbers were then, but in 1992 I headed up a special study effort on AID's

management or administrative efficiency, operating out of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If I remember correctly, I think that it would be safe to say that it was something in the order of 12 or 13 Committees and 24 Sub-Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate which had a hand in the AID budget and operational process. You can imagine AID people trying to respond to that.

That meant that in Nicaragua there was a lot of Congressional interest. We had some visits from members of Congress looking at AID operations. More often, it was Congressional staffers who would come out and look and want to know what was going on. There was a tremendous number of AID contractors and AID officials on temporary duty involved in Nicaragua and a huge turnover of people, as a result.

I was fascinated by what I thought were either the existing or non-existing policies to program the linkages. There had been for years a program which was modified from time to time. However, each AID Mission Director was required to go through a fairly systematized Program, Planning, and Budgeting process. To do that, you have to have a sense of what U.S. policy, objectives, and national interests are in a given country. I found that, by and large, the AID people didn't relate much to the U.S. Embassy people, as they called them - the Ambassador, the DCM, and the Political and Economic Sections. There was at least nominal contact on this, but the AID people really set things up on their own. I did not regard that exactly as a disconnect, but it certainly wasn't the kind of thing that you'd expect. You would think that there ought to be pretty close collaboration between the AID Mission and the Embassy. They ought to have reached agreement on what the short term, medium term, and long term objectives ought to be.

However, the AID people used to say, “Well, the short term objectives really don't interest us.” The Embassy people, for the most part, were concerned with what was going on right now. I guess that is why you had these lines which were probably converging but would not meet for a long time.

That was something which I was able to get into during the three missions which I headed. I had AID representation in all three of them. However, that was later.

I didn't like what I saw.

Q: Looking at this issue from a State Department point of view, I have to say that I've never been really involved with AID in any particular country, except during the wrapping up phase or something like that. I've had the impression that AID tends to be chaotic because it depends so much on who the Mission Director is. Things seem to go off in different directions. Often our aid programs are carried out in countries where these programs go along fairly well as long as we are there. However, as soon as we leave, the system set up under the aid program collapses. But you were looking at the aid program both as an insider and an outsider. How did you feel about the aid program?

GILLESPIE: Let me put my thoughts in order. I don't think that you can separate what might be called the organizational values from the operations. What I learned at first hand in Nicaragua, which I had not really learned when looking at the aid program from a distance at Syracuse University, was the importance of the personal factor. The premium in the Agency for International Development was how to be promoted and become a Mission Director, because that was one of the career objectives. Everybody assumes that you come into the Agency for International Development to do a great job in promoting economic and social development and growth, or whatever the right word is, at the time. It is also assumed that you are committed to that. Their selection and socialization process does that.

However, when I was looking at AID in the field, I got involved in their personal evaluation process and watched the program evaluation process. What I learned rather quickly was that the premium in the Agency for International Development was on program creation, reflecting initiative, ingenuity, imagination, and innovation in program development. Program management and implementation, while not ignored, took a very distant second

place to program development and innovation. The premiums in the efficiency reports, the premiums back in the corridors in Washington went something like, “Joe or Jane has come up with a really innovative approach to the role of women in economic development in rural areas. He (or she) has come up with this idea to enhance the ability of women” and so forth and so on.

Then they would go through the Program Development process, which involved looking at the interests and objectives of the United States. There was an elaborate structure for doing this. Program Design became very important. I found that, for AID, it was nothing to take an officer in Managua, or even a couple of them, put them on a plane and fly them to Washington for a week's temporary duty where they made a presentation to committees within the Agency for International Development on this new program or program design approach.

They would come back, in this case to Nicaragua, hire consultants, and spend a lot of money to refine the program design and work with the designer. Then there would be meetings with various elements of the AID Mission to go over all aspects of program design. It would take, perhaps, a year or even two years to get this program design right.

Then it would be funded. It had to be included in the budget, and they would have to go through all of these defensive mechanisms, committee meetings, and so on - whatever the size of the program, whether for one dollar, five dollars or $10 million. During this time the program designer and his or her colleagues who were working on this proposal were being praised for being innovative. The proposal was called wonderful, and so on.

AID used the system of tours. In the State Department we talk about a two, three or four year tour of duty. AID also talked about tours, but they were always two years long. We had AID people in Nicaragua who had been there for two, three, or four “tours.” A lot of the younger, brighter people stay for only two years. Well, it often took two tours, or four years, to get a program designed and approved.

At that point the officer who designed it left Nicaragua, and a new officer replaced him or her. I'm really short handing this process, but I'm afraid that it's true and have had it confirmed since then. The new officer would say, “That is a really fascinating, innovative program design. I certainly hope that it works well. Meanwhile, my job is to design the next new program.”

The problem was that not very many people spent much time managing or implementing this beautifully designed program to accomplish this or that, at a cost of so many millions of dollars. Money was allocated, and people in the local government were involved. The AID Mission Director would ask, “How is this program going?” They would have people come in to evaluate the program. Well, the evaluations were always positive. Nobody was ever very negative on these kinds of things. The fact was that there was no ownership, as I use the term, or perhaps investment by very many people in the AID Mission in that project because the original designer of the project had come and gone, and that was it.

I know that I'm oversimplifying this process, but I know that there was, and still is, a lot of that in AID. As a person who thought of himself as a manager and as a taxpayer, I didn't think that that was a very good approach. It is one of the continuing, main points of criticism of AID.

Q: There seems to be something more. I may be wrong, but what this whole Oral History Program is about is to give the academic world a taste of the real world. You rehearse before you push somebody out of the back gate of the Embassy. So often, on the academic side, they prepare these paradigms, or whatever they are. They build up a wonderful construct which is often dead wrong. It is logical and so forth, but it has no relationship to what really goes on in the field. I'm talking about the U.S. Government and the State Department. It sounds as if these programs are developed by very bright people, but they're looking at them from the academic, rather than the practical point of view, that is, “Is Juan Perez going to get some water?”

GILLESPIE: Well, that may not be totally accurate. There is a deep sense of mission and concern on the part of the AID people involved in these programs. I think that it's just the system and the way it works.

We had a very large Peace Corps program in Nicaragua at that time. The Peace Corps was out there making sure that “Juan Perez got his water.” They were really trying to do that. It was all hands on stuff. The thing is that the AID people are NOT Peace Corps volunteers. They are not out there to make sure that an individual person gets water. They are more concerned that there is potable water available in a broad area or that the money invested by the government in water is well spent. The AID people were looking at the problem in macro terms.

Now, I've given you a view of the way AID functions, from mperspective.

Q: Obviously, you've been Chief of Mission in various places. But was this the impression you were getting as a recent student at the Maxwell School of Public Administration now stationed in Nicaragua?

GILLESPIE: This is what I saw in Nicaragua. What came later on was something else. Ambassador Solaun, who had previously been on the faculty at the University of Illinois, was a sociologist. Both he and Ambassador Theberge, his predecessor, had done contracting work for the Agency for International Development. My observation was that I never saw Ambassador Theberge get too deeply involved in AID matters. However, he knew a lot of the terminology. When the AID Mission Director would be at a staff meeting on AID matters, Ambassador Theberge knew what was going on. He watched AID activity carefully, because he, too, was sensitive about where all of this money was going, what was happening to it, and what were we doing with it. Was this money serving the general U.S. interest? The general conclusion was, “Yes, it is.”

I'm not saying that the AID programs were bad. There was the public housing program. Developing markets where people could sell things was important. Rural development projects were all positive and good. It is not my intention to criticize the substance of it.

However, Ambassador Solaun really wanted to get in on the details of the AID program. He wanted to be the Ambassador who was helping the AID Mission Director to run the Mission. The AID Mission Director didn't always like that!

The important lesson which I learned from both ambassadors was that they saw the AID programs and the AID presence as they saw other programs - as important parts of the U.S. programs in Nicaragua. The ability to go out and visit AID projects and be photographed doing so, to talk to the press about AID projects, to meet with the Ministers of Health, Mines, Energy, and so forth regarding an AID project were reasons for getting into the Nicaraguan government in other ways. However, the United Nations also had a Development Program in Nicaragua. I became a little bit involved in it because I was sitting around, listening to all of this at the AID staff meetings.

I had to go to the Ambassador's Country Team meetings, the AID Mission Director's meetings, and I would sit in on a lot of the AID operational meetings, where there might be some administrative consequences. I learned that the fact of our AID program really opened up parts of the country and its bureaucracy to the Embassy, by virtue of the AID program being there. If the AID program hadn't been there, we probably wouldn't have gotten into some of the things we got into or learned about some of the things that we learned about or had some of the contacts we had. In many ways the AID program gave the Ambassador, and, therefore, the U.S., a seat at tables where we might not otherwise have had them. I have since had that confirmed over and over again. If you talk to our Ambassadors in countries where we had AID programs, they will confirm the benefits of those programs. One of the reasons why many Ambassadors do not want to see the AID programs cut out or terminated is that with these programs in existence we have a

purse or pocketbook. The pocketbook buys us a seat at the table. You may get the seat, or another seat, in different ways, but that's a sure way to get it.

Q: Did you see any effort to put the screws on the Somoza regime ohuman rights, using the AID program?

GILLESPIE: There began to be talk about using the AID program in this way. I would take January, 1978, as a watershed date in this respect, because of the assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. This showed the fragility of the Somoza regime and, I think, gave a lot of life to the Sandinista movement. However, I think that our efforts to affect that situation were not focused or coherent. There was talk of cutting off AID money. Then we found out that you can't easily cut off AID money, in the sense of money in the pipeline. In fact, the way it is set up, we have an obligation to pay for certain things and to do certain things which are now going on. It is not easy. You can't just turn a key and stop it. You have to be very careful how you do that. Payments are scheduled and fall due. Money is available. I learned that stopping an AID program is complicated, once it gets started. I don't recall all of the details.

On the military side I mentioned the military sales transactions which had been started. Basically, and for human rights reasons there was the question of whether we should sell these sling swivels to replace other, defective swivels on rifles sold to the Nicaraguans. There was more to it than that - grenades, ammunition, and so forth.

All of those issues were coming up for decision. However, remember that this happened during the first year or two of the Carter administration. Prior to that the issue of human rights existed conceptually, and, I think, there was legitimate concern about human rights in our government. It was not as if everything started with a blank piece of paper during the administration of President Jimmy Carter. The fact is, however, that the emphasis on human rights really began under President Carter. This gets into the question of why there was confusion about what our policy ought to be toward the Somoza Government and the

transition, as it turned out, to something else in Nicaragua. So there was talk about what to do with assistance to the Somoza Government.

Then you could see the difficulty that arises if the Ambassador and the AID Mission Director are not pretty close in the sense of what U.S. policy is and where it is going. You can find operations in support of policy diverging or you lose the possibility of a coherent approach to the issue of what to do about aid policy toward the Somoza Government. If, as I'm afraid was the case, Ambassador Solaun's ability to walk the halls in Washington and to get things done was not very great, that compounded the problem. I think that, when I returned to Washington from Managua, I saw all of that more clearly than I saw it from the viewpoint of Managua. There was a sort of disconnect between the Embassy, the AID Mission Director and his staff, and the Washington establishment on what was going on in Nicaragua. And there were also differences within the Washington establishment.

Q: Let's talk a bit about your time with this task force in Washington. Could you put in the dates when you were there, who else was involved in it, and what were the issues and relationships?

GILLESPIE: I left the Embassy in Managua on August 17 or 18, 1978. I haven't checked this, but it was about mid-August when we boarded the plane and flew out to Washington.

I returned to Washington, after taking a week or 10 days of leave, getting settled in the Washington area. I was looking forward to entering training at the Foreign Service Institute and then working out an onward assignment. This had not been arranged, but it was looming in the management area. However, at this point Somoza took over. When a crisis of this kind happens anywhere, the solution in the State Department is to set up a “task force.” You take a group of people often from different agencies, and they spend as many hours a day as necessary to deal with that crisis from the Washington end. The next step is that the Executive Secretary of the State Department approves the formation of the task force and assigns responsibility to the appropriate Bureau. In this case it was the Bureau

of American Republics Affairs (ARA.) The bureau was designated to form and staff such a task force and to draw on other organizational elements in the State Department to provide resources and people. That task force was given space in the Operations Center of the State Department - with phones, typewriters, and other things that it needed to do the job.

Usually, the task force has pretty direct and quick access to points of power and action interest in Washington and overseas that might get involved in this. If I remember correctly, one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries in ARA was named the overall coordinator, and the Director of the Office of Central American Affairs was named to be the Task Force Director. He was told that he ought to have people staffing this task force, initially, on a 24 hours a day basis. There was one Deputy Director in charge of one 12 hour shift and another Deputy Director in charge of another 12 hour shift. The Office Director could then work at other things. In many cases these task forces are staffed by volunteers. Obviously, the Nicaraguan Desk Officer, who is usually a middle grade officer, would be involved on the task force. Then you draw from within the bureau other concerned people who come in and handle political, economic, and other matters. The Bureau of Consular Affairs is concerned about American citizens in the country involved, as well as law enforcement and security people and Central Intelligence Agency personnel.

What you're really doing is trying to provide a short cut, a direct line of communications between the place in the field which has the problem and the people at the Washington end or elsewhere who can do something about it to help them. That is the whole idea, as I see it. The object is also to make sure that the leadership of the State Department, the foreign policy establishment, and the administration, have good and current information about what is happening and that decisions are made, if they need to be made, in a timely way on the basis of good information. So if the Secretary of State runs into a reporter who asks, “What's the situation in Nicaragua,” the Secretary will have something to say about

it and won't be caught short by the question. He doesn't have to say, “What do you mean? Where's Nicaragua?” [Laughter]

The task force has lots of administrative requirements. It prepares situation reports two or three times a day, it prepares “Flash” reports to the Secretary. It keeps a detailed log of developments. If you go into the task force office, there are usually maps of the country and maybe maps of the city. In the case of Managua there was a map of downtown Managua and a drawing of the National Palace. There was a sign showing where the Embassy was in relation to other places.

The U.S. Embassy was not involved in this takeover. There were no Americans present. Nevertheless, it was considered to be the first, real crisis of the Somoza period. I've mentioned that there had been attacks on Rivas, a town South of Managua, and on Chinandega and Leon, northwest of Managua, as well as some bombings. These were real attacks. People were killed in them. However, Americans were not involved. Later on, there was a second attack on Rivas. It sounded like an American Civil War battle. There was “First Rivas” and then “Second Rivas,” like “First Manassas” and “Second Manassas” during the American Civil War.

So for a period of two to three weeks I worked on the Nicaragua Task Force, since I was waiting to go to a course on political economy at the Foreign Service Institute. I was a kind of Deputy Director of the Task Force, since I had been in Nicaragua, knew the people, and all the rest of it. Basically, we monitored events. What I saw was that the data base on which Washington was operating was really not very good, in terms of what had been going on. The Embassy's reporting had been all right, but not very thorough. There was no substantial understanding of what had happened and why it was happening.

Other people were involved in reporting on this situation - in Costa Rica, for example, where, as I mentioned earlier, the “Group of 12,” a sort of Nicaraguan dissident, political group, had set up shop. There was also reporting from our Embassies in Honduras and El

Salvador about what was going on. Others were concerned, particularly the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington - the regional political organization. There were meetings there about what was happening in Nicaragua.

It turned out that the ability of the Embassy in Managua to affect the thinking in Washington was limited. The reason may have been the leadership of the Embassy. Ambassador Solaun didn't really know how to go about reporting on the situation. I don't know whether I drew the lesson there, but I am certainly convinced that Ambassadors are important. One of the things that an Ambassador does, and I think that no one else can do - that is, if he or she is capable - is to pick up the phone or put pen to paper and tell the people in Washington, “This is what I think is going on. This is what I believe we ought to be doing.” He or she may be right or may be wrong. However, the Ambassador's view becomes a key point in evaluating the situation, and everything can be tested against it.

To provide that kind of evaluation, the Ambassador needs to know who's reading the mail at the other end in Washington and how they're likely to interpret it. The Ambassador should not write his evaluation of the situation to suit the reader, but he needs to know what is important to the reader. This raises Kissinger's point that, if you start talking about Pan Americanism and Simon Bolivar, when what people in Washington are really concerned about is how this may detract from our ability to deal with a problem involving NATO, SEATO, or something like that, you are missing the point. The Ambassador should know that and be sure that the arguments which he or she marshals are arguments which are of interest to and will help the Washington people understand the situation.

Well, I had seen enough from Managua to have a sense that Ambassador Solaun simply did not know what to do. When I was in Managua, he would ask me, at times, to say what he could do better. I was not a Washington expert. I had had one, two-year tour in administration in the Department. I talked to him about the Washington situation and had friends in the Department of State. However, I was the Administrative Officer in Managua. I couldn't tell him “who was who” and “what was what” and how to deal with it. As I

mentioned before, Ambassador Solaun didn't have a good relationship with his Deputy Chief of Mission, so that made it awfully difficult to rely on the DCM. The Ambassador just didn't have a good sense of how to deal with the situation in Nicaragua, and that showed.

There were questions of confidence in the ability of Ambassador Solaun. Was he able to evaluate Somoza and the situation correctly? Could he be relied on to take the message in the right tone to Somoza that Washington might want to send? There were real questions about that. That was the view I got. All of these other things were happening. The U.S. was not really making policy decisions at that point. We were just monitoring a crisis. The really tough issues came later. I can't remember exactly when this happened, but William Bowdler, who had been our Ambassador to El Salvador and to Guatemala and later was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for ARA, was assigned to a mission which involved the OAS, Nicaragua, and the U.S. My interpretation of this was that Ambassador Bowdler was brought on the scene because of a lack of confidence in Washington in Ambassador Solaun. Ambassador Bowdler had to carry out this mission very, very quickly.

Ambassador Solaun eventually asked to be relieved of his assignment to Nicaragua after I left the Nicaraguan Task Force. There began to be questions about Ambassador Solaun's own safety. There was some question whether the Sandinistas and/or others might be about to cause harm to the American Ambassador. I think that that led to his departure from Nicaragua. However, Ambassador Bowdler was also involved in this.

There was a time - I don't think that it was in that August-September, 1978, time frame. It was later than that when the Department decided to evacuate American Embassy dependents. To me this decision was just dumb. The problem was that Ambassador Solaun's wife and the DCM's wife didn't want to leave. So they kept their wives there and made all of the other Embassy wives leave. That was not a good decision. I think that Washington wasn't tough enough to bring down the axe on their heads and say, “You get your wives on the airplane or else get on the airplane yourselves.” That's what you sometimes have to do.

Anyway, it was a very messy situation. I mentioned earlier that Robert Pastor was by then the director of NSC (National Security Council) operations for Latin America. Pastor was really an activist. He knew or quickly learned about President Carter. And Carter, as we knew, was a micro-manager. Pastor would prepare memoranda and slip them through or get Zbigniew Brzezinski [National Security Adviser] to deliver them. President Carter would write all over them. He would change things and do things. Pastor would say to the Assistant Secretary for ARA, “This is the way we're going to do this” or, “Let's do it this way.” Everybody would agree. He would say, “Don't worry about it,” and people would begin to operate on that basis. Word would get to President Carter, and he would say, “No, don't do it that way. Do it this way.” There was a lot of correspondence between Washington and Managua at the government to government level, in which there was confusion as a result of the different approaches. Letters were written to be delivered to Somoza. They would be delivered, and then somebody would rewrite the letter after it was delivered.

This is all documented now in a couple of books. I think that I mentioned a book by Anthony Lake, who is now our National Security Adviser. He wrote one of these books. A woman whom I've gotten to know rather well since then, Shirley Christian, a “New York Times” Latin American expert now retired from the “Times,” wrote an outstanding account of the past and then carries it forward. She had excellent sources for that and really did a wonderful job of writing it all up.

Interestingly enough, President Carter visited Colombia in 1986, when I was Ambassador, to take part in a U. N. inoculation program. It was part of a global inoculation program against polio, diphtheria, and whooping cough. He stayed with us in Bogota at the Embassy Residence for three days and two nights. He came by himself, accompanied only by his security people - no staff, no one else. Of course, we talked about Nicaragua. I was really impressed by the fact that he remembered so many details about Somoza, Nicaragua, and the 1978 period. This was 7-8 years later. His understanding of the facts

and his analysis were just off from what a number of people saw then and have seen since then, about what was going on. He was absolutely imbedded in his view and would not see it any other way. He was just fixed on that, and that was the way it was.

Q: This is one of the feelings that one has about President Carter. He was very bright, very knowledgeable, and a good learner. Then he would put it through his own algorithm or something like that. Out would come something which, as you say, would be off the mark and not very practical.

GILLESPIE: We had a wonderful time. We talked about Nicaragua at least twice. He was fascinated by the experience of Vivian, my wife, there and was glad to talk to somebody who had really been out in the rural areas and had a sense of them. We were in no way supporters of the Somoza regime, but she also saw, I think, that rural Nicaragua was not much involved in this whole crisis. The people in the countryside were largely ignorant of the politics in Managua.

I came away from these conversations with President Carter thinking, “Boy, he made up his mind, probably in 1979 or 1980, about the way he wanted things to have been,” and that's the way he is going to remember them from now on. [Laughter] Who are we to argue with that?

Q: You left the Nicaraguan Task Force and went to training? GILLESPIE: I guess that it was the second or third course in economic training at the FSI. It was called, Political Economy. It was designed to take non-economists who had not really studied economics and make them conversant with basic economics as they affected the U.S. national interest and our overseas operations. It was designed for political, consular, and administrative officers at what would be today the FSO-3 or FSO- 2 level.

Q: We are talking about the equivalents of majors or lieutenancolonels.

GILLESPIE: Yes. The course lasted for 120 days - four months. The FSI was still working on this course. It was the second or third time it had been offered. Two or three years ago I wrote a memorandum to the Director of the FSI - Brandon Grove at the time - when questions were asked about training officers for the Foreign Service. I was asked what I thought about this course that I was put into. I told him that, for me, it was a watershed training experience. I felt that if there were any single type of training that Foreign Service Officers should be required to take, it was that kind of a course. Certainly, for my generation and, I think, it still is the case, this was an excellent course.

It turned out not to be a course in economics, although there was a lot of economics in it. Probably more quantitative economics or econometrics than was really necessary, but maybe you have to go through a certain amount of regression analysis and all of those good things to know what other people are talking about. The course did two things. The basic thing that it did was to reveal to me and, I think, to several of my colleagues that you had to learn the language and break the “code” or the “glossary”. This course basically taught us the “glossary.” Secondly, what it really did, and I can't divorce it from my experience at Syracuse University, which did more or less the same thing, was to teach me a lot about how decisions are made in Washington. In other words, the policy process and what goes into it. Generally, who are the main actors? How does the Congress relate to the Executive Branch? This is not basic civics. It goes right down to specifics. Take the case of Bosnia. What's really going on there?

My colleagues and I had mixed reactions to the course, and they were not uniformly positive. A number of the Political Officers felt that it was a waste of time. Not because they already knew economics but because they couldn't see how it was relevant to their serving overseas. My feeling was that it was totally relevant. If we could analyze our own political economy and what the major ingredients and who the major actors were and how they related to each other, it could only help us do the same thing overseas. It would help

us explain overseas what was going on in the United States - both to ourselves and to those representing the United States.

As I say, I wrote Brandon Grove, I've told each Under Secretary for Economic Affairs whom I've gotten to know - and I've gotten to know five or six of them since then - that this is a very good course. I told the Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic Affairs, “You ought to make sure that political, administrative, and consular officers at least know what this course does, because it's going to make your life easier.” It's where you learn about profit and loss statements and balance sheets. It's not a business course. We had people come to speak to us, including Robert Samuelson, who was then quite young but is now active as a columnist on economic affairs. We went up to the Hill Congress and met with all of these different committees. We went to visit the offices of periodicals and met with their editorial directors. They came to us, at the FSI. We had academics from many universities come down and talk to us. It was rather rigorous. We knew that there would be quizzes and that we would have to feed some of this back. You had to have some ideas about it. It was not a freebie, a gentleman's course.

At that time, in 1978, we got into the whole question of petroleum pricing and all of these matters. We got into fiscal policy and into currencies and exchange rates. However, this was at a level of generality where we didn't have to be experts. We did have to understand some of the concepts. Later, just as a footnote to this course, when I was in the Bureau of American Republics Affairs the then Assistant Secretary selected a Civil Service lawyer to be the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau - the number two man at the Washington end of Latin American policy. He didn't speak Spanish, had never served overseas, and didn't know much of anything, to speak of, but was a very bright guy. He was a wonderful officer and executive. He once said to me after closing the door to his office one night - because I'd been around for a while - “How am I ever going to get my hands around some of these issues? One of the things that really has me worried is all of this economics and so forth.” I said, “Let me make a phone call.” I got in touch with the two guys who put this economics course together at the Foreign Service Institute to come

over and meet with him. They set up a reading and tutorial program. He was bright, and they were good. Within a matter of weeks they had given him what they'd given me in four months! He's thanked me for it ever since. By the way, he's gone on to be an Ambassador and to be the Administrator for Latin America of the Agency for International Development!

We joke about that, as did the two guys who put together the economics course, with whom I'm still in touch. I think that this was a wonderful course. Some of the reactions by the students to the course were interesting. To me, it was a great, 120 day long experience. I thought that it was over too fast. I really enjoyed it. We learned about bond trading, securities, and how to read the stock market pages of the newspapers. We looked at foreign exchange rates and came away with a good understanding of them. I had studied basic economics in college and at Syracuse University. This, somehow, brought it all together in a very practical way. We had economic practitioners, such as Office Directors from the State Department coming in to talk to us about national level situations, the Common Market, subsidies for this or that, and how our peanut program worked. We got it all.

Q: This was excellent. Where did you go after finishing this course?

GILLESPIE: I had gone into that course while waiting for a future assignment. The man for whom I had worked in Brussels, Michael Conlin, was, by now, a senior FSO. During a brief period, when Lawrence Eagleburger was Under Secretary for Management of the State Department, the Office of Management Operations had been established in M - the management area. It was called M/MO in the alphabetical jargon of the Department. Eagleburger had put in charge of that an officer in whom he had a lot of confidence, Clayton McManaway.

Q: Whom I've interviewed, by the way.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Clay had been active in Vietnam in a lot of different ways. I think that Eagleburger saw in him a decisive, executive kind of person.

Q: Physically, he was almost a clone of Larry Eagleburger.

GILLESPIE: On a miniature scale. McManaway had taken this organization M/MO and had turned it into a high-powered, super staff arm of the Under Secretary for Management. On the analogy of the honey attracting the fly, it had attracted and was the home of what was then called the MODE Program. I think that MODE stood for “Monitoring Overseas Direct Employment.” I don't know how much those who listen to or read these comments are going to be concerned about this. However, one of the points raised in the Letter to Ambassadors signed by President Kennedy and his successors was how many people do we need in a given country to represent and advance the interests of the United States. Also covered was who these people might be. Authority to agree or to disagree with assignments was placed in the hands of the Ambassador.

There is a tremendous amount of interagency tension over this subject. Many, or most, agencies would like to assign people overseas. Once they get them there, it appears attractive, and they would like to assign more people overseas. Many Ambassadors would also like to have more people assigned to their Embassies because that gives them more of an “empire.” Other Ambassadors say, “No, we already have too many. I want to cut back.” Or, they say, “I don't need this kind of person. I need that kind.” There are all of these issues to be resolved. The MODE office was the point in the State Department where this was all being managed because it involved monitoring assignments to make sure that the personnel ceilings were respected.

Also monitored there was how many military personnel would be assigned to a given country. The State Department had no control over such assignments but needed to know how many military personnel were assigned. There was a tremendous amount of interagency monitoring going on in that office.

Well, Michael Conlin was named to be Director of M/MO. He inherited, if I remember correctly, at least one and possibly two Deputy Directors. One of them was “Giff” Malone, a very capable officer who was the Principal Deputy. I don't remember, quite frankly, how it happened, but Conlin wanted me to come and work for him as a Deputy. At this point I was still quite junior and wasn't senior enough to be a Deputy Director of an Office. Personnel would not permit that. We created a new title. I looked around the Government and found that a couple of agencies had something called an Associate Director. I found out where that fit in the ranking scale. It was a smaller leap up to be Associate Director than to be Deputy Director in the State Department.

Anyway, in effect, we WERE the management area. Ben Read was then the Under Secretary for Management. At that time, if I remember correctly, either Joan Clark or Harry Barnes was the Director General of the Foreign Service.

Q: I'm not sure.

GILLESPIE: I'm not sure which of them was in 1978, but in some order they served as Director General of the Foreign Service. On reflection I think that Harry Barnes was the Director General. John Thomas was the Assistant Secretary for Administration. At that time the M area consisted of Personnel (the Director General was the Chief of Personnel); Administration, including Security and all those other things under an Assistant Secretary; the FSI; and perhaps other services. In any case it was the major management area of the Department. The Under Secretary for Management was the fourth-ranking official in the State Department.

Ben Read, who was a political appointee, had earlier been Executive Secretary of the Department. He was the Under Secretary of State for Management. At any rate, Michael Conlin said that he wanted me to be his Deputy and, “Go find yourself a title, and let's get you assigned here.” Well, it took a little while, but I was finally appointed Associate Director for Management Operations.

My job was basically to oversee a lot of these interagency relationships and to make sure that the MODE operation functioned properly. We had a GS-15 who had been there forever and who ran the MODE program. He knew it upside and down. However, it was all kept on scratch pad- on little pieces of paper. In 1978 the management function in the State Department was still pretty rudimentary in terms of technology. We got into some tremendous fights over that.

I stayed in that job from January, 1978, to the summer of 1980. During that period of time we helped create the Office of comptroller of the State Department, a separate and distinct bureau level financial management office, headed by an Assistant Secretary of State. We tried to create a separate and distinct information management bureau but were not successful in this regard. We were most deeply involved in, although we did not have the direct responsibility for, the drafting of what became the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Read looked to Michael Conlin and our organization really to stay on top of this effort. This was being prepared by people specially designated for the purpose, but we took on the job of watching over it.

If I remember correctly, we had a staff of maybe a dozen people...

Q: It had to be Harry Barnes as Director General who was responsible for drafting this legislation, because he really ran it through. Joan Clark came later.

GILLESPIE: Joan Clark became Director General later on. Joan, by the way, had been the Director of Management Operations at a certain point.

Q: She may have been Executive Director of the Bureau of EuropeaAffairs.

GILLESPIE: Yes, but I think that she may have also preceded MichaeConlin as Director of M/MO. I don't remember exactly.

Anyhow, there must have been about a dozen FSO's in M/MO and about three or four Civil Service professionals. We really were the staff arm of the Under Secretary for Management. We had a kind of hunting license that allowed us to cross over all of the internal boundaries in M and to go out into other areas of the Department on behalf of the Under Secretary for Management. We had the task of looking into and analyzing all kinds of matters related to the operations of the State Department, including how the Bureaus were functioning. We dealt very closely with the Inspector General. There was constant pressure on personnel and employment ceilings, and we got very much into that.

As you can imagine, some of our clients or colleagues saw us as evil and nasty. Others said, “Oh, no, they can help us.” It went back and forth a lot. We really had some very bright people assigned to that office. It was perceived by political, economic, and consular officers as a place to get something called valuable, management experience.

Q: Was a young man named Dean Dizikes in there?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Ed Perkins came in. He was from an administrative background. Also assigned there was the fellow who ran the Junior Officer Course and who just recently died of a brain tumor. We had some very capable people who jumped into this activity. We got into intelligence and law enforcement coordination. If the FBI wanted to put people overseas, we were involved. As I saw it, we were as valuable as the audience thought we were. We really felt as if we could add value to the process, and some of these other people agreed that this was the case. We could go in without a lot of nonsense, sit down and talk to people at an appropriate level, find out what was going on, come back, and put the matter before the Under Secretary for Management, who controlled the resources. It all worked out rather well.

John Thomas, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, did not like us because Michael Conlin believed that having security, information, purchasing and contracting, and building operations under a single point of control raised span of control problems. This did not

involve so much the number of functions but the disparity of these functions as information management and purchasing computers became a bigger deal. Money came under John Thomas, too, as it had been when I was in the Bureau of Administration. It was just too much under one person, when the Under Secretary for Management had to deal with that individual. Thomas himself wasn't bad. However, Ben Read, Conlin, and I sat in on these discussions and wondered, “What if we had to put a political appointee in there and hold him or her responsible for all of these different things?”

Q: This happens from time to time, because it gets into the Plum Book (the Federal Government's list of jobs available for political appointees.)

GILLESPIE: It gets into the Plum Book. I remember that one of the jobs that I took on as a specific task involved two other officers in addition to myself. This effort involved a senior, middle-grade officer who had been around for a long time, and then a couple of junior people. We really looked at how information management was organized in what we thought were really hot private sector areas and in other parts of the government. We came up with two approaches which we felt we should look at. One was Southern Railways, and the other was NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). As you know, NASA lived on computers back in those days. So we really went over that subject. We went to NASA and we talked to the Southern Railways people. We talked to other people, including IBM (International Business Machines) and others. We came up with the idea that there ought to be an Assistant Secretary for Information Management.

Basically, John Thomas didn't like that idea. However, intellectually, I think that he understood that it might be useful. Others thought that it was the right way to go. We've never been able to do it in the State Department, for whatever reason.

Q: This was the beginning of the computerized revolution which began about this time. People were really looking seriously at this in areas other than the scientific world.

GILLESPIE: Right. We had begun to look at this matter in the 1970-1972 period, when I was in the office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration. As I said, we had even thought about it in Brussels. I designed a system for purchase orders which could be handled, using, of all things, a punched-paper tape on teletype machines. However, it would capture all of the data and record it. As we got into the mid and later 1970s, this kind of effort was moving forward.

At some point along the way, under the Under Secretary for Administration, a man named Wally Francis designed and installed all of the computer systems for the Seventh Floor of the State Department, including the offices of the Secretary of State, the Executive Secretary, and all of the other executive suites for senior officers. Meanwhile, other people were handling the computer word processing and information acquisition for communications, which, by the way, is another area under the Assistant Secretary of Administration. All of our cable traffic was now becoming computerized. It was being stored in these big, IBM-type, Univac machines, where you literally had rooms full of computer hardware and spinning tapes which people had to move from time to time. It was really the paleolithic period of computers. In any event, all of that was going on. There were major discussions taking place in the State Department on this subject. The issues were whether this process would be centralized or decentralized and how much latitude should the individual operating elements have in the area of Automated Data Processing, or ADP, as it's called. The concept of information management began to come in at about that time.

The Bureau of American Republics Affairs, ARA, was way ahead of everybody else on thi- believe it or not. This was not EUR (Bureau of European Affairs), nor the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. This was the bureau where there were some really sharp management people. They said, “We've got to automate. It's the only way to go. We have to do it.” So ARA went off on one path. The central services of the Department and the Bureau of Administration didn't like that. There were all kinds of discussions. Ben Read, as I recall,

was hesitant about making a decision. He was not sure that he had enough information to do it. We in M/MO were pushing the idea of a separate organization and all the rest of it. It was a fascinating time.

Somewhere along the way the decision was made that we would centralize and have a single contract for Automated Data Processing. The winner of the competition was an outfit called Wang, which, I guess, is based along the “I” corridor outside of Boston. I think that Wang was a Chinese-American - a brilliant person. His company has gone bankrupt since then.

Anyway, in 1995 the State Department is still operating with Wang equipment, which is based primarily on word processing and not much more than that. It has very rudimentary data retrieval and capture/retrieval capability. When we bought that Wang equipment, we thought that we were with the times, if not ahead of them. However, we never upgraded or improved it. It got caught up in money and other, management issues. In my book, we missed the information management boat along the way.

What has happened since is that, per force, the individual bureaus and offices have gone ahead and gotten personal computers and all the rest of it. We could talk about that later, although I didn't have anything more to do with it, except as a Chief of Mission and, a little bit later, in some other areas, but not in policy terms. I am still convinced that, had we been able to set up a full-fledged and quasi-independent Bureau of Information Management, under the Under Secretary for Management, at any point along the line, we probably would have been ahead of the game.

Q: I got a little bit involved in this when I was in South Korea,from 1976 to 1979. We were working with what amounted to...

GILLESPIE: ISO.

Q: A centralized effort, which was trying to develop a computerized system for consular operations. We were being pushed in this direction by the DCM, Tom Stern. Unbeknownst to us, the Bureau of Consular Affairs went off on their own. Pretty soon the interest shifted to how we can use this for political reporting officers. We really needed such a system. It never developed, but the Bureau of Consular Affairs jumped into this with both feet.

GILLESPIE: As I said, for whatever reason, we can leave this to public administration and systems management people to go back and look at the history of it, if it's worth it. What I think happened is that, because the organizational arrangement for it was never clarified, while the need was so clear for moving in this direction, independent operators like the Bureau of American Republics Affairs, the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and other services within the Department moved out and did it. The Bureau of Economic Affairs, or EB, went off on its own. It needed computers. It needed to be able to manipulate data and money. It needed to be able to model. It needed to buy modeling programs from DRI, Development Resources International, and to look at what would happen to national economies if the price of gasoline goes up or the inflation rate changes. We didn't do any of that. We didn't have any computers overseas to speak of until well into the late 1980s.

Meanwhile, over in our Embassy in Bonn, where Tom Stern had been Administrative Counselor, there was a wonderful data processing operation which he had set up, using a lot of Germans and German equipment. We had Regional Finance Management Centers, or money centers in Paris, Bangkok, and Mexico City. Those centers were getting a lot of locally procured and installed equipment, but were totally incompatible with other systems! Software, hardware - nothing was compatible. You couldn't transmit this data back in any readable, report form to anybody else.

When you think about it now, people will say, “That is criminal. It's wasteful, profligate, and criminal to do that.” Or they'll say, “Do it some other way.” Well, those of us who had the revealed word and said, “Let's set up a centralized system,” didn't get through, in that

period. As I say, in the 1980s Ivan Selin tried it, but he got beaten down for other reasons. He only lasted...

Q: He was really going to turn things around.

GILLESPIE: There were two areas in this administrative area which I guess I should mention. There is a certain sense in bureaucracies, I think. Maybe Max Weber would be able to tell us what it was, or we could find it in his writings. There is this idea, “I want the power. I want a central and imperial approach on this matter.” On the financial side we - that is, M/MO under Michael Conlin and others - created the Office of the comptroller of the Department of State. One of the early, if not the first comptrollers was a man named Roger Feldman. The State Department had been under attack from the General Accounting Office and, to some degree, OMB, the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Branch, to come up with a realistic, accrual accounting system, so that you would know what you were spending, what you were spending it on, and how you were doing it. With such a system there could be current reporting, and you would know where your money was going.

Well, Feldman took that seriously. However, he decided that he would design the accounting system. It would be totally centralized under his control. You couldn't do anything in that area unless your name was Roger Feldman. So I don't think that the development of a financial accounting, or financial management, system, because it's more than just accounting, is complete yet. I think that they're still working on components of such a system. Feldman left the job, and others have come in after him. I think that the same thing is true in terms of communications, which was the other, big money area for Automated Data Processing. With Ivan Selin in particular we got into this concept that there would be a State Department owned and operated global telecommunications system. I think that they called it DTS or something like that. It was going to cost around $130 to $200 million. I think that Ivan Selin focused on that as the way we had to go. I'm

sure it would have done wonderful things, had we been able to implement it - if we could have afforded it.

However, the fact is that there would never be 130 or more million dollars to do it, and so this idea has never gotten anywhere. Meanwhile, the fight goes on as to “Who will control diplomatic communications?” Who should run it? Should it be the Central Intelligence Agency, the military, or the State Department, each of which had its own data transmission, satellite-based communications capability. Should one of them run it or should it be divided, shared, or something like that?To me it's one of the faults of the State Department that State Department management has never been able to address the question coherently and rationally, make a decision on it, and move in that direction in a realistic way. As I said, Ivan Selin wanted to take over all diplomatic communications and have the State Department handle it all. Well, CIA is never going to let the State Department take over its communications, and the military won't let State do it, either. I don't know what the right answer is, but I don't think that the question has ever been dealt with in a truly serious way. So we're way behind the times now.

Q: One final question on your operations. That concerns staffing, and I'm thinking not so much of State Department staffing. There is a story that's always been current, since I've been in the Foreign Service, that the government is always cutting down on its personnel, rightly or wrongly. The story goes that the State Department says, “Okay, we'll cut 10% of our people overseas.” However, the FBI, the military, AID, and other organizations which have people assigned overseas never seem to take the same cut. So State Department personnel essentially get smaller in number, while the other agencies have their people proliferating.

I'm only asking about the time that you were in M/MO. Is this story essentially true, is there any truth to this, or what? How did you deal with this matter?

GILLESPIE: In that 1978-1980 time frame this was a very real issue. I think that we had some balance of payments problems and other stimuli. Budget cutting or reducing expenditures is a fact of life. It is a truism or a tautology that there is never enough money. Every President says, “I'm going to cut expenditures. I am going to achieve economies in government.” We have this idea of reinventing government in the Clinton administration. President Bush did the same thing before him. In my view every cabinet officer, and this was absolutely true during the period from 1978 to 1980, goes to the cabinet room in the White House. They sit around the table. The President says, “All right, we're all going to cut the budget.” Everybody says, “Yes, sir, we're all going to cut!” The only guy who goes back to his agency, calls in his lieutenants, and says, “Cut,” is the Secretary of State. Or, if he doesn't do that, people will come to him and say, “They want us to cut this, boss, but if we do...” The Secretary will say, “I don't care. I told the President that we'd make the cuts. Go and make the cuts.” I'm oversimplifying and caricaturing the whole thing. In fact, a lot of that goes on.

The fact is that Secretaries of State don't give a damn. They're concerned about a lot of things, but I would say that, with the possible exception of George Schultz, institutional management has not been a value that any Secretary of State has put very high up on his list during my 30 years of experience. That's just the way that is. So the Secretary of State will say, “Cut.” And when we had an Inspector General of the Foreign Service, somebody would say, “You make sure that we are lean and mean overseas.” That translated into, “Cut by X percent.” Then the question would be, “Well, wait a minute. What about the people from other agencies overseas?” The answer would be, “Well, the Ambassador needs to get them to cut their rolls, too. We'll back him up. Don't worry. You get them to cut, too, and tell us what they need.”

Believe me, now you're talking about an agency i.e., the State Department whose life, presumably, although you can argue this today, is based overseas and not in the United States or in Washington, as opposed to agencies for whom the overseas operations are

basically gravy. These overseas operations are gifts for them. There are some exceptions. The CIA has to be overseas and the Defense Department is overseas. However, the Departments of Agriculture and all the others - this is just a way to extend their reach. In real, crass terms, international programs give them a presence, a reason for the cabinet officer or his deputies to go to some of these nice places, and to have programs which are international in scope as opposed to just having domestic programs.

For the FBI it's a way to get people out of the country who aren'good enough to do jobs here or to reward people you want to reward.

Q: Or to provide a kind of retirement post. Good old George has been doing a wonderful job here, and how would he like to go to Nairobi or Hong Kong for the last years of his career?

GILLESPIE: Some agencies weren't so evident in 1978, but I'll just mention them now. There are the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Geological Survey...

Q: Civil Aeronautics...

GILLESPIE: Yes, the FAA (Federal Aeronautics Administration). They've got to be overseas. They can't operate from within the U.S., at a time when we, the diplomats, are being told that we don't have to be overseas because we can operate to a considerable extent from within the U.S., because communications are so good, and travel is expensive. Well, be that as it may, from 1978 to 1980 this was an issue. Before they would leave on a trip, the Foreign Service Inspectors would come to our office the Office of Management Operations. They would go over all of the staffing.

The inspectors would say, “What can we cut? Where can we cut?” Well, they'd go out and would find all kinds of State Department activities which could be cut. They would come back and say, “You can cut this and this.” We would say, “Well, what about these other people?” The inspectors would reply, “Oh, we didn't look into that. That's not our job.” The

Ambassadors would come in with a recommendation that such and such positions be cut. Our job would often be to go to these other agencies outside of the State Department and take the Ambassador's recommendations. They would say, “Well, we don't want to cut any positions.” That was a real problem.

The other agencies did a lot of funny accounting, too. You got into position, not people, questions. It didn't matter how many people you had on the rolls. What did count was how many positions you were authorized, because a position carries a price tag. A person really doesn't carry a price tag. A position relates to your budget, and it's an authorized complement question.

You get into that kind of question. One of our exercises was an effort to preserve and protect State Department staffing, both overseas and in Washington. One of the big issues we have had in the State Department is what is called a “float.” We as an institution have the FSI. We know that we have to train people at least in languages, if nothing else. Whether we're going to “educate” them or not is another matter, but there are people who go off to take university training. To be able to fill the jobs that we have overseas and do that training, we have to have more people on board than there are jobs.

Q: Also, we have home leave, which is fairly long.

GILLESPIE: We also have transit time, which can literally cover months. You either have to let jobs go vacant for extended periods, to absorb this “float,” or you have more people than you need. This was a major issue for us.

Related to it, by the way, is what is called the “obligated and unexpended balances.” A young officer working for me discovered that, with all this home leave and other travel, we basically allocate or obligate millions of dollars for the travel and transportation of people and things. However, it takes a tremendous amount of time actually to spend the money

that you need. You always say that you're going to spend a certain amount but you often spend less than that. The difference is in millions of dollars.

In fact, you don't find out that you didn't spend what you said you were going to spend for a long time. It takes a long time from when the person actually starts to travel, ends the travel, and you get the bills that you really have to pay. You end up with money that you were authorized to spend but you never spent, because there is always more out there. You never want to “underauthorize” travel funds. That turned out to be a major accounting problem for us because it was literally costing us operational money. It might be two years before you found out that, for example, Stu Kennedy moved from Washington to the Republic of Korea in such and such fiscal year. However, not all of the bills were settled for about 18 months after that. Then you're two years out of the fiscal year when he moved. This money goes back into the general receipts of the U.S. Treasury. One of the tricks was to find out how to handle this.

Congress and the administration both say that we are going to economize. What they want to do is to cut positions. They want to cut the staffing in the Embassies under the State Department. One of our major exercises during this 1978-1979 period was to try to preserve what was called “the reporting and analysis function.” Basically, this meant the political and economic reporting officers. You can justify to the Congress, the public, and the critics why you need consular officers. That is very specific. You need them because the law says that they have to perform these functions. You need them to perform so many services. The work load is pretty easy to define. As long as you try to have a centralized, administrative operation overseas, running an Embassy, you can argue that you need this many administrative people. What is harder to justify is why you need any or, if any, how many political and economic officers.

We got into a very carefully worked out reporting and analysis study. My little unit concluded what we thought was a pretty good study of how many political and economic reporting and analysis officers were needed to do the diplomatic work of the United States

overseas. We came up with a number which, let's just say, was 1,200. This number seems to stick in my mind. We concluded that we needed this many positions of this kind. However, we were told that we could only have 600 worldwide. We really fought to try to get the larger number of positions. As I recall, we were able to get everyone to agree to the larger figure, but we never really had it approved by legislation. I remember that, after I had left the administration and management area, the R and A, Research and Analysis, number was still floating around out there. It had been modified, inflated, indexed, or something, but this was the kind of thing we got into.

M/MO was involved in a lot of different issues. One of them was that we somehow got into the mandatory retirement area. Somebody had either proposed a policy shift or a regulation change that would have the effect...

Q: It would probably have been in the Foreign Service Act of 1980,wouldn't it?

GILLESPIE: It may have been...

Q: But this was when they were really beginning to focus on mandatorretirement.

GILLESPIE: This got into retirement for age or other kinds of issues. I forget what it exactly was. Maybe it was a projected effect of the new Foreign Service Act.

Q: But there were also two issues. In 1979 or 1980 the new Foreign Service Act was getting cranked up, with mandatory retirement. However, the Supreme Court had also ruled that you couldn't make somebody retire because of age, which screwed everything up.

GILLESPIE: That's right, but the Foreign Service said, “No, we have to keep the concept of mandatory retirement by a certain age. We had the age set at 65 for mandatory retirement, which we still have. How does that work? Do you have to retire at 65 and does this apply to everybody?

Q: I can't remember how it worked, but the point was that everything had been projected on the assumption that people would retire by a certain age. All of a sudden, it was stated that you don't have to retire, because of a Supreme Court decision. This screwed everything up - all the projections about who was going to retire. Then you had the new Foreign Service Act in the process of enactment, which could require retirement, but that was for time in grade, rather than age.

GILLESPIE: But we still have mandatory retirement by age 65. We are exempted from the provision that there is no age limit for mandatory retirement. However, we got heavily into that question.

As I said, there were other people who were working on the new Foreign Service Act itself. In M/MO we were not working on it, although we did get involved in it in a number of ways. I remember one aspect which I specifically recall being involved in. This was the whole relationship between personnel evaluations and “selection out” and how that should be covered. It was very complicated and highly politicized at the time. Everybody was very concerned. It was fascinating to be inside the process.

We also got into intelligence coordination issues. That's where I had my first contact with the NSC (National Security Council). Michael Conlin asked me to go and deal with the intelligence people at the NSC on some intelligence coordination matters that involved people, positions, and places. It was all very highly classified.

We got into alternative seats of government issues. In the case of a nuclear or other attack, where would the President and the Department of State be? Some of these issues fell to M/MO.

We got into relations with other governments, in the sense that M/MO was where Ben Read and others would send people when the British or the Canadians would want to talk about “your Foreign Service and our Foreign Service” and “how do you do things?” We

would usually wind up having the action on those kinds of questions. We would make sure that the British or the Canadians met with the Director General of the Foreign Service or with Ben Read or with whomever else they needed to be in touch with. We got involved in all that kind of personnel management issues at that level.

It was fascinating. In the course of my tour at M/MO, we had a change in leadership. Michael Conlin retired, and a fellow named Bob Miller, whom, I think, you've probably interviewed by now, replaced him. I finished up in M/MO under Bob Miller. I made two trips for M/MO, which were very interesting. These took place in 1979 and early in 1980. One of them related to Foreign Service National management - how we managed our local, national work forces. One of these trips was to Africa in 1979. I believe that I was looking strictly at the matters from the local management point of view. This trip was to Zaire and Kenya. Then I was supposed to go to Mali and finish up in Dar-es- Salaam, I guess. I was half way through on this trip and had visited Zaire and Kenya when Ben Read called me back to Washington to do something else.

Then, in the spring of 1980 the Inspector General decided that he would do an inspection of management of the Foreign Service National work force. I was asked to head up a team to go to Greece and, using Greece as an example, inspect our Foreign Service National management. It was very interesting to see the degree to which Ambassadors, DCMs, and others cared or didn't care about their Foreign Service National employees. Boy, this really varies! I'd seen it in Africa. I'd seen the AID operations in Africa, because that was part of the Foreign Service National program, since they are all linked. Then I saw the same issue in Greece, as well.

From the management viewpoint the effort to manage personnel was very rudimentary. There were very amateurish approaches to personnel and work force management in the State Department. We often deserve some of the criticism and brickbats that get thrown at us. We don't do a very coherent job of management of personnel matters. I looked at this question more from the point of view of what I think was a business operation. We are

stuck with practices which, perhaps, are not of our choosing or not out of any great desire. However, we've also kept methods and approaches which are really neanderthal in the way we deal with our work force overseas, as well as in the United States. I sure got a first hand view of it from that M/MO experience.

Q: Well, when we pick up this interview the next time - where did yogo after M/MO?

GILLESPIE: I guess that I had been promoted recently. I was an FSO-1 by then. I had this position of being Associate Director of M/MO. Then I thought that it might be useful and good to go on to senior training. Michael Conlin had said that he thought I ought to do this before he leForI was assigned to the National War College at Fort McNair. That's what I did in 1980-1981.

Q: All right, we'll pick it up at that point.

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Today is March 5, 1996. Tony, we're off to the National War College, 1980-1981. I've heard it said that during war college assignments people from the Foreign Service are often used more as resource persons than anything else, to get the military to understand that there are real people and problems out there and to get them to understand how it all works. This particularly applies to those of us who served in the military. This used to include almost everybody, although that is changing now. How did you find the National War College? What were some of the dynamics at the National War College at that time?

GILLESPIE: In that particular period of time, remember, we had just gone to the all volunteer Army. Now, with a little bit of hindsight, you can see that we were very much in the post-Vietnam era and faced with the syndrome, as they called it, about where our military stood in our society and how they were supported by the civil population. These issues are very evident now - and were a little apparent then. I think that your statement that Foreign Service people are often seen as a resource has a lot to it, but it doesn't

tell the whole story. My peer group at the National War College consisted of about a dozen Foreign Service Officers, out of a class of about 160 people. As others may have indicated, the class consisted of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard officers, as well as civilians from other agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, Department of Defense civilians, Library of Congress people, and the U.S. Information Agency, of course...

Q: Treasury...

GILLESPIE: We may have had someone from Treasury. I know that the Florida District Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service was a member of our class. So, if I remember correctly, out of the total class of 160, 40 or them, or one-quarter, were civilians. The other 120 class members were uniformed military officers.

Just a quick note on that. Remember that we were in a period of transition in the Department of Defense's own structure. I can't, for the life of me, remember the name of the legislation that changed the relationship of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in terms of his command authority. Prior to the passage of that legislation the Joint Chiefs of Staff, supported by the Joint Staff, was sort of building up. The Joint Staff was made up of members of all of the services. The legislation may have been passed just after I graduated from the National War College in 1981, but it was certainly being talked about then. One could see the tensions between the military people in the class, Some of them thought that “jointness” - that is, bringing the services together - was the way to go. Others advocated maintaining the separate identity of the various services. As a civilian in that mix, I felt that one of the basic educational points I learned was just how much real tension there was among the various military services. We civilians in the class learned an awful lot about the fight for resources among the military. We learned that “defense” really almost translates into resources and budget battles.

Unlike the State Department and the Agency for International Development, which is programmatic and has large amounts of money to spend, or has had in the past, the Department of Defense and the armed services devote a tremendous amount of time to looking into the future - or try to do so. They basically try to see what they're going to buy and how they're going to spend money. At the same time they are very expensive organizations in terms of personnel. They spend an awful lot of money on their personnel. All of that was driven home to us civilians when we associated with the military members of our class.

As I said, we had just moved to the concept of an all volunteer Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines Corps. A lot of the issues that we saw being discussed by our military colleagues and peers related to what that all meant. There were serious questions about the quality of the recruits, the people coming in. There were real challenges to the organizations because they were very concerned. Narcotics abuse was a very serious matter. In a sense we civilians were given a chance to get inside the military culture and get a look at what was really on people's minds.

In terms of grand strategy the National War College is the joint college, which I should point out, if nobody else has. Each of the services has its own war college - the Army, Navy, Air Force, and so on. The National Defense University, of which the National War College is a part, brings the military services and civilians together. There are civilians at all of the service war colleges. Part of the National Defense University is the National War College. The other part of it is the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), which is where you really get into “bean counting,” resource allocation, and other issues related to the military-industrial complex.

The point I would make in response to your question is, “Yes, I think that the civilian class members, and particularly the State Department civilians, bring to the National War College the view that there is something else out there beside fighting wars or this constant preoccupation with the resource base and how you're going to maintain,

preserve, or increase it." I guess that that's what George Kennan had in mind when, just after World War II, the whole idea of a National War College as a strategic center or a think tank, if you will, for the discussion of strategic concepts was born. At this center the U.S. Foreign Service and the Department of State developed what has now been a 50-year association with the U.S. military services at Fort McNair.

The classes, the format, and the curriculum have undergone a number of changes. I think that people said that our group, the class of 1980-1981, was the last of the "gentlemen's courses." We had no examinations. We had no tests of any real nature. We each had to do some kind of a project but, quite frankly, it was judged for quality but not graded. Some member of the class was given a prize for the best project - whatever that was. More to the point, what we did was to be exposed to an awful lot of current and past, strategic thought. We looked at a number of historical issues from a defense and national security perspective. That was very useful.

The classes start in August. Wags tell the story that the military people come with the view that force is the answer to any problem. The State Department and Foreign Service people come with the view that negotiation is the answer to whatever the problem is. You undergo a process through which, by about mid-year, the coin flips over. All of a sudden every Foreign Service Officer is saying, "Let's bomb the hell out of these people," while the military people are saying, "Wait a minute. Maybe we ought to talk first." By the end of the year we regressed to the positions we started out with. However, Foreign Service members of the class now had a deeper appreciation of the use of force as one of the principal tools of national strategy and diplomacy. The military similarly had a better appreciation of how diplomacy and negotiations can be of assistance in carrying out national strategy.

For Foreign Service people the National War College was an opportunity to look at the whole resource allocation process - the political economy of the United States, as part of this process. In that sense this program at the National War College was very

useful. I think that, perhaps with one exception among the dozen FSO's who were in the course, we all judged it to be a good experience, while we were going through it and immediately afterwards. I've stayed in touch with at least half a dozen of those FSO's. We all considered it very useful in getting us to get outside our normal, bureaucratic culture and think about other things. We really did look at the application and the threat of application of force. Since we were going into the Reagan era, with lots of things happening around the world, it was probably useful that we did that.

Q: Let's take a little look at the world then, as you people at the National War College saw it. This was 1980-1981. The hostage situation was still going on in Iran, and the Soviets had gone into Afghanistan in 1979 in implementation of the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine. The Soviets seemed to be saying that it was inevitable that they would take over the world and that time was on their side. This is really ironic because the Soviet Union had less than a decade to go before it completely disappeared. This was a major concern. In the press we saw arrows pointing into the Persian Gulf from the Soviet Union. How did you people at the National War College perceive the world at that time?

GILLESPIE: We tried to stay in touch with current events. Of course, this was in a pseudo-academic setting, but you couldn't ignore current events. In addition to the situation in Afghanistan and the Iran hostage situation, the Sandinistas had won out in Nicaragua, and revolution or something close to that was happening in El Salvador. So Central America presented a problem.

I entered the National War College in the summer of 1980, Presidential election year. Jimmy Carter was the Democratic President seeking reelection. Ronald Reagan was the candidate of the Republicans. You could tell that the Carter administration was under a lot of pressure. The National War College administration would schedule administration speakers to talk to us. Then they wouldn't be able to come, in many cases. Substitutes would have to be found for them because some problem had come up. This happened all the time.

We in the class were very concerned. There was a question in the minds of many members of the class as to whether we would have the necessary resources to do the job. Remember that President Carter had cut back the Navy rather dramatically. The CIA had been undergoing cuts. So there was a lot of concern in the class about what our own ability to act in the world would look like. These were topical issues which we would discuss. One development which sticks in my mind was the new and growing phenomenon of terrorism. The National War College had begun to set up a cell of people who were experts on terrorism. This was a new issue for people to look at in 1980.

Regarding the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, the National War College was pulling together experts in that area to begin to look at it. Obviously, this was lagging behind the reality. Terrorism had been growing for a year or two before we got to the National War College.

Q: Even during the Carter administration, which was considered dovish, we were getting ready to move into the Persian Gulf. An austere base was being set up at Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean. A lot more was happening than was apparent in the political process.

GILLESPIE: Yes. We were watching that and reading the newspapers. At the same time we were going back and reading about the Peloponnesian War and thinking about the historical bases of grand strategy - Von Clausewitz and others. We looked at the Chinese masters of strategy - including Lao Tze. I guess that, in some ways, we were trying to relate them to the “real” world.

Q: Was there any split between the professional military and the professional State Department people in the way they looked at the Soviet threat at that time?

GILLESPIE: One of our Foreign Service classmates was Martin Wenick. He was the closest thing to a Soviet expert in our group at the National War College. Based on his expertise and knowledge, Marty felt that the military members of our class had very

simplistic views. Some of the faculty were very well qualified and knew what they were talking about. However, Marty felt that it was going to take a very long time to get the generals up to speed in terms of looking at things in other than black and white terms. That is my recollection, at leasIn this process we expanded our horizons a little bit and saw some of these issues, both past and current, from the other fellow's perspective. In this case the other fellow was wearing a U.S. military service uniform. Our military colleagues were thinking about how they were going to deploy their weapons systems, if we, the diplomats and the policymakers, came to certain conclusions or did not achieve our goals. By seeing things from the military perspective we probably realized how we ought to be acting to modify our goals and perspectives, because of the real world out there.

I think that that's the kind of thing we were doing. I'm trying to recall an example of that. It's very hard to remember now. However, it strikes me now that this is how it was at the time.

Q: Then in the spring or early summer of 1981 where did you go frothe National War College?

GILLESPIE: Part of the curriculum at the National War College was to do a spring trip. We had a choice and, because I didn't know anything about it, I joined the group that went to the Persian Gulf. That's when I got my first and almost only exposure, up close, to the tensions there. We studied the Gulf Cooperation Council. We went to Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Bahrein, and Oman. Then we finished up in Cairo, where the late President Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, gave us a two-hour, private lecture on the tensions in the Middle East. This was fascinating. I think that experiences of that kind for Foreign Service Officers are very useful. The National War College faculty encouraged us to get out of our area. The people who had served in Europe went to Asia or Latin America, and so forth. In late 1980 and early 1981, then, I was looking for an ongoing assignment. I was selected to go to INR (Bureau of Intelligence Research) and head up an organization that produces the Secretary of State's Daily Summary, among other things. I was to be the editor and publisher, in effect, of a number of these publications. It sounded interesting. I had come

from an administrative background, and this seemed a little bit of a change. It was a supervisory job and sounded good to me.

Then, in May, 1981, I had a phone call from someone in ARA (Bureau of American Republics Affairs), asking me if I would come over for an interview with the new Assistant Secretary. President Reagan had been elected, Al Haig was Secretary of State, and Haig arranged for Thomas Enders to be nominated as Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs. I was told that Enders would like to interview me for a job. I already had this assignment to INR, but I went to be interviewed by Enders. A few days later I got word that Enders wanted to have me as his Executive Assistant in ARA. That was not a normal job title, but he had told me what he wanted, and I indicated that I thought that I could do the job. So that was where I wound up, in ARA.

Q: You were in ARA in Washington from when to when?

GILLESPIE: 1981 until I went out as Ambassador to Colombia in 1985.

Q: Could you describe the atmosphere when you went to ARA? When the Reagan administration came in, and slightly before, out of all of the bureaus, there was “blood in the corridors” of ARA.

GILLESPIE: Stu, the blood was not really in the corridors. The blood was all over the walls of the front office of ARA. Interestingly enough, there were still survivors. They were the walking wounded or maybe the living dead. When I went into ARA, some had come back to life, but not all of them. By the way, I knew nothing about this. The blood was spilled in January, 1981, when I was at the National War College and didn't have the slightest interest in or only passing knowledge of ARA. There was no senior person or about to be a senior person from Latin America in the National War College group that I was part of.

So we didn't talk about it very much, beyond saying, “The Reagan administration is throwing a lot of the Carter people out.” We didn't pay much more attention to the matter than that.

I think that it must have been at the last part of May or very early June, 1981, when I reported for duty in ARA. By then I had begun to learn what had happened and that, in fact, Bill Bowdler, the career Foreign Service Officer who had been the Assistant Secretary of ARA, was told in January, 1981, to clear out his office by the close of business one day and not to come back. It was really about that rough. That left a couple of his Deputy Assistant Secretaries in office, both career people. The senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of the ARA front office was John Bushnell. The more junior Deputy Assistant Secretary was Jim Cheek.

Tom Enders was a career Foreign Service Officer, whose main areas of experience had been Europe and economic affairs. He had the reputation of being the fastest rising Foreign Service Officer in the history of the service, I think - until Tom Pickering came along. Tom may have been promoted more quickly by a month or two. In any event Secretary of State Haig chose Tom Enders, who joined the Bureau in about March or April, 1981. That's when the blood was still fresh. By the time I got there in May, 1981, the blood was still on the walls of the ARA front office, because these two Deputy Assistant Secretaries were still around the Department. They hadn't been able to get jobs. There was nobody who would “hire” them. They were tainted - the blood had spilled onto them. They were looking for things to do, and Enders was trying to take care of them. He didn't want to see them badly treated but he was not having any luck having them taken care of.

Q: I wonder if you could explain what were the dynamics behind this focus on Latin America on the part of the Reagan administration. Why did the bloodbath take place?

GILLESPIE: It's probably easy to over-simplify this, but maybe the simplest answer comes closest to the truth. As I mentioned earlier, there had been the Sandinista revolution in

Central America. Cuba - and Castro - were still very active in supporting revolutionary activity in countries like Colombia and elsewhere. There had been military takeovers in Chile and Argentina, and the Carter administration had focused on human rights and the very bad behavior of some of those autocratic and dictatorial regimes. The Carter administration had initially welcomed the overthrow of Somoza and the Sandinista revolution. It had not handled the Somoza transition particularly well, in the eyes of many people.This was especially the view of a group which was involved in Latin American affairs to varying degrees, though it would be a mistake to lump them altogether. This group included Jeanne Kirkpatrick, who came into the Reagan administration as a foreign policy expert and was appointed Ambassador to the United Nations and a member of the cabinet. Also included was William J. Casey, who was the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Casey had previously served in the State Department and in other U.S. Government agencies concerned with foreign affairs. He had a sense of the Foreign Service in his own mind, I think. Then there was a group of academic, foreign policy experts who came from the Southwest, from New Mexico and Arizona. I think that they belonged to a group called The Santa Fe School. They tended to believe that U.S. policy, in its handling of Latin American affairs, had coddled so- called revolutionaries and communists and had condemned strong, authoritarian figures. They felt that the answer to communism was strong governments.

That group also included Roger Fontaine and Constantine Menges. They were brought into the Reagan administration. Remember that President Reagan's first national security team was headed by Richard Allen, though he only lasted in office for about three weeks. They appeared a little confused, but Menges and Fontaine came onto the National Security Council staff in the White House. This group believed that policy was, indeed, made by the President himself and by his immediate advisers. They felt that it was nobody else's job to be involved in the policy making process. It may not be fair to say this of some of them, but they collectively believed that the Foreign Service had become tainted by the “Carter disease” and was only concerned with human rights and coddling revolutionaries

and communists. They had been bolstered by the then-energetic and very lively group around Senator Jesse Helms Republican of North Carolina.

Q: And his staff.

GILLESPIE: And his staff. That's what I meant by the group around him. Senator Helms' group included some former Foreign Service people who had been disappointed or unhappy with their Foreign Service careers. Some of this group were Latin Americanists. They felt that the whole approach to Latin America had been wrong and that the only way to get it right was to throw out everything that was there and to start afresh.

Secretary of State Haig brought a lot of experienced people with him. Initially, he focused on Castro. He had a very strong priority - to the extent that any Secretary has any strong priorities in dealing with Latin America, - to get rid of Castro. We're going to make sure that he goes. Since, by this point, assassination had been precluded and, indeed, forbidden by law, they were going to force him out through a variety of means. The idea was to take the battle to Cuba and keep the pressure on Fidel Castro. Secretary Haig brought Enders in as a very sharp, career Foreign Service Officer who was known to be decisive and forceful. Basically, Haig told Enders that that was his job.

By the time Enders was appointed Assistant Secretary in ARA, the Nicaragua situation had already begun to heat up and change. In fact, the Carter team of Assistant Secretary Bowdler and company was already faced with a rapidly-developing, negative situation. The hope that the Sandinista group could be brought in or co-opted was fading. It was evident that there was trouble there. The problems in El Salvador, including the murder of the Catholic nuns...

Q: These were American nuns.

GILLESPIE: Four American nuns were brutally shot and killed. It seemed obvious that Salvadoran government people had done this. We had a very activist Ambassador in El

Salvador, Robert White, who kept trying to raise everybody's consciousness about what was going on. At this particular juncture he was not getting a very sympathetic hearing in the new Reagan administration. However, even before that, he had been a fly biting under the saddle of even the Carter people on this issue.

In any event through a combination of events, and I do not know exactly how it all happened, by the end of January, 1981, Bill Bowdler was out as Assistant Secretary, ARA, and rather ignominiously sent away. There was a lot of embarrassment and discomfort about that on the part of Foreign Service people, who were embarrassed because it had happened to one of them. That's when I walked onto the scene - more or less three or four months after these things had happened.By that point Enders had still not been confirmed in office as Assistant Secretary. His hearings were not even held until June, 1981. Then it took another 30 days or so to get him confirmed by the Senate. Senator Helms did not like the choice of Enders as Assistant Secretary. He was against Enders and tried to block his appointment.

Q: As I see it, Secretary of State Haig was trying to keep this situation from turning ideological by using Enders, who was sort of outside the disputes over Latin American policy. Helms and others wanted to turn ARA into a much more ideological bureau.

GILLESPIE: There was pressure from Congress and from within the White House to have no career people in senior policy positions in the State Department. They wanted to have a man named John Carbo, who had been on Senator Helms' staff, appointed Assistant Secretary for ARA. He was some distance from the staff itself, if I remember correctly. They also had several people whom they wanted to have brought in as Deputy Assistant Secretaries to Carbo. It was pretty obvious that Secretary Haig wanted to block that. Haig was supported in this view by the White House, and that is how Enders was chosen.

Enders was a very tough, anti-communist guy. He had been Charge d'Affaires in Cambodia during the bombing of that country, 1970-1974. He had credentials as a tough

guy. Furthermore, he wasn't tainted in any way by previous association with Latin America. He was neutral in that sense, but his strong, anti-communist credentials were presumably well known. Enders was brought in after a difficult confirmation process. He then set out to organize his office.

Enders' idea was to have three Deputy Assistant Secretaries and someone whom he thought of as his Executive Assistant. It turned out that his idea of an Executive Assistant is very close to today's chief of staff. His Executive Assistant's job was to tell him what he didn't know but was supposed to know and do, and when he was supposed to do it. This is how he sold the job to me. This was strictly in the policy area. Enders said to me, “Somebody else will keep my schedule, somebody else will handle the administration of this Bureau. But you're going to make sure that the policy process runs and that I'm doing what I'm supposed to do and that my Deputies are doing what they're supposed to do. I will not have time to do that, and that's your job. You become the focal point.”

I didn't really know what that meant at the time, but it sounded challenging. Well, as it turned out, Secretary Haig supported Enders in what Enders wanted to do. Enders said, “I do not want any political appointees in the front office of ARA.” That immediately put him into conflict with Senator Helms and the White House, because they wanted political appointees.

Q: Well, for one thing, if I recall it correctly, Senator Helms'protegees were notorious for being direct conduits back to Helms.

GILLESPIE: Oh, absolutely. They were conduits in both directions. They were bringing instructions from Senator Helms. In reality what I ended up arranging and making sure happened was a weekly meeting between Assistant Secretary Tom Enders and John Carbo. I made sure that such a meeting did, indeed, get on Enders' schedule and that it did, indeed, happen. In effect, Enders' strategy was to co-opt Carbot and keep him

informed of what was going on in such a way that Enders could control the flow of information and blunt the influence of Senator Helms on the policy process.

Q: This is very important, because Senator Jesse Helms is now the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He has been a burr under the saddle of the Department of State - and continues to be. As you came into ARA, you were the new boy on the block, your eyes were wide open, and you were trying to find out what made things work. What was your impression of Helms' motivation? There was a tremendous concentration on Latin America by the whole Reagan administration. Really, the conduct of our relations with rest of the world was left in the hands of professional diplomats without any great change. Latin America, however, involved such a concentration of effort, and Senator Jesse Helms was such a key figure, particularly early in the Reagan administration. As you saw it, what motivated this man from North Carolina to get involved?

GILLESPIE: Helms wasn't exclusively focused on Latin America. Remember that Jesse Helms was very much against nuclear disarmament and had a strong, negative reaction to any arms control activity. He was very much an anti-communist, wherever anti-communism was needed.

Why Latin America? He had on his staff, for whatever reason, and I don't know that it had anything to do with the area that they were expert in, people who were interested in Latin America. It was their area of interest. There was a fellow named Christopher Manion, whose father was Dean Manion from the Middle West - I think, Notre Dame University. He was a strongly Catholic, ardent anti-communist, and very right wing kind of person. Chris Manion spoke Spanish and felt that he knew Latin America. I don't know how he developed that background, but that was his belief.

During that period of time there was a woman named Deborah De Moss, whose father was extremely wealthy. Again, he was very right wing, very religious, and worth hundreds

of millions of dollars, I guess. Deborah De Moss, who had studied Spanish and had lived in Central America for some time, was part of the Helms' staff. There were others on that staff whose names I can't remember now. For whatever reason they had gotten into the Helms' staff and brought with them some knowledge of Latin America. I think that, even today, they influence Senator Helms.

Today, in 1996, there is a man named Dan Fisk who, I guess, is the chief of staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He's a very senior Helms' appointee on the Foreign Relations Committee staff. Fisk worked for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs on Latin American issues during the Bush administration. He is now Helms' chief man on the Foreign Relations Committee. Fisk's strong area of interest is Latin America. He's a man who, right now, has been leading the charge against President Samper of Colombia. Helms is threatening to take action there, working on what is known as the “Helms-Burton Anti-Cuban legislation,” or the “Cuba Defense Act” or “Cuba Democracy Act,” whatever it's called.

Whether Senator Helms chose these people because they knew Latin America or they focused on Latin America because that is what they knew, and they had a channel in Senator Helms, I just don't know. My guess is that it's the latter. I think that Helms' interest in the Western Hemisphere is something that has been building over the years. As I said, this is not an exclusive Helms interest, because I watched Helms later on. In the late 1980s, toward the end of the Reagan administration, it was evident that Helms was going against the Foreign Service. It was very evident that he was linking nominations, confirmations, and even promotions in the Foreign Service to SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) activities. He was very carefully building up strength “here” so that he could apply it “there.”

Senator Helms is a very adept wielder of Senatorial power. However,I can't say exactly why he does this.

Q: To return to the ARA front office...

GILLESPIE: Let me say just one more thing. As I mentioned before, Enders decided that he wanted no political appointees in the ARA front office. This put him into direct conflict, not only with Senator Helms but, because of Helms, with the White House. People on the NSC (National Security Council) staff were saying to Enders, “You simply have to take a political appointee in your front office as a Deputy Assistant Secretary.” Tom would say, “No, I'm not going to do that.”

By that time Enders had brought in two of the three Deputy Assistant Secretaries that he hoped to have. He wanted to have a principal Deputy, who would be a sort of alter ego. He wanted to have a Deputy Assistant Secretary for political affairs, and another Deputy Assistant Secretary for economic affairs. Different regional bureaus have been organized in different ways over time. Some do this geographically, by countries. Enders was going to do it functionally. His principal Deputy Assistant Secretary was a man named Stephen Bosworth. His Deputy Assistant Secretary for political affairs was Everett “Ted” Briggs. Both of them were career Foreign Service Officers. Bosworth was a long-time protegee of Enders who had worked with him in the economic area and was a brilliant officer. Briggs also was brilliant but with extremely good, right wing connections in the Republican Party. His father was Ellis O. Briggs, a legendary Foreign Service Officer and Ambassador to a number of countries. Ted Briggs was to be the right flank protector for Enders but from within, not outside, the Foreign Service.

Enders was not able to bring in the man he wanted as his Deputy Assistant Secretary for economic affairs, because of White House objections. He was told, “No, you cannot name another Deputy Assistant Secretary unless he is a political appointee.” That threw Tom a little bit, at least briefly. He said, “To hell with it.” He got us all together one evening - Steve Bosworth, Ted Briggs, and me. He said, “We're just going to operate this place without a Deputy Assistant Secretary for economic affairs. I've always felt that the Office Directors in a bureau, who are all senior Foreign Service Officers, are able to carry more weight

than people think. So, we'll just go without this additional Deputy Assistant Secretary. I'm going to name someone as Office Director for ARA Economic Affairs, and we'll treat him as if he were a Deputy Assistant Secretary." And then he said to me, "Gillespie, your job is to make sure not only that everybody pulls not only his full share but a little more. That's what I want you to do. Because we only have these two Deputy Assistant Secretaries," he told the other two Deputies, "I'm going to have Tony Gillespie have full signing authority for me. If he feels that he needs your advice in an area, he'll come to you, but basically he can sign anything in my name that he thinks he ought to sign. It's up to him to make the decision whether he needs to check with you or with me. That's the way we'll operate."

This was really quite a grant of authority. I was new to ARA and new to this level of operations, and I was told that I could sign documents for the Assistant Secretary. He made me, in effect, the executive secretary of the Bureau. He said, "You're going to be the Executive Secretary for any interagency matters that we handle."

Tom Enders had a very special view of interagency activity. He didn't like it, particularly. He felt that, to the extent that it happened, it should be limited to a few people who would consider only a few matters. It was Tom who set up his own command structure, trying to keep control of policy toward Latin America. This was initially called, "The Restricted Interagency Group," or the RIG. That included the Assistant Director for Latin America of the CIA Operations Directorate, a senior person from the NSC, and the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. At that time they still didn't have a very high-ranking person is what is now J-5, which deals with matters on a geographic basis in the joint structure. That was basically the group which met once or twice a week to look at the situation and what might be done in places like Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. Tom set up this small and relatively high level structure. He brought in L. Craig Johnstone, a young and fairly fast rising officer, as his Director of the Office of Central American Affairs. He gave Craig a tremendous amount of latitude and authority to run Central American affairs. He had Myles Frechette as the Director for Cuban Affairs. Myles' job was to serve mainly as a buffer in all of this and to

make sure that that situation did not get out of hand. He was the expert on Cuban affairs. He had quite a crew of office directors, all of whom went on to higher and more important things in the Foreign Service. Frechette is now our Ambassador to Colombia. Johnstone runs the whole Resource Management Process for the Department.

So we operated on that basis. All of the correspondence and cables were very highly classified. This was a very activist and very operational effort. This was when the contras were beginning to be organized in Nicaragua - that is, the indigenous, anti- Sandinista movement. Thought was given to what might be done about Castro which would weaken him. Remember that in 1980, in addition to the other things that we've talked about, including the situations in Iran and Afghanistan, there was also the Mariel boat lift from Cuba.

Q: Could you explain what the Mariel boat lift was?

GILLESPIE: In effect and stated briefly, although I think that this is essentially correct, the Mariel boat lift was Castro's attempt to cleanse his jails and get rid of a lot of people whom he considered dissidents and ne'er-do-wells from Cuba. He put them all on boats and rafts. In effect, he shoved them off the island. They were picked up and brought into Florida by Cuban-Americans. It turned out that, while some of them were decent Cubans who were, in fact, dissidents, anti-Castro, and okay from our point of view, others were out and out criminals and lunatics. These were people who were taken out of asylums and medical institutions. Some of them were very ill. They included convicted murderers, rapists, and heavies of all kinds.

As a result of the Mariel boat lift, among other things, U.S. federal jails became full of what were called “Marielitos.” These were Cubans who had come out of Cuba in the boat lift, many of whom, it turned out, could not be left out in open society. Some had been allowed to circulate but got into trouble and were put into jail. Others were just taken directly to jail when other Cubans identified them as possible criminals. There were maybe as many as

several thousand of these people in federal prisons in places like Atlanta and Little Rock. Many were incorrigible. They didn't speak English, they were hard to deal with, and were a high cost problem.

I recall that one of the things that we talked about was returninthose people to Castro. That was one of Secretary Al Haig's ideas.

Q: This would have to have been a midnight boat operation.

GILLESPIE: I could tell you something about this. One of the ideas that was considered, and rejected, obviously, was to act with no advanced warning. Buses and trucks would be brought to these federal prisons and some kind of tranquilizer would be put in the Cuban refugees' food to quiet them. They would be put into ground transportation, taken to harbors on the Gulf of Mexico and on the East coast of the U.S., where “Liberty ships...”

Q: These were obsolete, World War II...

GILLESPIE: World War II cargo ships. These ships would be prepared to make the 90-250 mile or so run to Cuba. The ships would be launched in a synchronized way with minimal crews which could just get them operating. In effect, 12 miles off the North coast of Cuba, possibly near Varadero Beach or some such place, these ships would be lined up, heading for shore. Then helicopters would lift the crews off. The Cuban refugees would have been put on benches. The planners of this operation even went so far as to have someone design or at least conceptualize manicles and leg irons, so that these refugees would be sitting on the benches, with their legs and arms immobilized. As the ships hit the beach, the manicles would open so that they would not be put in jeopardy if something bad happened to the ship. This planning went to the point of having people prepare drawings and plot the requirements for doing this.

One of Tom Enders' great strengths, in my view, was to let people talk about anything that they wanted to talk about. Let people express their ideas and play things all the way out,

but always try to bring reality in. One of the reality checks was supplied by a lawyer whom Tom had selected in the State Department, maybe an Assistant Legal Adviser or even the Deputy Legal Adviser. His name was Jim Michel. In my mind Jim came to be the “war and peace man.” We would have these meetings in ARA and would talk about plots like this - and there were others that were even more bizarre.

Tom would say, “Okay, Tony, let's have a RIG meeting now. Let's get Jim Michel to come to the meeting. You brief him on what's been talked about so that he's prepared for the meeting.” He would then have the meeting of the RIG. He would call in Michel and would say, “Jim, give us a 'war and peace' check. If we do this, what are the pitfalls as we move along? Assume we want to do it. You tell us how to do it.” That was a code signal for Michel to speak up. According to my recollection, Michel speaks slowly and carefully, measures every word but doesn't drag things out too long, and is a chain smoker of cigarettes - in those days you could smoke in the office. Jim would immediately point out all of the advantages of these schemes and then figure out how to put a stiletto in them. He would say that, of course, if you do this, you will open the U.S. Government to the following liabilities and disadvantages. This is a violation of this part of the United Nations Charter, so we'll have to figure out exactly how we deal with this.

It's interesting to see how these things fit into the global policy of the United States at the time, because these were very discreet and localized operations. However, they all related back to THE communist threat, to the Soviet Union. Remember that we had had the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962 and all of that. We were absolutely convinced that the Cubans, supported by the Soviet Union, were actively engaged in the Sandinista operation and in supporting the Sandinistas.

One of the big issues was the introduction of “Mig” fighter aircraft - that is, an advanced fighter aircraft from the Soviet Union - into Nicaragua at about this time. This was a very major concern. We had intelligence information that the Russians intended to do precisely that. There were Mig aircraft in crates on docks, not only in the Soviet Union but in Eastern

Europe. They were inspected by spy in the sky satellites. Our photo interpreters were saying that this is what they are, and preparations are being made to load them on this particular ship. This ship is going to go here, here, and here, and it's going to stop in Nicaragua. Or it was going to go to Cuba, and material from Cuba was going to go to Nicaragua.

Lake Managua is a big lake right in front of the capital of Nicaragua. Across on the other side of the lake is undeveloped, ranch land. Here the Sandinistas, the people who had taken over from Somoza, began to build a major, military airport with Cuban and Russian support. There was no doubt about that. It was very clear that somebody was going to give to the Sandinistas aircraft that they could use there.

So the introduction of this advanced weapons system into Central America at this time was viewed as anathema by President Reagan and the people around him, by Secretary of State Al Haig, and by everyone else. On August 13, 1981, Assistant Secretary of State for American Republics Affairs Tom Enders met with Daniel Ortega, the leader of the Sandinista movement and the chief of state of Nicaragua. Tom said, in typically Enders fashion, in tough and very firm language, “We could work out a 'modus vivendi' with you, but you're going to have to give on a number of these issues. Some of the things that we don't want to see are advanced weapons systems and support for revolution in other countries.” Enders knew, at that particular moment, that the chances that Ortega would agree to that were pretty slim. However, I think that Tom thought, in his own way, that he was delivering the right message. At that juncture the situation probably could not have been dealt with in any other way. In any case that was the message he delivered.

It was from that point on that things like the Contras, counter revolutionaries or domestic, Nicaraguan opponents of the Sandinista government, the Central Intelligence Agency, William Casey Director of the CIA at the time, Dewey Claridge official in charge of CIA Central American operations, and others became directly involved in the Nicaraguan situation. The way I saw it, we were on a high spirited horse, if not a bucking bronco, and

we were holding on as best we could for the ride. Tom Enders was trying to keep hold, not only of the reins, but the pommel or whatever other part of the saddle that one holds onto, and keep this situation under some kind of control.

The “Agency,” the CIA, saw this situation as an opportunity to do a lot of things that it felt it was very good at doing. That is, real, covert action. In the political-military area the CIA brought in Argentine military people for some of the training of the contras. The idea was to keep steady pressure on the Sandinistas so that they presumably could not deliver support (people or things) to what became the FMLN Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the revolutionary movement in El Salvador, which was trying to overthrow the Salvadoran government.

So by the end of 1981 we were bouncing along on this “bucking bronco.” That ended up in what became known as the Iran Contra affair in the latter part of the 1980s, with all of the problems related to it. Tom Enders was trying to manage this process. He felt that he could do so and that this was his job. However, there were a lot of people in it, such as Jean Kirkpatrick then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; William Casey Director of the CIA; Fred Ikle, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; and the NSC staff, including Menges and other people. At that point the people associated with Senator Jesse Helms didn't get too involved in the operational side of things. It was a little different arrangement with them. They were still trying to get somebody into the Bureau of American Republics Affairs. They thought that that was the most important thing that they could do. The people I was associated with in ARA were trying to make sure that they didn't do that.

Q: There is a whole series of matters which we will want to talk about. There is the Grenada affair, the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983, the Falkland/Malvinas Islands affair, the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982, as well as other matters. However, let's stick to the Central American situation first, and then we can deal with other matters. How does that strike you?

GILLESPIE: Yes. I guess that that's the best way to do it, although, quite frankly, I hadn't thought about how we might structure this discussion. There were several things that began to happen at the end of 1981.

There was the Falklands/Malvinas crisis, that is, the Argentine incursion on islands that Great Britain said were a British Crown Colony. That really flowed out of or was related to an Argentine threat to the Beagle Channel, the southernmost channel through the southern tip of South America. The North bank of the channel was Argentine territory; the South bank was Chilean territory. According to our intelligence, this dispute could have led to war between Argentina and Chile. Instead, Argentina looked to the East, instead of the West, and chose war with Great Britain over ownership and control of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. One can argue now that this was not a very smart thing for Argentina to have done. The result of this war was to bring down the generals and the admirals in control of the Argentine government. However, the result might have been the same if they had gone the other way against Chile over the Beagle Channel question. The Falklands/Malvinas issue was a major development in U.S. relations with both Europe and Latin America.

The other issue which now is so vivid in people's recollections is the financial or bank crisis in 1982. First, the Mexicans and then, like dominoes, the Argentines and others began to go belly up and were basically unable to meet their external financial obligations. The U.S. banks were in great danger of suffering serious, financial losses. This was the Latin American banking and financial crisis of 1982.

1983 brought the U.S. invasion of Grenada in the Lesser Antilles. Indirectly related to that was a little noticed series of incidents which still are festering and causing trouble in Surinam. There Desi Bouterse killed or arranged to have murdered about eight members of Surinam's democratic government. He was a corporal in the Surinam army and seemed

to be getting very close to Fidel Castro of Cuba. That was all part of the lead up to the Grenada situation.

In the case of the Surinam situation there was a real possibility of the Brazilians working with us, because that was in their area of national interest. We found that there may have been some interest on the part of the Soviet Union in possibly using the air fields in Surinam for reconnaissance flights. That situation became very involved. Internally, in the U.S., as 1982 proceeded, William Clark went from the State Department, where he had been the Deputy Secretary of State, to the White House as the National Security Adviser. Robert McFarland, who had been the Counselor of the Department of State, then moved over to the NSC (National Security Council) as deputy to William Clark. He eventually took over from Clark as National Security Adviser.

During this period 1981-1983 Tom Enders gradually came to the conclusion - I am not sure whether he ever had any other view - that the Contras were not going to be the answer in Nicaragua or in Central America. He sought to promote what we called a two track policy. That is, let's go back and talk to the Sandinistas and see if we can make progress in that way. At the same time, we will keep the pressure on by continuing to support the contras. That, and a number of other things, soured Enders' relations with the NSC and the White House. So he was eased out of ARA, and Langhorne “Tony” Motley replaced him.

Tony Motley is a Republican from Alaska. He is a Brazilian by birth and had to give up his Brazilian citizenship to be President Reagan's Ambassador to Brazil from 1981 to 1983. Then he replaced Enders. Motley was Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs for a couple of years. He, in turn, was replaced by Elliot Abrams. I left ARA shortly after that. This was all in the space of roughly four years.

A lot happened during that period of time, and I guess that we neeto structure this period accordingly.

Q: Yes. Let's consider this period in several slices. Perhaps this is not the best thing to start with, but the Central American situation covers so many things.

GILLESPIE: Let's start with the more or less definable things. Foexample, the Falklands/ Malvinas crisis and U.S. involvement in that.

Q: Before you do that, I wonder if you could describe Tom Enders a bit. The picture I have of Tom Enders from other interviews - I've never met the man - is that he comes across as very forceful and very strong. However, from other people who have dealt with him, he gave the impression of being quite arrogant. You are giving quite a different picture of him as a man of force and so forth but who allowed his staff to play around with ideas, rather than a know it all who says, “This is what we'll do,” who sits there in his office, brooding and brilliant, and then comes out and tells you what to do. Could you describe him in a little more detail?

GILLESPIE: Yes. I'll try to do that. It's particularly timely. Tom is on his deathbed right now, today, in New York, in his Park Avenue apartment. I spoke on Friday to Gaetana, Tom Enders' wife. He has metastacizing melanoma. This has developed in the past three weeks. The basic melanoma was surgically removed five years ago, and the doctors thought that it was in remission. And so it was, but now it has come back. It's pretty poignant because this man ended up playing a tremendous role in my own professional development and in my career. Without Tom Enders' having hired me, in effect, in 1981, my whole career trajectory would have been dramatically different. At least, it wouldn't have been what it's been since then. I feel very much indebted to Tom because he had let subordinates take action and was very comfortable with this way of doing things.

I should quickly add that I am not close to Tom Enders in a personal way. We are familiar with each other and are friendly, but we are not close friends at all. He is from a different world, as far as I'm concerned, in many ways.

First of all, a quick portrait of the man. He is 6' 5” tall, a husky, big fellow. His deep and frustrated ambition was to be a general in the Army. He did everything that he could to get into West Point U.S. Military Academy but he was regarded as too tall. He exceeded the height standards of the time, and the Army people simply would not allow him to go to West Point. So he ended up going to Yale, where he exceeded all previous, academic standards. He is a very bright guy. He has the apparent arrogance that comes with size. In my view this apparent arrogance also comes with superb intelligence. He has the arrogance that comes with supreme self-confidence.

You made a comment about what he might have done. I'm sure that in any given instance Tom Enders pretty clearly knows what he thinks ought to be done or what he would do under a given set of circumstances. Who knows? Maybe, if a subordinate chose something that was so diametrically opposed to what he thought should be done, Tom would dismiss the subordinate. However, if the subordinate came up with what Tom thought should be done, then the subordinate was allowed to go ahead and do it. Maybe that's the point.

I think that Tom's reputation for arrogance - or something like it - may have been deserved, during his early years in the Foreign Service. Maybe he was arrogant, or that was the attitude that he projected to a lot of people, and that's when his reputation was formed. Tom Enders was not a warm, fuzzy, little pussy cat that you held close to your chest when I knew him. However, at the same time, I was able to be relatively close to Tom and to listen to him.

There was a relatively small group at the apex of the ARA Bureau. There was a triangle of Bosworth, Enders, and myself at the top of ARA, because Ted Briggs left after a while and could not be replaced as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. At this time Enders was still holding out against accepting a Deputy Assistant Secretary designated by Senator Jesse Helms.

At that point Enders picked up a little, bureaucratic trick from Richard Burt, a political appointee serving as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. Rick Burt brought in a very bright fellow with him who had been with him from an earlier period, Richard Haass, who has continued to be active outside the Department of State in the foreign affairs field. Burt made Haass a “Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State.”

During the Falklands/Malvinas crisis we were working closely and sometimes in conflict with the Bureau of European Affairs. One day Enders came into the office and said, “Tony, find out about this position oDeputy to the Assistant Secretary. What is it?” It turned out to be a totally unauthorized and meaningless position in a bureaucratic sense. However, you could put that title on the door. If somebody asked, “What does that guy do?” you could say, “He's Rick Burt's deputy for policy.” People would think that he was a Deputy Assistant Secretary, which he was not. He was a Deputy to the Assistant Secretary. When I found this out, Enders said to me, “Tony, you're now the Deputy to the Assistant Secretary for Policy Operations. That's your new title.”

So late at night Bosworth, Enders, and I would frequently sit around, review what was going on, and discuss whatever the policy should be. Occasionally, people like L. Craig Johnstone or others would join us. In those sessions Tom talked about developing Foreign Service talent. We had a rule that, whenever Enders was out of the country or away from Washington, I had to be available. I could only be away when he was in Washington and not likely to be absent, whatever that meant. Bosworth, who at this point was the only real Deputy Assistant Secretary, was Tom's alter ego. He did a lot of the traveling involved in the job of Assistant Secretary. When he was gone, I basically did what the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary did.

We would talk about the officers who were out in the various Embassies under ARA. We would talk about how one ought to be developing that talent and how it was important to spot good talent among these officers when they were young. We would discuss how

officers were brought along, were provided with mentors, and how Office Directors should be provided with authority to go along with responsibility.

We talked about Mort Abramowitz, who, at that particular point, was under tremendous fire from up on the Hill and, I think, from within the administration. Enders went to the Hill in a really active way and did things to support Abramowitz. I think that they have never been intimate friends but I think that Tom thought that it was important for senior Foreign Service Officers to stick together.

Q: What was Mort Abramowitz doing?

GILLESPIE: It's hard for me now to remember the precise details. However, my recollection is that he was having great trouble with confirmation up on the Hill, for some policy related reason.

Q: Where was he going?

GILLESPIE: It's hard for me to remember. I don't remember exactly. This came up in one of these evening conversations with Enders. We devoted a lot of time to what could be done to support this Foreign Service Officer at this time. So this was not warm and cozy stuff. It was very practical management of human resources, in my view.

Q: You bring up an important point. We're not straying off the course. We're talking about a lot of things which are very important. In looking at ARA, as a regular Foreign Service Officer who has never served there, I've always had the feeling that those who concentrated on ARA had a sort of second class reputation in the Department. Part of it was that they tend to stay in ARA and so don't get out and around. When you think of the crucible of the Middle East, maybe the Far East, or European affairs, which involved sort of life and death issues concerning war or no war, service in these areas seemed to hone the diplomatic skills. In Latin America there were coups d'etat and dictatorships, but service there just didn't seem to turn out the same breed of cat. Enders came from the

same world that I came from, in a way. Did you get the sense that he wondered about ARA?

GILLESPIE: Oh, no. He was trying to find out if there were good people in ARA and to identify the good people who were there, now that they were more or less under his control. He took seriously his responsibilities for supporting the people who worked for him. However, I think that he did it in very practical and cold, analytical terms. These were our personnel resources. We were dealing with Latin America. You need to know something about Latin America. One thing that Tom did was to latch onto a man named Luigi Einaudi and make sure that Luigi became the head of the small, Policy Planning Staff in ARA. Luigi was not a Foreign Service Officer. He had an academic, intellectual background in Latin America.

I was no expert on Latin America. Bosworth was no expert on Latin America. Ted Briggs had some expertise but didn't stay in the ARA front office all of that long. Some of the NSC staff were experts on Latin America, but their views were quite warped, in my view. They were really way out in certain areas. The CIA people with whom we worked were all from the Directorate of Operations.Enders tried to draw on the best people he could. He didn't hesitate to cut out of consideration officers whom he judged to be lacking or wanting in ability. I don't think that, with Tom Enders, you got very many second chances - or more than two chances. Let's put it that way. He wouldn't hesitate to let me know, at a certain point, that he didn't want to see a particular officer in another meeting, if that officer had really shown himself or herself to be incapable. This didn't happen very often, but it happened a couple of times. One of my jobs was to make sure that, for example, the Office Directors knew what was expected of them and that they knew enough of what was on Enders' or Bosworth's minds, as matters developed, so that they wouldn't be blind sided or taken aback at a meeting that was coming up on a particular policy issue. Then, as they got involved in the issue, it was up to them. My job was to make sure that they knew what was going on and to keep everybody aware of which balls were up and in sight.

So with further reference to Enders, he could be cold and very distant. At the same time, as with everybody else, I found out that he had a very fine and sophisticated sense of humor and had another life completely outside the Foreign Service. This had nothing to do with diplomacy. His wife, Gaetana, was very interested in high society matters, and he was interested with her in that. He had a prodigious appetite for work and for activity of all kinds. He would work until 9:30 or 10:00 PM and be getting ready to go home. I would say, “You know, Tom, you were supposed to go to a dinner tonight. Are you going to miss that?” He would say, “No, I'll go now.” He would go to the dinner and show up late or he would go off and play bridge with some group and do his own thing. He was a really serious mountain climber - big, high mountains. That was his main, “fun” type of activity. He had lovely children - all very accomplished and doing well.

I think that his reputation in the Foreign Service was not undeserved but I think that it probably was not based on a complete picture of him. I think that, as he aged, he probably mellowed somewhat. Of course, as you get to know other people, you see sides of them that others haven't seen, and you come away with a slightly different impression. Overall, he was an amazing guy.

It soon became evident that with Bosworth and with me and, to some degree, with Craig Johnstone, we found that we didn't have to finish sentences. Enders was already responding to what we were going to say next. Then we learned that we were doing the same thing to him. (Laughter) I had a number of people come around to me and say, “What the hell were you people doing?” We'd be in a meeting with some different kinds of people. We would say things and not finish sentences. The sentence would run, “Well, we ought to”...and, “Okay, why don't”...and, “All right I'll do it”...and, “You?” “All right fine.”

Q: While we're on this, what was his relationship with Secretary of State Haig? Was Secretary of State Schultz there, too? Then we'll move to the Falklands/Malvinas crisis. That will probably cover it.

GILLESPIE: Okay. I think that Secretary of State Haig trusted Tom and had a lot of confidence in him. As long as Tom was an asset and not a liability, he gave Tom all of the scope that he needed. Tom literally knew how to get to Haig, to get his views to Haig, and to communicate with him directly. Tom had a technique - annoying to many but effective to some - of saying to the Secretary, “Well, you know what I mean, don't you, Mr. Secretary?” And the Secretary would say. “Oh, yes, I understand.” Then Tom would come to us and say, “All right the Secretary has just approved the following actions.” Later, Haig might say, “When did I ever do that?” Tom would reply, “You'll remember, Mr. Secretary, when we met on such and such a date.” Tom would remember the exact date and would say, “Remember, I raised these points with you.” He probably had raised them with the Secretary, but Haig may not have known that he was making a policy decision at that moment. People didn't like that. A lot of that came up during the Falklands/Malvinas crisis. However, Secretary of State Haig left office before Enders did. Haig blew it on other grounds - not Latin America. You will recall, this happened after President Reagan was shot.

So Haig was out and Secretary of State Schultz came in. I think that George Schultz never trusted Tom Enders. Perhaps better said, he never developed the level of confidence in Tom that Haig had had. Schultz was never quite sure where Enders was going to take him, because Enders would and could speak cryptically to the Secretary, whether it was Schultz or Haig, somebody at the White House, or a foreign government leader. If you didn't get his message and didn't ask what he meant, he wasn't going to take a lot of time explaining it to you. I think that Secretary of State Schultz felt that Enders played pretty quick on some of those matters.

Q: Shall we take a break now? I think that it's better to leave a discussion of the Falklands/Malvinas crisis for later on, because it will take some time.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: Okay, so I'll make out a shopping list of topics, because I don't want to forget it. So the next time we want to talk about the Falklands/Malvinas crisis and then the Grenada cum Surinam situations.

GILLESPIE: We need to discuss the financial crisis affecting LatiAmerica before we go into the Grenada situation.

Q: This is the financial crisis of 1982. There are a couple of countries that we want to talk about, including the situation in Chile, drugs, and Mexico in particular, because these are major issues. There may be other matters, also. Then, of course, Central Americ- and I include Cuba in that. So we'll start again with the Falklands/Malvinas crisis.

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Today is May 1, 1996 - May Day. Okay, Tony, since our last conversation Tom Enders died. You saw him shortly before his death and you were a pallbearer at his funeral. You have reflected on Enders, and perhaps we haven't covered all aspects of him. Maybe we could cover it now - about why Secretary of State Haig chose Tom Enders, a non Latin American hand, to be Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of American Republics Affairs.

GILLESPIE: This goes back to and touches on what I think that we did cover briefly. This involved the state of affairs in Latin America and particularly Central America, as the Reagan administration came into office in 1981. Roughly, the situation was that the Sandinistas had taken over in Nicaragua, and a rebellion was pretty much under way and growing in El Salvador. We have already covered the Carter administration and something of its policies toward Nicaragua as I saw them in the mid-1970s. The Carter administration was coming to the conclusion that the situation was indeed negative and that maybe Nicaragua was indeed helping the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front in El Salvador. The Carter administration had been undergoing changes. Pete Vaky had left office as Assistant Secretary of State for American Republics Affairs. Bill Bowdler had taken his place.

Then the Reagan administration came in. There were some people called the Santa Fe Group of academics and pretty far right wing, strongly anti-communist figures. There was a “cleaning out” of ARA, in effect, with competent, career officers told to get out overnight. They were hit hard by all of that. Haig was coming in as Secretary of State. The sense was that he wanted to have a clean start in Latin America.

So Haig chose Tom Enders, although he was a man viewed differently by lots of different people. Enders was perceived to be a very tough diplomat and an able negotiator. His greatest strength was in economics and finance. He had already served as Assistant Secretary of State for Economics and Business Affairs. He was Ambassador to Canada when he was nominated as Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs. I think that he had done a very good job in Canada. His death, even after allowing for the emotion of the moment, reminded me and really reinforced my impression of how much Henry Kissinger had valued Enders when he was National Security Adviser and later Secretary of State. I think that that probably had some influence on Al Haig. So when Haig was looking for someone to serve as Assistant Secretary for ARA, he chose Tom Enders. I think that the reason that Haig chose Enders was to get somebody who was tough. I think that Enders' Republican credentials were very good.

Enders came in. We've already gone into the organization and personnel of ARA, so we don't need to repeat that. He was faced right away with the Central American situation as a major problem throughout most of 1981. He didn't know the region. He was learning it and studying Spanish. He was learning Spanish very quickly, I might add. I don't know whether I've touched on that. He would have a private, Spanish lesson in the morning from 7:00 to 8:00 AM - perhaps three days a week at most. Sometimes, it would only be one or two days. However, within a few weeks he was reading Borges' poetry and Gabriel Garcia Marquez' novels in Spanish and discussing them with the tutor from the FSI. Those of us who spoke a little Spanish could see that he was picking up Spanish in a hurry.

He had to do this because, in late 1981 or early in 1982, we began to get intelligencreports about what the Argentines were thinking about the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. By 1982 and 1983 this was a dispute which had already had a life span of 150 years, since roughly the 1830s. Throughout this period the British have claimed sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, which the Argentines call the Malvinas Islands. The Argentines disputed the British claim. We won't try to go back into the theology of all that.

Q: Actually, the United States had the Falkland Islands for a couple of weeks, didn't we? I think the USS Constitution sailed into the Falklands and in effect we took control of it. Then our naval commander was disavowed by the U.S. government.

GILLESPIE: Anyway, these are godforsaken, windswept rocks about 400 miles off the coast of Argentina in the South Atlantic Ocean. Then there are the South Shetland Islands about 1,000 miles off the Argentine coast which are down there, also, and are claimed by both Great Britain and Argentina.

In any event we started to receive intelligence that something might be going on down there. As Ambassador to Argentina we had Harry Shlaudeman, who was really a pro on Latin American affairs. He had been Assistant Secretary for ARA, he had operated for a number of years as Secretary of State Dean Rusk's Special Assistant, and was accustomed to dealing at high levels and in global terms. However, he really is a Latin Americanist, through and through.

At this point Argentina was governed by a military junta which had taken over the government. There had been some changes at the top of the junta. I think that GeneraGaltieri was the head of the junta at that particular time. He had some really activist people involved with him. If I remember correctly, these included his Air Force and Navy chief.

Q: You were a new boy on the block to this situation. Tom Enders was certainly a new boy. When this issue first came up on the radar, and there obviously had not been anything much up to that point, what were you getting initially from ARA and EUR? Where were we coming from?

GILLESPIE: Let me say that, as the whole Malvinas crisis unfolded, and as we look back on it, you find that U.S. interests were more definable in South America at that time. However, we had some clearly conflicting interests involved. We had a long history, or a public impression of history, interests, and views affecting all of this. Enders was newly in office; Steve Bosworth, his principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, was new; and Ted Briggs was our political Deputy Assistant Secretary and a regional expert. There was no doubt about that. We turned to a number of people in addition to Ambassador Shlaudeman, with whom we were obviously consulting by cable. There was one man who was really important in all of this, because he did provide the historical and policy context. That was Dr. Luigi Einaudi, whom I referred to previously. At that time he was the head of the ARA Policy Planning Staff - its own, internal policy planning staff.

While Argentina and the Falklands Islands were not his specific area of expertise, his knowledge of hemispheric relations, of Argentina more generally, and particularly of political and military affairs in South America were of tremendous value.

Remember that this was a time of transition. There was an NSC National Security Council staff Latin America group, which was pretty far right and pretty firm in its view as to what was important. In their view anti-communism was important, so the military government in Argentina, which was anti-communist, was regarded favorably. Remember the Kirkpatrick model...

Q: Jean Kirkpatrick...

GILLESPIE: Our UN Ambassador at the time. Her position was that a strong, authoritarian friend was better than a totalitarian, communist enemy in office. She felt that democracy was important, but it could follow later on down the road.

In the State Department the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs in 1982, if I remember correctly, was Richard Burt. He was a former New York Times reporter but well plugged into international affairs and particularly political-military matters. I guess that Larry Eagleburger was the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs at that time. Of course, Larry had been Assistant Secretary for European Affairs earlier. During the Carter administration he had been Ambassador to Yugoslavia, taking a break because of his own ideological and political connections. He came back to the Department to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs.

In any event intelligence started to come in about Argentina. Obviously, my recollections are hazy, but it seemed to indicate that something was going on. When you look back at it, this was a very short term crisis, very much compressed in time. It covered the January to June, 1982 time frame.

Q: Wasn't there another factor in here? If I recall, even during the Carter administration, we had used Argentine military advisers in Central America.

GILLESPIE: This became a factor in the way this crisis unfolded and as it defined the different aspects of the U.S. position. Absolutely. Of course, we'll get into this more fully later on.

For their own reasons and because of some U.S. involvement the Argentines had begun training the anti-Sandinista people. They were training Nicaraguan anti-Sandinista fighters in Honduras, before there was ever any use of the words Contra or “freedom fighters.” The Argentines were rather heavily involved in that. That was their strong, anti-communist

stance, and people in the Reagan administration were aware of that. They knew that that was going on. It was one factor which went on the scale as a plus for Argentina.

Obviously, the Falklands/Malvinas conflict was between Argentina and Great Britain. We don't need to go into all of the special relationship which we have with the British.

Q: But I would think that this would be terribly important. Somehow or other what you might call the short term objectives of the Reagan administration began to come up against the very solid relationship with Great Britain. Did EUR and our British interests even weigh in early on during this crisis? Or was this whole matter more or less dismissed by EUR...

GILLESPIE: Until probably in March, 1982, I don't think that anybody that I knew or can recall really recognized that this conflict would involve a major flare-up. Most people thought that this would eventually go back in the box. I think that it was one of those classic cases where we had intelligence about the things that the Argentines were doing. What we in the U.S. really didn't understand were their intentions. How far were the Argentines really willing to go?

We made a number of assumptions. I saw this because, while this was going on, I was dealing with a lot of other subjects involving making sure that things happened when they were supposed to happen. I didn't have a lot of time for reflection, but we just didn't understand the Argentines. We had a sense of what was driving them - a strong sense of sovereignty. However, you have to go back a little and see what had been going on between Argentina and its neighbors, in addition to what Argentina was doing in Central America - which you could almost say was a sideshow. Still, this was important for the Argentines and, as I say, it was given some weight by the U.S.

What really set the Argentines on fire were sovereignty and nationahonor kinds of issues. There was the Beagle Channel dispute...

Q: With Chile, which almost resulted in direct war or somethinapproaching war back in 1978.

GILLESPIE: Eventually, there was a Papal mediation of that dispute. It set all of that to one side by keeping this situation from turning into a war. In this matter Argentina was going to lose what it had set out to gain. So its national honor and sovereignty were basically at risk.

Until 1982 we had received reports - and the British intelligence people had reports - that the Argentines might still be thinking of causing problems with Chile. The Argentine Army, just like the Chilean Army, had a game plan, which involved looking across the Andes Mountains at Chile and saying, “When do we move, how do we move, or, if they move, what do we do?” The Chileans also look at Peru and Bolivia, in addition to looking at Argentina. They have the same questions: “Do we attack them? If they attack us, how do we respond?” This is the way that the military minds work down there.

So that had been going on. As I say, the generareading in Washington in the early part of 1982, as the intelligencreports were received, was that the Argentines were making some noise, but they probably weren't going to do anything. Then, as the situation worsened and it became apparent that in fact they might be thinking of attacking the Falklands, I believe that the reaction in Washington was, “Well, look, if the Argentines really look at the consequences of what they're about to do, and if the British decide that they're not going to take this,” as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said, “surely, reason will prevail, and the Argentines will accept some sort of solution to the problem.” The Washington view was also that the British would accept some solution, because neither side really wanted war. What you got was one of those classic cases where we, and maybe even some people in London, could look at the situation logically and coolly. Maybe in Buenos Aires they thought that they were being logical and cool - but they didn't see the same thing. They didn't see it the same way.

Some people have said that the capacity of the Argentines to misread all of the signs, and to reach all of the wrong conclusions based on the signs that they were seeing, was perfect. They didn't understand the British and what their reaction would be. They didn't understand the United States and what its reaction would be. They didn't understand the United Nations and how it would play. There were just a whole lot of misunderstandings, and yet the Argentines seemed to have a fairly competent diplomatic service. However, they were being ruled by a junta of generals who were not, themselves, totally integrated or cohesive in that sense. So there were a lot of interests at play. Within the State Department we spent long hours in deep and sometimes antagonistic discussions between the Bureau of American Republics Affairs and the Bureau of European Affairs. Over a matter of weeks these discussions moved into the realm of saying, “Look, these guys, the Argentines, may go ahead. If they do, here is the position coming out of London, and we're going to be faced with some really tough decisions.” My sense was that we would probably have to side, eventually, with Britain.

There were strong arguments from within ARA, from our Embassies in Latin America, from our Ambassadors, and from other governments. They said, “Hey, wait a minute, this is a time of real test for the U.S. and its sincerity in terms of relations with Latin America.” We had a fair amount of traffic of this kind coming into the State Department. I remember Luigi Einaudi policy planner in ARA making these kinds of arguments, saying, “We may end up siding with the British, but this could be the cost of doing that.” Not so much as a result of this, because at this point I can't say that I saw all of the arguments, and I certainly can't remember all of the traffic on this subject. Secretary of State Haig decided - and President Reagan approved - to undertake a mediation effort, involving some shuttle diplomacy.

Q: In this equation, within ARA, was Einaudi playing the part of dispassionate analyst or advocate?

GILLESPIE: Einaudi was never dispassionate. He never was without passion, I should say. He was trying to make sure that the Assistant Secretary - whether Enders or Jones,

it probably didn't make any difference - was as aware as Einaudi could make him of what Einaudi thought the different U.S. interests were, as far as the regional context was concerned.

Another officer who ran what amounted to the political and military aspect of things for the Bureau was George Jones, a long-time specialist on Latin American affairs. Just as an aside, George is about to retire, if he has not already done so. He was most recently Ambassador in Guyana and, I think, is up at the U.S. Mission to the UN. You might want to contact George, because he has had extensive experience in Latin American affairs. Anyway, George handled political and military affairs in ARA, and he was well informed. At that particular time people from the Carter administration, such as Bushnell, who had been the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State to Bowdler, and Jim Cheek were sort of on their way out. They were still around. I think that Bob Service, who is now our Ambassador to Paraguay, was the Director of Southern Cone of South America Affairs, which included Argentina.

My recollections are pretty vivid of late night discussions with Service, Einaudi, Briggs, Bosworth, Enders, and others in meetings at the State Department, which involved Assistant Secretary Burt going to Enders' office or Enders going to Burt's office and then the two of them going up to Eagleburger's office to hammer out what the positions ought to be. A fellow named Kim somebody was the Deputy Director of the EUR office involved. There were spurts of activity that I saw, in which people were trying to get Haig's talking points and plans for his mediation effort lined up, including how far to go with the British and how far to go in the direction of Argentina, and how much to take into account what was going on in the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Einaudi was trying to give all of this a strategic sense, which Enders liked. Enders was a strategic, visionary type of guy. He would say, “If we do this now, what's going to happen then, and if we do this now, how does it relate to what we did before?” He was trying to put these things in context.

There were lots of discussions, lots of arguments, some of which werat times rather bitter.

Q: Did Jean Kirkpatrick play a role in this?

GILLESPIE: Jean Kirkpatrick played a role in this. There was a whole “play” that was going on at the United Nations. There were resolutions in the Security Council, you had the non-aligned movement, and you had the Latin American group. All of those people were very much involved. There was Dick Walters, who was, I guess, Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs. Vernon A. Walters is his full name. He was later, or was it earlier, Deputy Director oCentral Intelligence?

Q: Earlier.

GILLESPIE: Earlier. His involvement in Latin America over a period of 20 or 30 years was intense. He had been Military Attache in Brazil in the 1960s, when the Brazilian military took over. He had been closely tied to the Argentine military as a Defense Attache or Army Attache. He really rose to prominence during the Nixon administration. He moved up to the very top, having started out as a colonel or a brigadier general, and then went on to be lieutenant general. He was involved and conducted some of his own diplomacy.

Jean Kirkpatrick was conducting her own diplomacy. She did not take very much direction from Secretary of State Haig or the State Department. She took her directions, if any, from the NSC. I guess that Bill Clark, by that time, had moved from the State Department to the NSC. I think that Bud McFarlane was still Counselor in the State Department. He had not yet moved to the NSC as Clark's deputy. Clark had been the Deputy Secretary of State, but I just don't remember the timing. However, it was important because William Casey was Director of CIA. CIA was, of course, trying to find out what was going on in Argentina. There were lots of questions about the quality of the intelligence coming out of Buenos Aires and other posts there.

So there was a rather dispersed set of actors and decision makers. Haig, being Haig, tried to take charge of the whole thing. Remember, this was about a year after he had said

on the occasion of the attempted assassination of President Regan, “Don't worry, I'm in charge.” In fact, I didn't see this snippet of television myself but you can suppose that there were discussions of his own tenure in the winter and spring of 1982 and whether he had the confidence of Nancy Reagan and President Reagan.

Q: Was there a feeling within ARA that Jean Kirkpatrick was leaning or tilting toward the side of Argentina, as opposed to the British, or not?

GILLESPIE: I had the job of calling and talking to her on at least seven or eight occasions. I think that she was quite realistic. She probably wanted to exercise damage control with the Argentines. I think that there was a belief that, if Argentina could see the light in terms of its own interests, which was the Enders' approach, then they the Argentines would conclude that they had to figure out a way to get to a stand down and get this crisis away from a path to conflict. I think that that, probably, was something that everybody could support.

My own sense was that everyone recognized that if it came to shooting between Britain, on the one hand, and an Argentina led by a military government on the other, in the last analysis the U.S. would not support Argentina in a war. Then the issue would be how much would we remain neutral or support our cousins, the British across the Atlantic Ocean. My recollection is that the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) situation was not a major problem at the time. That was not the major question. This (the major question) was the special relationship with Britain that was involved. The closer ties between President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher were just beginning to develop, but this was a factor.

Jean Kirkpatrick and others were concerned about the anti-communist, military government, our friends, if you will, in Argentina, but not to the extent that it would weigh so heavily and would cause us to act negatively toward Britain. The question was how positively would we support the British.

I think that Enders' job, as he saw it and as I saw what we were trying to do, was that, at a certain point, we should try to help the Haig mediation effort to be successful.

Q: Are we talking about the period after the Argentines put troopinto the Falklands/ Malvinas Islands?

GILLESPIE: They put troops into the islands on about April 1, 1982. We had a brief period in March, 1982, when there were diplomatic efforts under way to try to persuade the Argentines not to take that kind of action. Like most aspects of this crisis, our intelligence on the Argentine landing was last minute intelligence. I think that it was at the end of March that we learned that the Argentines were really going to land some troops in the Falklands/Malvinas Islands. My recollection is that there may have been one or more presidential phone calls. President Reagan actually called GeneraGaltieri in Buenos Aires and urged him not to take this action. However, although an effort was made, nothing came of it. There was a definite move of Argentine troops around April 1, 1982.

At that point the question was how could we either put the cat back in the bag or make sure that no claws are unsheathed and get this issue settled. At that point the idea of a mediation effort came up and, from that point on, we got involved in this effort at shuttle diplomacy.

Q: Was this a matter of Haig jumping in on his own initiative or was it in response to a recommendation from ARA to do it? Do you know the genesis of this effort?

GILLESPIE: I think that this was pretty much ARA saying something along these lines. Haig was quite sympathetic to it because he had seen Henry Kissinger do it when Haig worked for Kissinger in the NSC context. My guess is that Haig saw this proposal as an opportunity that might work and, in any case, shouldn't be passed up, apart from the fact that it was important. Our people in EUR thought that it was important for us to do something, that this was a legitimate role for the United States to play, and that we should

go ahead and play it. So that started the mediation effort, which involved some trips to London and Buenos Aires - not very many, if I remember correctly. Probably three or four trips.

Q: Did you go on any of these trips?

GILLESPIE: No, the arrangement was that if Enders was out of the office, I had to be in the office. During the time that I worked for Tom Enders - or for Tony Motley, really - I only went on specific missions when they wanted me to go. Remember, if you go back a little bit, Enders had been down in Nicaragua in August, 1981. He had met with Ortega. Things seemed to be moving forward there. In November, 1981 - and we'll get around to this later in more detail - there was a major National Security Council decision on what we were going to do about the Sandinistas. That was under way. I'll have to check a calendar to make sure I have a sense of the time line. A major financial crisis was brewing in Latin America, which came to the fore in the spring of 1982 - plus all of the regular things that were going on. My job was to make sure that we didn't lose touch with anything.

I didn't devote all of that much time to this financial crisis. As I said, I talked to Jean Kirkpatrick six or seven times. We'd be sitting there in the office at night. The rest of the day's work would be done, and we were now looking at this issue. Tom Enders would say, “We need to have somebody call David Mulford about the economic situation. Steve, you do that. Ted, you call these other people. Tony, would you call Jean Kirkpatrick and make sure that she's 'on board' with this issue?” I wasn't discussing high policy with our UN representative. I had started off with, “Madame Ambassador,” and pretty soon it was, “Jean, this is Tony. We want to make sure that you are clear about this. Do you have this or that document?” I was not a major policymaker at that particular time.

Q: But you were the fly on the wall.

GILLESPIE: I was the fly on the wall. As I said, there was a lot going on at that particular point. Then Tom Enders would usually cable in to us. I had to do summaries for him when

he was out with Secretary of State Haig, running around, either to London or to Buenos Aires. Then I would get his feedback on what was going on.

Q: What was the mood in ARA as to what you were getting from the Haimissions to Argentina and Great Britain and how was this working out?

GILLESPIE: I think that among the people - particularly the Office Directors and the middle to senior grade people - there was a sense that this whole situation with the Falklands or Malvinas Islands would be bad. This whole episode - forget the U.S. involvement in it - was very, very bad for the Western Hemisphere. It would be very difficult, for the reasons that we've already touched on, for the U.S. to stay totally neutral. If we tilted, the tilt would obviously be in the direction of our British cousins. That would dramatically complicate the situation in the rest of the Western Hemisphere. And it did, as later events showed, although in various capitals, such as Bogota, Colombia and others, people said "We understand what you're doing and why you're doing it. However, we are very sorry because it shows that, when the chips are down, we Latin Americans cannot overcome your Anglo-Saxon connections. There is a limit as to how far we can go to trust you. We disagree with the Galtieri junta in Argentina. We, as democrats, disagree with the fact that the junta exists. We disagree with what they're doing, whatever it is. We think that they're wrong and are making terrible mistakes." However, there is this magic word in Spanish, which translates into solidarity in English. Publicly, and in a proclamatory sense, they felt that they had to show solidarity with Argentina.

Q: Well, it's the same feeling that we had.

GILLESPIE: Yes, on the other side.

Q: When you talk about our British cousins, when the chips are down...

GILLESPIE: It was the flip side of the coin. There were a couple of interesting things about the Argentine situation which, I think, someone should look at seriously. You may recall

that Argentina was a major focal point for the Carter administration in terms of its human rights policy - as were Brazil and other countries. However, in the case of Argentina in particular there was a Foreign Service Officer named F. Allen (”Tex”) Harris, who had been the Human Rights Officer in the Embassy in Buenos Aires. He became rather notorious within Argentina - certainly as far as the government of Argentina was concerned - on that subject at that time.

Over the years and as I've become more experienced in life and in all of these things, I have learned to appreciate that we operate on a set of assumptions about commonalty of interests with other countries, particularly within this hemisphere. I think that these assumptions are flawed, if not mistaken. That is, we assume the existence of commonalty and mutuality. I am not sure that they really exist.

As an aside, I'm doing a paper on trade in the Western Hemisphere. A lot of Americans believe that there is a high degree, if not of dependency, of trade and focus between Argentina, Brazil, and Chile with the U.S. That is simply not the case. In the case of Argentina that has not historically been true. It never was.

Q: It's been Britain...

GILLESPIE: Britain and Europe have been the focus of our trade. We make those assumptions, and they have driven us toward the belief that there is a mutual set of interests with Latin America. Back in the 1960s we pushed the Argentines very hard not to recognize the Castro regime in Cuba and to condemn Cuba. That went against a deeply-grained Argentine principle, yet they went along with our views. What I think that you saw in the ARA Bureau, among people who were experienced operators, was the sense that this was the reality, but we would end up paying a price.

To move ahead a bit, after about June, 1981, or perhaps a month or two later, Luigi Einaudi, began what really was an effort to analyze and to assess the impact of the whole Falklands/Malvinas crisis on our relations in the Western Hemisphere. I don't know where

this study is. I just remember reading it. It passed through me on the way up to Tom Enders. Its main thrust was that this crisis has been very costly to the United States. I think that that study and that judgment reflected the kind of talk and thinking in the corridors and offices of the Bureau of American Republics Affairs.

I think that I mentioned Richard Haass, who is not a career government official but is one of those professional foreign policy experts. He was deputy for policy for Richard Burt, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. People like Dick Haass, Rick Burt, and the people around them, including David Gompert, all recognized that the Falklands/ Malvinas crisis would end up being costly to the United States in a number of different ways. It would probably turn out this way because we were going to try to moderate British behavior. There would be costs there. Certainly, they recognized these costs. It wasn't a matter of convincing them. In Enders' view it was much more a matter of trying to buy as much time as he could and capture as much energy as possible to moderate relations in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere. These were patterns of behavior which were pre-ordained. That meant that we were going to have to do these things. Then, in the final analysis, we ended up providing a lot of help to the British. It was not enormous, but it was substantial help to the British. So all of that just sort of happened.

Q: Well, when Enders came back from these trips to London and BuenoAires with Secretary of State Haig, what was he saying?

GILLESPIE: Usually, he was angry or frustrated, to the extent that he showed any emotions or feelings. He was disappointed that they couldn't break through. He was, of course, a fly on the wall during the trips to London. Then he was the driver on the trips to Buenos Aires. He would comment that the British were very tough and were unwilling to back down to the Argentines at all. Obviously, the British were on a course which they were likely to follow, if the Argentines didn't moderate their behavior. Then Haig and Enders would go to Buenos Aires and talk to the Argentines. My recollection is that Enders would come back and say that the Argentine Foreign Ministry said that they would do this

or that. After he had been back in Washington for a day or two, we would find out that the Argentine military junta had said that they weren't going to do what the Foreign Ministry had said that they were going to do. So the Argentines were sort of playing games with this sort of thing.

Based on my impressions and on what others said later, there was a real misreading of the situation. The Argentines just didn't believe that certain things would happen and that they had much more freedom of movement than, in fact, they had.

Q: I was here in Washington at the time. It seems to me that there was no way that we could have supported Argentina. I'm talking about American public opinion.

GILLESPIE: It's interesting to note that there was some support for Latin America at the time. I think that there was public support for Latin America. There were people who said, “What are the British doing down there in that godforsaken part of the world?” Argentina and all of that is a long way away, and so forth. However, as soon as the situation moved toward a conflict, American public opinion changed. You're absolutely right. I don't think that anybody in the U.S. blamed the British for going to war or for taking military action. However, I think that there was some sympathy for the Argentine claim to the Falkland/ Malvinas Islands. On the Hill, in Congress, if I remember correctly, nobody supported Argentina's case. When you analyze the U.S. interest in the issue, it may have amounted to an effort to keep our relations with the rest of the Western Hemisphere from coming apart, but not much more than that.

Q: What were you getting from the rest of Latin America? At times, when we do something in particular - and I'm talking about the support we had - some governments say, “We're going to have to protest what you're doing, but go ahead. You're doing the right thing, but we can't support you.” I take it that Latin America was really different, or was it?

GILLESPIE: No, Latin America is not different. That is often the case. We would get a message from a Latin American capital saying, “We totally disagree with the Argentines.

We disagree with their position. You know, we encourage resolution of this dispute by peaceful means. However, if you, meaning the United States, step over a particular line, we will vigorously protest that you are doing that." That happened, although my recollection is that initially in the United Nations there was strong support for the peaceful resolution of this dispute. However, the British - and we worked with them - could never get anybody to support the British position. This was because this involved too important a regional matter. My recollection is that the messages that we were getting from other Latin American capitals were publicly very strong and negative against us. In private they said that the Argentines were nuts and that their attack on the Malvinas was nothing but trouble.

We had some ideas, but they are pretty hazy in my mind now. We were going to propose the establishment of some kind of multinational authority in the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. This might have been made up of Canadians, Peruvians, and others in some combination. Remember, Perez De Cuellar, a Peruvian, was the Secretary General of the United Nations. He was involved in trying to get something done. However, this reflects the complicated nature of the region, which is divided into blocs of countries, and the fact that some countries are not going to back off in a given situation.

Q: The British humiliated the Argentines militarily in what was really a shoestring operation. What was the impact of this outcome, from the ARA perspective, on American interests in the area?

GILLESPIE: You mean the military outcome. It is hard for me to describe this, and certainly, at the time, I didn't think much about it. I would say now that Argentine society must have been terribly divided in going into this effort. This was the time when they had gone through their "dirty war." A large number of people had "disappeared" and were probably murdered. The Argentine military government was not popular at all, in that sense. However, it seems to me that everybody rallies to the flag whenever you bring an emotive issue like sovereignty into a dispute, as we saw in the United States when

body bags were coming home from Vietnam. My recollection is that, on one occasion at least, when Secretary Haig and his delegation got down to Buenos Aires, there were huge demonstrations in front of the Presidential Palace in favor of Argentina. I don't know whether people in ARA thought that those demonstrations were stage managed or spontaneous. They could easily have been spontaneous.

First of all, there was a tension between a military government which, in a large sense, was not popular and a nation of individuals who, I think, are basically national thinkers. They consider that Argentina is Argentina, after all. From what I have seen since that time, I think that there has been a very bad morning-after hangover in Argentina. I think that the effect of decisions regarding the Falklands/Malvinas Islands, over which we had no precise control, lingers on. Again, there is a feeling in Argentina about how far they can trust those big guys North of the Equator, i.e.,the United States and Britain, who speak English and not Spanish. This gets down to some of these very basic points. These feelings are emotional, not logical, and not always consistent on either side, but I think that this is what is involved in all of this. It reinforces a train of thought that one sees right now, to some degree, in Buenos Aires, certainly in Brasilia, as well as in other Latin American capitals, that all of this goes to show that the United States leaders in Washington will do “this” and not “that.” Or, they're more likely to do “this” and not “that.”

I guess that the question for me is whether there is clearer thinking in Buenos Aires today about how to interpret what others are doing. Do people in Argentina understand this? Would there be a similar misinterpretation or set of misinterpretations in 1992 or 1996, as opposed to 1982? I would like to think that communications and the process of globalization in Latin America is such that you're less likely to have that same degree of misinterpretation, or insular thinking.

Q: In a way you are dealing, as most bureaus in the State Department do, with the after effects of this crisis, in the sense that that crisis is over.

GILLESPIE: First of all, the war had started, and we could not stop it. There was no way that we could stop the march of events. Our efforts were last minute and, as it turned out, futile. These efforts included a phone call from the President to GeneraGaltieri, a message from our Ambassador in Buenos Aires, and so forth.The Argentine military made their move against the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. We took an extraordinary step, in that we launched our Secretary of State on an effort to put this matter back in the box or, at least, to blunt it. That didn't work at all. However, I don't think that we suffered any long term or particularly short term consequences. Of course, failure is failure, but it was recognized that we had made the effort.

Then there was the conflict phase. At that point our active support for the British became a factor. Whether things would have been different if we had stayed really neutral, I don't know. However, since we did not remain really neutral, which probably was inevitable, this strengthened the arguments of those people in Argentina and Latin America who said that you cannot trust the U.S. when it comes to this or that or, more simply, that you just cannot trust the U.S.

Q: Was there any “rear guard” action by ARA to ensure that the U.S.would stay really neutral on this issue?

GILLESPIE: My recollection is that we prepared standard options papers. They were not very good. We always made the case, listing options in 1, 2, 3 order. I forget which ones we used at the time. One option was very strongly argued. That's where we got into the bureaucratic discussions with the Bureau of European Affairs. Well, these discussions involved which adjective should we use. If we were going to use one adjective, how were we going to make this case? There would be a parenthesis at the bottom of the page, saying, “The ARA Bureau strongly supports this, but the EUR Bureau strongly disagrees” or whatever. We used those formulations. One option which went up to the Secretary of State advocated following true neutrality. It never would have been approved, but the case was made vigorously and argued internally within the State Department. This true

neutrality option was not only presented in the options paper but was also argued with the National Security Council people. The argument was certainly made. When Secretary of State Haig would sit down in the Situation Room, presumably, that true neutrality argument was mentioned but not vigorously.

Q: Well, moving on from that, we probably should talk about the LatiAmerican banking crisis. We're talking about, what, 1982?

GILLESPIE: 1982. I should check on the dates because I do not have a chronology available. However, in any event, what happened was that Mexico basically went bust. Euro-Dollars were circulating at that particular point. Everybody had been borrowing money. Petroleum had been very high-priced, and Mexico was a major petroleum producer. The situation was very similar to the one we saw most recently in 1994. The Mexican peso was over-valued. The Mexican Presidential election was held in 1976, and another election was coming up in 1982.

Q: Every six years?

GILLESPIE: Yes, every six years. Whatever it was, the Mexican peso had been over valued, and Mexican external debt levels were high and at adjustable, not fixed interest rates. This was a tremendous boom time in Mexico. The Mexican middle class had credit cards and was buying things, traveling around the world, and doing all sorts of wonderful things. It all began to come apart in 1982.

Q: In 1981, when you started to work in the ARA Bureau, was thimatter raised from time to time?

GILLESPIE: I can't remember.

Q: There were so many things on your plate.

GILLESPIE: I simply can't remember the degree to which this issue was flagged in 1981 as a potential problem. It doesn't do any good to speculate back on that issue because my memory just isn't complete about the time when Regan was Secretary of the Treasury and Haig was Secretary of State. What was interesting was that David Mulford was the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs.

Mopert was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs. What seemed very natural and normal to me then, although it certainly wasn't true later, was the degree to which the State and Treasury Departments, at the Assistant Secretary level, really worked very hard and closely together. In cooperation with the Federal Reserve and with others they tried to moderate the Mexican financial crisis, although I don't think that there was anything that we could do to end this crisis at all. If I remember correctly, Tom Enders was very concerned about the spread of this crisis to other economies. Of course, it did spread to Argentina and a few other countries. The question was how do you moderate a crisis of this kind?

The key tactical issues which I saw at first hand were how did we make sure that Mexico had enough money, basically overnight, to be able to meet demands tomorrow morning, while we were negotiating with the IMF and others to get them some help. Another issue was how could we prevent the Mexicans from doing something really stupid, which they ended up doing, anyway. They tried to put monetary controls on and tried to do a lot of things which everybody now says were the wrong things. What I saw of this was like some people's conception of a foreign exchange house or a trading floor. Various people involved in the crisis were on the phone all the time talking with other people in London, Paris, New York, and in the State and Treasury Departments, trying to make sure that they stayed on top of the situation, almost on an hour to hour basis. Indeed, in some cases it was minute to minute - to try and keep the fire from spreading. I think that this effort impressed me because I saw a couple of Foreign Service Officers who were really on top of this crisis, in my view. This was really something to see. I knew a little bit about

economics and finance, but not very much. These Foreign Service Officers were moving all the time. That was the key point there.

What we saw from other capitals was a strong sense of interest in what was going on, with people wondering how it was going to affect them. Tom Enders was really trying to ensure that the strings of control were all held together. I think that this was one of the areas which marked him in the minds of some people as vulnerable - trying to do too much, too fast in some of these areas.

Q: How about the banks? As I recall, American banks were heavilinvolved in this. What role did we play?

GILLESPIE: We were trying to make sure that things held together long enough for the banks to be able to take whatever protective action they could. This was a banking crisis. Mexico was not able to make its loan payments. The loan payments were not to the U.S. government - they were to the banks. And these were mainly U.S. banks, which were heavily extended in Latin America and in the Third World generally. This was a case of the U.S. government acting to help U.S. business and banking interests so that they would not suffer a total collapse, in the same way the government bailed out Chrysler. In this case we were not using funds appropriated by Congress. We were trying to get the international financial institutions to try to shore up the situation long enough for the creditor banks to work out their problems with the debtor countries.

Q: From your perspective, what was the response of the Mexicaauthorities at this time?

GILLESPIE: On the one hand, they were desperate and, therefore, wanted whatever assistance they could get. I guess that my impression was that they weren't sure what to do or how to do it. At the same time these same issues of nationalism and sovereignty were very much involved. However, they were not willing to go too far in the direction of getting help, particularly from the United States.

Q: From my perspective, it seems as if the Latin American countries don't like big brother i.e., the U.S., to dominate them too much. However, when the chips are down and they get into trouble, they appear to say, "For God's sake, get us out of this." Was there something of that or not?

GILLESPIE: When they are in extremis, the Latin American countries tend to look for lifesavers wherever they can find them. In this case the Mexican economy was really in trouble. This was a situation where a sovereign country could really have gone belly up. They really could have gone broke and bankrupt.

You have to look at what was driving the U.S. and even at what was driving Tom Enders. I remember conversations with him at the time. These were not deep, extensive, philosophical discussions. However, good heavens, the whole international financial system could come apart if this kind of thing continued. He felt that this was a time when we had to get serious and put the structure back together. Otherwise, if Mexico went bankrupt, which country would be next? So we were making this effort not just for Mexico by any means, and not just for the American banks. Sure, that was a benefit for the banks. However, this system that we had built up since the 1930s, and certainly since World War II, at the Bretton Woods Conference 1944 and other meetings, could have crumbled, and we would have had financial anarchy, if matters went beyond a certain point. At least that was our assumption. I am quite confident that this consideration was driving Tom Enders. Whatever he thought about Mexico and the Mexicans and whatever the Mexicans thought themselves, he saw this consideration as the value and interest which needed to be protected.

So Enders moved in that direction. This is why you could say that there was a real community of interest and views between people in the Treasury and State Departments, the Federal Reserve Board, and elsewhere. There was a feeling that we should all move together. Then it became a tactical question of how do you do it and who moves what and where, and "will the Mexicans do that?" My recollection of the details is not that great. It is

just interesting to note that a young man who was of Enders' generation was brought in by the Mexicans. His name was Jesus Silva Herzog, who is now the Mexican Ambassador to the United States.

Q: How did this whole problem work out, as we saw it?

GILLESPIE: Well, basically, we put the cat back in the bag. The Mexicans did a number of things which you would not want anyone to do today, and at a certain cost to their economy, to their middle class, and to their prosperity associated with it. This was unlike what was done by a country like Chile which was faced with the same kind of crisis, but not nearly on as large a scale. Basically, Chile did some belt tightening, took some bitter medicine, and things like that. Chile tried to pull it all together, mostly with their own efforts.

It's interesting to note that both Mexico and Chile suffered dramatic reductions in real income, inflation, high interest rates, tough times, and other problems. However, Mexico did it in a way that was government controlled. Chile's effort was more market-oriented, although not exclusively so. Probably, that is the basis of or at least an element in Chile's current prosperity. Mexico had to go through some real gyrations to get itself out of its problems, and we still don't know the details of all of those. Mexico didn't build the strong economic base that Chile did.

There were also similar problems in Argentina, Brazil, and in other, debtor countries in Latin America. The only Latin American country which took this tough road was Chile, which was under a military controlled government. However, other military governments certainly did this - in Brazil and elsewhere. These countries, as well as Mexico, have all had to go through rather drastic, reform processes to get on the road that Chile is on.

Q: Let's turn to the Grenada and Surinam crises. They really artied together, along with Cuba.

GILLESPIE: That goes back to the Cuban situation, and it ties into Nicaragua and Central America as well. You may recall that it's hard to divorce these issues from each other. In fact, it's hard for me to figure out in my own mind how we ought to do this.

However, let's start out when Secretary of State Haig came into office in 1981 and said, “We're going to go to the source. We really want to get the Cubans. It's time to zap Fidel Castro. He's been causing trouble.” We had had the Che Guevara problem in Bolivia, there had been revolutions almost everywhere - from Colombia to Argentina to Uruguay, to Chile. The only country which had been sort of immune to this process was Mexico. Mexico had managed to avoid this process by embracing Fidel Castro, to a considerable extent.

So the Republican administration under President Reagan followed the Democratic administration under President Carter. People came into office in our own country from pretty far over to the Right in the political spectrum. There was GeneraAl Haig, who said, “We're going to go to the source.” At least, he thought that that was what he was going to do. I can recall the memoranda with “Going to the Source” on the subject line of these studies. Tom Enders would meet with Secretary Haig and then come back to his office, sit down, and dictate or write or whatever he did. He would ask somebody to draft a program on going to the source.

In an effort to get control of policy and particularly having to do with going to the source and dealing with tough political and military issues Tom Enders had established a group which met regularly. It had lots of different names. I think that when I came into ARA, it was called, “The Restricted Interagency Group.” There was a National Security Council body whose name was changed over the years. There were various kinds of “IGs,” which were “Interagency Groups.” They were usually headed by an Assistant Secretary. Under the National Security Council structure there were “working groups” and other kinds of committees and meetings in the White House where things were done.

So Tom Enders set up the “Restricted Interagency Group.” He told me, “You will be the Executive Secretary. I want you to come to these meetings. I don't want you to say anything. I want you just to listen carefully and take notes so that we can follow up on anything that needs to be done. If people don't want you to take notes and say, 'Tony, don't write that down,' don't write it down - but remember it, and we'll talk about it later!” The RIG included the chief for Latin American affairs on the National Security Council staff, the Assistant Director of the CIA (Central intelligencAgency) for Latin American affairs, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. At that time the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff had no deputy but had an Executive Assistant who was a three-star general or a vice admiral. He attended meetings of the RIG. Including Tom Enders, there were five members of the RIG.

This was the context in which the members of the RIG discussed going to the source in all of its variants and what to do about Central America and the Sandinistas. Eventually, the RIG also discussed the Grenada situation.

The trouble about discussing Grenada now is that that issue came up in 1983. Enders was gone from ARA by then, so maybe, in a chronological sense, it would be better to discuss that later on.

Q: All right. No problem at all.

GILLESPIE: So let's get started on Cuba and why we didn't go to thsource.

Q: Then would you talk about Cuba, what we felt, and so forth?

GILLESPIE: We had this vision which, I think, carried over from the 1970s and maybe from 1961 the time of the Bay of Pigs episode. Remember, there was the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, and other things happened after that. Secretary of State Haig brought with him to the State Department this strong feeling that, “This guy Castro is trouble.” And he was. He was really causing a lot of difficulty in the Western Hemisphere and, of course, he was

the channel for Soviet moves into the region. The Soviets were doing things on their own, but they used Castro a lot. Cuba was a Soviet base. The Soviets had a signals intelligence base established after the Cuban Missile Crisis. There were all kinds of other things going on in Cuba. So Haig came into office with this idea of “Let's see what we can do to knock this guy Castro out.”

One of the things that happened, and I don't know the origin of it, was that the RAND Corporation Research and Development Corporation, a research outfit, had done a couple of interesting studies. One of them considered what it would cost if we got into a military conflict with Cuba. That had not been publicized much. It may even have been a classified study. However, as the RIG looked at the Cuban situation, it saw that the RAND study, plus work that was being done over in the Pentagon, indicated that a military conflict with Cuba would be quite costly. We wouldn't be talking about a few body bags containing soldiers killed in action. We would be talking about several thousand Americans killed in action.

It was interesting to see how that group the RIG, which had a couple of real hard liners in it from the White House, as well as from CIA, managed to express itself in a way that said to Secretary Haig, “Let's find another way to go to the source”. William J. Casey, the Director of the Central intelligencAgency, really wanted to go forward with some kind of action against Cuba. However, Casey's professional intelligence operator recognized the problem. He concluded that if we pushed an anti-Castro move in one of several directions, it could really result in major difficulty in terms of what it would cost.

I certainly didn't recognize this at the time, but maybe now I would say that, maybe, the Vietnam Syndrome was at work on the military side. The CIA was saying that it had been burned badly during the Bay of Pigs episode 1961, and “Let's be careful how we do this.”

So what we had was not a timorous, tepid reaction to “going to the source”. Enders was the right guy to say, “All right let's really look at this.” I recall that Jim Michael, who was the

“war and peace” officer in the Office of the Legal Adviser in the State Department, was not a member of the RIG but was an important participant in its discussions from time to time. Every now and then, when we would carry a discussion to a certain point, Tom Enders would say, “Tony, have Jim Michael come to the first part of the next meeting, and we'll discuss with him what we have just discussed here. We will see how we come out on the 'war and peace' aspect.”

The RIG came up with the argument that going to the source, as it worked out, turned on who were Castro's surrogates and how could we get at those surrogates, in addition to whatever other problems they presented. In my mind that was the way that we definitely got involved with the Sandinistas and the FMLN Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador because the view was that Fidel Castro was very much behind these people and very hard at work, supporting them ideologically and materially. That led us into the involvement in Central America. One little vignette of the Cuban situation is the Mariel boat lift which took place in 1980, when Fidel Castro opened his jails. It was near the end of the Carter administration. He opened his jails and mental institutions and basically gave the Cubans leave to leave Cuba. There was a flotilla of boats that went over to Cuba from Florida and brought a lot of these Cubans into the United States. By 1981 or 1982 the Immigration and Naturalization Service had sorted those people out, and they learned that there were some really bad actors among them, including killers and mentally deranged people. We had federal penal institutions in Arkansas, Georgia, I think in Louisiana, and maybe in one or two other places with hundreds and in some cases, a thousand or more Cubans incarcerated in the U.S.

I think that about 100,000 people had come out of Cuba during the Mariel boat lift. Some 95,000 of them had been absorbed or were being absorbed, but some of the Marielitos, as they were called, were in prison and couldn't be released. They were dangerous to themselves and to others. Some of them were kept in solitary confinement.

I remember vividly a discussion which took one full meeting of the RIG and part of another. I was present, and there was discussion of a possible way of making Al Haig feel good, if we could figure out a way of taking these prisoners and dumping them back into Cuba. What was discussed was fascinating. In San Francisco Bay, in northern California, there was a number of old Liberty cargo ships, vessels used during World War II to carry goods back and forth. The idea would be to take enough of those vessels, deploy them to a port somewhere along the Gulf of Mexico, and install metal benches on the decks which would hold as many people as possible. There would be CIA hired or recruited crews to operate the ships. In the dead of night we would seek court orders through the Attorney General, take these Cubans out of the federal prisons, bus them, truck them, or fly them, in chains, to the ships, and put them aboard. Actually, they would be shackled to the benches. There would be an automatic machine to open the shackles at a certain moment to release all of them. The Liberty ships would then leave the U.S. port, go to Varadero Beach on the North Coast of Cuba, in Matanzas Province and be steered toward the beach, on automatic pilot. The crews would then be lifted off by helicopters at the last moment. Then, lo and behold, the ships would hit the beach, and all of these criminal and insane Marielitos would be back in Cuba.

This subject was discussed in this kind of detail by grown men who, at the time, were considered senior executives and who literally went through this exercise. There were staff people - not in the State Department but in other Departments in the government who really studied how this might be done. LaughteWhen Jim Michael was brought into this discussion, he listened, and then walked out of the meeting. He grabbed me and took me into my office. He closed the door and said, “Did we really hear what we just heard?” I said, “Yes,” and a memorandum on this proposal was prepared. It did not go into details, but it basically said to Secretary Haig, “We have considered a number of options for dealing with Fidel Castro, although their feasibility is probably doubtful.” It was one of those things that I can never forget.

It was amazing that generals and senior executives of the intelligence community, the State Department, and the White House discussed this matter. They considered how many people you would need to have in the crews of these ships. This kind of subject came up later in connection with Grenada and Surinam. It is remarkable to see what resources the U.S. government has to look at ideas of this kind and reject, perhaps, 99.7% of them. But we did it.

Q: At this time - and we're still talking about the time that Tom Enders was Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs - how did we view Castro? Was Castro his own man? Was he a Soviet loose cannon, or what was he?

GILLESPIE: Everybody has his own ideas about this. However, as I saw it, as we sat around and talked about this matter, I think that Tom Enders' view was that Fidel Castro was probably his own man. However, the Cuban economy was unlikely to go very far without the heavy infusion of outside resources because of the way it is managed. All that Cuba has is some nickel ore, some sugar, and a few things like that. They have made a tremendous, social investment in health, education, and other things. These are not inherently bad things, but they are very costly. Cuba was involved in adventurous activities in other parts of the world. Cuba has a huge military establishment.

The support Cuba received from the Soviet Union didn't come free of charge, as we have seen in the case of Nicaragua. The Russians are going to forgive, I think, several billion dollars' worth of debt the Nicaraguans owed to the former Soviet Union, and Russia is the successor state to the Soviet Union for goods transferred to Nicaragua during the time of their close association with Nicaragua. As we have seen since the downfall of the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, Soviet assistance to Cuba was measured in millions of dollars of assistance provided each day. Soviet assistance to Cuba per capita approached, if it didn't exceed, U.S. assistance to Israel, with a far less capable team at the other end taking this assistance and doing something with it.

We can get involved in almost theological discussions of this subject, but the generaview of Castro, within the U.S. government, was that this guy was a menace in his own right. He was not a puppet dangled at the end of Soviet strings, but he certainly could not function in the way he did without a lot of Soviet help.

There was one effort made to deal with Castro. Secretary of State Haig met with a Vice President of Cuba. This was a person who was nominally a Vice President of Cuba, which surprised everybody. I think that this visit was arranged with the help of the Mexicans - particularly Jorge Castaneda, the Mexican Foreign Minister and a kind of sleazy, not very helpful guy. The Cuban was named Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. In any case, Haig met with this Vice President of Cuba. It was a very unsatisfactory meeting.

The overall judgement was that the Cubans are Cubans, and they do what they do. They didn't ask for permission from the Soviets at this time, but they let the Soviets know what they were doing. There was a lot of discussion and collaboration. I think that even the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 showed that Khrushchev was able to make all of the decisions involving the Soviet Union and what they were going to do. However, Castro did not go along with everything that Khrushchev did and presented problems in that regard. So I think that that was the view of Fidel Castro and the Cubans within the U.S. government at this time.

Q: You mentioned Secretary Haig's meeting with the Cuban Vice President. Were we thinking or ever proposed doing what we were doing over the long term in Poland. In other words, if you snuggled up close enough to those people and inundated them with goods, eventually things would start...

GILLESPIE: Remember that President Carter had established a kind of relationship with Cuba on the basis of the U.S. Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in Havana. The “U.S. Interests Section” is a term of art as opposed to a “U.S. Embassy.” Peter Tarnoff now Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs in the State Department had worked very

diligently on that and did a lot of the negotiation and legwork. I think that that action, which had been ill received by most of the Republicans and certainly by U.S. right wing groups, was nothing that would have crossed the mind of Secretary of State Al Haig, National Security Adviser Bill Clark, President Ronald Reagan, or the people around them. In practical terms I don't think that Tom Enders would have said, “Let's pursue that.” Enders was too much a pragmatic, foreign affairs practitioner or professional, in addition to being a diplomatist, to consider doing that. He was a foreign affairs manager. He would say, “No. That's not in the cards for the Reagan administration, even if it were desirable.”

Of course, he was “Two Track Tom,” when it came to negotiating with the Sandinistas. He felt that it wasn't a good idea to freeze the Sandinistas out. However, I think that in the case of Fidel Castro, 20 years after the break in diplomatic relations in 1961 and with an embargo in place and other restrictions in force, we couldn't seriously consider improving relations with Castro.

Q: We're still talking about the period when Tom Enders was Assistant Secretary for ARA and we'll use that as our benchmark. Regarding the Cuban-Americans, were they a factor?

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. One of the reasons that we got into the personnel pickle that we had was that, as I previously mentioned, we had an ongoing battle with Senator Jesse Helms, a Republican from North Carolina, over the staffing of the ARA Bureau and its front office. John Carbo, whose name I think I already mentioned, was a prot#g# of Senator Jesse Helms. Helms wanted to put him into the front office of ARA. The Cuban-American National Foundation, headed by a man named Jorge Mas Canosa, wanted to have a man whose last name is Casanova as Deputy Assistant Secretary for ARA and would rather have had him as Assistant Secretary, in preference to Tom Enders. I can't think of his first name now. It may be Jose Manuel, or something like that. Instead, Casanova became the Executive Director of the Inter American Development Bank. Helms and his supporters wanted very much to have a hand in the development oU.S. policy toward Latin America. Throughout this time, running the Office of Cuban Affairs in the State Department was a

career Foreign Service Officer named Myles Frechette, who is now our Ambassador to Colombia. Myles was under intense pressure from the Cuban Americans on anything to do with the Cubans and the Cuban involvement in Central America.

At this particular time of transition from the Carter to the Reagan administrations we had as the chief of the U.S. Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in Havana a man named Wayne Smith, a career Foreign Service Officer. In a not unrelated fashion we had Robert White as Ambassador to El Salvador and Frank McNeil as Ambassador to Costa Rica. Larry Pezzulo was Ambassador to Nicaragua. These were all Carter administration, career Foreign Service Officer appointees.

Wayne Smith believed that a continuation and reinforcement of the Carter direction was the proper policy approach toward Cuba and debated by cable from Havana and during a visit or two to Washington with Tom Enders whether that was not the proper course to follow. As I indicated, whatever his feelings were, Tom's analysis was, “Wayne, you are barking up the wrong tree. There is no way that this is going to happen.” Wayne then took it upon himself to retire from the Foreign Service but said that he was doing so because of differences over policy toward Cuba. He received his full pension and then began publicly to follow a path which he has consistently followed and which has fitted in with his reporting from Havana. He said that he thought we would be better off using sugar in our relations with Cuba than caustic soda.

That angered and excited the Cuban-American community. They would have preferred to have Enders march Smith in front of the C St. entrance to the State Department, cut off his buttons, or whatever diplomats do, and drum him out of the corps. They felt that Smith should have been fired.

In El Salvador Ambassador Bob White eventually resigned because he saw that Secretary of State Haig wasn't doing anything about the murders of the four American nuns and the situation there. Pezzulo and McNeil came back to the Department.

In any event the Cuban-Americans have been, and continue to be, a substantial influence or force, if you will, on the State Department and the policy apparatus in the U.S. government on the Hill or in the executive branch, if not always to its satisfaction. So they are deeply involved in all of this.

From his position as Executive Director of the Inter American Development Bank, Casanova tried to influence policy. The trouble is that he was up against two hot shot professional and well connected Foreign Service Officers who were also economists, Enders and Bosworth. They didn't need Casanova very much. He wasn't invited to meetings and became upset. I had to hold his hand at times and set up meetings to which he could come and talk to people and do things. The idea was to keep him happy. We didn't want him out there dissatisfied with the situation, because these guys can really cause you grief, one way or another. So Tom Enders had to be very careful about how he managed relations with the Cuban-Americans.Eventually, the right wing group got Frechette. You can't be the Director of the Office of Cuban Affairs and survive very easily, no matter what you do. Of course, Frechette didn't do anything that was going to antagonize the Cuban Americans. Tom Enders protected him to the extent he could, but he really couldn't do this forever. So Tom tried to appoint Frechette as Deputy Assistant Secretary. There wasn't a chance of having him confirmed in this position. Then he tried to get him an Embassy in Latin America. “Impossible,” the Cuban Americans said. Finally, Myles went off as Ambassador to Cameroon. He wasn't as badly tainted as Jim Cheek was. Cheek's problem was with Senator Helms, not with the Cuban Americans.

So the Cuban Americans are always with us in Latin American policy. Whatever their situation today, at the outset of the Reagan administration these people were making $10,000 contributions to the Eagles Fund, or Eagles Forum, or whatever it was called. The Cuban Americans had a lot of clout in the White House.

As I reflect on that, the fact that Tom Enders was able to stave off their penetration of U.S. Latin American policy to the extent that he did was really quite remarkable. However, he did.

Q: Okay. What we will do next time is to continue with the ToEnders era in Latin American affairs.

GILLESPIE: That will finish it.

Q: We will consider the situation in Central America and then go into the Grenada and Surinam situation. At some point we will want to look at how we viewed the situations in Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, at the different times that you were there.

***Today is May 21, 1996. Tony, let's talk about the Tom Enders period and Central America. Some of this may be duplication, but could you give me some idea of how Tom Enders and some of his staff looked at the situation in Central America? Particularly if there was any difference in the way the White House was looking at this situation.

GILLESPIE: When I came on the scene in ARA in June, 1981, the headline item in the media was the discovery of the bodies of four American nuns who had been killed in El Salvador. That had already happened, but my recollection is that this is what really seemed to push the Central American ball initially. This incident had the press play. It had all of the attention, really. Secretary of State Haig was questioned about this and came up with answers which were sort of temporizing, to put the best light on it and were equivocal, if you want to put another light on it. He said that maybe they had been murdered by the guerrillas or by other, unnamed bad guys. However, a lot of people were pretty firmly convinced that they were probably murdered by government security forces in El Salvador.

Q: Who were supposedly on our side.

GILLESPIE: Well, remember that in 1981 Secretary Hague's view was that we were going to go to the source. We were going to get Cuba. The line being used with the media and the available intelligence indicated a strong Cuban involvement in Central America, in both Nicaragua and El Salvador. So we had already begun to line ourselves up, even during the Carter administration, with the established government in El Salvador, which at that time was controlled by the military. This government in El Salvador was already under threat from the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the FMLN. According to all of the available intelligence, the FMLN was getting intellectual, moral, and physical support from Cuba. By 1981 a lot of that support was flowing througNicaragua, because the Sandinistas had taken over there.

What Tom Enders was faced with almost right away was that the situation in Central America was really a mess. There was the murder of the nuns, which had attracted a lot of press play - particularly because this involved the killing of four American citizens. At that point a lot of journalists from the U.S. - not that they weren't experienced or were new to the profession - had moved into Central America. The bodies of the four nuns had been discovered under very gruesome circumstances. So that was a driving factor in the situation.

The Ambassador, Bob White, was a career Foreign Service Officer with long experience in Latin America in general and Central America in particular. He had been the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) in Nicaragua years before. He had served in Paraguay during the period of the authoritarian Stroessner regime. Then and now he was a committed democrat, with a small “d.” He was faced with the issue of what you do when four of your fellow citizens have been murdered. He was the Ambassador. I think that he was being as careful as he could be not to leap to conclusions in public. However, I think that increasingly, and this is my supposition, he was frustrated by what he saw coming out of Washington, including statements by Secretary of State Haig. Jean Kirkpatrick, our Ambassador to the UN, was

also saying, “Well, blood is spilled in wars,” and she called into question a lot of different things. She was expressing her very hard line. So El Salvador was the initial hot spot.

Then, as I say, we looked at the Cuba issue. I think that Tom Enders and eventually Secretary Haig decided that we could not go very far in dealing with Cuba. It was a choice between keeping things at a relatively low level or going all out. If we went all out, we were probably talking about war in a true sense. It would have been much more than the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. It would be open warfare and U.S. troops on the ground. The RAND Corporation which I referred to previously had done some studies and predicted casualty rates which were up in the tens of thousands if the U.S. attempted to invade and then occupy Cuba. The conclusion was that if you really want to go that way, this is what we would have to do.

So Tom Enders and others looked at all of this, including the movement of arms to El Salvador. I saw it as sort of the chief of staff in ARA. My job was to figure out what the course of action should be. What should we be doing? What should our strategy be? I am not giving the subject full justice because of its complexity, but in a nutshell what Tom Enders concluded was that we should take the war to Nicaragua, because Nicaragua is the foothold of the bad guys in Central America, if you will. He said, in effect, let's see what we can do to alter that situation. He used warlike terms very consciously. I think that he felt that that was the way to make an impression on Secretary of State Haig, Director of Central intelligencWilliam Casey, National Security Adviser Bill Clark, who was not himself a military man, and Bud McFarlane, Counselor of the State Department and later on the National Security Council staff. I think that Tom Enders felt that we should use a lot of robust language, whatever we were really doing.

Tom Enders had been Assistant Secretary for ARA since March, 1981. If I remember correctly, he was not confirmed in the job until about June, 1981. In August, 1981, Tom went down to Managua, Nicaragua, and met with Daniel and Humberto Ortega, who were the leaders of the Sandinista movement. The two Ortega brothers probably exercised

the real power in Nicaragua. However, the Nicaraguan scene was somewhat confused because there was a kind of coalition group at the top of the government.

There was confusion in one sense, in that the Sandinistas, who were under a lot of international pressure, very wisely had agreed to the establishment of a junta or commission type of government, which included people like Violeta Chamorro, the widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the newspaper publisher who had been assassinated in 1978 during the period of the Somoza regime. Also involved in the junta was Alfonso Robelo, a businessman who had become engaged in what was called the Group of 12, an exile group of Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica. This group had struggled for change in Nicaragua. So Robelo and Chamorro were among the members of this governing junta. However, Tom Enders very wisely saw that the real power lay with the Sandinistas. In the Sandinista context there was nothing more important than the two Ortega brothers, Daniel and Humberto.

Daniel Ortega was sort of the political leader of the Sandinistas and eventually became the President of Nicaragua. His brother, Humberto Ortega, had become the military and defense chief of the Sandinistas.

Q: This sounds a little like the situation in Cuba, where Fidel Castro is the political leader and Raul Castro is the military and defense chief.

GILLESPIE: I guess that that is true, although it may not have beeconsciously copied in this way. You could make that comparison.

Tom Enders had said that we were going to take the war to Nicaragua. He saw that Nicaragua was the place where the metastasis, i.e., the spread of the cancer of the Sandinista revolution, to use a medical metaphor, was occurring. He felt that this was the place where bad things could happen and affect others. So he said, “Let's figure out what

we do about Nicaragua." As I said before, we already had intelligencreporting that arms were moving through Nicaragua, headed toward El Salvador. So he went in that direction.

When he went to Nicaragua in August, 1981, he traveled by himself and took no one from Washington. Our Ambassador there, Larry Pezzulo, a very capable, career Foreign Service Officer, had been appointed to Nicaragua by President Carter. Obviously, Ambassador Pezzulo had come to his own conclusions about how things might go. Both the Carter administration and, initially, the Reagan administration had not ruled out the possibility of trying to deal with the Sandinistas on some basis. Tom Enders went to Nicaragua and really pushed on that line.

He did this in Enders' own style. Remember that he was the antithesis of a Latin American romantic, in the sense of emotion and thought. Someone may have mentioned that he seemed to be the ultimate WASP. So Enders' ability to deal cross-culturally was something that intrigued me. I had served in the Western Hemisphere for a number of years but was by no means an expert on this area. As I mentioned, Tom Enders decided that he would learn Spanish. That meant that a Spanish tutor from the Foreign Service Institute came to his office at 7:00 AM on at least two or three mornings a week. In those days, unlike some of the things that have developed since then, the Secretaries of State did not have daily, morning meetings with other senior, Seventh Floor officials. He devoted nearly an hour to his Spanish class when he could meet with the tutor. Enders spoke French and Italian and so was not unfamiliar with Romance languages.

To come back to my point, you kind of looked at Enders and thought that here was this cold, hard guy. Can he deal crossculturally? Certainly, he presented a very tough, negotiating front to the Sandinistas and to the Ortega brothers. What he was saying, basically, was, "We can probably figure out a way to work through some of our problems." However, he couched it and reported it to Washington in tougher terms. That was an admired virtue in the early years of the Reagan administration, you can be sure. Secretary

of State Al Haig liked toughness. This was probably one of the reasons that he chose Tom Enders to be Assistant Secretary for ARA.

In any event Tom Enders went down to Nicaragua in August, 1981, and made his pitch to the Sandinistas. That generated a flurry of activity in the ARA Bureau which was then coordinated through what I described earlier as the Restricted Interagency Group, or RIG, which met at least once a week. The other members of the RIG were watching very carefully how Enders, the State Department, and the Foreign Service would play this game. There was always talk about the Foreign Service engaging in preemptive capitulation through negotiations.

Q: It sounds as if this term came from right wing academicians.

GILLESPIE: Oh, yes, people like Roger Fontaine and Constantine Menges, who at that point was over at the CIA (Central intelligencAgency) as a National intelligencOfficer. Roger Fontaine was on the NSC (National Security Council) staff. There was also a man named Lewis Tambs, who was waiting to go to Colombia as Ambassador. It was an interesting group of people. I heard more global conspiracy theories from these guys than I ever want to hear. As people they were all right but they really felt that they had the answer to world problems.

Tom Enders had brought into the ARA Bureau a young fellow who was actually younger than I. He was a bright, bright officer, named L. Craig Johnstone. He was appointed Director of the Office of Central American Affairs. Craig's personality well matched that of Enders. He was not a mirror image or clone of Enders. I later learned that Craig had studied mathematics in college and was a whizz at it. He was probably the first, computer-literate Foreign Service Officer I met. We played around with computers later on in the ARA office when Tony Motley came in as Assistant Secretary to replace Tom Enders. Craig had previously acted very independently in Vietnam, particularly toward the end of the Vietnam era. He had served in the Phoenix program which targeted Viet Cong

cadre for recruitment or, in some cases, for assassination. He had been very concerned about Vietnamese who had been loyal to their country and to the U.S. He'd gone back to Vietnam on his own and tried to help people get out of the country.

He was a very committed and very bright officer who was able to take Enders' short hand guidance, like, “I think that we ought to push on this or that.” Enders didn't have to say a whole lot more for Johnstone to say, for example, “Well, I think that we ought to push on the Honduras angle on how these arms are moving to El Salvador, and let's see what we can do.” Craig would take that and come back with a strategic approach, a new tactic that would take that into account. He tried diligently to see how we could take the Enders' overtures to the Sandinistas, as we saw them, and move them forward. In other words what kinds of conditions to look for in reaching, if not an accommodation, certainly a kind of modus vivendi with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. His objective was to develop programs which would be acceptable to the Sandinistas and to the Reagan administration and the right wing in the United States, if that wasn't an impossibility from the outset.

They really struggled with that effort - long hours, late nights, lots of discussion. It was done very diligently. At the same time we had the incontrovertible evidence, which I referred to several times before, of the arms shipments to the leftists in El Salvador, through Nicaragua. There was a military buildup in Nicaragua of the Sandinistas' own forces, such as the Ejercito Popular Sandinista, or the Popular Sandinista Army. By the way, this was a Sandinista party army, in addition to the Nicaraguan national army.

Q: Sandino after whom the Sandinistas were named was a 19th centurlocal hero of Nicaragua.

GILLESPIE: Yes. He had been involved in internal, civil wars and conflicts. Both he, his role, and his positions are perhaps even more controversial now than they were during

his lifetime. He was regarded as an early liberationist revolutionary against the right ring in Nicaragua. In any event the Sandinistas had their own army.

The Russians - the Soviets in this case - were really pumping in military equipment. It was not given away. It turned out that it was all military assistance. As in the case of our own programs, this was called “foreign military sales” or loans. None of it was free. We saw this while it was going on but later focused on the fact that the Nicaraguan government run by the Sandinistas was, in fact, building up a tremendous debt to the USSR, Cuba, and other communist countries, with all of this military equipment coming in. However, one of the reasons for the concerns occupying our minds in the 1981-1982 time frame - that is, when Haig was Secretary of State, if you will - was the introduction of advanced weapons systems into Central America.

Q: Meaning?

GILLESPIE: MiG fighter aircraft which had been the mainstay of the Soviet Union's Air Force. There are various models of MiGs. This not only became the watchword but the item which we were all very concerned about. Our intelligence, and it was very good, was telling us that there were plans to give MiGs to Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Sandinista troops and pilots had gone to the Soviet Union to learn to fly these aircraft. We were tracking their training schedules. At a certain point Secretary of State Haig made his concern over this development absolutely clear, not only to the Sandinistas but to the Soviet Union and to the Cubans.

I think that I mentioned earlier a meeting between Haig and the Vice President of Cuba, which took place in Mexico, in an effort to try to move things along. It was the first time that I thought through what a diplomatic term meant. We had discussions which I sat in on and where I occasionally got to throw my two cents' worth in, both within ARA and with some of the people on the Seventh Floor i.e., the senior levels of the State Department, the NSC, and others. We discussed what term the Secretary of State should use about the

introduction of these MiG aircraft into Nicaragua. Before we decided what term to use, we had to decide what our response was going to be. We looked at our response capabilities. They included what would be called, in today's terms, stand-off air attacks with precision weapons, sabotage on the ground using agents in place, and out and out air attacks by U.S. or friendly air forces.

Q: By “stand off attacks” you mean rockets.

GILLESPIE: Yes, rockets fired from a distance. There was intense discussion of what should we do when and if MiGs appear on the airstrips in Nicaragua. Our intelligencreports showed us graphically, in photographs, how the government in Nicaragua was building a new airstrip in a place where they already had a commercial airfield. However, the new airstrip was not in a place where it would be very convenient for commercial purposes. It was clearly a military airfield with a big, long runway, and they were going to build revetments, shelters for aircraft. All of the indications were that the Sandinistas intended to bring this high tech equipment in. We felt that that would dramatically change the balance of power within the region of Central America. This was considered a bad thing, and we had to stop it. To make a long story short, we concluded that we had the capability, using an AC-130 gunship or something like that to fly overhead at 10,000 feet or higher. The minute one of these MiG aircraft appeared on the ground, we would blow it up.

It was interesting to me because at the time we had such good intelligence. We knew when airplane fuselages were crated for shipment and were being loaded on vessels in Soviet Union ports, in Murmansk or other places. We could track those ships. They would go to Cuba. The question was what will they do there? Will they assemble the aircraft and fly them to Nicaragua and have bright young, Nicaraguan Sandinista pilots with scarves flying them, have them hop out of these aircraft after they land? Or will they put these aircraft on another ship, send that same ship to an East Coast port in Nicaragua. They used what they called “roll on, roll off” vessels. It looked as if it would be hard for that to be

done at an East Coast Nicaraguan port. There were other ways to do this. The question was, where should we apply the pressure?

The upshot was, to go back to the diplomatic word, “unacceptable.” That is, the introduction of advanced, fighter aircraft or weapons systems into Central America by the Soviet Union and given to the Sandinistas would be unacceptable, and this word was underscored. The question might be asked, “Well, what does that mean, Mr. Secretary?” The reply would be, “It means exactly what it says. We will not tolerate it.” The next question might be, “Well, what does that mean?” The answer would be, “You figure that out.” That was the diplomatic term of art. Backstopping that kind of consideration was what I thought was a very thorough look at what we were really prepared to do and whether we were prepared to do it before we used that term. Since then I have looked and listened very carefully to the use of the word, unacceptable because, in my view, it has been depreciated, not only by the Department of State of the 1996 era but the 1992 and 1990 era. Everybody was using this magic term, unacceptable, but I don't know how many people really thought through what that meant. If you depreciate the term, it loses its value and isn't too useful.

At any rate at that point we really looked at what we would do. My guess is that, had those MiG aircraft really shown up, we either would have used an AC-130 gunship to blow them away or we would have done something else. Eventually, we might even have flown F-15 or other kinds of fighter-bomber aircraft overhead, such as F-111 bombers, as we eventually did in Libya, and tried to blow them up. The mood was that we just would not tolerate the introduction of MiG aircraft into Nicaragua.

Q: To follow through on this, the MiG aircraft didn't...

GILLESPIE: Never showed up. The Nicaraguan pilots completed their training, but the planes never showed up. They took us very seriously. I think that everybody, including the Soviet Union, Castro and the Cubans, and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua took us seriously.

It was probably a little bit like the relationship between Fidel Castro and the Russians and the Soviet Union. That is, the relationship of the Sandinistas to the Cubans and the Soviet Union. On the one hand, they were highly dependent. On the other hand, they wanted to remain nationalistically independent. The Nicaraguans may not have liked this outcome. They might really have liked to have these aircraft delivered. However, somebody made the decision, “We're not going to test the U.S. resolve on this because they have done this kind of thing elsewhere.”

Nonetheless, Tom Enders and Craig Johnstone, who was his chief lieutenant on this subject, really tried to develop an approach to the Sandinistas which would work.

Simultaneously, discussions were going on within the Reagan administration concerning communist arms shipments through Nicaragua to El Salvador, transiting Honduras.

It turned out that as soon as the Guardia Nacional, National Guard, in Nicaragua which had supported Somoza was defeated or neutralized in 1980, a lot of its members left the country as the Sandinistas took over. Some of them ended up in Honduras. I don't know how the connection was initially established, but a relationship developed between Argentina and former members of the Somocista Guardia Nacional. At one point I thought that it had been initiated by the CIA, but I never tried to research it in detail. To the extent that I learned more about it later, I'm not so sure that the CIA initiated this contact.

In any case Argentina had a military government. It was definitely anti-communist and was definitely feeling its oats as Argentina. This connection with former members of the Somocista Guardia Nacional may have been an Argentine initiative. The result was that there were Argentine military personnel supporting and, to some degree, training these former Guardia Nacional personnel outside Nicaragua with a view to their returning to Nicaragua and taking back the country, or whatever purpose they were supposed to serve. I don't know what the details of that were. However, at a certain point our CIA people

did make contact with that group of former Somocista Guardia Nacional personnel and became directly involved with them.

That is the genesis of what later came to be called the Contra movement. Contra means “against” in Spanish. It was a name that would be applied by any revolutionary group to any counter revolutionary group, contrarrevolucionario being the adjective in Spanish. President Reagan eventually called these people “freedom fighters,” as you recall, but that came later. The initial idea is that we needed to slow down if not stop the flow of arms from Nicaragua through Honduras to El Salvador. One way to do this was to harass or block the arms shipment routes through Nicaragua, and the Contras would be a useful tool to do that. That was the genesis of the Contra movement. At least, it was sold that way within the U.S. government. It was felt that this would be a very limited, insurgency type operation. The Contras would be a harassing force that would make it difficult to move arms shipments through Honduras. We would also try to help the Hondurans in a much more overt effort to stop the flow of arms.

There were several different routes for these arms shipments. Some of them used regular highways, employing trucks, buses, and other kinds of vehicles and means of transportation. There were also air drops of arms from aircraft operating from Nicaraguan soil. Use could also be made of the Gulf of Fonseca, a large gulf on the West Coast of the Central American isthmus. El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have coastlines on the Gulf of Fonseca. This is a fairly large body of water with some islands in the middle of it. The thought was that the Contras might be able to interdict the movement of arms there or at least make it difficult to do that.

The Sandinistas denied that they were making any of these arms shipments. They steadfastly claimed that they were not doing that. Our intelligence showed that they were doing it. To compress things a bit, that was the genesis of the Contra movement. Initially, it was supposed to include a few hundred fighters who were trained and equipped with limited arms and equipment.

The Contras were supposed to operate away from the population centers in Nicaragua. Really, apart from Managua, there were only a few such centers in the northern and northwestern quadrant of Nicaragua. The CIA became actively engaged in helping the Contras. So we received routine reports and held discussions on what the Contras were doing.

Q: Were we at all concerned about whether this activity was legal?I'm not sure what was legal at that time.

GILLESPIE: Well, it was a covert action supported by the legal steps required by U.S. law, practice, and policy at this time, but mainly by the law. The President was required to make a “finding” that this kind of activity was in the national interest, was vital, and was essential. He had to inform the intelligence Oversight Committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate that this was going on. That step was taken. There has been a lot of discussion of questions of timing - who told whom, when, and how much was revealed.

The finding action was a national security question. It was drafted at the CIA. The General Counsel of the CIA at the time, Stanley Sporkin, later became a judge here in the District of Columbia and is still active in that capacity. He was in a crucial position in handling these findings. He spent a lot of time in our offices, discussing and debating how these matters should be worded. I've already identified Jim Michael who, in my mind, was the State Department's “war and peace lawyer” par excellence. He was a lawyer of the first order who was directly involved in this. The finding drafted by the CIA went to the Legal Adviser of the Department of State and lots of other people, too. These documents involved very extensive deliberation and discussion.

If I remember correctly, the finding was finally issued in November, 1981, or sometime around then. It was decided that we would support the Contra movement. It meant that

we were taking democracy to Central America. It involved high ideals, but the idea was to interdict the arms shipments.

Q: The whole thing was done in accordance with the proper procedures.

GILLESPIE: The forms were followed. What later became much clearer, particularly to me, was that it was like our famous story of all those Indians with that big beast called an elephant. They were blindfolded. Each of these Indians touched a piece of this beast and felt something different.

Virtually from the outset, or shortly thereafter, CIA Director William Casey's idea was that there was a cancer in Nicaragua called Sandinismo, and it needed to be excised. We should use any means available to do this. He was a World War II OSS (Office of Strategic Services) officer. His views were certainly shared by political appointees from the right wing in the American political spectrum who were in positions of authority and responsibility under the Reagan administration. At the outset, in my view and the views of my colleagues, including Tom Enders, Craig Johnstone, and others who looked at the situation, there wasn't the slightest possibility that the Sandinistas, through the use of any kind of force or any direct means, could be induced to stop sending arms to El Salvador. This wasn't on. This wasn't going to happen. However, that didn't mean that we had to put up with this situation. We had to find another way to do it.

Eventually, this led to the nickname given to Mr. Enders of “Two Track Tom.” One track involved using whatever means were at our disposal to keep the pressure on the Sandinistas. While the pressure was on, the idea was to see if there wasn't a way to affect the situation so that the Sandinistas would give up, relent, and eventually put themselves in a position where they would be more vulnerable to other kinds of pressure.

Q: When you took over your position in ARA, there were two Ambassadors - Robert White in El Salvador and Larry Pezzulo in Nicaragua. Who was...

GILLESPIE: My recollection was that there had been a political appointee from the Carter administration in Honduras as Ambassador. I haven't gone back to check this but I think that a career Foreign Service Officer named Jack Binns was the DCM to that political appointee Ambassador to Honduras and was the Charge d'Affaires there during this initial period.

Q: During this initial period you obviously had what would have been a very nasty situation under any administration. However, the right ring of the Republican Party in the U.S. was posturing and doing other things. You had these career Ambassadors who were turning out the normal diplomatic analyses and looking after American interests...

GILLESPIE: And dealing with these Central American governments.

Q: Dealing with these governments. How did you regard their efforts? What did you think about what they were doing? Were you trying to protect them? How did this go?

GILLESPIE: I'll try to answer this through the eyes of Tom Enders, as I understood it, because I certainly wasn't making any decisions. I would like to add to the list of people involved. We had Frank McNeill as Ambassador to Costa Rica, another career officer. For the life of me I can't remember who was Ambassador to Guatemala, but I'm pretty sure that he was a career Ambassador.

An immediately difficult situation arose when Ambassador Bob White in El Salvador reached the point where he basically had had enough of the Haig-Kirkpatrick approach to Central America. He basically threw in the towel and said, “To hell with it.” I don't think that he was relieved. I think that I've already mentioned that with regard to Cuba Wayne Smith had resigned and retired from the Foreign Service. Tom Enders was faced with the problem of what to do about appointing a new Ambassador to El Salvador.

Enders made a move which was, in a sense, surprising to some people, in the same way that Secretary of State Haig had chosen Enders to be his Assistant Secretary for

ARA. Tom selected someone who had a very fine reputation for toughness. By the way, Tom identified many of the major problems for all of Central America as being principally economic in nature, whatever the political aspects were. He had already been Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs. He chose Deane Hinton, the then Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, to replace Ambassador White. Deane Hinton had been an AID (Agency for International Development) career person earlier in his career. He had also served as Ambassador elsewhere. I remember that he had been in Chile and was married to a Chilean woman. Deane spoke Spanish, he was smart, he had a good foundation in economics, and he was tough. So Tom Enders and Secretary Haig asked Deane Hinton to be Ambassador to El Salvador, and he accepted. This was interesting because it was the first of a series of really tough, hard-nosed, and very accomplished people who were not locked into the ARA orbit in terms of their own careers.

Eventually, Larry Pezzulo was perceived by many people as just not sufficiently tough with the Sandinistas. He kept looking for ways to bring them into the fold. Tom Enders was trying to do this in a measured and careful way, sounding and appearing to be tough but also trying to leave the door open for the Sandinistas to come in. He occasionally even invited them to “come in, sit down, and talk.” However, he did this in the political and ideological context of the Reagan administration. That effort didn't work, although it kept things going a little longer. Ambassador Pezzulo kept saying, “All we need to do is to sit down and talk to the Sandinistas, and we can work things out.” He wasn't really soft but he was too soft for the Reagan administration. He left Nicaragua and was replaced by, Anthony (”Tony”) Quainton. He was really selected because of his knowledge of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Q: There was something else at this time when you just arrived in ARA. I am an old consular hand, and one of the things that disturbs me is that, if there's anything that one learns in the Foreign Service, it is that if Americans are in danger or are killed, that is absolutely a major issue. We're talking about the murder of the four American Catholic nuns. This is true in most countries. The idea of Jean Kirkpatrick writing off their deaths

as somehow contributing to the greater good of the United States must have presented a moral dilemma. More than that, I would call it a professional dilemma. If anything is “unacceptable,” the killing of Americans, particularly women - and especially American nuns - apparently by the security forces of a friendly country, is just plain unacceptable. Can you talk about the wrestling that must have gone on regarding this issue?

GILLESPIE: As I say, the incident had already occurred when I arrived in ARA, so what we're dealing with is the aftermath of the event. We're dealing with the public view of it. I think that here we see the tension that was created by Jean Kirkpatrick's formula, which amounted to “better the friendly, authoritarian” government than the “unfriendly, totalitarian” government. She defended support for the Pinochet regime in Chile which came to power in a coup. In this case the Chilean security forces dealt harshly with and murdered foreign citizens, including Americans. The issue then moved, to some degree, to how knowledgeable or complicit were U.S. authorities in any aspect of what was going on.

In the instance of the murder of the American Catholic nuns that particular issue never arose. However, I think that in their vigorous defense of anti-communism some of these political appointees may have gone too far. I think that Jean Kirkpatrick was in a position at the UN where she was asked about this incident by the press and others, and she expressed her view. I simply wasn't around when the incident, in fact, occurred. I don't remember the exact timing of it. However, Ambassador Bob White went out to the grave of the nuns. There were other nuns there describing what had gone on. It turned out that the murdered women had probably been violated. It was a terrible, atrocious event, and Ambassador White reacted to that. To my recollection Bob White was not saying, “The security forces did this.” He said that this was an atrocious act, and whoever did it should be punished. He really took what I would think of as the most professional approach you could take at the time. We didn't know who did this. It was something that happened in the midst of a conflict.

Where it became complicated was when the Secretary of State raised the possibility that maybe this wasn't done by the security forces - maybe this was done by the guerrillas. I don't know what he was trying to do, but he had that effect. People were saying, “Come on, Al, the odds are that this was done by the security forces.” Jean Kirkpatrick, I think, was in that same position. She said, in effect, let's not rush to judgment on this.

Then all kinds of stories came out. The most recent case of this kind which has come to public attention was one which very vividly raises the same issue, in the view of some people. This involved an American Catholic nun, Diana Ortiz, in Guatemala. Several years ago she reported after the events had occurred to have been kidnaped by someone, tortured, and forced to do some very atrocious, bad things. Bad things happened to her. She survived and has made allegations and charges. At the time the American Ambassador in Guatemala, Fred Chapin, said that he had a report that this had happened. However, since she did not come to the Embassy to provide a detailed statement of what had happened, he did not know what the facts were.

That aside, the press and others in the U.S. - not necessarily government officials - have drawn all kinds of suppositions. One was that it didn't happen. Two, that this was like an allegation of rape: you know, the woman caused it. A lot of suppositions like that seemed to be going around regarding the case of the nuns in El Salvador. Regarding the case of the nuns the U.S. Government insisted that the government of El Salvador should investigate this matter and bring those responsible to justice. We provided FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation assistance. There was an investigation. Eventually, it was shown that, almost beyond a shadow of a doubt, this was done by members of a security team which had been out on a road when a jeep driven by these women came by. Either they opened fire on them, without provocation of any kind, or stopped them, abused them, and then killed them. So there was an official part of this incident in which we were involved more closely.

Our official involvement in this affair was in the hands of the Embassy in El Salvador, the ARA Bureau, the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and the Department of Justice, which sent down investigators. The government of El Salvador made a show of cooperating with us. In that sense that track was being followed, and the right things were being done. However, there was also the fact that our UN representative Jean Kirkpatrick made a statement which the press focused on and which questioned the morality or the scruples involved. Secretary of State Haig who, as you recall, had the reputation of shooting off his mouth, said things. I guess that you could say, “Why did they say that?” However, this didn't cause a major, moral dilemma for anybody around me. We thought that we were doing the right thing.

Q: Well, you were.

GILLESPIE: We didn't start out by accepting the facts of this incident as reported. We called for an investigation. I think that where Ambassador Bob White and the administration parted company on this is that Bob probably began to draw his own conclusions from the facts as he saw them and moved much more swiftly to condemn the Salvadoran government. He tried to keep more pressure on the Salvadoran government. There you get into a question of judgment as to the proper course to be taken when it appears that this has happened. However, was a decision made at the highest levels of the government of El Salvador to go after these four nuns or anybody out on the highway in a rural area? Or was this a case of troops doing whatever they felt was the right thing for them to do at the time, no matter how bad it was? Where should the blame lie and how far up the chain do you take these things? This is a dilemma that we see all the time.

I think that this was the view in ARA at the time. This matter was under investigation, and it was leading us in certain directions. When this investigation was completed, we would take certain steps. That is how that issue moved along.

Q: We've talked about dealing with the Ortega brothers, the Sandinistas. What about the Salvadoran government? How did we feel about that when you first came on board in ARA and subsequently?

GILLESPIE: Well, the Salvadoran government had been under pressure for some time. It had a military leadership but with civilian involvement in the government. I guess that it must have been in 1978 that the FMLN, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, as it was called, began to be really active. They killed the young Salvadoran Foreign Minister. If I remember correctly, he was a very bright fellow who had visited Nicaragua. I had been a fellow guest at a dinner for him. He was assassinated by the FMLN at some point along the way. This created a lot of pressure for the Salvadoran government.

We saw that, in the cold war context, the Salvadoran situation could easily go the way of Nicaragua, and that was not desirable. Certainly, that was the position of the Reagan administration, but it followed very closely the position that the Carter administration was moving toward, which was that nobody wants the communists to take over in Central America. Everybody could construct a domino kind of approach to that region. That is, if Nicaragua went communist and then El Salvador came under communist control, next would come Honduras and Guatemala. Then would come Costa Rica, the bastion of democracy down on the southern end of Central America, next to Panama and the Panama Canal. Costa Rica was a democratic country, but it had given up its army and no longer had an army. Jose Figueres, the former President of Costa Rica, did that. It just had a limited security force. Then there was Mexico, itself a country which was not very stable at that time. There was real concern that the situation in Central America could lead to other things. There was a belief that that could dramatically accelerate emigration of people from these countries, and the logical place for them to go was to the U.S. That would put pressure on us. All of that reasoning developed.

So the U.S. government, and particularly during the Reagan administration, was disposed to try to preserve and protect the existing situation in Central America.

I think that at that time the emigration from El Salvador had already been substantial. If I remember correctly, let's just say that El Salvador began with a population of 5,000,000 at some time in the 1970s. They had already lost 1.5 to 2.0 million to emigration. Most of these people had gone to thU.S.

Q: A significant number of them are right here in the Washington,D.C., area.

GILLESPIE: That's right. So that was viewed as something that needed to be dealt with. Our whole approach in ARA was that we should do something about this situation. There was not that much difference in that concept between the Carter and the Reagan administrations. The modalities and the interpretation and how you analyzed these events - and probably the ways we dealt with the foreign governments with which we were dealing at the time - were very much colored by the different administrations. You can go back to the Jean Kirkpatrick approach that, right now, our guy in El Salvador is a military man who has security forces which do rough things, and he is better than the alternative. So let's support him and see what we can do to moderate his behavior. Now, remember, you have to add a very active, human rights element in the Carter administration.

The Reagan administration did not do away with the Bureau of Human Rights in the State Department or the approach to human rights. They decided that they would change it and they took what would later be described as a bright young “neo-con,” or neo conservative, a former Democrat named Elliot Abrams. They made Elliot Abrams the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. I can remember from the outset Elliot's outrage over the reported human rights violations in Central America, of all kinds. He was not hanging back on this issue. He was a tough, bright guy, a Harvard lawyer who had been Senator Pat Moynihan's staff assistant. Elliot did not take this matter lightly. Of course, he was more of a believer in quiet diplomacy than public diplomacy, in this instance. Later on, that

changed, when he became Assistant Secretary for ARA, and public diplomacy became the answer for him. In any event, it was quiet diplomacy that he preferred, initially.

However, I must say that he would come and pound on the door in ARand say, “Damn it, you've got to do something about this.”

Q: Were people in ARA paying attention to this?

GILLESPIE: They listened. I think that Tom Enders and company said, “Okay.” The principles were pretty basic. I don't think that Tom Enders believed that violations of human rights in defense of democracy were acceptable. I think that there were people in the Reagan administration who, regrettably, did come up with that formula. For example, this was the case with Constantine Menges. I don't think that Lt. Col. Ollie North ever thought the matter through. However, if you pushed him, I think that he would have said, “Sure, if you have to kill a few people to make sure that you preserve democracy, that's Okay. It's regrettable, but it's okay.” I don't want to go too far in guessing at this, because I don't really know. However, that was my sense of it.

The other thing that you can't separate from this view, which worked very strongly during the Reagan administration, was that the entire region of Central America and the island states of the Caribbean Sea constituted ground that was really ripe for the same kind of Cuban, revolutionary, Soviet approach. We had better do something about it. The “Do something about it” that emerged was the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), which was an effort, through trade and aid, but more trade than aid if you could do it, to try to help those countries develop economically, to some degree, so that their living levels were better. People argued about this a lot. Many people called it a “one way free trade area.” However, it attracted investment in those regions, particularly those which were not affected by war. This concept applied to the whole Caribbean Basin, which included all of Central America and the islands of the Caribbean, both Spanish, English and French speaking. That was a non-military effort to deal with a major part of the problems of the

region, in an effort to protect U.S. interests. I think that that was a pretty clear approach to that problem. Interestingly enough, it has turned out to be successful in many ways. It was not a complete answer, but a good thing.

Tom Enders really got on top of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and drove that, as he was doing with the conflict in Central America. I think that you have to say that, if it hadn't been for Enders, Steve Bosworth, and a few people like that, this initiative would never have gone anywhere. They really pushed the daylights out of that. It was an effort which had immediacy in terms of preserving its core in all of the Congressional dealings it had to go through to make it work. There were textile interests in the South who said, “No, you can't do that.” There were shoe manufacturers and pharmaceutical producers who would go one way or another. That was a whole set of political negotiations that were going on.

I must say that, in my view, U.S. policy toward Latin America was basically being driven by the Sixth Floor of the State Department, which isn't often the case.

Q: The Sixth Floor is where...

GILLESPIE: The Assistant Secretaries of the various regional bureaus have their offices - Europe, East Asia, Near East, and American Republics Affairs. There was a lot of pressure being exerted. Nobody, singlehandedly, ever drives policy, but Tom Enders and his team certainly had a strong hand on the tiller or the wheel and the accelerator. Often they were simply reacting, but the initiatives which came out of that situation were being pushed forward. CBI was one...

Q: The Caribbean Basin Initiative. Often those who look superficially at our policy toward Latin America, particularly Central America, say that it is driven by the United Fruit Company and American commercial interests. We really haven't talked about commercial interests, except for the fact that what we were trying to do was probably acting adversely, from the point of view of American commercial interests. Did a concern that we needed to

protect our business interests, such as the United Fruit Company, enter into this process at all?

GILLESPIE: It did, because your office door is one at which a lot of people knock. My own recollections of this subject are scanty, but I do remember that U.S. commercial and sales people and investors came knocking at the door of the Assistant Secretary for ARA, wanting to meet with him and discuss situations which had arisen in one or another of those countries.

I just don't remember United Fruit and such people well enough. Their big investments were in Costa Rica, which was farther South and sort of out of the conflict by now. There was a lot of business interest in El Salvador. One of the problems in ElSalvador had been an incomplete effort at land reform, but I don't remember how much that affected any specific U.S. owners or their interests. It certainly was a continuing problem area.

The Sandinistas had expropriated property in Nicaragua. Even early on, people like Senator Jesse Helms had concentrated on that as an important factor to worry about. That hadn't ripened to the stage where it is now. It is very ripe now. However, I don't recollect any particular pressure on this issue, but it may have been that I just didn't see that.

Q: I think that it comes across very clearly that, at the policy level, the so-called driving force of United Fruit or other business interests, in the so-called “banana republics” in this day and age, is among our various interests but is not paramount. Our interest is really security.

GILLESPIE: I have gone back and looked at the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam era through the eyes of contemporary viewers and historians. It is very evident that our collective, bi-partisan or non-partisan, concern, in the 1981-1983 time period about communism, the Soviet Union extending its reach, the Brezhnev Doctrine, and all of the issues related to this, was so great that it really was a driving element. I am firmly convinced that there was no cynicism in the concerns that were being expressed

that Central America was about to go down the tubes in several different ways. One of those concerns was that these revolutionary governments were going to take over. If they did, that would cause further economic deterioration in this area, and all sorts of negative consequences would follow, affecting United States interests directly.

Another, separate discussion that was going on was the degree to which our focus on and involvement in Cuba would detract from our NATO posture - our ability to defend Western interests and the United States. That is, if we were preoccupied with and somehow committed to problems in the Central American and Caribbean area. From that you mix in the idea that it's very much in the interest of the Soviet Union to have us occupied elsewhere, whether it was in Afghanistan, into which the Soviets had moved in 1979, and elsewhere. We had had the Iranian problem. There was a feeling that we had better deal with this Central American problem and make sure that it was not going to occupy us over a long period of time in a strategic sense, because the big threat at this stage was still the Fulda Gap on the NATO Central Front in West Germany. I had worried about that when I was a lieutenant in the Army. That problem hadn't gone away, although now the technology meant that missile threats and all those other things were out there, too.I think that it helps to look at the Central American problem in terms of the realities of the time. For example, there was going to be a meeting to discuss whatever the latest development was in that region. We had to make sure that Tom Enders, or whoever else was going to that meeting, was prepared to handle this. Tom was coming into the office at 7:00 AM to study Spanish. I was coming into the office at 7:00 AM or even 6:45 AM to make sure that, if he doesn't read the overnight traffic, the office was ready for him to do some real work other than the Spanish. Other people were starting to come into the office around 8:00 or 8:30 AM. We ended up staying, virtually every night, until 8:30 or 9:00 PM. If Tom Enders went off to a diplomatic function or dinner, it was at 7:30 or 8:00 PM, and the rest of us would close up between 8:00 and 9:00 PM. We did almost the same thing on Saturdays and, many times, spent a somewhat reduced period of time on Sundays.

Q: How does this impact on your family life?

GILLESPIE: It's awful. If I had known then what was happening, seen clearly what was happening, or listened more carefully to my wife, I guess that I would have gone ahead and done the same thing, but I would have felt much more guilty about it than I did.

Q: Did you have the same wife?

GILLESPIE: I did. I now know that it cost me substantially, because it's been made very clear to me, in terms of my relationship with my daughter. We have two kids. At about the time that this was happening our son was getting out of high school and getting ready to return to California to go to college. Our daughter was four years younger and was just in high school. She was on the high school track team and rowing in the crew. She was a bright kid and liked to read. We didn't have what I would call normal, family conversations. I didn't come home at night, five nights a week. I was not at home in time to have dinner with my daughter. I would come home and find that she might still be up but was getting ready to go to bed or engrossed in reading or something else. It just wasn't convenient to talk to her. I'd be gone in the morning before she went to school. I tried very hard to go to her athletic events. Sometimes, I was able to. More often than not, I wasn't. We have since had long talks about this. I realize how much my absence meant to her. It meant a lot. She can now articulate this and does so. She is now 30 years old. We can now talk about it and we try to do what everyone else does.

In terms of my wife she had gone to work at the State Department. She was working in the Bureau of Public Affairs and actually doing analyses of U.S. press coverage of these same issues at the time. She had started that in the late 1970s. However, even there, I'd come home at 9:00 PM. She would usually have had supper with our daughter, so we didn't have anything like a normal life. This went on from 1981 until 1985, covering four years of my life. I have since urged people to have the same kind of experience but, for heaven's sake, to limit it and keep their values up in front and be aware of what's really important.

However, I was caught up in it. Craig Johnstone lived the same kind of life, and so did Steve Bosworth. There were probably four or five or us who did this. Now that I think about it, it was probably misplaced effort.

Q: You talked about NATO, and I'm particularly thinking about the French, but there were others. Now and then something catches the eye of left wing intellectuals. We're not talking about communists but about people who, for fun, like to stick their thumbs in the eyes of the Americans. All of the “glitteratti” from Hollywood and everywhere else had a thing for the Sandinistas. They were heading for Nicaragua.

GILLESPIE: They were sometimes called “sandalistas” - that is, “sandal” + “istas.” There were Americans - and Europeans - who went to Nicaragua, both during the final stages of their civil war and then during the immediate, post civil war period. Many of them were Americans, but quite a number of them were Europeans. They included Swedes, Germans, French, Danes, Italians - all kinds of them. Some of them were of the core left in their countries, and some of them were just sort of interested. They sort of thought that the Sandinista movement was a kind of romantic, revolutionary thing, involving the overthrow of a dictator. The same kinds of things happened in the 1970s in Chile when Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile. You had the same sort of influx of people sympathetic to him.

The Sandinistas had done a fair amount of propaganda during their conflict with the Somoza Government. So there was a core of sympathy with them. The chief legal counsel for the Sandinistas was an American lawyer. However, there were governments which immediately moved in on the Sandinistas. By the way, we tried to move in. The U.S. tried to move in with aid for the Sandinista Government, which had replaced the Somoza regime. We talked about developing a U.S. military to Nicaraguan military relationship. Our motivation was pretty practical. We thought that if we could get into Nicaragua and influence the post-Somoza Government, that would be fine. Better us than the Russians.

In addition to the Soviet Communist group there was a whole group of democratic socialists and others - social democrats - who wanted to move in, make things better, and help the Sandinistas to succeed. The French were very active. The French had a very active Embassy here in Washington and a very active French observer with the OAS (Organization of American States), a woman whose name I can't remember. Later, she went on and became an Ambassador in her own right. She was something like a First Secretary in the French Embassy. Her Spanish was excellent. She was very concerned about the communist influence with the Sandinistas. However, the French approach was, “Let's try to influence the Sandinistas away from the communists and more toward social democracy.” Of course, the Sandinistas were singing that tune. They were saying that they were their own people and that they were not communists. I don't think that this French Embassy woman officer was taken in by any of that. However, she said that the only way to deal with this situation, because you can't shoot them all, was to get in there and work with the Sandinistas. This was sort of a practical, pragmatic approach.

If you think back to the period roughly from 1980-1988, and certainly during the first four years, 1981-1985, of the Reagan administration, anything called “pragmatic” was anathema. That was regarded as a sin. It was considered a heresy to be pragmatic. You had to be a principled, anti-communist.

So there was Swedish aid to the Sandinistas. The Europeans generally were helping them. You had the beginnings of contacts in Central Americans which have ripened so that today there are meetings between the EU (European Union) and the Presidents of Central America in San Jose, Costa Rica, and all kinds of things like that.

Q: Did you find that this fascination of the European and Americaleft with Nicaragua got in your way to any extent?

GILLESPIE: Oh, U.S. public opinion was very important. You had had the movement of various kinds of refugees, because that's what they really were, out of the Central

American region, from Nicaragua, El Salvador, and some from Guatemala and Honduras. They had come to the United States. There were religious and other groups that were actively engaged in trying to help them. These groups were hearing stories about the “bad guys,” who were usually the military forces of the countries concerned, and the “good guys,” who were usually the revolutionaries or the guerrillas, whoever they were. So there was a growing sense in U.S. public opinion that the administration, our government, was probably on the wrong side of these battles and that we were trying to preserve the status quo against change, in the sense of good change. So that was a factor.

It was not easy to get support for our government's position internationally - in the United Nations and elsewhere - for hard line positions against the Sandinista Liberation Front and others. Western European and other governments and the Non Aligned Movement were frankly against us. The Sandinistas immediately began to fight hard to become members of the Socialist International (SI).

I can remember that in 1981 Tom Enders and I were talking about two really good people, a German and an Italian. They were, as I recall, the President and the Vice President of the SI. At about this time I learned that the State Department had no institutionalized or systematic approach for dealing with or even knowing much about the various “political internationals.” There were the Socialist International, the Christian Democrat International, there was the Conservative Union. There were probably five of these groups which were truly international in scope, with structures, positions, and so on. They were distinct from the Non Aligned Movement, the G-77, and other groups.

Gerry Helman, if I remember correctly, was in the office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Gerry and I had worked together at the U.S. Mission to NATO. Gerry was one of the officers who, when Larry Eagleburger was named Minister for Political Affairs, talked to me at some length about whether he should resign or leave the Mission. Here was Eagleburger, an officer who was the same grade who was going to be his boss as Minister

for Political Affairs. Gerry was really an adept, political operator in the Foreign Service Political Officer context.

Anyhow, in 1981 I talked to Gerry and asked him about these various “political internationals.” He said that he kind of knew these groups. I had identified a crevasse, a big gap in our knowledge. These political internationals were important, political actors. I tried to find out more about what they were doing. It turned out that there was no bureau in the State Department which was following them, because they were international in scope. The Bureau of International Organizations Affairs had no interest in these private organizations at all, because they weren't really international organizations. They were essentially political parties.

I don't know that we ever really fixed this problem, but I had identified it. I went around personally on a kind of pilgrimage to the Office of Western European Affairs, to the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, and to other areas in the Department. I said to them, “What are you doing to follow this? We would like to know what you know.” Then we would send messages out to individual Embassies overseas. Helman, from the Office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, pressed this kind of thing. He eventually had a junior officer in his office for a time whose job it was to make sure that we in the Department of State knew a little about what was going on with these political internationals. Gerry would go these meetings. I would call him and ask, “Could we arrange for Horst whatever his name was to meet with Tom Enders to talk about whether the Sandinistas should be allowed into the Socialist International and whether they qualified for membership. This set up another area of diplomatic activity.

We also looked more closely at the national, political operators. There was the Konrad Adenauer Group in Germany which was more conservative. I forget which stiftung, foundation, was controlled by the Social Democrats.

Q: Was it the Franz Ebert Stiftung?

GILLESPIE: Something like that. There were the Germans. And the British had their own British Councils and the way they worked in the past. We eventually got our National Endowment for Democracy. Those groups, and the Germans in particular, were heavily involved in Central America and in the Caribbean. Their main base was in Kingston, Jamaica, and I actually met with the head of that group as I became less “chief of staff” and more Deputy Assistant Secretary of ARA.

But these were areas which we knew about in the Department of State. Some officers knew about them, but it was a very unstructured, very informal approach. It turned out that we could have used and eventually did use some very good contacts. That helped us both in our appreciation of what was going on in Central America and, eventually, South America, and then operationally, in being able to influence events. We didn't want the Sandinistas in the Socialist International. We didn't want them to have the benefit of this Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. The Socialists had no trouble because they looked carefully at it. They eventually said, “No, these Sandinistas are not what we are.” So that was important.

What did happen as a result of this was the whole origin or genesis of what eventually became a fairly elaborate, not terribly good, but elaborate, public diplomacy effort. As early as 1982 we really began to put people out “on the stump” giving talks. One of my initiatives was to work very closely with the Bureau of Public Affairs in developing a speakers' bureau of people who could explain to American audiences U.S. policy in Central America. Our speakers bureau consisted of Foreign Service Officers from quite junior to senior, including, interestingly enough, people like James Cheek and John Bushnell, the Deputy Assistant Secretaries who had been bounced from their positions in ARA at the beginning of the Reagan administration. We had a little office off to the side on the Sixth Floor. I put them there and said, “All right this is where you guys can 'hang out.' Until you get other, honest work, will you go out and talk about Central America and its importance to the U.S.?” And they did it.

That ended up developing a cadre of really bright officers, men and women, who were highly conversant with the issues in Central America and were actually given training in the Bureau of Public Affairs. I said, “We've got to have people who are able to deal properly with the challenges that they're going to get.” These folks went through some workshops and did some speaker training and so forth, both in preparing and delivering their presentations. I felt all along that this is something that the Foreign Service should devote more time to.

I remember Joe Sullivan, who was a bright young man in the Policy Planning Office - as Irish as he could be, from Boston, I think. He'd served in Israel and in other places. He came back in to the Department and said, one day, “Don't send me out again. I can't take it any more.” He'd been out to the University of Wisconsin, to Marquette University, and to God knows where. He had had “artillery shells” lobbed at him when he tried to defend our policies in Central America which many people in his audiences saw as evil. People would ask, “Why are we thwarting revolutionaries who want to replace right wing, military governments in this region? We know that those revolutionaries will bring peace and prosperity.”

That was the argument. There was, in effect, a large speakers bureau in the U.S. that was really being supported out of those countries in Central America. This “bureau” was self supporting. The revolutionary movements would send people to the U.S. It was really something. I went out on a few of those speaking trips, just to see what it was like. I'll tell you, I didn't want to do it any more, but we just kept sending the “cannon fodder” in, because I think it was important. Our speakers were Foreign Service Officers, not political appointees. They didn't have to go. They were all volunteers. They were not right wing, anti-commie type people. They went out, and many of them, like Joe Sullivan, who would come back, beaten and battered, would say, “Okay, where do you want me to go next?” He enjoyed the debate and felt that he was on the right side of it.

For some people in the Foreign Service the whole Central American situation was an annealing process. I imagine, although it was not on the same scale, but in some ways there were some similarities to Vietnam.

Q: Absolutely. What you're saying is that our policies do not grow up out of nowhere or feelings that “We want to be way to the Right this time,” and “way to the left the next time.” The communist Vietnamese were a real threat, and the Sandinistas weren't nice people. Nasty things could happen, but American policy is American policy. It seems to be regarded as fun on the right or the left to attack it. It's always the easiest place to attack because you can come up with hard line positions which you cannot attack on domestic matters, because people know more about it.

GILLESPIE: As you were saying that, I was thinking about how in terms of policy, more often than not, many of the “non-central regions” such as Africa, sometimes East Asia in the past, the Near East - leaving aside the hot Middle East - and Latin America have to fight to get themselves, their issues, and their policies front and center in the Department. Often, it's a battle to get a line and especially a paragraph in a Presidential speech or in testimony that the Secretary of State is going to give.

At this time, during the first few years of the Reagan administration, what we were doing was trying to make sure that the reams of material that were coming out described the situation in what we thought was the right way. We would learn that the President was going to give a speech - President Reagan, who was called, “the Great Communicator.” Half of the speech was going to be on Central America and Cuba. What we developed was the capacity, using guys like Luigi Einaudi, whom I've mentioned and who was sort of the ARA Bureau “policy planner,” Tom Enders himself, and several of us, who had the contacts, to pick up the phone and call the President's speech writers. The speech writers would already have material from hard line right wingers and were just going to put it in the proper language for the President. We would get hold of the speech writers and say, “Wait a minute, if the President says this, this will be the consequence.” The speech writers

would say, “Oh, I didn't know that.” So we were able actually to pare material away in some cases and reshape it in others. I think that this speaks well for the State Department and the Foreign Service. There was a surfeit of riches that you don't often get. You almost had to fight them off, because everybody wanted to be holier than the Pope.

I remember that there was one speech writer named Anthony (”Tony”) Dolan. He was really adept at words. He came out of that very conservative, off campus, Dartmouth College newspaper. He had been its editor or publisher and then came down to Washington to write speeches. He had a tremendous way with words, but Luigi Einaudi was able to work with Tony Dolan and temper some of the extreme aspects of what he wrote.

That was all part of the foreign policy business, of course, because when the President says something, it's policy. If the President says, “Our vital national interest is something,” and then does anything to support that statement, then he has truly defined it.

Q: What always stuck in my mind was that when President Reagan said, “They're only 2,000 miles from Brownsville, Texas,” that didn't sound like a great threat to me. How did that work out?

GILLESPIE: That was the “search for” argument. That began during this period and reached an almost feverish pitch later. However, that involved looking for means to impress upon people the vital nature of our interests in this region of Central America. Public opinion polls kept showing that well under 25% of the American public even knew that there was a Central America, much less than anything was happening there. However, to judge from the press on the Eastern seaboard and in the major cities, whether the Boston Globe, The Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times, The Washington Post, or The Los Angeles Times, the only thing that was happening on many days was in Central America.

I didn't get directly involved in this, but part of this whole public affairs campaign was to develop arguments. It started at a low level and then built up. They prepared maps that showed the flood of refugees from Nicaragua would be at the gates of the United States within a given period of time.

Regarding the rest of the Western Hemisphere, I think that that was important, too, during this period. Mexico had a Foreign Minister named Jorge Castaneda, who was very much in the Mexican tradition. The traditional Mexican attitude is that, whatever the personal, ideological views of the President of Mexico, the Foreign Ministry has traditionally been thought of, and its probably just a stereotype, as the home of the Mexican left.

Q: I've always heard this.

GILLESPIE: That is where Mexico's revolutionary outlook is on display. They don't revolt at home in Mexico any more. However, outside of Mexico, the Mexicans are going to be part of the revolutionary context. Jorge Castaneda seemed to fit that stereotype very well, whether that's really true or not. He loved being a fly in our ointment. So there was a lot of support for Sandinistas, the FMLN, and contacts with Cuba. Mexico has managed to maintain very amicable relations with Cuba and Fidel Castro over all these years. On balance, this seems to help Mexican interests. It is of some interest to note that, contrary to his protests and denials over the years, Castro may have trained Mexican revolutionaries who might have acted against their own government. Nonetheless, Castaneda and the Mexican left, or the Mexican establishment under his lead, certainly didn't mind seeing us troubled and engaged in Central America. They tried to moderate our behavior. They were very supportive of the Sandinistas throughout this period. It was to the Mexican Ambassador in Nicaragua that Jay Freres and I delivered these two young Nicaraguan-American dual nationals in the back seat of the Ambassador's car to get them out of Nicaragua. There are other matters that I didn't mention. CIA Director William Casey was running the Contra program. His principal lieutenant in this was eventually a man named Dwayne (”Dewey”) Claridge. I should mention that there was a House Permanent

Select Committee on intelligence - HPSCI, or “Hipsy,” as it was called for short - and the SSCI, the Senate Select Committee on intelligence, which were the watchdog, oversight committees. Senator Barry Goldwater (Republican, Arizona) was the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on intelligence and Senator Pat Moynihan (Democrat, New York) was the Vice Chairman. Remember, the Senate was under Republican control at this time 1981-1987.

On one of the very first occasions that Casey and Claridge went up to testify before these committees by themselves. Goldwater said to Claridge, because he told us this later, “This is the last time you're coming up here without someone from the policy area of the government. You are from the intelligence area, and I want someone from the policy area up here. Get a policy person.” Tom Enders was designated, and I usually wound up managing Tom's testimony before those two committees. I often was fortunate enough to go up with him. These committees were all super secret, but everybody knew that whatever was said would be leaked within hours or minutes, maybe. Nonetheless, it was very interesting to see how these people behaved.

Casey, as others have noted, and I don't need to dwell on it, had this wonderful habit or mechanism, which he could stick in pretty much at will, of mumbling.

Q: I've heard this. Even under normal circumstances you often coulnot understand what he was saying.

GILLESPIE: For example, he would say, “Mr. Chairman, mumble, mumble, mumble. We have 4,000 troops there and they are provided with mumble rounds of ammunition.” Then Senator Goldwater would say, “Wait just a minute, Mr. Director, what did you say?” And Casey would reply, “Mumble, mumble thousand troops and mumble rounds of ammunition.” And the recording secretary who was sitting there and talking into his or her machine would look around, as if to wonder, “What did he say?” Then he'd call for Claridge. Claridge would sit there, with this most sincere look on his face, and would say,

“Mr. Chairman, these brave men are down there training and fighting. But you're right sir, we limit them strictly. We only give them 53 rounds of ammunition per weapon. 53, sir.” He would be asked, “Are you sure it is 53 rounds of ammunition, Mr. Claridge?” And Claridge would reply, “Absolutely, sir, it's 53 rounds of ammunition.” He would come back the next week and say, “Oh, by the way, Mr. Chairman, it turns out that it's 64 rounds of ammunition.” They were really playing these games with the Committee.

Q: What was your attitude, and I'm including Enders in this, towarthe CIA in the Central American context? Did you trust them?

GILLESPIE: No, I don't think that we trusted them at all. Tom Enders advised me not to trust anybody from the CIA in the sense that, “Tony, they're going to tell you things. Take it all with a big grain of salt. We do need to know what they are doing.” It wasn't so much that they would lie. It was rather that they would not tell the whole story. I think that Claridge pretty much leveled with Tom Enders, except on the things that he didn't tell him. Now, if it involved something that needed an authorization, in the mind of the CIA people, that was brought up and dealt with. However, if they didn't think that they needed an authorization to do something, they didn't bring it up. They made that determination. They didn't raise it just to avoid creating problems. The Foreign Service and the Tom Enders' approach would be, “I'd better make sure that I've got as many people on board with this as possible, so that it has the critical mass of support it needs to go forward.” That was not at all the view at Langley CIA Headquarters outside of Washington, which was, “We'd better have authorization to do this, so go talk to State, or Defense, or the White House and so forth. But if we don't need authorization, it doesn't do us any good to have people supporting us, so let's do it.” Tom Enders' view was the other way around. He would think, “I'd better get CIA and all these other people to know what we intend to do and support it, and then we'll go ahead and do it.”

Q: Let's stop at this point and pick up the next time, where we're talking about the end of the period when Tom Enders was Assistant Secretary of State for ARA and also the

beginning of the involvement during his time in the Central American crisis and other Latin American involvements in this affair. We do want to touch on how things were looking in Chile and Colombia and with the drug problem. Is there anything else we should talk about during the time that Tom Enders was in ARA? Then we can carry on with how he left the ARA Bureau and what went on thereafter, up to the end of your time in the ARA front office in 1985.

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Today is May 28, 1996. Tony, we had talked about the Caribbean Basin Initiative. You mentioned what you and Tom Enders thought of it. This is extremely important. How well did this take within the Reagan administration?

GILLESPIE: The Caribbean Basin Initiative? It really turned out to be the centerpiece of hemispheric policy. However, it was hard to tell, from the outset, whether it was really seen that way. However, it caught the attention of members of Congress from Florida and other states who saw in it some possibilities for economic benefit to their constituents, their regions. It developed a lot of supporters. It was perceived as a “trade, not aid” approach, which would be very much in keeping with the views of the Reagan administration and of the Republicans who had come into office. It was pushed pretty hard. Of course, there was a lot of protectionist resistance, a lot of which was from the textile and shoe industries. Many of the arguments in 1981-1982 were echoed later during the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association) negotiations about the diversion of investments and low paid workers overseas displacing workers in the U.S.

When you looked at it, the Caribbean Basin itself was so small in economic terms and had such little weight that it was fairly easy to develop a good set of arguments in support of it and overcome a lot of those objections. Nonetheless, the textile people and others persisted in carving out exceptions under which we got into “rules of origin” arguments and the “transformation” fear that European countries, particularly the British, French, and

Dutch, would come into their former colonies. There was fear that European investors would somehow come in there and get free access to the American market. It was a “one-way” free trade area. There was no reciprocity under the Caribbean Basin Initiative. These small island countries did not give us free access to their economies. We gave them virtually duty free entry and let their products come into the U.S. market. The results were slow in coming, but over a number of years it's probably proved to be beneficial to all concerned. It's been extended. Initially, I think, it had a life of 10 years. It's still going 15 years later.

Q: We're still talking about the period when Tom Enders was AssistanSecretary for ARA. Could you explain what the Contadora process was?

GILLESPIE: As it became evident to a number of countries in the Western Hemisphere that we were really serious about this whole Central American set of problems, there began to develop some counter pressures. They were generated, I think, in the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations, called the SRE, to use the Spanish acronym. Some of it came from Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, and other countries which were concerned about the direction of U.S. policy. This was a slow process, and I'm compressing it considerably. However, representatives of some of these countries met on the Isla de Contadora Island, which is in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Panama, a resort out there. They decided that we were getting nowhere in dealing with the Sandinistas and with the situation in El Salvador and that, perhaps, the way to set this situation straight was for some of the local, regional powers to get into the act and either mediate or set up an alternative to what the U.S. was doing.

From that meeting on the Isla de Contadora came what was later known as the Contadora Group from the name of the island. Eventually, it included Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama. They set up a process under which they were trying to achieve a peaceful direction of change in Central America. They very much resisted what many people perceived as our interventionist approach, which was building as we adopted a harder

and harder attitude toward the Nicaraguan government, including the Ortega brothers and the Sandinistas, and against the FMLN, which was in rebellion, if you will, against the authorities in El Salvador.

The Contadora Powers came up with a series of negotiating proposals to try to move the matter away from conflict and toward some kind of peaceful resolution. Because it involved negotiations and seemed to give weight to the people whom the U.S. government did not like, the Contadora process was always viewed with scepticism and mistrust by Washington and viewed as a competitor. The U.S. government never wanted to give it a lot of weight. Nevertheless, there was a realization that these people might get somewhere, so we had to try to stay in touch with them and work with them. Or be in touch with them, not necessarily work with them- I guess that's the way to put it.

Regarding the Contadora Group, I think that I mentioned the last time that the Europeans, and particularly the Socialist International and others, were not sure what was going on or how they ought to deal with it. The general line of the Contadora Group was received sympathetically, I think, in Europe. There was a fair amount of European contact with the Contadora countries. The Contadora Group came up, as I say, with a series of proposals. Eventually, we accepted some of that and figured out how we might try to use that for our own purposes, without handing over the show to them.

Q: Did the White House and what you might almost call the trubelievers there have a different view than you had in ARA?

GILLESPIE: Oh, I think so. I'm getting away from the use of the word professional diplomats, because I'm not sure what that really means. The people who were making their life's work in this profession weren't all Foreign Service Officers, as I pointed out. Some of them were senior civil servants, like Luigi Einaudi. When you're in a bind and are trying to approach matters in a very American and very Foreign Service way, you say, “Let's pick this piece of fruit. It's ripe now.” Then let's reach out for something that's getting

riper. However, piece by piece, we pluck the fruit and put it away. That way you make progress which eventually turns out to be real, particularly if there are no opportunities for bold strokes, though nobody ever rejects the idea of a bold stroke approach.

In any case, guys like Craig Johnstone, Tom Enders, and others in the ARA Bureau, looked for ways to use the energy that was developing anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, conceivably in Europe, or wherever it might be. Eventually - not so much at this time but later - the Japanese became more involved in the Western Hemisphere. The question was how could we take advantage of that energy and get it to move events in the direction that we would like them to go? However, that ran into or was in contrast with the heavily ideological and almost religious fervor on the part of some of the people in the White House - not all, but some. These people felt that, if an idea wasn't “made in America,” it wasn't any good. Even if it had something in its favor, the risk of following it meant that we would be giving up either power, influence, or control in a way which would undoubtedly work to our disadvantage. Furthermore, the motivation of a lot of these people was suspect. I guess that, maybe, the approach among those who lived the life, walked the walk, and talked the talk was, “We don't really care what this individual's motivation might be. If he's doing the right thing, as far as we're concerned, let's take advantage of it. Just because we recognize this point doesn't mean that we support him, his life style, and his ideology.”

You have to be careful in this regard, because it's probably too easy to slip into I guess what some people would call unprincipled or uncontrolled spin or free fall. However, if you've got your eyes open and know what you're doing, then that approach often works.

Q: During this process and previously what were you getting from the 21 or so countries of Latin America?

GILLESPIE: Actually, there are now 35 of them. At that time I guess that we were getting close to 35 countries. I'm trying to remember when the last British colony became independent. It was probably around that time, although I don't remember exactly.

Q: Well, what were you getting from our Embassies in what I would call the big mass of countries in the Southern Hemisphere, as we went through this process?

GILLESPIE: It's hard for me to pull it all back together again. It all came together, overnight. Argentina and others, of course, were still digging out of their financial crises. Military governments were still very much in vogue, both in Argentina and Chile. There was the war over the Falkland/Malvinas Islands and our action during this conflict, which had been at least publicly viewed so negatively by so many countries in the Western Hemisphere, no matter what a few of them said in private, condemning Argentine “adventurism,” if you will. There was the aftermath of the Beagle Channel crisis between Chile and Argentina, which was still being felt. There other were territorial disputes which were still very much alive.

In the deep Southern Cone, my view is - and this is a poor kind of shorthand - is that in South America, probably with the exception of Colombia and Venezuela, there were fairly loose ties with Central America and Mexico, for reasons of both geography and personal contact. Brazil and other countries South of them didn't have a lot of time for their little brown brothers to the North. There is a distinct, sociocultural division which one can see and experience. It's pretty evident, once you know that it's there, that they are very much concerned with their own interests and issues. Their orientation has been ambivalent. That is one way to describe it, but it has certainly been bifurcated over the centuries. They had much more of an orientation toward Europe, a short hand term which is partly a mistake, that a lot of people in our country understand. If you look at trade flows in particular, you find that Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and countries like that have traditionally traded more extensively with Europe than they have with North America and the United States. Our

trade with these countries is not inconsequential, but by far the preponderance of their foreign trade has been with Europe, over the years.

World War II is perhaps an example, just to recognize that, although Brazil and Argentina eventually aligned themselves with the Allied powers, it took a while for that to happen. Argentina did that under really intense pressure from the United States, not on its own. So those countries had their own problems and interests. To them, despite the Reagan statement that the communist revolution in Central America would unleash a horde of immigrants into the United States, that was not a problem for Brazil or Argentina. Their attitude was, “Too bad, but what's the big deal?”

Nonetheless, as we noted earlier, because of its anti-communist, military government, Argentina had placed itself squarely into Honduras in an effort to assist ex-Somoza, Guardia Nacional people to fight the communist-oriented Sandinistas. However, the Brazilians did not have this view. If anything, the Brazilians were a little more worried about what was going on in Surinam than in the Central American countries. Interestingly enough, Brazil's military establishment has always had some reservations about U.S. intentions toward South America and with regard to their country. Brazil has had some degree of suspicion that the U.S. might find it interesting to engage in some kind of military adventurism in Brazil and take over the country. That is even evident in 1996.

Q: I've heard this. It just seems so outlandish.

GILLESPIE: I guess that it seems outlandish to all of us. However, it is not outlandish to somebody who watches our behavior. They can interpret that in a variety of ways. This shows that we live in such a wonderful sense of detachment. We live with ourselves and really don't see how others link all of the facets, elements, and aspects of our national behavior and see in them a certain design. They cannot believe that that is not the conscious design of somebody in the United States. So the very presence of the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Panama, our control of the Panama Canal, and all

the rest of it is seen to have meaning. Our generals and our Secretaries of Defense walk into Brazilian halls of government with their arms open and their hearts bared. They say, “We want to be your friends,” but many South Americans, who have lived through colony, empire, conquest, rape, pillage, and other kinds of things, say, “Sure, we understand. We know exactly what you want. We're the next round of Indians.” This is overstating the problem, but it's there.

Q: It sounds as if those Confederate colonies down there are stirrinup trouble.

GILLESPIE: I think that that's it - all of those wonderful people from the American South who went down to South America in the 19th century after our Civil War and established themselves there. Along with all of the Germans - immigrants who came in waves but among whom were people who were fleeing Nazi persecution, and there were Nazis who were fleeing anti-Nazi persecution. You get a whole mixture of the “Boys from Brazil.”

However, it would be stretching it to try to recall some of the issues that were hot at this time. There was the financial crisis, there was the Falkland/Malvinas Islands crisis, and then the Central American crisis. As I say, the people in the southern part of South America were sufficiently occupied so that, while they were not uninterested in what the U.S. was doing in Central America, this was not their principal concern.

The Contadora Group comes later. It eventually began to become something which today is almost institutionalized as the Rio Group. The four countries in the “Contadora Group expanded and became eight and then 12 countries. Now it is about 14 countries. It is now a political forum with some growing, economic aspects which, many people believe, really gets its energy because it is a political forum of Spanish and Portuguese speakers. In other words, Latin Americans. It is an alternative to, or a divergence from, the Organization of American States (OAS), which many countries in the Western Hemisphere see as a U.S. dominated and controlled instrument, without the same degree of commonalty and practical approaches than, say, NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, has.

So the Contadora Group progressed and became the Rio Group. In more recent times, since 1994, the Rio Group, from time to time, has sort of set itself up as the contrast or alternative to a U.S. position, outside the OAS context.

Q: Perhaps now we should talk about why Tom Enders left the ARBureau.

GILLESPIE: I guess that there were two aspects to his departure. One was policy, and the other was personal. The two aspects came together, and that seemed to result in his departure. Tom's intellectual force was translated into an assertiveness on policy matters which was extremely strong and evident to many people. He just pissed off a lot of the people in the Reagan administration. He was forceful, dynamic, and all of those things that went with him. By 1983 George Schultz came in as Secretary of State to replace Haig. Bill Clark, or “Judge Clark,” as he was called, had moved from being Deputy Secretary of State over to the National Security Council.

Clark was a man with virtually no foreign affairs experience but had been a close friend and adviser of President Ronald Reagan. He had been appointed as Deputy Secretary of State and then National Security Adviser, to replace Richard Allen, who left. To Clark Tom Enders probably personified the very worst of the Eastern seaboard, because Clark was a guy who wore cowboy boots and rode horses. He was not from California. He was from Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, or somewhere in there. Clark didn't like Enders. I think that he probably found him obnoxious and difficult to deal with. Clark himself was not a sophisticated man but was no country bumpkin.By that time what was called the Contra movement, the group of armed, anti-Sandinistas whom we were supporting in Nicaragua, had grown. That whole movement and arm of our policy operations had picked up steam. I guess that the William Casey, Jean Kirkpatrick, Fred Ikle, and the Defense Department mode of thinking was dominant at that time.

Tom Enders, Craig Johnstone, and those around them, were trying to draw a careful balance or line between the force option, which seemed to be growing, and more of

a negotiating track. In other words, “Let's try to get the Sandinistas to moderate their behavior, on the basis of what they perceived to be what was good for them and try to talk to them a little bit.” I think that in the opinion of most people the force option really didn't have much of a chance of succeeding. The alternative option of negotiations was not acceptable to the Casey, Kirkpatrick, Clark group in and around the White House and President Reagan. Secretary of State Schultz was both new to this controversy and not exactly sure where he wanted to go - and may not have cared a lot at this particular point.

I don't recall a specific event, incident, or question but I recall that Tom Enders came back to the office one evening and announced that he would be leaving the ARA Bureau. So that was that. Interestingly enough, he stayed on the job for some while and then went off to Spain as Ambassador. During the time that he stayed in the Bureau after telling us that he was leaving, he wrote a book, working with one of the economic think tanks, on the effect of the low level of savings on the Mexican financial crisis of 1982. He eventually retired after completing a tour as Ambassador to Spain and went to work for Salomon Brothers in New York.

Q: Before we move to the next stage, did Enders come to your meetings on where we were going, when you all got together, and more or less roll his eyes when Clark, Kirkpatrick, or Casey were mentioned? Were you aware of how he felt about dealing with these people?

GILLESPIE: I was very much aware of how he felt. The four or five people who were closest to him on a regular basis did not have the slightest doubt about what he thought about these people, although he was careful about it. Tom Enders was bold and assertive but not necessarily indiscreet. To use that terribly trite and cliched phrase, if a fool was around, Tom didn't put up with him very long. The fool was put out of his misery or disappeared, one or the other, rather quickly. When cabinet officers and senior officials are involved, that's easily managed. We had a catch phrase. I forget what the trigger was, but in the evening it was usually just Tom Enders, Steve Bosworth, and I, although others

would occasionally join us, when it got to be 8:00 PM and Tom wasn't going out. We would repair to his office and, occasionally, I would pour everybody a drink. We would just sort of sit back and talk a little bit about what had gone on.

I remember one occasion, which was later repeated. Steve Bosworth was describing an incident - I forget what it was. Tom just looked at us both and said, “You know, sometimes I have to conclude that ours is not a serious government.” It was said with laughter and in joking fashion. That soon became shorthanded just to the one word, “ours.” Something would happen, and one of the three of us would look at the others and say, “ours.” That's all it took to get some chuckles. Then we would move on to the next thing.

There were meetings held, including Interagency meetings. We would learn that CIA Director Casey, UN Ambassador Kirkpatrick, and one or two others had had a meeting to which people from the State Department hadn't been invited. Reportedly, they were going to move forward in certain areas. There were lots of questions at that time about the number and activities of U.S. military advisers in El Salvador. Congress was calling for testimony on the subject. One or another of these people would go up and give testimony. We would find out that it was running counter to what had been agreed to be the policy line. There was a lot of that going on. Tom Enders never showed any great dismay about it but certainly displayed impatience from time to time.

Q: Moving to how you perceived things, who replaced Enders as Assistant Secretary for ARA and how did that work out? Was this another hostile takeover?

GILLESPIE: No, this was really not a hostile takeover. At the outset of the Reagan administration the political personnel people had put in place a political operator, a man who had really engineered, for a period of four years, the lobbying effort to get the Alaska oil pipeline through Congress. This man, Langhorne Anthony Motley, was named as Ambassador to Brazil. Motley was born in Brazil of an American father, although his mother may have been Brazilian, though I'm not sure of that. I just don't remember now. In

any event, he had been born, raised, and grew up in Rio De Janeiro. He had gone through high school there. He then attended the Citadel Military Academy in Charleston, South Carolina. He graduated and was commissioned in the Air Force. Because he was bilingual in Portuguese and English, he eventually ended up in the U.S. Southern Command in Panama, where he learned Spanish, if he did not already know it. Then, after 10 years or so in the Air Force he resigned his commission and went to Alaska - I guess to seek his fortune. We used to joke about it later.

He got into banking in Alaska and, at the same time, began to become involved in Republican politics. He may have held some kind of state office. I don't think it was elective office. It may have been appointed Alaskan Secretary of State or something in the State of Alaska.

Q: There is an interview with him on this.

GILLESPIE: So you can refer to that. However, what was interesting was that he had then gone to Brazil as U.S. Ambassador. The Brazilians required him to renounce his Brazilian citizenship. There had been a question raised by the Brazilians when he was given agrement as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil.

The Brazilian role in the Falklands/Malvinas Islands crisis was very important. Motley had a characteristic or quality that certainly I have come to recognize in Ambassadors who are political appointees. That is, a very clear understanding and appreciation of authority. I think that on the Foreign Service efficiency report form there is a reference to “authority structures” or “lines of authority.” Tony Motley had no evident problem with saying, “I am the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil. I am President Reagan's personal representative but I really work for the Secretary of State. The Assistant Secretary of State for ARA is his executive officer, as far as I am concerned, and I salute that man and take his orders.” Motley had no problem in accepting the chain of command. He was a very smart guy,

politically, well clued in with the Republicans, a conservative but by no means what we had come to call a “winger” - that is, a right winger.

Tony Motley took his job as Ambassador to Brazil very seriously. He was there during the transition from military to civilian government in Brazil. He had gotten to know the man who was going to be the next President of Brazil, Tancredo Neves. This man was elected President but died on the operating table after surgery within 10 days after the election. He was replaced as President by Jose Sarney, a much less capable person than Neves. Motley was really working on the Brazil situation, as any good Ambassador would.

William Clark, President Reagan's National Security Adviser, had a feel for Brazil. When it was time for Tom Enders to go as Assistant Secretary for ARA, Motley was chosen to replace him. I was not in on any of the background developments but I learned that Tom was going to be replaced by Tony Motley. Motley came over to ARA and basically did a kind of military approach to the job. He said, “I'm coming in here. I'm the new guy on the block. You people have been doing wonderful work. I'm not going to make any changes until I've been here long enough to know whether I need to make any changes.”

We had all worked with him as Ambassador to Brazil. We knew who he was, and we were known quantities to him. Soon, within a matter of months, Steve Bosworth left as Deputy Assistant Secretary of ARA. However, Tom Enders had brought in James Michel as his principal Deputy Assistant Secretary to replace Bosworth. Motley said, “Michel stays. He is my principal deputy. Tony Gillespie stays. In addition to being a sort of super Executive Secretary of the ARA Bureau and an executive assistant in the military sense and deputy for operations, I'm going to make him Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Operations in the Caribbean.” So that happened. Then he appointed Craig Johnstone as Deputy Assistant Secretary. Craig had been the Director of the Office of Central American Affairs. He was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with the same portfolio, but clearly now at the policy level.

Tom Enders had been interviewing some non career people for Deputy Assistant Secretary jobs, because the pressure was tremendous. It looked as if he was going to have to “cave” on that. He had identified, and I had talked extensively to a man named Richard Holwell, a right wing Republican from Louisiana or somewhere else in the South. He had been a radio announcer and a journalist of some kind. However, Holwell was acceptable to Enders, and Motley accepted him right away as Deputy Assistant Secretary. Holwell had the same outlook as Motley's, that is, when he worked in an organization, he identified the boss and saluted him and didn't try to work around him.

Q: This wasn't some raw meat tossed to the wolves. Holwell was someone with whom Motley felt comfortable. Co-opt is the wrong term, but he engaged Holwell as one of his troops. He was not what I assume would be regarded as a spy from the right wing, from Senator Jesse Helms' group.

GILLESPIE: Yes, although Holwell was from that group and had been put forward as a candidate for Deputy Assistant Secretary, with the idea that that is the role he would play. Of all such candidates he seemed to be the best, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was that he said that he knew that he was coming in to work in this kind of an organization and so forth. Motley felt that this was just fine, and he could deal with that. Motley, more than Enders, could talk Holwell's language, and they would figure out a way to get going and get along. In fact, that's the way it turned out. It happened that way.

So Motley came in as Assistant Secretary for ARA. As you say, you've interviewed him. He recognized that he was walking into a situation that was less than ideal. He knew that there was a lot of tension and concern about what was happening. Motley's approach was so dramatically and diametrically different from Enders'. His personality was different. He was physically different. His interests were all different. But in this respect they were the same. They both can be very plain spoken. They know how to do things. Whereas, I can say, Enders could be subtle, indirect, and sophisticated, Motley tends to be blunt, direct, straightforward, and candid. He projects that. In fact, he thinks very carefully and

very well. He projects a much more blunt approach. He has what someone might call a businessman's style. He gets to the bottom line. He has a lot of favorite sayings, all of them in good, plain, American English - like “keep your eye on the ball,” and things like that. He uses a lot of Air Force jargon and has a lot of military and business contacts. He was very close to Senator Ted Stevens.

Q: Of Alaska.

GILLESPIE: Of Alaska. A very close friend and ally. That is probably how he got both the Embassy in Brazil and into the Assistant Secretary job for ARA later. Tony Motley has one point in his background which, I have learned, is not inconsequential. He had a near death experience. Motley was in an airplane crash in a small plane in Alaska in which, I believe, several people were killed. His back was badly injured, and he still has problems with it today. He doesn't make a lot of this. However, when we became more intimate and got to know each other he talked a lot about having come close enough to see his life before his eyes. He said that this helped him not to worry too much about “little things,” “keeping your eye on the ball” and what's important. He and his wife have a couple of lovely daughters. He can balance family considerations and his personal interests, including his desire to get out on the golf course, every now and then. And to have as good a time as possible, if that is the right word or phrase to use, while doing the work that has to be done.

That impressed me, because Tom Enders' dedication to the work he did was just phenomenal. Except for those few times when he would break away to go on vacation and climb mountains or something like that, the appearance was that he was just constantly involved with his work. He ran a good bit. We did not run together, but we would occasionally encounter each other out on the C&O Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath while running on the weekends. However, Tom Enders really didn't have any athletic interests and not too many other interests.

By contrast, Motley had these interests. We soon learned that there might be an afternoon during the week when nobody was going to schedule any meetings for Tony Motley, because he had important business to do. He really was out playing golf. That worked for him. He is not uncalculating, and that served very well to ingratiate him with people like Secretary of State George Schultz, who liked to play golf. Tony knew the right golf courses and country clubs and had access to them, as did the Secretary. There were people around the White House that Tony knew. Whereas Schultz may not always have trusted Tom Enders or been quite sure of him - and I think that this has come out elsewhere - I think that Schultz knew just how far he could trust Langhorne A. Motley.

Q: What was Tony Motley's relationship with William Casey, the Director of Central intelligence, and Jean Kirkpatrick, our Permanent Representative to the UN?

GILLESPIE: It was carefully, carefully managed. It was really something to behold. As far as they were concerned, at least initially, Motley was a worshiping disciple. I wouldn't say a sycophant, because he never behaved that way. However, he showed them the greatest respect for their policy knowledge, their skills, and their positions. He worked very carefully to cultivate them. I'll be perfectly honest. He would come back into the office, after we got to know each other fairly well, and would say either to me or to Craig Johnstone, “Those stupid (expletives) don't have the slightest idea what they're doing. They're going to take this country and all that's in it down the drain!” Then he would go right back out and do his job.

Motley had what I would call tricks, but they were very carefully done. He fought with the Director General of the Foreign Service and other people in the State Department to get a State Department Superior Honor Award for Dwayne Claridge, the Latin American Division Chief in the CIA Central intelligencAgency Directorate of Operations and chief of the Contra operation in Central America. He did these little things which now I see were a combination of “grace notes” and ingratiation but he knew that probably that was

something that he could do really to lock in the relationship with Claridge, so that Claridge would play things as straight with Motley as he was going to play them with anybody.

To this day Tony Motley and Claridge are good friends. However, Tony also knew that you could trust a CIA covert operator, who relished covert operations the way Claridge did, only so far. You shouldn't expect him to give you 100 percent of the truth. However, Motley wanted to get as close to that as he could and so he worked to achieve that. And the same thing was true with a whole host of other, political operatives from CIA, the Defense Department, and elsewhere.

Tony knew how to get to people. He certainly knew how to get to me, how to increase my sense of personal and professional gratification, and so forth. I didn't think then and don't think now that it was truly manipulative. He just knew how to do this very well. He could read people well and figure out how to do it. He had no misgivings and no misunderstandings of where Casey and Kirkpatrick were coming from. Because Tony Motley is such a practical man, in so many ways, if he sees a straight line, and it's safe to take the straight line from Point A to Point B and he doesn't believe that you have to go through three other way points around the corner to get there, then he goes that way.

As he became more accustomed to the Latin American scene, he would say, “Look, when we were down there in Brasilia, nobody gave a damn what you guys were doing up there in Central America in the North. That was not of interest. There were bigger fish to fry down there. However, now that's the name of the game, so read me in.” So Craig Johnstone and a host of other officers got Motley read in. I think that he quickly saw that the conflict in Central America was not something that was going to be won militarily, through these Contra people, but that this was a very important part of the Reagan administration's policy. Therefore, it needed to be managed, and he needed to see how it would work.

In large measure it was Motley, given the way the whole Central American situation began to unfold, who arranged for Secretary of State George Schultz to go to Managua. Remember that Secretary of State Haig had talked to the Cuban Vice President. The Schultz trip raised hackles all over the Republican administration and in Congress. Motley had arranged for Schultz to make a stop in Managua, out of which came a series of talks in which Harry Shlaudeman carried on a series of negotiations up in Mexico with members of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Shlaudeman was a well-respected, career specialist in Latin America. He had been our Ambassador to Argentina and later was Assistant Secretary of State for ARA (American Republics Affairs). In other words, he had held Motley's job.

These negotiations went on over a period of months but didn't go anywhere. However, Motley felt strongly that we needed to have this two track approach. He thought that neither negotiations nor pressure by themselves were going to change the situation. In the meantime, the problem in El Salvador was growing. The FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) was building. Arms were flowing in to the FMLN from all over. Tony Motley was managing the policy process. It turned out that Tony had that same, sort of step by step, incremental approach, which could be described as, pluck the fruit when it's ripe, keep checking overhead to see what's coming down next, and identify it, put it in the bag, in the view that that was the only way that you were going to get enough fruit.

He really developed a high degree of trust and confidence in those around him. He quickly knew which Ambassadors were going to be reliable, honest, straightforward reporters, whether they were political appointees or career officers. He made the same kind of judgments. Like Tom Enders, he did not suffer fools gladly, but he was very careful. He could figure out how to marginalize somebody, and the person hardly knew that he had been marginalized. With Enders you kind of knew that you had been cut out. If that happened, there was no point in hanging around. Motley had the politician's touch, more than Enders did, exercised it, and carried that forward.

He was quite adept at delegating authority. He gave Craig Johnstone tremendous scope on the Central American front - I think, quite wisely. Although Motley didn't shrink from becoming involved, he delegated authority to Craig Johnstone in that area. He delegated authority to me in the Caribbean area and made sure that everything was done in the policy implementation area, whether it was in Chile, South America, or wherever. Motley traveled to Chile. He went to Argentina. He did all of these things to a much greater degree than Enders had done. He carried the flag and our policy into those areas. He tried to enlist support for our policies from other countries. He was very good and much more active, publicly and in public speaking in the U.S., than Enders had been. Although Enders didn't hang back, he didn't have a lot of time for it - whereas Motley would make the time. He would go out and make the speeches. He supported Craig Johnstone as he would try these different angles to try to move the Central American situation forward.

Probably, the most prominent example of that was Secretary of State Schultz's trip to Managua, followed by the talks with the Sandinistas conducted by Harry Shlaudeman in Mexico City.

By the way, we had had a commission on Central America, known as the Kissinger Commission, which had been set up in an effort to try to define the problem in a way that would be supportive of U.S. policy. Like so many things, we had the policy. Now we had to try to rationalize the policy.

We had Deane Hinton, who had gone to El Salvador as Ambassador to replace Bob White. Deane's special interest was economics, anyway. He'd come in and said, “All that this situation needs is a couple of hundred billion dollars, and that will get things straight. With good, economic management in El Salvador, you'll get prosperity, and that will show them the way to take care of things. That's the way to go.” Well, most people thought that there was nobody who was going to come up with that kind of money. Of course, when you look at what we spent there over the course of the next five or six years, it was twice

or three times that. Nonetheless, Deane Hinton had come in with that particular kind of approach.

So the Kissinger Commission was appointed, with Henry Kissinger as the nominal chairman. However, Harry Shlaudeman was named Executive Secretary. He was an Ambassador back in the Department in our typical fashion. There was no other Embassy that he either wanted or that was open for him at the time. There was no other job, so Harry became the Executive Secretary or Director of the Kissinger Commission. This Commission came out with its analysis of the situation in Central America and said that it was a matter of economic reform, development, and growth - and it battled to get that under control, in the view that the political situation would follow. We had the Kissinger Commission report as a kind of backstop for a policy of assistance to the Central American countries. That got the AID (Agency for International Development) engines going, and it got the money flowing. There was still aid money at that time. This process resulted in the transfer of large resources into the region, some of which actually paid off. The emphasis was on investment and growth, as opposed to merely social programs by themselves.

A number of initiatives were begun during this period. A number oprograms had their genesis...

Q: Just to get an idea, sticking strictly to your time in ARA, whedid Motley become Assistant Secretary of State for ARA?

GILLESPIE: It was some time early in 1983 - probably January oFebruary. I left my front office job in ARA in the spring of 1985.

Q: So it was a good two years.

GILLESPIE: Yes, and then Motley was replaced by Elliott Abrams aAssistant Secretary for ARA.

Q: And were you still there?

GILLESPIE: I was there. I was in the front office job in ARA until April, 1985. Motley probably stayed about two years. I don't remember the exact time when he left, but it probably was early in 1985.

Q: How long did you serve with Abrams?

GILLESPIE: Just briefly. I don't remember whether I was still in the ARA front office when Abrams came in - possibly I had just left.

Q: You talked about the incremental approach, or two-track system of policy with Motley. Was there a difference between how Motley maneuvered and worked with the Contra military pressure and how Enders handled it?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Tom Enders tolerated - I guess that this might be the right word, if I am not oversimplifying it - or gave loud lip service to supporting the Contras. I don't think that he ever believed that the Contra movement as it began - or as it developed, which was quite different - was really going to make a tremendous difference in Central America. Enders would say all the right things and sound very forceful in doing so. However, my interpretation, my reading at the time, was that he tolerated this line of policy.

To use a term out of the Pentagon, when Motley became Assistant Secretary for ARA and as the matter developed, he became much more “forward leaning.” That is, Motley sounded to those around him as if he really believed that the Contra movement could and would make a difference and needed to be pushed. He appeared to be an enthusiastic supporter of that particular approach.

I learned later, during the time that he was in ARA, that he, too, was not at all convinced that the Contra movement was going to make that much difference. However, he believed that the only way that he could remain effective was to give the Contra movement

enthusiastic support. So he did that. His relationships with the people who were the supporters of that approach were much warmer than those of Tom Enders with the same people. Motley was very comfortable and not at all impatient, at least visibly, with Jean Kirkpatrick, the people from the Defense Department, and all the rest of them.

Tony Motley had what I thought was a wonderful approach. I think that it was very smart. He can be just as comfortable with a junior Foreign Service Officer as he can with the Secretary of State. He had no problem talking to people like Oliver North, who at this point was still a Major in the Marine Corps, and others, and making them feel that this now senior official was listening very carefully to them and taking their views into account. He did listen to them. Then he would make his judgments and do what he was going to do. At the same time he was a very pragmatic, practical guy in that sense. This was another reason why, ultimately, Motley couldn't stay in that job. He was labeled a pragmatist. He was a right wing conservative who was labeled a pragmatist, and that really hurt him.

Not to speed this interview too far forward, but Motley would come back from an appointment. We would talk about some of these things. It was pretty clear that a lot was going on. It just didn't seem that anything was moving, and you couldn't get these guerrillas to come down out of the hills. There were problems involved. It's hard for me to go back and dredge this up from memory, but it seemed that there were press stories of atrocities every day. There was a whole new cadre of journalists from The Washington Post, The New York Times, The New Yorker, The New Republic, the Los Angeles Times, The Christian Science Monitor, and The Boston Globe who were down in Central America, in the hills of Nicaragua, going out with Sandinistas on the one hand or the Contras on the other. They were writing stories about military, governmental atrocities, that is, on the part of our allies, the people with whom the U.S. had associated itself. The articles also stated how the Cubans and the Sandinistas were transforming the education and health system of Nicaragua, making these things look wonderful. That was the impression that one had. Of course, I'm not doing this situation justice.

There were Congressional hearings almost every week, to which Motley had to go and testify. He was very good at that. From the administration's standpoint he was a very good witness, a very good testifier on Capitol Hill. As well as anyone, I think, Tony Motley could deal with a subject fully and still control how much got out. He knew how not to answer a question and he knew enough not to go beyond the question with his answer - and to do all of those things which are so important when you've got a phalanx, a bank of members of the House or Senate who are sitting up there, each asking questions. Many of them are there to become better informed and many of them are there to make political points. He could tell which was which and give an answer that would be accurate and honest and, at the same time, do no harm or do whatever good might be done.

Tony was quite adept at keeping his temper in public and rarely get into a cat fight. Enders would occasionally do that. As it turned out, Elliot Abrams, Motley's successor, got into cat fights in a calculated way. However, Motley was very careful with both Democrats and Republicans and did not get into controversy, if he could avoid it.

So all of that was going on. The pace of activity in the front office of ARA was just phenomenal. This was my territory, virtually from the day that I got there in June, 1981, until I left, almost four years later. There were young Foreign Service Officers drafting testimony that was going to be required in three weeks, two weeks, and one week, refining the testimony that was to be given, for example, on Thursday. Today was Monday, and we had better be ready with this testimony. They want it up there on the Tuesday before it was delivered, and so forth. The workload, the product of policy- related paper was immense. There were CODELs (Congressional Delegations) traveling abroad. There were members of Congress who were antagonists or supporters of the administration who were going wherever they could go. There was Senator Helms (Republican, North Carolina) going to Chile. He was, of course, a strong supporter of the Pinochet regime, which was in power. There were human rights people who were going to Argentina who were negative toward the Argentine administration. There were all kinds of Congressional people who were

going to Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, or Panama and such places. All of that paper, all of those preparations were flowing through the ARA front office. Or there was drafting under way for concurrence, and so on.

Around Secretary of State Haig there had been an Executive Secretariat in the State Department that services the Secretary, or the “Seventh Floor principals,” as they were called. This involved the line or bureau people and S/S, the Executive Secretariat, and all of that. I guess that we don't have to go into that in detail. There were two Deputy Executive Secretaries. They split the world into two halves. One of them dealt with Latin America, among other regions. During the Haig period - and during the Falklands War - my recollection is that Al Adams was the Deputy Executive Secretary who dealt with Latin America. My job, on instruction from Enders, was to keep in touch with Adams and make sure that Adams knew what was important as far as we were concerned. Al Adams and I became friends, and we still are.

However, when Motley came in as Assistant Secretary for ARA, this was the aftermath of the period of the Falklands War. Tony Motley had seen how our European interests had overridden our interests in Latin America with Argentina, the Falklands, and the rest. He had seen this from the perspective of Brazil. Quite frankly, he felt that the Secretary of State, who was now George Schultz, was being protected by palace dogs who did not want Schultz to be involved in what Tony felt was the most important set of issues in the world - his issues. So we calculated how to manage that situation. We had all of this paper to handle.

At that point those around Secretary of State Schultz really didn't want Schultz to get tarred with what was increasingly the Central American brush. They tried to set up a lot of different barriers. I guess that one of the values that I had for Motley is that I knew that system, up one side and down the other. I knew the secretaries and the most junior people. I knew the most senior people and had a certain amount of influence with them. I knew how to move ideas and paper in that institutional context. So we did a lot of that,

and there was a hell of a lot of paper. A lot of it was extremely “close hold” sensitive, not that it contained great, strategic secrets, the revelation of which would bring us all down, or anything bad. But timing is everything.

So Motley wanted to make sure that when he wanted to get a message into Secretary Schultz's hands, it got there. It soon reached the point where he could, in fact, pick up the phone and get through to George Schultz. This arrangement had its genesis on some golf tee or green. My job was to make sure that notes got to the Secretary, got past the palace dogs and weren't stopped there, but were dealt with appropriately. There was a tremendous amount of that kind of thing going on. There was a little bit of palace politics and the State Department bureaucracy, and so forth. The other side of that was getting that material into the White House, into the hands of the National Security Council staff. There, Motley was very careful always to give the impression that he had all the time in the world for the more junior members of the NSC staff. The fact is, he didn't have a lot of time for them, and so some of us ended up with that particular kind of job. That's a little bit of the mechanics, the engineering of the thing.

Q: What did Motley think of two different groups? One, the government of El Salvador and what they were doing. Two, the government of Nicaragua? He was the new boy on the block. What impressions was he getting?

GILLESPIE: I think that he was a very judgmental guy. I think that he came back, based on his initial exposure to both, with the feeling that, “Those guys in Nicaragua are up to no damned good.” He felt that they were probably not what they liked to say that they were. As a small d democrat, he felt that they were bad guys. He paid attention to the analysis that he was given, but he made his own judgments about it. He wondered if we could work with them if, indeed, there was any way to work with them. Could we negotiate with them as we could with any kind of person from whom we wanted to get something but who may not want to give it up. In return, they might want something from us that we probably don't want to give up. He wondered how to handle that. These guys were not to be trusted. They

were liars with an agenda which was basically inimical to U.S. interests in the area. I think that that was pretty much what he saw there.

I think that, with regard to El Salvador, he felt that these people were low life - at least the military people were, at the time when Jose Napoleon Duarte was elected President of the country. The Salvadoran military people, our allies in El Salvador, were brutal, not nice people who were used to acting expediently and were fully capable of doing all of the bad things that were attributed to them. My interpretation is that Motley had seen the same thing in Brazil as a kid growing up there. To him this situation was probably not nearly as alien as it might have been to the rest of us. Brazil is a society which, while not primitive, certainly is very basic. You know, it's a big country with a large rural area which still has the pioneer spirit. I don't know what it was really like when he was growing up. However, there was a lot of “authoritarian” activity going on. There was a military government. It had never been as brutal as the Argentine regime next door. However, he had seen that and heard about it. I think that Tony Motley may have appreciated, as a person, what was going on in the military and police structure in El Salvador. However, he was enough of a realist to say, “It's happening. We're not going to change it overnight. For the time being, these are the people with whom we have to work.”

This was opposed to the other side, which he also saw, the guerrilla front, which was equally brutal. They murdered people and didn't hesitate to do so. They carried out their own set of atrocities. I think that in terms of terribly pragmatic judgment, he felt that, “Look, this group includes a set of antagonists. We have to try to move them from where they are. If we could remove them entirely, that would be nice, but we can't do that at our will. So we have to move them in a direction that we want them to go.” He felt that these other guys were our allies. We want to see the situation improve that they are trying to manage. We can't do it for them. We have to do it through them. I consider that, in the same way that Tom Enders would not be considered a missionary; neither was Tony Motley. He did not have the missionary zeal needed to try to turn everybody into the kind of people who wear

pinafore dresses and suits and ties. He felt that we have to take what we have and move the situation in the direction that we can.

Q: You implied that there were a lot of reporters down there in Central America, representing the American media, and you named places. You seemed to imply that they were accepting, pretty uniformly, a certain stand. How would you describe it? What was your impression at that time about where the media people were coming from? How would you describe the accuracy with which they reported, the bias, and how the State Department viewed them and dealt with them?

GILLESPIE: It's terrible to over-generalize. However, I think that the journalists who were on the ground down there in Central America, particularly those from the United States, saw a set of facts and events which, to them, were newsworthy. They reported them as accurately as they could. I would contrast that with our own, U.S. Government reporting officers who were down there. That is, the Political Officers, the reporting officers from our Embassy establishments who were on the scene. I think that our Embassy officers were making an effort to see and report a broader spectrum of elements. They were forced to take a broader focus and put what they saw into the context of U.S. interests at the time and analyze how events would affect U.S. national interests. I don't know if that makes it clear, but I think that the journalists reported accurately what they saw. Since their priorities may have been to tell the story that is the hottest at the moment, they did that and did it accurately. However, those stories, from the point of view of the administration, often ended up being considered negative for policy purposes, in the sense of the way that they would impact on our policy.

For that reason I don't condemn or criticize the journalists for doing what they did and the way they did it. However, the mass of what they were reporting seemed to be negative. To go back to the beginning, Central America is a region about which very few people in the United States know anything at all. The number of people who know much about the region is infinitesimally small. A whole lot of people don't even know where Central

America is. So the news interest in Central America on the front pages of the newspapers in the United States started to grow at about the time that the Somoza regime was in the process of being overthrown. The stories were awfully simplistic, because that's the way that news stories are. There isn't a lot of time to go into deep background. The simplest stories were, “Bad guy meets good guy. Good guy wins, because he throws out bad guy, and let's not worry about the deeper problems, psychological or otherwise, that the good guy may have. He's just a good guy who threw out a bad guy.” Then the good guy comes in and, all of a sudden, the U.S. Government is saying that the good guy really isn't such a good guy. He's really a bad guy, he's doing bad things, and he ought to go. The journalists would say, “Wait a minute, the good guy's behavior that we can see is good. He is for education. He helps people. Well, maybe he uses terror.” However, that's the way that these things now seem to me to be reported.

I saw this much more vividly later. At the outset of this situation there were two kinds of journalists. There were really hot shot, famous journalists who drop in because something is going on. They have instant credibility, instant access, and the instant possibility of being published, whether it's on TV or in the written press. Then there is a group of journalists who are new on the scene. This is their big chance. They have to keep things going. It usually happens, and this is Gillespie's theory, that the hot shots come in, do a quick story, and then go on to the next big story somewhere else in the world. These other reporters remain. The quality of the news to them as journalists diminishes because it isn't quite as hot or quite as much in the headlines any more. So, they feel that they have to go and find a good story, the best story to report. They don't set out to create it, but they identify it, track it down, and do it. All of this is happening in a period when investigative journalism, criticism of governments, of bureaucracies, and of establishments is on the rise, because that is the way things are going. That created the situation regarding news coverage in Central America.

As I said, that kind of reporting was having its effect on U.S. public opinion. In the ARA front office we felt so strongly about it that we considered it necessary to set up some

kind of public affairs effort to deal with it. Not so much to counter it, but at least to give the other side of the story or the administration's side of the story. That was the journalist side. Then, as I think I may have mentioned earlier, there were growing pockets in the U.S. of native expertise because there were a lot of refugees and emigres who had gone to the U.S. They were getting into church groups and schools and were having a lot of contact. They were telling the story as they saw it, which was, “My brother was murdered by the police.” There might be somebody there who said, “Yes, but the rebels killed your sister,” or my sister. However, that didn't get the same attention because rebels were considered good. If you were fighting against established authority, which, by definition, had done bad things, then that was essentially good, and you got a kind of grace period on that or benefit of the doubt.

I got to know a number of these journalists personally, over time - much better later on than at the time that they were doing the writing. I am absolutely convinced that these people did not have major axes to grind, at least when they went down to Central America. Some of them saw things that were so bad to them that these conditions may have affected their objectivity and their judgment to some degree but not enough to turn them into bad journalists.

Q: To carry on the story, were there any major developments in Central America during the period when Tony Motley was Assistant Secretary of State for ARA?

GILLESPIE: Yes. This was the period during which, I guess, we started to see the play on Capitol Hill. This gets very arcane. There were efforts on the part of members of Congress to cut off aid to the Contras, the anti-Sandinistas. That was basically a Democratic Party line. There were Republicans in Congress who wanted to keep the aid flowing. Some of them wanted to see more aid for the governments in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. They wanted to bolster the anti-communist bases in those areas against what was seen as this movement from Nicaragua out to the North involving subversion, Soviet penetration of the area, and Cuban involvement in this effort.

That all played itself out in very involved, exciting activity from day to day and week to week. This was taking place on Capitol Hill, in the Congress. There were hearings and votes. There was a Republican administration in office whose strategy was, “Okay, if they're against us and the Contras, they're for the communists. That will be our line, and it will be a matter o'Who lost Central America?'” There was a strong belief, which I heard over and over again, initially out of the domestic end of the White House involving the national security side, “Well, we'll set this thing up so that if Congress takes away the tools that we believe are necessary to get the job done, then they will carry the blame.” “They” meaning the Democrats, who controlled Congress. The administration tried to follow that strategy in dealing with this situation. It was a we versus them, in black and white terms, good guy versus bad guy.

The fact is that there were some Democrats who were moderate in their views and were more conservative. They thought that it might be a good idea to keep some of this pressure on the Sandinistas. They believed that guns and other supplies were moving from Nicaragua into El Salvador and that that was bad. They realized, particularly after Jose Napoleon Duarte was elected in El Salvador in March 1983, that there was a civilian President in El Salvador who was trying to do what he could. However, he had this strong, military establishment to deal with. These Democrats felt that, maybe, we needed to support President Duarte of El Salvador with assistance and aid and bolster his position.

It was the kind of situation where you probably need a good road map to get through. Those were the kinds of activities that were going on. There was Harry Shlaudeman talking to the Sandinistas up in Manzanillo, Mexico, trying to see if there was any give there. As it turned out, there wasn't. It later turned out that the Sandinistas were extremely cynical about these talks. Shlaudeman had entered these talks with a skeptical attitude and sort of stayed that way but was willing to give it a try. There were the Contadora people and representatives of several Central American countries plus Mexico who were coming up with something like 23 separate initiatives. These were included in the

Contadora charter, and the Sandinistas agreed to sign on to 20 of the 23 proposals - but not the other three. The whole process became very intricate and very involved. I saw bits and pieces of all of this as they flew by my office. I would get the reports, see them, and pass them on.

Q: When Tony Motley left office, that's where things were. What about other aspects of how ARA, through Motley, was looking at other parts of Latin America?

GILLESPIE: As I said, Motley went to Chile and met with General Pinochet. Tom Enders had not gone there. Of course nobody from the Carter administration 1977-1981 had any real contact with Pinochet. Motley came back from this trip apparently impressed by the seeming tranquility and security in Santiago. At this point the Chileans were following what sounded like a set of macroeconomic policies that made sense, although they hadn't been proved yet. Motley took a lot of heat in Washington because he said that publicly. He didn't see anything wrong in doing that. This was, of course, some 10 years after President Allende had been overthrown.

The Argentine situation was moving toward a change in government, and that was one which we worked very hard on. Motley had brought in as his Deputy Assistant Secretary, dealing with South America, a man named Lowell Kilday, who had been a Political Officer in Latin America for a long time. He had been Motley's DCM Deputy Chief of Mission in Brazil. Lowell ran the South American side of things. This was an area to which Motley wanted to give attention, including Brazil. It got attention, and there were changes going on in Brazil as well. So there was a lot happening there.

However, during the summer of 1983 some disturbing intelligencreports began to come out regarding a little island called Grenada, in the Lesser Antilles. First, it was no secret that in 1979 a civilian figure in Grenada had been replaced by a revolutionary group called The New Jewel Movement. The leader of this revolutionary group was a young Grenadan named Maurice Bishop. He and his followers had taken over the country in what was

essentially a bloodless coup d'etat in 1979, more or less on the heels of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Nobody seemed to know exactly where the New Jewel Movement and Bishop were coming from. However, by 1983 it was obvious that it was probably going to cause trouble.

Q: Tony, so things were disquieting in Grenada. What was the initiaprognosis that you were getting about the New Jewel Movement?

GILLESPIE: The New Jewel Movement took over power in Grenada during the Carter administration. At that time we had an Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados, with an AID (Agency for International Development) mission. This was the resident post for an American Ambassador who was accredited to each of the island states of the Eastern Caribbean. If I remember correctly, the Ambassador was accredited to as many as seven states. Among those was Grenada. We had no resident representative on the island itself. We had an office on Antigua. We had no other resident people in the area. Everything was covered out of Barbados or Antigua. The office in Antigua was headed by an officer called a Charge d'Affaires who reported to the Ambassador in Bridgetown, Barbados.

The Ambassador at the end of the Carter administration was a woman named Sally Shelton, who later married William E. Colby, the former Director of the CIA, and is now known as Sally Shelton Colby. When she was in Barbados, Sally was unmarried. She had been given agrement and accredited by the New Jewel Movement government that ousted the civilian government in Grenada.

In 1981, when the Reagan administration came into office, a man named Milan Bish from Nebraska, a land developer and a major Republican Party contributor, was named Ambassador to Barbados. The State Department gave him the same area and the same countries as Ambassador Shelton had had. However, the Government of Grenada never gave agrement to Bish, and, certainly, he was never accredited as Ambassador to Grenada. So he had never been to Grenada during this time.

In any event, in about July, 1983, I had been formally designated as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean. I had never been to that area and didn't know it. It was new to me. I had met some of the people from that area - political leaders and others, including their diplomats in Washington. So Assistant Secretary Motley agreed that it would be a good idea for me to make a familiarization visit to the area. It was July, it was summertime, and there were lots of reasons why it was a good idea to put off this trip. However, I started to plan the visit for the month of October, 1983.

Just as those arrangements were going forward, in July, 1983, we learned, within a week of my having been formally designated Deputy Assistant Secretary, that Vice President Bush was going to make an official visit to Kingston, Jamaica, in October, 1983. So Motley and I agreed that this was great and that I should go on the airplane with Vice President Bush. That would help us get acquainted with Vice President Bush and his staff regarding the Caribbean and elsewhere. Then, after the Bush visit to Jamaica, I could start on my familiarization tour of the area from down there. I started the planning process, which was really nothing more than telling the Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados, that I was coming and that I would like to have some meetings with local government and other figures. This was two months in advance of the proposed visit.

We had a very competent Office of Caribbean Affairs, where you don't normally have a lot of good officers, because these countries are so small, and there isn't a lot going on. However, the Deputy Director of the Office was a man named Richard Brown. He was extremely competent. He had been on the NSC (National Security Council) staff during the Carter administration and had come back to the State Department, where he had been assigned to the Office of Caribbean Affairs. Rich, in effect, was managing that office.

The trip to Jamaica with Vice President Bush was interesting because the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Edward Seaga, was more conservative than his political opposition, which was led by a man named Michael Manley. To the Republicans and people from the American right Manley had been a very bad guy. He had recognized Cuba and had done all kinds

of things. He was a strong believer in a statist approach and government intervention in the economy, whereas Seaga was on the Board of Overseers of Harvard University, from which he had graduated. He was a white Jamaican, not a black man. Manley was also a Jamaican white. Seaga had a very beautiful, young wife. He spoke business and private sector language - all those things that were important to the Republicans. He was a very smart guy. Like Manley, he was also tough and quite a ruthless politician and actor in the Jamaican context, which is not all sweetness and light for anybody.

So Vice President Bush was going to Jamaica at Seaga's invitation, to make a visit, and show support for Seaga and the Jamaicans. Seaga wanted to go through a process of privatization in the economy. He particularly wanted to dump some government owned hotels which the Jamaican Government had bought into or built in years gone by and which were not making money. They were beautiful, big, white elephants. Anyway, it was decided that I would go with Vice President Bush and would be a kind of escort on his trip to Jamaica and then go on to do the Eastern Caribbean tour.

So I ended up planning to visit the Eastern Caribbean in early October, 1983. In about August or September, 1983, we started to get intelligencreports out of Grenada concerning some tensions and difficulties within the power structure of the New Jewel Movement itself. That is, the government and the political process there.

That was in addition to information about an airport being built or expanded at a place called Point Salines, at the southwest tip of Grenada. This airport was being constructed by the Cubans, allegedly for the Grenadians. It was to be a huge airport, with a runway more than 9,000 feet long. That would make it as long as the runway at Dulles Airport in Washington, DC. It was reported that it was very heavily constructed. Our intelligence people were producing aerial photographs which showed that revetments and structures were being built, along with fuel storage facilities, which were far in excess of the presumed needs of an island about 13 miles long by 10 miles wide - 130 square miles.

The Grenadian census figures showed that the island had a population of about 80,000 people. The economy was very, very small. The island grows nutmegs and vanilla beans and produces a little sugar and a little rum - not very much. It's a very mountainous island - physically very beautiful, with high peaks, a lot of jungle growth, and so on. It has lovely beaches. However, it doesn't have a big port or market. It doesn't have much of anything. Its tourism infrastructure was really small. It did not have more than a couple of resort hotels and a couple of other, smaller hotels.

Over the years Grenada has been a sort of secret hideaway for a lot of wealthy people from around the Western Hemisphere - from Venezuela, the U.S., and Britain. These wealthy people had homes here which they would visit in our winter season.

The New Jewel Movement people said that tourism was not the way to develop a society. That is an example of decadent capitalism. What they really wanted was something else. So, the question was, why were they building this huge runway and airport? There were a lot of Cubans there, building it - maybe as many as a whole construction battalion of Cuban troops. We had no representative on the island. A couple of our consular officers visited Grenada once or twice a year, to do a consular visit, check on visas, show the flag, and do whatever needed to be done. If someone from Grenada needed a visa to go to the U.S., he or she would have to come through Barbados, anyway, because that's the way the planes fly. There was no other way to go. So they did that. It's a better arrangement than sending someone to Grenada.

However, there was a very big Soviet Embassy, a big Cuban Embassy. There were Embassies from Libya, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania - virtually all of the Iron Curtain countries were physically represented there. This was during a period when the Cold War was still very much with us. In addition, Venezuela had a very small, two-man Embassy. The British had a one-man Consulate, staffed by one British officer, who was accompanied by his wife and their children. He didn't really have any Grenadian help, except in his house. The British High Commissioner in Barbados was accredited to Grenada, like our

Ambassador. The British Consulate in Grenada came under him. There was practically no other country represented in Grenada - just Iron Curtain countries in large numbers.

People in the Reagan administration were asking, “What's really going on here? Why are they building this big airport?” Well, we started to get intelligencreporting and analysis that indicated that, perhaps, this might be a good place for the Cubans to have some kind of forward base. Maybe this would be a good place for Soviet Air Force Bear reconnaissance aircraft.

Q: This was a big, four-engined plane.

GILLESPIE: A big, four-engined plane that conducts photographic, radar, and signals intelligence flights. Grenada would be a good, refueling spot for that kind of activity. It was speculated that it would be an excellent place, interestingly enough, as a stopping off and refueling point for flights from Cuba to Angola. At this time the Cubans were heavily involved with troops and people in Angola and Mozambique, in southern Africa. So we were all concerned about what Grenada was and was becoming.

We also had some reports that the Sandinistas from Nicaragua were involved, but nobody could really figure out what that was. The Cubans had put medical personnel, teachers, and combat engineers on the island.

As part of its general, public affairs approach to the region, pointing out how vulnerable all of this was to Soviet and communist penetration, the Reagan administration released some of the aerial photographs of the airport at Point Salines. This was accompanied by questions as to what all of this means.

All of that was a back drop to my getting on a plane on October 12 or 13, 1983, at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C., with Vice President and Mrs. Bush and flying down to Jamaica. We had some reporting from intelligence agents that something

was going on in Grenada itself. There was reported to be some tension within the New Jewel Movement.

In Jamaica we first went to the North coast, to a resort area near Montego Bay for Marcus Garvey day. Marcus Garvey was a black Jamaican who came to the U.S. and established himself in New York back in the 19th century, I guess it was.

Q: I think that it was early in the 20th century up in New York.

GILLESPIE: Yes. He was something of a hero to the blacks.

Q: I remember seeing old pictures of him in something like aadmiral's uniform.

GILLESPIE: Yes, but he established a strong movement among the blacks. In Jamaica he was viewed as a hero. Vice President Bush went down to the North coast of Jamaica and made some sort of speech. This area was where Garvey was from. He also did some “administrative time” on the golf course.

Then we flew down to Kingston for an official visit. That's where I came into play. We met with Prime Minister Seaga. As we were meeting - this was now about October 15 or 16, 1983 - we got reports, both through Embassy Kingston channels and over the news broadcasts that there was trouble in Grenada and that all kinds of things were happening, though it was not at all clear exactly what it was. We talked to the Jamaicans about it. We had a long talk with Seaga, who was trying to find out what this was all about. He had a network of communications to all of the rest of the islands in the Caribbean. People were very worried. There was reportedly some tension between Prime Minister Bishop and some other people in his New Jewel Movement in Grenada, but nobody knew exactly what it was. Then a general in the People's Army of Grenada said, in effect - in the manner of Secretary of State Al Haig at the time of the attack on President Reagan in 1981 - “Don't worry. Everything is under control. We're all okay here.”

This was broadcast in English, interestingly enough, over all of the broadcasting stations in the Caribbean, which are joined in a large network. I actually listened to this broadcast in a car as we were going to a wreath-laying ceremony. This general talked almost eternally - you couldn't figure out what was going on. It was hard to concentrate on it, but it didn't sound very good. He did not announce that there had been a military takeover, or anything like that. This was about October 17, 1983.

We had a meeting with Prime Minister Seaga. He said, “This is not good. It doesn't portend well for the future of the Eastern Caribbean if this kind of thing is going on. However, maybe it's an internal affair and maybe it'll be resolved.”

We had breakfast the next morning, October 18, at the Embassy Residence with former Prime Minister Michael Manley, who was the leader of the opposition to the Seaga Government, but not in the formal sense. He had taken himself and his party out of the opposition. However, he met with us because he was important. I suggested to Vice President Bush in his talking points that he should ask Manley about the situation in Grenada, which he did. At the breakfast Vice President Bush was sitting across the table from Manley and said, “Well, Mr. Prime Minister, tell me what you think about what's going on in Grenada.” Manley looked at Bush and said, “I'm really worried. I think that Maurice Bishop is an honest and good man who has the interest of his people at heart. However, there are people around him who are not good, who are bad, and who have really totalitarian ideas. I'm concerned about that, and we'll have to watch that situation very carefully because, if the situation moves in that direction, for any reason, then we will have to take some action. We will not be able to abide that.”

It was a fascinating statement by Manley. At the moment it seemed like something that you might expect. Well, we completed the visit and flew up to San Juan, Puerto Rico, where Bush was going to make a speech on the night of October 18 to a conference of mayors from all around the Western Hemisphere. He suggested that I come with him to that conference and then we would say goodbye. So I did that. I then caught a British West

Indian Airlines (BWIA) flight on October 19 to Bridgetown, Barbados. Meantime, we hadn't heard much of anything out of Grenada. It all seemed to be very quiet. I got off the airplane at Grantley Adams Airport in Bridgetown, Barbados, and met Kim Flower, the DCM at our Embassy in Bridgetown, a career Foreign Service Officer. He greeted me and said, “Come on, Tony, Maurice Bishop has been killed.” I said, “What!” He said, “Yes, we're getting reports that he's been assassinated. The Ambassador would like you to come right to the Embassy.”

So we went to our small Embassy, which was on the fourth or fifth floor of an office building in downtown Bridgetown. We went to the office of Milan Bish, the Ambassador, a big, husky man from Nebraska. He had seven Presidential Commissions framed and on the wall behind him for each of his “Embassies.” Ambassador Bish said, “We don't really know what's going on. We're getting radio and telephone reports. It sounds as if there's been a horrible massacre in Grenada. Maybe hundreds and hundreds of people have been murdered, including the Prime Minister.”

This is how the whole Grenadan situation began for me. AmbassadoBish said, “Prime Minister Adams wants to meet with me this afternoon.”

Q: Adams was Prime Minister of Barbados.

GILLESPIE: This was Tom Adams, the Prime Minister of Barbados. He was the son of the Grantley Adams, after whom the airport had been named. Tom Adams had been the Prime Minister of Barbados for several years. He was a very well respected politician from the Eastern Caribbean. Adams had asked Ambassador Bish to come and see him that afternoon. Bish said, “I'd like you to come with me.” He addressed me as “Deputy Assistant Secretary.” We were not at all on a first name basis.

We eventually got into the Ambassador's car. I had seen all of the reporting which the Embassy had regarding Grenada, which was fragmentary. We telephoned to Washington to see if they knew anything more about the situation. There was no secure telephone

in the Embassy. We went to see Prime Minister Adams at 5:00 or 6:00 PM in his office. His Foreign Minister was there and one or two other key advisers. We talked for about an hour. Prime Minister Adams said, “Look, this situation in Grenada is really bad. I'm concerned that this is the beginning of something terrible in the Eastern Caribbean.” Barbados took the position that, although it was not a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), an organization of small, island states. Adams said, “We're not a member of the OECS, although we are closely tied to all of these people. I've been talking to all of these Prime Ministers since the news of this incident was reported. We're trying to find out what's going on but we cannot accept this situation.” He looked at Ambassador Bish and said, “The United States will have to help.” Then he looked at me and said, “Mr. Deputy Assistant Secretary, I'm so glad that you're here because I will expect you to take this message to your government and reinforce whatever the Ambassador is doing,” and so on. The conversation was all very nice and relaxed, though serious.

Ambassador Bish said, “Gillespie is here on a familiarization tour. He plans to fly to the other Caribbean capitals. I guess that we'll scrub that now.” Adams looked at me and said, “Well, what were you going to do tomorrow?” I said, “I'm supposed to fly up to St. Lucia to sign an aid agreement worth a couple of million dollars with the Prime Minister there.” Adams said, “Well, the Prime Minister in St. Lucia is John Compton. If I may, I would suggest that you go up there.” He said, “You have your own airplane.” This was true. Our Embassy in Barbados had a two-engine Cessna 404, which was nicknamed Air Banana. It was under lease to the Embassy in Barbados because the Ambassador and his staff had to cover all of these islands. So we agreed that I would go up to St. Lucia with an AID officer. St. Lucia also happened to be the headquarters of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. The Secretary General of the organization, who was a St. Lucia at the time, was there. I planned to meet with him and see how they see things concerning the situation in Grenada.

We went to St. Lucia and stayed up until 2:00 AM on October 20. I have been involved in a fair amount of crisis management situations, both during my Foreign Service career and in the Bureau of American Republics Affairs. So Kim Flower said to Ambassador Bish, “Mr. Ambassador, you might want to ask Tony Gillespie to give us some ideas on how we can organize ourselves.” Basically, Kim had some ideas and he basically wanted me to reinforce them.

So I said, “Yes, I think that Kim has the right idea. You ought to set up a Task Force, including consular officers and others. There are American citizens on Grenada. By this time we were being told that 450 people had been shot and killed in the disorders in Grenada. The situation sounded really bad. We were talking to the British High Commission in Barbados, which was talking to its representative in Grenada. We had a CIA office in Bridgetown, but it was very small in this backwater. We had a military attache who really wasn't very effective, as it turned out. Actually, as I learned later, he was a relative of friends of mine in California. He was down in Barbados having a wonderful time on the golf courses, the beaches, and so on.

In any event we set up a Task Force. We decided that we would keep a couple of people on duty all night - all of those things that you usually do. We called the State Department in Washington, which was setting up a similar Task Force, with which we could establish contact and so on. We did all of those mechanical things but we still didn't know what was happening on Grenada.

On October 21 I got up very early and went out to the airport in Barbados and flew up to St. Lucia. I walked into a very small office complex at Government House, the Prime Minister's office. I was introduced to a man behind his desk, a sort of fire plug of a guy, bald-headed, with a nice tan. This was John Compton, the Prime Minister in St. Lucia. He shook my hand and said, “All right Mr. Secretary, we have to talk but let's go and sign this aid agreement.” We went through a door into a little conference room with a lot of people

there. He and I made some remarks about a program having something to do with road building.

Press representatives were there, and they immediately began to ask, “What are you going to do about Grenada? What's happening?” Prime Minister Compton looked at me and said in a low voice, “Do you have anything that you really want to say to the press now?” I said, “No, other than that, we're monitoring the situation and are very concerned about it.” So he said, “Say that,” and I did. Then he said to the press, “We in the Eastern Caribbean have the same concerns.” He expressed really deep concern about the situation. He said that nobody seemed to know what the details were and that we were trying to find out. He wound it up, saying to the press, “Thank you very much.” Then we went next door to his office.

Then, when the door was closed, he turned on me and grabbed me by the arms. He said, “What the hell are you going to do about this? We have a parliamentary democracy in this part of the Caribbean. This situation is a threat to us.” He went on and revealed that there had been similar statements out of Guadeloupe a French overseas department an other islands. He said, “Look, we're taking this very seriously. We're going to need help. You have to be with us, and we have to be with you. We don't know what's going on and we'll have to find out, but I want you to know how seriously we take this whole thing.” He said that he had been talking to the prime ministers of the various islands. I said, “I'll make sure that Washington knows exactly what you think. You've made the point very strongly.” He said, “This is some kind of counterrevolution or revolution, a new stage in this situation. If it is anti-democratic, is not going to be positive, and is threatening to us, we will not stand for it. We're talking to the British Government because we want to find out what the British will do.” And he went on and on.

So I went off and had lunch with key staff members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, including the Secretary General. I got a big dose of the same comments. There were a couple of Grenadians there who were not at all in agreement

with what was being said. They said, “No, there are no problems in Grenada.” However, the other people from the other islands were very concerned about what was happening, although there was a lack of real information. People were still trying to sort out what was going on.

Then I got on the airplane and flew back to Bridgetown, Barbados on October 22. There we learned that “maybe 150 or a couple of hundred people” had been killed in Grenada. The key consideration is that we had pretty solid information that Prime Minister Bishop and five members of his cabinet had been gunned down in the big fortress which overlooks the harbor in the capital city of St. George's, Grenada. That was really bad news.

I then focused on the situation affecting U.S. citizens in Grenada. The consular officer at the Embassy in Barbados came in and filled us in on the situation. He had big charts. He said that, in addition to a few vacationers and others, there were about 1,000 U.S. citizens who were students at St. George's Medical School.

Q: Was this the first time you had heard about it?

GILLESPIE: I knew that the school was there, but at this point we really hadn't focused on the fact that there were about 1,000 U.S. citizen students there. This was an offshore medical school attended by students who couldn't get into a medical school in the U.S. They paid high tuition rates and got a medical education. Then they had to come back to the U.S. and take special examinations. If they passed the examinations, they could practice medicine in the U.S. It was an “overflow” mechanism and a highly profitable one for training doctors to practice in the U.S.

The next thing I knew was that I had a call from Rich Brown who, as I think I mentioned, was the Acting Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs in the State Department. He said, “There's a real flap going on here, Tony. Forget the politics of the revolution for the moment. The chairmen of this group or that are calling Assistant Secretary Motley and

the President. We've got 1,000 students down there, and everybody is scared to death. They want to know how many of them are dead and how many alive, and so forth." We then had to focus on a major American citizen protection and welfare operation, with what turned out to be, quite frankly, a very marginally competent consular staff in the Embassy in Barbados. There were some very nice, young, but terribly inexperienced officers. When I met with them and with Ambassador Bish that afternoon October 22, we said, "We need to have some volunteers to be ready to go to Grenada." One young woman among them said, "But they're shooting over there. We're not going to go. I'm not going to go. No, you'll have to get somebody else."

This was really something. Ambassador Bish said, "Wait a minute, where's Foreign Service discipline?" I said, "What are you people talking about?" Well, as it turned out, we had some volunteers who said that they would be prepared to go to Grenada. Then we tried to figure out how we could get some people over there. Well, Ambassador Bish had never been accredited there. We had a couple of consular officers from Barbados who had visited Grenada, but it usually took weeks to make the arrangements for the trip because we were not considered particularly friendly by the Grenadian Government.

Then we met with the British High Commissioner in Barbados and asked if his representative in Grenada could help us. He said that he would do anything that he could. We started getting some reporting back from the British Consul in Grenada who said that the situation was not very good. The Grenadian Government had declared a 24-hour, shoot on sight curfew. The People's Army of Grenada, composed of young, tough guys with AK-47 assault rifles, had started to appear on the streets. There was shooting going on at night. There was a blackout, a lot of noise, fires, and all kinds of things going on. Nobody really knew what was happening, not even the British Consul. The Consul said that he had tried to go up to Ft. Rupert, which had been named for Prime Minister Bishop's father, to find out what was happening. However, he couldn't get near the place because it was all cordoned off. The word he had was that Bishop and his ministers had definitely been killed, in addition to others, but nobody knew how many. Reportedly, a lot of people

had jumped the walls of Ft. Rupert to get away from the shooting. Ft. Rupert was not a real military installation. A lot of people had been there, and they jumped over the wall and might have died in the fall. So there might be dead people all around.The British Consul said, “Your American students are down at one end of the island, near the airport at Point Salines, where the Cubans are expanding the landing strip.” He said that there hadn't been any shooting out there. He said, “However, some of the students are boarders in individual homes, closer in to town. It's a tense situation. A lot of these students are bright kids. However, they're full of beans. If they go out on the streets, they could get themselves into trouble. They are medical students. They never have been happy with this communist, socialist government down here.” It turned out that the British Consul was a good British socialist who got along well with the New Jewel Movement people. However, he said, a lot of the American students are pretty strongly anti-communist. He said, “If they become convinced that this is really a communist takeover, I'm concerned about what they might say and do.”

It was obvious that this was a growing problem. The political situation was clearly at a crisis stage. There were Grenadian generals broadcasting on the radio, declaring a curfew, and so forth. There was a powerful radio broadcasting station built with either Cuban or Soviet money which was broadcasting all over the Caribbean, spewing forth a lot of anti U.S. and anti-capitalist rhetoric. The broadcasts said that everything was calm and under control. As I said, we had at least 1,000 U.S. citizens on Grenada. We were getting reports about a situation which certainly was unclear and unconfirmed but which led us to believe that there was a crisis on the island. Let's stop at this point.

Q: We'll break off here. You had received reports from the British Consul on Grenada that the American students were more or less safe, but things could really get nasty. Where were you at this point?

GILLESPIE: I was at the American Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados.

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Q: Today is July 31, 1996. Okay, Tony, you were talking about the situation in Grenada on October 22, 1983. You had heard a report that, as far as was known, the American students were safe, but it was a very dicey situation. Go ahead.

GILLESPIE: We were trying to watch the situation in Grenada from the vantage point of the American Embassy in Barbados. Regrettably, I don't recall how much detail we went into before. I don't recall whether I had said that we sent American consular officers over to Grenada. However, we sent Ken Kurze, the chief of the Political Section in Barbados, a consular officer named Linda Flor, the chief of the Consular Section, and, I believe, one other consular officer. After some difficulty they were able to get to Grenada by light plane and land there. They made contact with the British Consul in Grenada and began to verify, first hand, what the situation was.

Linda Flor, the consular officer, was to concentrate on what the situation was on the ground. She was to try to get an impression of what was going on with the People's Army of Grenada and the Grenadian Government. Ken Kurze was the senior U.S. official in Grenada. We were going to count on him, not only to give us the benefit of his judgment but to negotiate with the Grenadian Government whatever might need to be done. The Chief of the Consular Section in Barbados, whose name I cannot remember at this point, had also gone to Grenada. He and the other consular officer with him were to check out the situation affecting the thousand or so Americans in Grenada.

Q: Were you concentrating on getting the Americans out of Grenada owere you thinking about a U.S. intervention?

GILLESPIE: At this point, because of everything that had gone before, I think that we had already begun to think of what could be called, euphemistically, a non-permissive evacuation of Americans. That is, we would have to go in to get the Americans out, without

agreement from the Grenadian authorities, whoever they might be.I have recently returned from a visit to the Caribbean and had a number of conversations with Trinidadians about the Grenada affair. I'm a little confused about how much I've said in this interview and what I discussed with the Trinidadians.

We thought, from everything that we knew, that the situation in Grenada was certainly confused. We'd had reports from Grenada from ham radio operators, from the British Consul, and from others that there were problems on the island. There could be, and likely were, trigger happy, young Grenadian military people, armed with weapons which they knew how to use. They might use these weapons, and people could really get hurt.

Certainly, after Ken Kurze arrived in Grenada, and perhaps even before, we may have had some contact with officials of the Grenadian Government. This was sort of an interim government, because Prime Minister Bishop had been killed, and nobody was quite sure who was really in charge. We were considering bringing in resources if the Americans in Grenada wanted to leave. Remember, you still have to go through a series of steps when you're in a situation like this. The U.S. Government can never really order its citizens to leave a place. It can make the facilities available for them to leave, it can recommend and urge them to leave, but it cannot force people out.

We had a situation where the head of the St. George's Medical School, a privately-owned institution, was on the ground in Grenada. He was resident there. I think that he was British by birth. He kept saying, “There's no problem.” The chairman of the board of the medical school, where the students were going through their studies, was in Manhattan. He was on the phone to the State Department - and even to me, on a couple of occasions, in Bridgetown - saying, “There's a problem there. Get those students out. You've got to help us get those kids out.” So there was a clash between the two most senior officials of the medical school as to the nature and extent of the problem.

All of this led us to believe, at the Embassy in Bridgetown, and, I'm sure, this view was also held by many people in Washington, that, whatever else might be happening, we had a citizen protection problem on our hands which we were going to have to deal with. That view sort of set up one track. The other track was that we were under intense pressure from a variety of points - which ultimately fused together. In the United States there were those who said, “This is all a Cuban plot. The communists are coming and they're going to take over Grenada. Somebody has to do something about it, and it had better be the United States.” There were people within the Reagan administration, in the military, in the intelligence community, and even in the State Department, who said, “This is an opportunity to set right a bad situation. We could go in there and set the situation straight. That is, make sure that we neutralize the military force that's on the island and certainly neutralize, if not remove, the Cuban presence, which is bothersome, and prevent that large airport at Point Salines from ever becoming a Cuban or Soviet air base,” which is what many people thought that it was proposed to be.

The strategy that ultimately was chosen was to get ready to do all of the above. All of the above involved trying to get the American students out of Grenada, with the cooperation of the Grenadian authorities. That is, the Grenadian Government would facilitate this evacuation, and the students would be out of there. Then we would try to decide what to do about the other problem, but we also prepared to get those American students out of there in case the Grenadian Government says, “No, we're not going to let you do that,” or, “We're not going to help you,” and the danger level would rise.

So we were looking at two approaches. The idea was to be ready to do whatever we have to do. We were in a tight time frame. This all began on October 19, 1983. It was now October 22, 1983. This situation began with the assassination or murder of Maurice Bishop on October 19.

Q: Speaking of dates, did the blowing up of our Marine Barracks in Lebanon happen just prior to this?

GILLESPIE: It happened during this time, on October 23. We can get into that later on. The strategic approach which I mentioned before led us to prepare for a non-permissive evacuation. If you are going to intervene and take out the American students with military force, then, obviously, other things will happen at the same time, when we had military forces on the ground.

In any event, in Bridgetown, Barbados, where I was, we focused on all aspects of the situation. In addition to what was going on in the U.S., which I referred to - the different pressures on President Reagan, Secretary of State George Schultz, Robert (”Bud”) McFarlane, who was the National Security Adviser to the President, on members of Congress, and others - we also had in the Caribbean a group of five or six Prime Ministers from the Eastern Caribbean states, organized in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). There was also Barbados, which was not a member of the Association but probably had the largest economy in the islands North of Trinidad and East of Jamaica. The Prime Minister of Barbados was Tom Adams. There were also the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Eddy Seaga.

It turned out that of the OECS members - all former British colonies which were now independent - plus Barbados and Jamaica, only Jamaica really had something that you could begin to think of as a military establishment. Barbados had the Barbados Defense Force, but it was really rudimentary, with a couple of British officers who had helped Barbados to set it up since independence. They had an officer who was a Colonel on October 18. Within days Prime Minister Tom Adams promoted him to Brigadier General and said that he was going to expand the force.

As part of our security strategy for the region, and with much more of an eye on narcotics trafficking than on other forms of security threats, although those were not absent, we had

helped establish a structure. One of the items that I was down in the Eastern Caribbean to discuss was participation in the Regional Security System, the RSS. This was a means of taking the Barbados Defense Force, which was military, and then melding it in with the police establishments or constabularies of the various other islands. These were the local police, with red and white insignia on their hats, wearing London “Bobby” uniforms in the hot climate there. They were really police who received support from Scotland Yard in Britain.

From the outset the five OECS states, Barbados, and Jamaica said, “This situation in Grenada is an abomination which we, as democrats, constitutionally organized, and as parliamentary democracies, cannot accept. Therefore, we are going to do something about it. Is the U.S. with us in this?” They tried to get Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain to do something, but she said, “No.”

Q: I think that this is very interesting, because Margaret Thatcher, as Prime Minister of Great Britain, was known as The Iron Lady. As you mentioned at some length, we had supported her in the Falklands crisis, under a great deal of pressure. However, on this issue the British, who in this case had primary responsibility, sort of weasled out.

Gillespie: There were different angles on this. First, the British felt that their responsibilities ended with the “Sterling handshake,” or grant of money, which they had given the Eastern Caribbean islands in the 1970s, when the islands became independent. Prime Minister Thatcher and everybody else in Britain wanted to stay as far away from this area as they could. Otherwise, it would become continually dependent on Britain. It was the British who bought the bananas and the British to whom these people turned. There were still some aid relationships. The British had thought that, by giving them all a Sterling handshake at the time of independence of these islands, the British could walk away and leave them alone. The fact is that they couldn't.

I don't know what was really going through Prime Minister Thatcher's mind at the time, but she had just concluded the Falklands War in 1982. The British had just suffered some loss of life there in the campaign to regain the Falklands. They did not have any military assets anywhere near the Eastern Caribbean area. Everything was either far to the South, down near the Falkland Islands, or back home in Britain. There was one British frigate steaming somewhere in the region, but I don't recall exactly where it was. Eventually, it joined in with the American led operation in Grenada.

I think that the other consideration which really frosted Margaret Thatcher was that the Eastern Caribbean states had gone to us before they went to her. I'm not sure what kind of reporting she was getting from the British High Commissioner in Barbados and how that was affecting British thinking. Mrs. Thatcher and President Reagan were often on the phone, discussing a lot of things. My recollection isn't good enough to recall whether they discussed the Grenadian affair on the phone or to any extent, although I think that they did. Basically, she was reluctant to commit any British resources, other than what were available in the immediate area. The other thing was that time was of the essence. That probably was a message that she was getting. However, she was never very happy with U.S. behavior regarding the Grenadian affair.

The other people who weren't happy with us about this were the Canadians. I remember that Larry Eagleburger, who was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, had a terribly difficult time with the then Canadian Ambassador to the United States.

Q: Was that Gottlieb?

GILLESPIE: I think that it was Ambassador Gottlieb. They got into a real shouting match over Grenada in Larry's office. As this situation moved toward a military solution, I think that more people in Washington probably had the military aspect on their minds, rather than the protection of the American students. This was the case with Canadian observers who said, “Ah ha! This is right wing Ronnie's opportunity to go in and get the commies, and

they're going to milk it for everything that it's worth." So they saw that aspect of it. I suspect that some other people were saying that they didn't want any part of it.

However, the story down in the islands was fascinating. The eloquence and the vehemence with which the Eastern Caribbean Prime Ministers were saying, "We've got to resolve this situation in Grenada. We have to move, and the U.S. has to help us because we can't do it by ourselves. This is democracy being saved." I think that they really believed this. I don't think that this was at all phoney on their part. A couple of these island prime ministers in the previous two or three years had gone through something serious in this regard. In Dominica Prime Minister Eugenia Charles had had an armed attack on her government. Guess who came in and fixed that! It was the French from Martinique, who sent a couple of their cutters up to Dominica. They did this without a by your leave. They just went in, grabbed the armed men, took them away and put them in prison. or set things straight very quickly, without any discussion. Nobody went to the United Nations. It was just done. Sometimes, that's the way the French operate. Prime Minister Eugenia Charles was grateful to the French on this occasion.

Remember, the Sandinista revolution had taken place in Nicaragua, followed by an attempted communist takeover elsewhere in Central America. Then there was this revolution in Grenada in 1979, when the New Jewel Movement and Maurice Bishop had come to power. They declared themselves to be communists and said that they were going to bring communism to the New World. Then, a year or two later, there was the rebellion in Dominica against Prime Minister Eugenia Charles. So the island Prime Ministers saw this as very much of a piece. They thought that this violent outbreak in Grenada was looming very much in their futures. They didn't want any more of it. They wanted this kind of violence out of there.

So it fell to me and Ambassador Milan Bish in Bridgetown, Barbados, to sit down with the island Prime Ministers and discuss the situation. On the one hand we were looking very carefully at the consular problem involving perhaps 1,000 American students in Grenada.

We were also looking at the political security and military parts of it. We reported these matters in as much detail as possible to Washington.

I think that I mentioned to you that the U.S. military sent a plane down to bring Prime Minister Eugenia Charles up to Washington to explain to President Reagan and others the seriousness of the situation. I don't remember the date - whether it was October 21 or 22, but it was one of those days. I had been talking on the telephone to Assistant Secretary Motley in Washington and said that the staff of the Embassy in Bridgetown was not sufficient to deal with this situation. It was deficient in several respects - in terms of numbers and in terms of capacity, I think.

Q: By capacity you mean capability?

GILLESPIE: Yes. The officers assigned to the Embassy in Bridgetown were a real mix. Some of them were very good and some of them were not. We had decided very early that we needed to send some people over to Grenada. As I mentioned, when it came time to send Ken Kurze and the other officers to Grenada, we kept running into roadblocks. The Grenadian authorities said, “Yes, you can send somebody,” but then the plane on which they were traveling wasn't given permission to land. Or they would say, “It's not convenient for them to come.” This raised everybody's suspicions about what the Grenadians were doing and what they planned to do.

In any event the DCM in Barbados, Kim Flower, reported back to Ambassador Bish and to me that, not only could they not find volunteers to go to Grenada, but some people wanted to leave Barbados and go back to the United States because they were afraid. These were commissioned Foreign Service Officers of the United States! They were assigned to Bridgetown, nearly 200 miles away. In that sense this experience was disappointing. There were others who performed very well. The senior consular officer in Antigua, who was a former tight end for the Washington Redskins, was on the phone right away. He said,

“What can I do to help?” He wanted to be a part of it. He came down to Barbados and he was very good at organizing and getting things done.

In any event I asked Assistant Secretary Motley if he would send me Larry Rossin. You may recall, I had been the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations in the ARA Bureau. Larry Rossin was the second-ranking Staff Assistant in the office. However, Larry had been a Political Officer, during an earlier tour. So he knew the territory. He'd been to Grenada and knew it. I asked Motley if I could have him. I asked Larry Rossin if there were anyone else whom he could recommend. He said, “Yes, there's an officer working on UN Affairs in the office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, named Barbro Owens.” He said that Barbro had been a Political Officer when he had been in Barbados and that she was well clued into the region. Larry urged me to ask for Barbro, which I did. Motley put them on a Lear jet small, jet-powered passenger airplane that came down to Barbados. Larry Rossin and Barbro Owens did a fantastic job and really added a lot to the operation.

CIA (Central intelligencAgency) sent down half a dozen people. DOD (Department of Defense) started sending people in. All of this was either part of existing plans or ad hoc arrangements to get ready to do whatever had to be done. We eventually built the whole operation up rather dramatically, but most of that happened after the troops went in.

Anyway, with regard to Grenada itself, we got Ken Kurze and company in. They started sending back the reports, which were troubling in the extreme because they could never pin down the Grenadian Major who was the main point of contact. Remember, the Foreign Minister had been murdered up in Ft. Rupert, so there was no Foreign Minister. Our officers were dealing with a Major, whose name slips my mind now. The Major would say, for example, “Yes, if any of these American students wants to leave, they'll be able to leave. All they have to do is say so, and you can bring a ship in.” So the Administrative and Consular people up in the State Department in Washington got in touch with Cunard and other cruise lines. They had ships lined up, ready to come in to Grenada. So we were

saying, get those ships moving down there, because we may have to use them. There was no commitment as yet, but we were ready to pay for them.

Ken Kurze would go over to the Major and say, “Okay, we have a ship that will be coming in on such and such a date.” The Major would say, “Oh, no, it can't land. That's not permitted. I'm sorry. We're going to have to close the port. The ship will not be able to come in.” There was no airfield, no place for planes to land, except a very small, light aircraft strip in the northern part of the island.

Q: Were you getting any analysis? Were the Grenadians playing gamewith you?

GILLESPIE: Well, we had to guess. We really couldn't tell. Remember, we had no one on that island doing political reporting. The CIA had no one and no assets on that island. The British had their Consul, who was a very smart guy. He was highly suspicious of what was going on. He did not trust the Grenadian Government people but he couldn't tell. Remember, the Prime Minister and five of his cabinet ministers had just been murdered. A man described as “general “ Henry Austin had just taken over the Grenadian military. He said, “Don't worry, I'm in charge. Everything's okay.” Then came the 24-hour curfew, with shoot on sight orders to the troops and all kinds of problems. Then came Bernard Coard and his wife who, as we learned over time, were the instigators of the whole thing. They were the leaders of the group that killed Bishop and his ministers. They were there, but Coard wasn't acting aPrime Minister. There was the Governor General, who was accessible to the British Consul and a few other people. He was Sir Paul Scoon. Initially, he was reluctant to blow the whistle too hard, although he cooperated fully with us afterwards, as I will mention later, particularly after he concluded that the situation had gone further than anyone thought that it would.

It was very hard to judge what was behind the factual situation with which we were dealing. For example, we would ask, “Can we bring in a ship?” We were told, “Yes, you may.” We would ask, “Can we bring in a ship tomorrow?” We were told, “No, the port will

be closed." We would ask, "Well, when will the port be open?" We would be told, "We don't know." Meanwhile, there was a shoot-on-sight curfew. We were advised, "Tell everybody to stay down." We were getting this by telephone and by ham radio. We had no Embassy in Grenada, and there were no secure communications.

Q: Were you getting any indication of what the Cuban labor battalion,what these military troops were doing?

GILLESPIE: Very little indication of what they were doing at that particular time. The situation on Grenada was all very shielded from our sight. When our people were there, they were escorted and were with Grenadan officials, either military or civilian. Nobody had the free run of the island. Linda Flor was out trying to learn what she could, but she was having trouble finding out and was reporting back, because neither she nor anyone else could easily pick up a telephone and say, "Well, there are six battalions of troops lined up this way or that way..." Whether they were there or not was irrelevant. She couldn't have that conversation under the circumstances. The assumption was that we knew that there were Soviets, Cubans, Libyans, Hungarians, and all kinds of other, Eastern European, Iron Curtain country representatives there on that island. We were pretty sure that they had intelligence capabilities of their own and could monitor phone lines and do other things. Everybody was very careful in talking to our people in Grenada because we didn't want them to get into trouble.

So we really didn't know what the situation was. We had to interpret it as best we could. The Deputy British High Commissioner in Barbados flew over to Grenada and flew back. He was an interesting guy. He was more concerned than the British High Commissioner in Barbados about the nature of the developments on Grenada. He acted a little independently of his boss. He went out on a limb, met with us, and told us that the situation in Grenada was pretty bad and was quite serious. He said that he wasn't sure that his boss, the British High Commissioner in Barbados, was reporting it precisely in this way to London and to Whitehall. He also brought back a message from Sir Paul

Scoon, the Governor General in Grenada. I'm not sure that it's public knowledge that the Deputy British High Commissioner was Scoon's messenger. He brought back an oral message, not in writing, from Sir Paul Scoon that said, “We need help.” There wasn't time to write it down and, therefore, it was questionable because this British official had already expressed his concern.

So we had to be very careful about how we dealt with that. Washington was very concerned, but we assumed that the message from Sir Paul Scoon was accurately phrased and that it was valid. It was at that point that we realized that we had to figure out a way to get some message from Scoon that they really needed help, which would be usable in the event that anything happened. The OECS people took it at face value and said that that was good enough for them. We said that issues of war and peace would have to be dealt with under Article 51 of the UN Charter. As it turned out, Chapter VIII of the OAS (Organization of American States) charter authorized coming to the aid of a member country. We were trying to figure out if there was a way for Scoon to get that message through British Commonwealth channels. Could he, as the Queens's alter ego, get that message back, through the Secretary General of the British Commonwealth, to the Queen, who would then get it to the British Government? This turned out to be very difficult. Communications with London were very difficult - maybe they were being interfered with. Nobody was quite sure.

Finally, we got the word back from Scoon that they needed help. At the same time Ken Kurze said to me on the phone or otherwise, “Look, this situation has gone past the point of no return. We're over the threshold. Anything could happen here. We have all of these American students, some of whom are scared out of their wits, and others of whom are not. There are people here with guns and fingers on the triggers. We have students who are drinking and want to go out and fight the Grenadian troops. You can imagine the situation. 1,000 young people, medical students. Some of them are 'nutty and some of them are not.” He felt that they could do anything. They were living all around the place,

not in a single location. They were not living near the airport, where the Medical School was. They were living all around the place, including in St. George's, the capital.

Ken Kurze sent this message back to us. We sent it on to Washington. I talked to Assistant Secretary Motley, Secretary of State Schultz, and to other people. I said, “Look, this is the situation with the students. Things have now gone too far. If we don't move now or are ready to move on a moment's notice, we will have failed in our responsibilities. We have to be ready to move.” Washington was reaching the same conclusion. There was a consensus of views there.

At the same time the OECS was saying, “Scoon needs help. This situation needs to be set right. We want to do something. We can't do it without your help. You must help us.” At that point Washington said, “Well, we have to be really sure about this.” Several meetings had been held in the White House Situation Room. President Reagan was a reluctant warrior. He did not easily send troops anywhere. On about October 22 the President and his advisers said that they ought to check all of this. They looked around for somebody to send down to Grenada as a special representative. Prime Minister Eugenia Charles from Dominica was up in Washington. She was returning home. It was decided to send Ambassador Frank McNeill on the plane with her. Frank was a career Foreign Service Officer who was in the Bureau of intelligencResearch. He was on vacation in Newport, Rhode Island. He was contacted by phone and told to pack light clothes and come to Washington right away. He did and got on the plane with Prime Minister Eugenia Charles.

Assistant Secretary Motley told me on the phone that Washington needed someone to provide an independent assessment, so Ambassador Frank McNeill was being sent down to Barbados. He wanted him to meet with me and asked me to make sure that he met with all of the key figures in connection with the Grenadian affair. So Ambassador McNeill arrived in Barbados. We had one meeting with the OECS people in the Barbados Foreign Ministry. In a private meeting with me - in the bathroom - McNeill said to me, “We've got to do this. There's no other way. I'm convinced.”

So we figured out what we needed. The consular aspect was being taken care of. Now we had the other, political and security aspect. We needed commitments on paper with details on who was going to do what and to whom. McNeill had come down to Barbados with Major GeneraGeorge Crist, a rising Marine Corps general who was assigned to the Joint Staff under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. GeneraCrist, Ambassador McNeill, Ambassador Bish, and others, including myself, listed what was needed. Eventually, McNeill and I wound up setting down what needed to be done. We began the process of preparing the memoranda. McNeill and I reported back to Washington by secure voice channel from the Embassy in Barbados. That seemed to get the military ball moving.

Then Major GeneraCrist said, “They're not going to believe this. We're not ready to do this. You'd have to put dynamite under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. You'd have to put dynamite under CINCLANT (Commander in Chief, Atlantic),” the military command in Norfolk which would be involved.

Well, at that point there was already a Task Force in being, designated JTF-120 (Joint Task Force 120), under the command of Vice Admiral Joe Metcalf. It was based in Norfolk and came under CINCLANT. I didn't learn of this until later, but JTF-120 was assigned the task of conducting the operation in Grenada. One of my other colleagues, Craig Johnstone, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary oState for American Republics Affairs, normally handled Central America. However, he picked up my responsibilities when I was down in the Eastern Caribbean. Craig and a Navy Commodore or Rear Admiral, Second Half, were sent down to Norfolk to meet with Admiral McDonald, CINCLANT. Either Admiral McDonald or someone on his staff said that he understood what the mission was. This was about October 22. Admiral McDonald said that it would take about four weeks to prepare for this operation.

Well, all of our reporting stated that this situation could blow up at any time. This young Commodore got up and told Admiral McDonald, “Admiral, you don't have four weeks. You've got, at most, five days.” The Admiral just laughed at him. This Commodore looked

over at Craig Johnstone. Craig, a good Foreign Service Officer, pounded the table and said, “Admiral, you just don't understand this, do you? The President is about to issue an order. If you're not prepared to comply with that order, you're probably going to be out of the Navy.” It was just amazing. They went through the whole situation. At that point it all settled down, although tempers flared from time to time. In fact, they prepared the operations plan.

The way it worked was that there was a Marine Amphibious Unit, a 2,000-man force, on one or more LPHs (Landing Ship, Helicopter). This unit was already embarked and ready to go to the Mediterranean. They decided to divert that unit for the Grenada operation. This was the first step. Then they began the rest of the process, involving alerting the 82nd Airborne Division, a Ranger unit out in the State of Washington, special operations people, Navy SEAL under water demolition teams, and all that kind of stuff.

In Barbados I received word back that we were getting ready to go. I was told through very restricted channels that D-Day in Grenada was going to be Tuesday, October 25. However, there would be a final meeting on October 23 or 24 with Admiral Metcalf, who was on his way down to Barbados and was going to join his flagship in the area. He arrived in Barbados, where we had a major review of the situation. Just as that was happening, the news about the bombing in Lebanon came through.

Q: Could you explain what the bombing in Lebanon involved?

GILLESPIE: The U.S. had stationed somewhat more than 200 Marines at the airport in Beirut to protect it from attack by Lebanese and Palestinian militias. Basically, there was a civil war going on in Lebanon.

Q: There were also Christian militias.

GILLESPIE: There were Christian militias, Palestinians, and others. However, we had decided to keep the Beirut airport open and operating. To do this job, we stationed some

200 Marines at the airport to protect it from guerrilla or militia attacks. Someone drove a very large truck bomb into the building where the Marines were living, near the airport. The bomb went off, killing the driver of the truck and most of the Marines. It was a horrendous development and a real shocker.

I think that, at this particular point, President Reagan was in Augusta, GA, for the Masters' Golf Tournament. Secretary of State George Schultz and the people who normally accompany the President, including Bud McFarlane and others, were also there. In addition to the blowing up of the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, there was what may have been an attempt to assassinate President Reagan at the golf course in Augusta, by someone who didn't even get close. However, it happened, and it was prominently reported in the press. It was a terribly difficult day for the President.

Meanwhile, we were all down in Barbados and didn't learn anythinabout these events in Beirut and Augusta until later in the day.

Admiral Metcalf arrived in Barbados. Our planning group, including the heads of the Eastern Caribbean police forces, had a meeting with him at a sea front conference center. The head of the Jamaica Defense Force, a very capable general, was also there. Ruddy Lewis, a Brigadier in command of the Barbados Defense Force, was also there. Also present were our admirals and a very interesting, big, bluff Army officer, who turned out to be the operations chief for the Joint Task Force. His name was Norman Schwarzkopf. So we were all reviewing who was going to do what so that this could be done in a day or so. There were only a couple of days left for the planners to complete the details and fold the Caribbean RSS (Regional Security System) and police elements into what would clearly be a joint U.S. military operation. So all of that started to go forward.

Meanwhile, there was the usual wringing of hands in Washington,second thoughts, sweaty palms, and who was going to do what.

Then we turned to what would happen after we made the landing in Grenada. What would we do? Well, the Army has a civil affairs and military government staff, plus intelligence and counterintelligence people. As all of this planning was going forward, there was a lot of discussion in the press about the lack of intelligence on Grenada. Indeed, there was a lack of current intelligence. There were no very good maps of the island which were publicly available. However, the Shell and other gasoline company road maps were pretty good. The military had their own, high resolution maps of Grenada.

This was still Saturday, October 22, 1983. CIA had sent down to Barbados its Assistant Director of the Latin American Division, which covers the Caribbean. He gave me a list of the people whom, the CIA believes, we should include in the new Government of Grenada. I looked at these names and, quite frankly, I hadn't the slightest idea of who they were. I only had two resource people available. So I said to Larry Rossin, “You and Barbro Owens look over this list.” They took one look at this list and said, “Oh, hell, these are just the worst crumbumbs in the Caribbean! They're exiles, some of them belonged to Sir Eric Gairy's really 'crazy' government, and others are believed to be narcotics traffickers and crooks.” They said that some of them were all right but, by and large, the people on the list were pretty bad. There were a couple of people on the island who were very good. Sir Paul Scoon was considered to be very honest.

Q: Who was Scoon?

GILLESPIE: He was the Governor General of Grenada.

Q: Was he a Grenadian?

GILLESPIE: Yes. He was a black African-Grenadian. He was a barrister. He had been admitted to the bar in London. He was a very cool customer, as it turned out. He had a lovely wife and children. He had been Governor General of Grenada for a while. He had

had to put up with Eric Gairy and Maurice Bishop. Scoon and Bishop were friends. They used to play tennis together regularly before Bishop's murder.

So, regarding this CIA list, we said, “Let's not rush too fast to impose a U.S.-made government in Grenada. First, there will be a lot of recovery work.” There was a regional AID (Agency for International Development) office in Bridgetown, Barbados, which had some really capable people in charge of it, supported by some good people back in Washington. We got them involved and we started looking at what our work plan was going to be in Grenada.On Sunday, October 23, I had a phone call from Assistant Secretary Motley, who said, “Secretary Schultz and the President insist that there has to be a civilian in charge of the operation there. Someone must go immediately to Grenada and take over. We've looked at all kinds of names and we thought we would ask Ambassador Frank McNeill to do that. What do you think?” I said, “Frank would be very good.” Motley, in his own way, laughed and said, “Frank won't do it, so you're it. The President is going to name you as the Chief of Mission.”

Q: Why wouldn't McNeill do this?

GILLESPIE: It turned out that Frank had a serious, personal family problem, a daughter who was not well and who was having real difficulty. He later told me that he didn't want the job anyway. He thought that I was the right guy. Whether that was true or not, you never know, but he said, “You're the man. You've been doing it. You know all of the people involved. I thought that you were the right guy from the outset and I told Motley that.” In fact, McNeill simply couldn't accept the job. When he told me about this, Motley said that this would be a matter of a couple of weeks. Then responsibility would go back to Ambassador Bish, who would be in charge. He said that we just want somebody on Grenada to be in charge for the first couple of weeks.

McNeill commented to me later that he knew damned well that it wasn't going to be just a couple of weeks. He thought that the assignment would be for an extended period. In any

case, I was the one selected, and was not given any choice. I was told that I would do it and so I did it. I saluted and said, “Yes, sir.” Then I really began to follow what was going on in Grenada.

Q: In the first place, you are a former military man and all of that. One is surprised, when something like this happens, that we don't have a response force lined up. After all, these military people are all up there, training for year after year. It is surprising that there isn't a response force and a basic sort of plan to put into operation...

GILLESPIE: Actually, there is...

Q: Well, could you talk a bit about your role or that of your group in the planning? I take it that our primary objective was to get the American students out of there, wasn't it? In order of priority, wasn't this objective always the foremost consideration?

GILLESPIE: Yes, at least in my view, this was the absolutely primary purpose and the main reason for doing what we did. I never had the slightest doubt about that in my own mind and, I think, in the minds of nearly everyone else who was at all close to the scene, including some of the Washington decision makers.

The U.S. military - in this case, CINCLANT - has a plan for emergency operations of this sort. CINCLANT has run an annual training operation for a number of years in this regard. The first year, say, is what is called a Command Post Exercise where just commanders get together. In alternate, following years it's a field training exercise in which they deploy units, troops, guns, munitions, and all of that stuff. That exercise is one in which I participated as a Foreign Service Officer in May, 1981, when I was at the National War College. CINCLANT needed someone to come down and play the role of an Ambassador. I went down and did so for 10 days, I think. The scenario for that operation was an exercise involving the non permissive evacuation of U.S. citizens from a mythical

country which, in 1981, happened to be in Central America. I think that the exercise was calleJoint Venture, Ocean Venture or something like that.

I later learned that in 1982 they had a similar exercise, and it involved a Caribbean island, with a big airport on it! This could have been Grenada. The following year, in 1983, the exercise involved something else. However, CINCLANT Headquarters has on file a whole bunch of basic plans which it can pull out which describe in rough terms what would be needed, and so forth. This provides a starting point. You would never have to start from zero. There is always the sense, “If you're going to do this on an island, then this is what you're likely to need.” Then you throw in the characteristics of the island and the current intelligence available. However, at least you start from a consideration of the land, sea, and air forces that would be needed.

We don't have that in our diplomatic files. We never do that. We never plan ahead for this kind of thing. Our consular and even our policy people, from time to time, plan evacuations, but in concert with the U.S. military.

I had seen this kind of exercise happen. As it turned out, I'm sure that the fact that we had what I think was a regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division available greatly simplified the planning. First of all, the 82nd Airborne is always the reaction force for this kind of contingency. There is an Army unit from the 101st Airborne Division available. There are Ranger units which are always used for certain contingencies. They practice deployments of this kind, time and time again. The Navy has its units for this purpose, as does the Air Force. These people have areas of operation, and they are supposed to know them.

So on the military side of the planning, it was a challenge, but it wasn't as if we had to start from scratch. The military knew what they would need. They had a good idea where the units were. They all have reaction times down to hours. That is, they know how many hours would be needed to move this or that regiment. They know what the alert regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division is. They can say, “All right we want this regiment to be ready

to move at 0500 next Tuesday morning. They need 24 hours notice, and that's really all that they need." Sometimes, the planners gave them 48 hours' notice, or something like that. The military side of the planning is there. It's very realistic. They can turn it on and move it forward.

Q: But why then did CINCLANT react as it did? Admiral McDonald saithat he needed four weeks, or something like that, to plan a move.

GILLESPIE: It involved a certain reluctance to move. He may not have been sure that this was the right decision. There may have been a lot of different factors involved. He may not have been sure that they could really meet the time lines that had been set out. So there was that kind of consideration.

Part of the problem was probably also the Vietnam syndrome. Remember that everybody wanted to be very sure. They may have been afraid that they might be committed to something that either wouldn't turn out right which couldn't be done right or that something would go wrong. So I think that this may have been why there was some reluctance to carry out the operation. And everybody always wants more time.

So the decision was made to go ahead with the operation. The word that I was getting which helped me set my priorities was that we simply, absolutely, positively must have a request for assistance from Sir Paul Scoon, the Governor General of Grenada, in writing. If we didn't have that, we would have to accept the possibility that we would have major problems around the world, politically, and in every way, but especially in Washington. I was not in Washington, but the Washington planners realized that they were going to have to tell Tip O'Neill (Democrat, Massachusetts), the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and other key officials in the House and the Senate what this was all about. Time would be needed to brief people and so forth. If we didn't have that formal request for intervention from Sir Paul Scoon, we would really be out there open to problems.

So Assistant Secretary Motley said, “Tony, you simply have to get that request in writing from Sir Paul Scoon. How can you do it?” I sat down with our people in Barbados, including the military and Major GeneraCrist, as well as others. We now knew that the Governor General and his wife were in Government House, his residence up on a hill overlooking St. George's. They hadn't been able to leave there. The British Consul and our people there - remember, we had some Foreign Service Officers in Grenada - reported that nobody had seen the Governor Generarecently. Somebody had talked to him on the telephone, but he was stuck inside his residence. He was sort of under house arrest. The Grenadian Government had stationed a couple of Armored Personnel Carriers with machine guns, blocking his driveway and the other exit from his residence. So, as zero hour approached, we knew that he was stuck there.

We came to the conclusion, in discussion with the Army Special Operations people and the CIA, that we would take a senior CIA officer and Larry Rossin, if he would go. He would have to be a volunteer. Rossin had met Sir Paul Scoon in the past, which was why we wanted him to go. He and I sat down to discuss this privately. His wife was pregnant, and this operation involved his going into a potential combat situation. I said to him, “Larry, here's the challenge. Are you willing to go?” He said, “Let me think about it.” He thought about it for, perhaps, half an hour and then came back and said, “Yes, I'll go. I'm scared to death, but I'll do it.”

In fact, he didn't know what he was going to do. Well, as it turned out, he was going to get on a Blackhawk helicopter with a team of Special Operations people. There would be three helicopters in all. Larry Rossin and Rooney, the CIA guy, would be in the same helicopter. The CIA communications guy would be in another helicopter. They would fly in over the Governor General 's residence. The helicopters would drop big lines. The people going in would have big, leather gloves on and would wear jeans, jackets, and Army fatigues. They would slide about 60 feet down these lines, onto the Governor General 's grounds. Then, presumably in a hostile environment, they would make their way into the

Governor General 's residence, and Larry would have a nice, quiet chat with the Governor General. He would ask Sir Paul Scoon, “Would you draft a little letter to the President of the United States?” We knew the elements it needed to contain, it had to be in writing, and it needed to have Scoon's signature, so that it could be authenticated. We weren't concerned about the precise wording. Larry Rossin and Rooney, the CIA guy, had in their heads the elements the letter had to have.

Larry Rossin was supposed to be out at Grantley-Adams International Airport at 1:30 AM, if I remember correctly, on the morning of October 25, 1983. Larry and his party would drop down into the Governor General 's house before the operation started - before the U.S. troops landed. So, at about midnight Larry and I were in Ambassador Milan Bish's office with a couple of other people, sitting around and talking. Then we got up, and I said, “All right I'll take you out to the airport.” So we got into a car to go to the airport.

We knew at this time that there were going to be major, logistics problem of a civilian nature. Within a day or two before the operation was begun the State Department had flown in a very senior Panamanian GeneraServices specialist. He was familiar with working with the U.S. military in SOUTHCOM (Southern Command). He was very good. He had actually set up a small motor pool for us in Barbados. He had rented cars, had drivers, and so forth.

We took Larry Rossin out to the airport. I watched him put black camouflage cream on his face and get ready to join the other members of his team. I watched the helicopters carrying them go off. Then I did nothing but worry from then on.

We got ourselves ready to go. We had figured out what we would need as a diplomatic establishment. Larry Rossin had been working on that, as well as Barbro Owens and others from the Embassy in Bridgetown. We had administrative and security personnel who had been brought in from Washington. I was assigned three Army colonels and a

Navy captain from the Joint Staff to be my military liaison people to work with me. We then just sort of sweated it out.

I talked to Admiral Metcalf and to Washington about when I ought to go over to Grenada. The reply from Washington was that there was probably nothing for me to do on the first day, but I should get over to Grenada pretty soon after that - probably as soon as I could meet with Sir Paul Scoon, assuming that we were going to be able to meet with Scoon.

What really happened is that Larry Rossin and Rooney took off in the dead of night. As they were coming over the Governor General 's residence in Grenada, the helicopters were hit repeatedly by gunfire. It was armor-plated on the bottom. Larry later told me what it was like to be in a helicopter that was being shot at. He was holding onto a ring. There were no seats and no doors in this helicopter. Two of the helicopters were able to land the people they were carrying. I guess that they were Navy SEAL's. The helicopter with Larry Rossin and Rooney in it could not land. The pilot was wounded in the arm and was bleeding badly. They returned to the helicopter carrier that was ofGrenada and landed on it. Meanwhile, the Navy SEAL's got down to Sir Paul Scoon's residence, which they were unable to leave for 24 hours. They got in and introduced themselves to the Scoon's. People were shooting at them, and they were shooting back. It really was a bad scene. A couple of hours later the big landing started, and all of those military units began to go to work.

Later on, I got the following version of events from Sir Paul Scoon and his wife and from Larry Rossin and members of his team. It really was a very hairy situation. The batteries for the radios, with which the SEAL's were communicating, began to run down after 24 hours. They decided that they had to leave Scoon's residence via the back gate. They took Sir Paul Scoon and his wife out with them. Mrs. Scoon made it a point to tell me, Secretary Schultz, and other people, what absolute gentlemen these Navy SEAL's were. She said, “These huge, bulking, big men, with their guns and their faces painted just couldn't have been more gentle and nicer with me.” They helped her to get down the garden steps and

out through the trees. They eventually met up with another, American unit. They put Sir Paul Scoon on a helicopter, got him out to the helicopter carrier, where he met up with Larry Rossin. They had a meeting there, and that's where he wrote his letter requesting U.S. assistance!

On October 26 the Navy took Sir Paul Scoon ashore. They couldn't set him up in his own residence but took him to another house. I flew in on a C-130 aircraft, landing at the airport at Point Salines, after circling for 45 minutes while a firefight took place at the end of the runway.

Q: Was this the airstrip that the Cubans were building?

GILLESPIE: Yes, the airport at Point Salines. As I learned later, two air operations were conducted simultaneously to secure the island. This was an operation in which each of our military services had to shine. So each had to have its own Area of Responsibility (AOR). Evidently, they could not work together. The Marines were given the northern third of the island, including the small, light plane airport that was up there. The Navy was given the flight mode, and the Army was given an area in the South. The Air Force had something else. This division of areas was silly in the extreme.

Q: Well, it led to a lot of reforms.

GILLESPIE: A lot of changes. And the communications, while not a total fiasco, were not good. It wasn't easy for one service to talk to another service and tell them what they were doing, why, and how. In any event, the Marines came in on the northern part of the island. Point Salines is down at the southwest tip, where the main assault took place. I believe that that is where the Ranger units came in. They had boarded planes in the State of Washington and then flown down with refueling, never landing elsewhere. They planned to do a standard, parachute drop, which would, I think, have been from 1500 feet, down onto the airstrip. They were to clear the airstrip. Then the planes coming in later

with the regiment from the 82nd Airborne on board would land. Everything was timed very carefully.

Well, when they arrived over the Point Salines airstrip, the Ranger aircraft found that the anti-aircraft fire from the ground was tremendously intense. These planes were unable to make the runs which they had planned to make to drop the Rangers from 1500 feet up. However, they also found that the Soviet made ZU-23 anti-aircraft guns could not depress their barrels enough to cover an area between the ground and 1000 feet above sea level over the airstrip. So, for the first time since World War II, American paratroops made a 500 foot drop over the airstrip. That's a pretty short drop for these Rangers. They all did it, and not too many of them were badly hurt. They came in and immediately cleared the airstrip.

Q: We're talking about Cubans using Soviet equipment.

GILLESPIE: We're talking about somebody shooting Soviet equipment. We assumed that it was Cubans. As it turned out later, the number of Cubans on Grenada was probably about 360, and not 1,000 or so. There were about 7,000 troops in the People's Army of Grenada. The Cubans probably really were in a Construction Battalion. They were not first-line combat troops, as such. But the Cubans all had their guns, their barracks, and places where they had their AK-47s, helmets, and so forth, although they normally didn't work in uniform. They fought very hard - 56 of them were killed and some number were wounded.

Anyway, the Rangers landed, cleared the airstrip, and the planes carrying reinforcements began to come in. The regiment from the 82nd Airborne came in. On the next night October 26 I was able to fly in, although there was still fighting going on. Calivigny Point, just East of the end of the airstrip, and one inlet farther East, was a major, military base for the People's Army. As it turned out, there is where the bodies of Maurice Bishop and others were taken after they were murdered. That was also where the Cubans were

training the Grenadian military forces. There was sporadic and intermittent fighting there, which lasted for two or three days, until it could be cleaned up.

I flew into Grenada on October 26 and immediately went and met with Sir Paul Scoon. Then I went back and met with Major GeneraCrist, who was then on the ground.

Q: By this point what was Sir Paul Scoon's attitude?

GILLESPIE: He said that he was frightened to death that we would never come. He said that the situation had really begun to deteriorate. He basically reaffirmed all of our conclusions and our analysis of the situation, such as it was, adding further details to it. He reaffirmed everything that we thought was the case. He had made out his request for U.S. assistance, and Larry Rossin made sure that that was communicated to Washington. We met, had long talks, and reported everything that he told us.

On the night of October 26 an Air Force colonel from JCS, and some three or four State Department communicators set up TACSAT satellite Fax and voice communication links in a house we commandeered near the Point Salines airstrip. We set that up as our little base of operations. That was our first Embassy in Grenada. We had a security man and an administrative person there. The only problem was that water was hard to come by. Somebody had cut off the water to the Point Salines peninsula, which sticks out into the Caribbean. This house and others nearby were summer homes owned, for the most part, by American citizens as vacation places.

I spent the night there and got up the next morning October 27 and had breakfast with the generals. The situation at that point wasn't really clear enough. People were concerned about my going into St. George's, so I didn't go in to St. George's. Sir Paul Scoon felt that we shouldn't do that. He felt that we should wait until order was really established. There was still some fighting going on. Although we later learned the number of Cubans on the

island and the exact numbers of weapons and similar things, in those early days we really didn't know what the facts were. We had no idea.

About this time Grenadian, Barbadian, and Dominican officials were arriving on the island. They had police functions to perform, including crowd control and all of that. They had all arrived on the same day that I did. They didn't come in the first landing. They were getting reports from local residents that there was a large Cuban encampment in this position, there were Cuban “spies” there, there were “bad” Grenadians here. When you think about it, all of those reports came up naturally in a situation like this where there had been a lot of mistrust and secrecy - and foreigners and all of that. This traumatic invasion had occurred. Even though the invasion didn't touch many Grenadians directly, the hospital up on the hill above St. George's had been bombed because it was perceived to be an enemy strong point. It turned out that this had been a mental hospital and a prison, and there had been people up there shooting. There were Americans who came under fire and were wounded as they tried to clear out the mental hospital, which was defended by Grenadians, not by Cubans. Unfortunate things happen.

In any event, as soon as I had set up my “Embassy,” we had a meeting every morning at 8:00 AM for several weeks after the initial landing of the American forces. Attending was the commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division and his senior staff, all of my senior staff, the intelligence people, and the senior Caribbean representatives. We would analyze and look at the current situation. For example, it had been reported that there was an arms cache here. People reported that individuals were heard speaking Spanish or doing this or that, there. So units would be sent out to look at the place involved. The units would come back and report that they had found some trails and tracks but hadn't found anybody. Well, you can't prove a negative easily. It turned out that there were some weapons caches but not big arms caches. They contained contraband and different things.

There really were no other Cubans on the island, beyond the 360 in the construction battalion. Colonel Tortola was the commander of the Cubans. He had just come back

from Angola and really was a tough guy. He happened to have been sent to Grenada on October 21, just four days before this all started, probably because of the difficulties resulting from the murder of Prime Minister Bishop. The Cuban Government was concerned about this. As soon as the Cubans found out that they were really up against the might of the United States, Colonel Tortola, rather wisely, was reported to have said, “Come on, you guys, let's get out of here.” He planned to “get out of here” by going to the Soviet Embassy, which was a large establishment - big grounds, big fences, big walls, located on a hillside.I learned that one of my first diplomatic encounters as a new Chief of Mission was going to be to get the Cubans out of Grenada. The 82nd Airborne Division had killed or captured most of the Cubans. Now they just wanted to get rid of the remaining Cubans on the island. It made me think of the movie called, The Russians Are Coming. This was a story about a Soviet sub that stranded on Martha's Vineyard, in the U.S. We kind of did the same thing on land. The 82nd Airborne had ringed the Soviet Embassy with armored personnel carriers, machine guns, and troops, and it was just like the movie. We had also ringed the Cuban Embassy. The U.S. military had just moved in. I had a little bit of guidance from Washington as to what I was supposed to do. Basically, I was pretty much able to call the shots and say, “Well, this is what we're going to do and how we're going to do it.” I kept saying to our generals, “Don't kill anybody but don't let anybody move, either.”

The Soviet Embassy sent out a messenger saying that they needed to go into St. George's to buy vegetables and so forth. So we had to deal with that. We decided who could go into town, what they could do, what they needed, and so forth. The same thing with the Cubans. We then had a series of meetings. After intense consultations with Washington it was decided that we would get the Cubans out of Grenada.

By the way, another key role of Sir Paul Scoon was that he was, by every legal interpretation - in the United States, in the Caribbean, and in Great Britain - the only legitimate authority in Grenada. There was no other. If something happened to him, there would be no legitimate authority because the Queen's choice of the Governor General has

to be ratified by the Grenadian Parliament, since it was an independent country. It was a very tricky situation, and international law was coming into play. Using his powers, Sir Paul Scoon broke relations immediately with Cuba. I guess that that's the only communist state with which he formally broke relations. In effect, he asked the Cuban Ambassador to leave Grenada.

In consultation with Washington we tried to figure out how we could get rid of the Cubans. Our intelligence, which mainly came from a lot of troops watching them, was pretty sure that the Cubans in the Soviet Embassy compound had weapons. We didn't know if they were Soviet weapons that were there or whether they'd taken their guns into the Soviet Embassy with them, when they ran away from the airport at Point Salines. So we were very concerned about that. We did not want the Soviet Ambassador to leave his compound. This was easy because, as it turned out, he refused to leave his compound. I went to meet with him at the gates of the Soviet compound. He told me that the reason that he did not wish to leave his compound was that the Cubans were armed. He was concerned about what would happen if he left the compound and relinquished authority to someone else. I asked him what he wanted to do. He said, “I want to get out of here.” So I said, “Okay.” He said, “We have burned all of our codes. We have destroyed all of our communications gear because we didn't know whether you were going to attack our Embassy. Would you be good enough to send a message to Moscow for us?” So I said, “Sure.” So he went back to draft his message. He said that he would write it in English because we would want to read it. He said, “I know that you can translate it, but I'll just write it in English.”

The Soviet Ambassador left his second ranking officer, the senior Commercial Officer, Boris Nikolayev, to talk with me while he drafted his message to Moscow. The Deputy Chief of Mission of the Soviet Embassy in Grenada was on vacation in Moscow. Boris and I had been in Mexico at the same time, and we had played volleyball against each other on Soviet and American Embassy teams. He remembered me. We later met again

in Colombia, where he was again the senior Commercial Officer when I was American Ambassador to Colombia. Of course, we reported all of this to Washington.

Q: It strikes me that Boris Nikolayev must have had other dutiethere.

GILLESPIE: No, according to CIA, he really was a Commercial Officer.He was a trade specialist.

In any event, Boris made one of those statements that sort of stick in your mind. He said, “I remember our days in Mexico City. I've really enjoyed my time in this Hemisphere, in the Americas. I love your country. My wife is with me. We don't have any children. We've been on this island now for almost two years. Mr. Ambassador, it's a lovely island. It's truly beautiful. The beaches are white, the mountains are high, and the lake is pretty. The people are delightful. However, it is a damned, tiny island, and I'm going to be very glad that you've given us an excuse to get out of here.” This was in a private conversation with me, and it was really quite funny.

As it turned out, before we could even begin to discuss the departure of the Soviet Embassy contingent, there were two matters that had to be taken care of. The first was the sale by the Soviet Ambassador of his Mercedes 300 S convertible and Boris Nikolayev's Japanese Lexus Infiniti, or whatever it was. It probably was just a big Camry, or something like that. They said, “We have to sell these. We need the foreign currency when we go home.” That was really something to see. That was a major, major point. They asked if they could get the cash before they left, in U.S. dollars or Pounds Sterling. It was really quite something.

Q: How did you resolve that?

GILLESPIE: There was a merchant who agreed to buy them, a non-communist who said, “Sure, I'll buy them.” He paid a low price for the two cars. The Ambassador and Boris were angry, because they had expected to make a whole lot more.

In any event, it was decided that the U.S. Navy would send in a couple of DC-9 jet aircraft. They would take out all of the members of the Soviet Embassy. They had shut down their Embassy. They broke relations with Grenada. The Cubans were prepared to be evacuated. I think that the Hungarians, Czechs, Libyans, and a whole hodgepodge of others - not large groups - were going to be evacuated, plus the Cubans who had surrendered and were in a kind of POW (Prisoner of War) compound. I had a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador on the day before the DC-9's were to arrive. He said, “What can I take out?” I said, “The minimum. These are DC-9's. They're not big aircraft. You can take out personal belongings.” He said, “Well, we have to take our diplomatic files and things like that. We can't leave those.” I said, “You could burn them.” He said, “Oh, we need these things.” He said that the files would amount to two crates, two boxes. Then he said, “I would like to take my diplomatic pouch. That really has our only secret material in it. I would like to have the benefit of the pouch.”

Of course, we have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and I said, “Okay, that's fine with me. Just guarantee to me the following. I want to be sure that there are no firearms and there are no other problems when you people get on this airplane. What about these Cubans?” He said, “I am very concerned about them. I will make sure that everything is okay. You can count on me.” So that was fine.

In the meantime we were carrying on daily negotiations and discussions with the Cuban Ambassador to try to find out who was on the island, how many Cubans were there to start with, what were the troops, what they were doing, and so forth. As you know, we don't have formal, diplomatic relations with Cuba. We have an American Interests Section manned by Americans who work under the auspices of the Swiss Embassy in Havana, and that's all. In this case the Cuban Ambassador came to me, escorted by troops from the 82nd Airborne Division. He was a very bright but snotty guy - relatively young and married to an American woman. She had been an activist in the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) in the 1960s.

Q: During the 1960s it was sort of a left wing organization. Almost a bunch of bomb throwers, but not quite.

GILLESPIE: She had renounced U.S. citizenship and gone to Cuba out of sympathy for Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution of 1959. She had met this guy and married him. She had also worked as a translator and was virtually bilingual in Spanish and English. As part of my staff I had brought down a young officer named Lino Gutierrez, a Cuban- American who is also very sharp and bilingual in Spanish and English. He was the Nicaraguan desk officer in the State Department at the time he came down with me.

So we ended up going through one of those diplomatic exercises. I would send a request to the 82nd Airborne to bring the Cuban Ambassador to see me in the morning. As I said before, we wanted to know how many Cubans had been in Grenada, where they had been assigned, and what they wanted done with the bodies of the Cubans whom our forces had killed and with the Cuban wounded that we held. We also wanted to know what their plans had been - in effect, we wanted to get as much out of this guy as we could.

The Cuban Ambassador would be brought to the place where we had set up our Embassy, The Ross Point Inn. This was a lovely, little, very unpretentious, but very nice resort hotel with cottages out on Ross Point, just outside St. George's, the capital and principal city of Grenada. We had rented that place from its owner for $25,000 a month, or something like that. Prices were not cheap there.

Anyway, we'd sit out there. We had a lovely, outdoor pavilion. That's where I had my staff meetings and social events. That is where we met with the Cuban Ambassador and his interpreter-translator, i.e., his wife. We engaged in what was my first intense, hostile diplomacy. Lino Gutierrez was at one side of a table with me. The Cuban Ambassador sat opposite with his wife, who was also his interpreter. We knew from our intelligence that his English was nearly perfect. As I said, his wife was bilingual. My Spanish is very good, and Lino Gutierrez is bilingual. We went through a diplomatic process, which is so useful.

I spoke only English, and the Cuban Ambassador spoke only Spanish. It worked out very well.At one point he decided that he was going to challenge us and accuse us of open aggression or some such thing. He wanted to tell us how Cuba would eventually dominate the Western Hemisphere. In one of those dumb moments I said, “Well, Mr. Ambassador, that may be true, but right now there are 56 Cuban families who are wondering why the hell this sort of thing had to happen, if you're behind it, because there are 56 dead Cubans whom we would like to return to Havana. I think that that tells the story.” He really shut up after that. Then we immediately started talking about what we should do with the dead and wounded Cubans. I'd assigned Barbro Owens to deal with the issue of the Cuban dead and wounded. Incidentally, Barbro is now married to another Foreign Service Officer. Her name is Barbro Owens Kirkpatrick. She is presently Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs in Mexico City. Her story is fascinating, just as a quick comment. She is Finnish by birth and was once a member of the City Council of Helsinki, Finland. She met and married William Owens, a Foreign Service Officer. She came to the U.S., became an American citizen, went to Princeton, got a master's degree in international relations, eventually took the Foreign Service exam, and became a Foreign Service Officer. She and Bill Owens were later divorced after he had been Principal Officer in Bermuda. She has gone on to have her own Foreign Service career and is now married to another Foreign Service Officer.

She is a tough person and handled this assignment of dealing with the Cuban dead and wounded extremely well. I only learned some time later, when we were all back in the U.S., how difficult dealing with the wounded had been for her. The dead Cubans were not a problem. However, she had to make sure that all of the wounded Cubans were identified.

At these staff meetings every morning we kept a tally of the Cubans. We tried to get the numbers right. Another part of thGrenadian question was the press, which posed a major management issue. The Department of Defense was clearly in charge of the military operation. They had control. The civilians, including the President, had authority, but the

actual, operational responsibility was all military. The Pentagon and the commanders on the ground had reached the conclusion that they were going to keep the press totally under wraps. Again, I think that this was part of the sequel to the Vietnam...

Q: Oh, absolutely!

GILLESPIE: The U.S. military did not want to have any journalists running around. On reflection, it's always been interesting to me that the press never really learned of the Grenadian operation before the fact. It was quite remarkable. I've since talked to some of the reporters who were down there and whom I'd gotten to know. For whatever reason, it was some time before they realized that I was on the island.

In any event the press was fighting to get into the military operation. There were reporters who got on boats, sailed to Grenada, and actually landed in Grenada, to avoid the military controls. Well, by the time I got there the military knew that the press fever was at a tremendously high point. So they said to me, “Good! This is for you to handle.” Well, I had two or three USIS (United States Information Service) people - Information Officers and others. It turned out that one of my jobs was to stand up, almost every morning, and have some kind of press briefing.

What my staff and I ended up discussing every morning were the numbers of Cubans, which were carried on little 3” x 5” cards. The press was concerned with how many Cubans had ever been on the island. That is why we were pushing the Cuban Ambassador for information on the subject. They wanted to know how many Cubans were killed, how many wounded, and so forth. They wanted to know how many U.S. troops were there, how many had been wounded, how many killed. It was amazing the amount of time it took to deal with that. There was a major general commanding the 82nd Airborne Division, a major general commanding the XVIII Airborne Corps, intelligence and medical people, and so forth. We were trying to come up with the same kind of numbers on a 3 x 5 card, so that if we received a question from the press, I didn't say, “320 Cubans” while the

general said “318 Cubans.” If that happened, the press would say, “Aha, you're cheating again.” One way or another we devoted a lot of time to those numbers and eventually got them all straight.

We got into a very military exercise in the morning, with a kind of morning report. We would list which groups were here and there and who was doing what. All of this was on the military side. I don't like to draw this out, but in the next interview we probably ought to talk about the civilian government of Grenada and how we moved the Soviets out, because that was interesting.

Q: I have a couple of questions which we'll take up next time. First, could you talk about the American students in Grenada? This was the main reason for the intervention. We haven't talked about what happened to them when you got there. Secondly, what kind of reaction were you getting from Washington? How did you get the Cubans out of Grenada? Was there any concern, perhaps, about a Cuban counterstrike? How did you continue to deal with the Cuban Ambassador, since we had no formal, diplomatic relations with Cuba? What was your analysis of the motivation of the Cubans in going to Grenada, and all of that? Of course, as you continue, I suppose that you'll talk about how things were put back together.

GILLESPIE: One of the things that we didn't deal with in the run up to the intervention is that we formally informed the Cubans of our intention to intervene militarily in Grenada, prior to doing so. This was done in time for them to tell the Cubans in Grenada not to shoot back. We passed this message through General. Noriega, in Panama, and we also informed them through our Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in Havana. This effort evidently had no effect.

Q: Okay.

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Today is August 20, 1996. Tony, to follow through on what you were talking about, informing the Cubans, how did that come out? Did the Cubans say, “Yes, thank you,” and then do nothing? Because the Cubans did fight, didn't they?

GILLESPIE: Well, there was some resistance from the Cubans on the island. However, as I indicated, this all happened in a very short period of time. The decision was made to make sure that the Cubans knew what we were doing and to do this quickly. The channel to make sure that the Cubans were informed was through our Interests Section in Havana. I'm not sure whether we also informed the Cubans through their Interests Section in the Algerian Embassy in Washington. I think that it was principally done through our Interests Section in Havana.

It was apparently the idea of William Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, to unleash General. Noriega, the President of Panama. As I recall it, Noriega made some kind of contact with the Cubans - whether in Havana or in Panama City, I'm not sure. In any case, the word passed to the Cubans was that we were going into Grenada, and the Cubans there had better be very careful. My recollection is that in their response the Cubans simply accepted what we said. There may have been some hostile rhetoric, but, in fact, the Cubans did not mount a major effort to try to do anything. I don't know if the Cuban Government was ever able to communicate with the Cubans on Grenada. I'm not sure what their communications system at that point might have been - whether they could have radioed, telephoned, or somehow told their people in Grenada to stand down.

The fact is that when our airplanes flew over Grenada to drop the Rangers on the morning of October 25, there was anti-aircraft fire coming from the positions which we assumed, and believe now, were manned by Cubans, and not by Grenadians, although there was a mixture of Cubans and Grenadians in that area. The purpose of this effort to inform the Cubans was to make sure that we had not missed a bet by telling the Cubans that we were going to do this and to prevent bloodshed. I used those lines with the Cuban Ambassador in Grenada when we met when I summoned him to the then U.S. Embassy

in Grenada at Ross Point and during our several conversations about getting the Cubans and others off the island.

Q: We're talking about a real hodgepodge of Eastern European, Libyans, and others. It sounds as if this was where they went to have their sun and fun.

GILLESPIE: Larry Rossin, a Foreign Service Officer, had gone in initially to try to make contact with Sir Paul Scoon, the Governor General, and eventually did - aboard the USS Guam, I think it was, the helicopter carrier (LPH-9). He prepared an inventory for me at the time of all of the representatives of communist and other, relatively unfriendly countries who were in Grenada. We used U.S. military people to help us to prepare this inventory. As you say, it was a real hodgepodge. Larry himself was very concerned about the Libyans. At that point I think that their Embassy was called the Libyan People's Bureau actually, the full name is the Bureau of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, with Jamahiriya usually translated as “community.” Whatever the term was, they didn't call it an Embassy, but we checked some of their names with intelligence and found out that one or two of them might be real bad guys.

Larry Rossin made contact with the person in charge of the People's Jamahiriya Bureau, who breathed a great sigh of relief and said, “Get me off this island. Get me out of here and away from these people who are with me.” There were really some funny vignettes in all of this. There were also Eastern Europeans. When we finally got around to getting these people on board the two U.S. Navy DC-9 aircraft that was going to carry them to Jamaica and turn them over to the Cubans there, the passenger manifest by nationality was really quite a mix. There were Middle Easterners and other people who wanted to go with them, but it was mainly the Eastern Europeans and the Cubans. So it was quite a deal. Getting them rounded up and moved to the departure point was not without its problems, both logistic and diplomatic.

Q: The Cubans were mainly a military force. How did you get them out?

GILLESPIE: We had two groups of Cubans. There was the Cuban diplomatic establishment, whom we treated as if they were a diplomatic establishment, although our relations are at the level of Interest Sections. I didn't hesitate, in effect, to insist, if not order, the Cuban Ambassador to come to our Embassy. I treated him - and told Washington that I was doing so - as the representative of a hostile power in this case. Therefore, I felt comfortable about sending jeeps to get him. I didn't let him come in his own car. I didn't want him to arrive that way. He wasn't happy with that. We dealt on that level.

However, the most troublesome Cubans in their Embassy, although we didn't know what the intelligence system was, were several dozen Cubans who were members of the engineering battalion, or whatever it was, who had taken refuge on the grounds of the then Soviet Embassy - with their weapons, as we later learned. We assumed all along that that's where their weapons were, since we hadn't found them elsewhere. Those were the problem children.

The Cubans at the Soviet Embassy were themselves military personnel. They were commanded, at that point, by Colonel Tortola, the man who had just come onto the island but whom we knew was a very tough, Special Forces kind of officer. We didn't have a clear picture of his relations with the Soviet Ambassador, or with his own Cuban Ambassador. We didn't know what the contacts were. We had not really sealed off the Soviet Embassy because, at that point, we had no beef with them. They were obviously the Soviet Embassy, and all of the Cold War considerations still applied. However, nonetheless, we were not at war with them. They were not hostile and had not been directly implicated in anything that was going on. So we were trying to be careful about that.

At the same time, as I think I've mentioned, the Soviet Ambassador had indicated to me that he was ready to leave. We basically had the same response from all of the diplomatic missions and government representatives of the various Eastern European - then Iron

Curtain - countries. The Libyans were ready to leave. So we ended up with several planeloads of people who were ready to leave Grenada. I don't remember the exact date but I guess that it must have been in early November, 1983, that we arranged to get them out. We eventually bussed, trucked, and otherwise took them to the Point Salines airport, which was open for business, although not yet completed in terms of its various buildings and structures. Even the Control Tower wasn't fully operational. The electronic equipment was not fully installed.

It turned out that the departure of these flights would be late in the afternoon or early evening. As the day dragged on, and it did drag on, we were trying to get a lot of people from a lot of different places to a single point at the airport and get them on board the aircraft. We had told them that they could take a minimum amount of baggage and could ship out other effects later. Their effects would be taken care of. I think that I mentioned that the Soviet Ambassador and his Commercial Counselor were both very concerned about selling their cars. However, they were basically prepared to leave.

They said that they had some material which had to go back with them on the airplane. We agreed that that could be done. We got them all to the airport. At the airport I turned to the Soviet Ambassador as the boss of the Eastern European contingent and the Cubans. He knew that I was going to hold him responsible for what happened at the airport. He didn't like that but he accepted it, eventually. I think I mentioned that we had discussed the fact that the Soviets had some materials that had to go to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. They had classified material which they wanted to take in a diplomatic pouch. I said, “Yes.” However, I said that we were going to have to check to make sure that there was no trouble on these aircraft, which would be carrying a lot of people. We would do some checking in the normal course of events. You'll recall that this was in the early 1980s.

Q: For one thing, you wanted to make sure that they weren't takinarms and ammunition on the plane.

GILLESPIE: We wanted to make sure that nothing was going out on the airplane that would be harmful to the people on the airplane, both our air crews and the passengers themselves. We did not want to have any problems in that regard. We were concerned about the usual things - narcotics and so forth. Yes, we were very concerned about arms and ammunition. I had sent word to the Ambassadors and the various other people that they would be subject to a check as they were getting ready to go on the airplane and that their baggage would be subject to a check. I got some initial resistance from them. They said, “We're diplomats.” I said, “Look, when it comes to safety aboard aircraft, none of us is exempt from this. It happens all over the world. We all have to go through the various kinds of security checks. That's what we're doing here. I've already allowed you to take your diplomatic pouches, and we're not going to mess around with that. That is under seal, and you are accountable for that. It will be stored here. You'll pick it up when you get off the airplane.” The Soviet Ambassador didn't like that, nor did the others, but they agreed to it.

Well, we checked the people as they went through, including families, since there were diplomats, their spouses, and their children. The Soviets had various kinds of people, including drivers, waiters, code clerks, and God knows what all. As they were going through checkpoints set up basically by U.S. Army Counterintelligencunits, there were male and female personnel who were checking everybody. We gave people a general going over. We were not conducting body searches or making them strip, or anything like that. We looked at them carefully. If somebody looked suspicious, I'd say that it was up to the plane commander. We suggested that he carry out an appropriate check, but we didn't want to do anything that would really cause a diplomatic incident. We had gamed this process all the way through and in advance.

Meantime, the U.S. intelligence people were very concerned about what was inside several bigger boxes and crates which were nailed shut and sealed. However, they were not listed as diplomatic material. There was one box addressed to “The Foreign Ministry,

Moscow, USSR.” The address was in English and in Russian, in the Cyrillic alphabet. I think it was Larry Rossin, who was in charge of this, who came to me and said, “Look, Ambassador, here's a box. We think that we ought to take a look inside it.” So I said, “Go ahead. Don't worry about it. Do it.” They did. And that's when we found the AK- 47 assault rifles, actually loaded with clips full of ammunition, with rounds in the chambers of several of them.

At that point Larry Rossin and the Captain in command of the Military intelligencunit, a Colonel, and some other people came to me and said, “Wow, this is really bad news. Who knows what might happen with this stuff? It's probably inert, but they might try to get hold of it in Jamaica and try to do something with it.” At that point we had to decide what to do. We looked at several options. One was to call the whole evacuation off and hold everybody. The other was to go forward but, from now on, open everything, check everything, and don't let anything go unchecked. We ran through all of this. We had a secure, communications phone through TACSAT with Washington. Tony Motley, the Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs, was at the other end of that telephone line. I had with me a couple of officers who had been sent by the Department of State specifically to help with the evacuation who were then experts in Soviet affairs - a couple of really bright people from EUR/SOV (Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs). I don't recall their names.When I reported this discovery on the phone to Assistant Secretary Motley, and thus to the State Department, that generated a tremendous amount of activity in Washington. While we were considering the options in Grenada, they were considering them up there. I vividly remember a lapse of some time - maybe as much as a half hour or 40 minutes. Somebody said, “Motley wants to talk to you on the phone.” So I went over and picked up the TACSAT phone. Motley said, “Look, this is really a hell of a development. There are a lot of people back here who think that we ought to shut the whole evacuation down. This indicates that the Soviets are in complicity with the Cubans in this whole thing. We can shut this down and hold these people, squeeze them a little,

and really search everybody and everything rigidly. What do you think, how do you think that that will 'play' there?”

My reaction was that I didn't think that it was a good idea. I said, “We want these people off this island. I don't want them on this island any longer. With or without guns we have 82nd Airborne and Military Police guarding them. We've got them out at the airport. Tony, this is going to be a major headache if we stop it.” Interestingly enough, one of the EUR guys at my end of the line in Grenada was listening to this. He could gather, from my comments, that people were saying in Washington that maybe we ought to hold them in Grenada. He gave me all kinds of high signs and waved his hands. I said, “Wait a minute, Tony,” and put the phone down. He said, “What do they want to do?” I told him. He said, “Oh, God. This is really bad news. Look, we're dealing with the Soviet Union. They've got U.S. diplomats all over the place. There are all kinds of things that they could do to them.” I said, “You don't have to tell me that.”

Well, I learned later that, as it turned out, the Office of Soviet Union Affairs in Washington was saying basically the same thing to Motley. As it turned out, Motley was under pressure from these crazy guys over at the NSC ((National Security Council). These were these right wing nuts who were saying, “Here's a chance to stick it to the Commies.”I held as firm as I could and said that it would be a bad idea to hold up the evacuation. I said that what we must do - and prudence demands this - is to search everybody. Not strip search, but we were going to pat down everybody.

Q: Were you able, at the time, to take the Soviet Ambassador aside and, in a way, rub his nose in it, so that he would understand what the problem was?

GILLESPIE: No, that comes next. I told Tony Motley: “Here's my recommendation. We will now open every package, except their diplomatic pouch, which is sealed.” It was small, no bigger than a small suitcase. I said, “The Soviet Ambassador is quite willing to have it under observation by one of his people until it's loaded on the plane. He doesn't have

to have it with him, or anything like that. I'm pretty sure that there is no bomb in it. The Ambassador doesn't want to commit suicide. We will open up and search every other package which goes aboard to make sure that it does not contain weapons or explosives and isn't going to be used against us or anybody else. We will do a pat down but not a strip search of everybody who gets on this airplane." Tony and the people in Washington said, "That's fine. Do that."

I then called the Soviet Ambassador over. I said, "Mr. Ambassador, I'm terribly disappointed. We are going to have to change the ground rules that I laid out for you. We're going to open every single item, including suitcases and carry-on bags. They will all be searched rigidly."

The Soviet Ambassador blew up. He didn't even let me get around to the fact that we were going to search the people. I just said, "Calm down, there are good reasons for this. We are going to do this." He protested and did all of the things that any good diplomat would do. He was ready to pound the table and so forth. I said, "Look, I don't want any more of this from you. You have absolutely lost control of this situation, if you were ever in control of it. I have, in the back room, loaded weapons that were found in a crate addressed, not to any person, but to your Foreign Ministry! This means that you had to know that they were there." He said, "Oh, no, I insist. That must be a box prepared by the Cubans." I said, "Come on. It's addressed to the Soviet Foreign Ministry." He said, "Well, I protest. We're not going to get on these planes. We're not going to go through that."

At this point I said, "Fine, Mr. Ambassador. You have exactly five minutes to reconsider that. In five minutes I'm walking out to the National Broadcasting Corporation, to CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), and to all of the other media. I'm going to bring them back, and you will come with me, and you can explain how these Soviet weapons got into this box which you've addressed and which you people have handed over to me." At that point he just wilted. He said, "All right but please don't disturb my diplomatic pouch." That was a saving feature. I said that we wouldn't disturb the diplomatic pouch.

However, in fact, we let the press in later to take pictures of it all, anyway, because we wanted to take advantage of that. The fact is that we did not put him, personally, on the spot. We then went ahead and searched everybody. We found a hand grenade packed in a typewriter and loaded into a box of office supplies going back to Moscow. We found pistols that had been hidden in different places. Probably, in a way, this was just to get them out of Grenada, not that the owners intended to do anything in particular with them. I'm still not clear on what they might have done with those AK-47 assault rifles. I talked to some of our military people later and asked them how they might have handled this. They said that they might have carried loaded magazines because they would have wanted to take their ammunition with them. However, they said that they weren't sure that they would have had rounds in the chamber. One or two of our officers surmised that maybe, when they were on the ground in Havana or some place, they would break open these boxes and start shooting into the sky and making it out to be a big, victory celebration, or something like that. Who knows? In any event, we found all of that stuff.

Q: Historically, the Soviets have kept pretty close control over weapons. With all due respect, there's been a certain amount of this, but the Soviets usually aren't exuberant about that.

GILLESPIE: The Soviet Ambassador was quite a refined man. He was a scholar. We checked through CIA, and neither he nor his staff aide, who was a very bright English speaker, had any known connection to the KGB (Soviet secret police) or the GRU (Soviet Army intelligence) or any of that. If I remember correctly, he didn't seem to have any Soviet military representation in Grenada. The Soviet Embassy was basically made up of civilians. It may just be that, to some degree, he was a little intimidated or in complete cahoots with this Cuban Colonel Tortola. I guess that we'll never know. In any event, they were trying to take out of Grenada a lot of things, and this gave us a tremendous edge.

As I learned later, Assistant Secretary Motley was under tremendous pressure from these crazies over at the NSC to milk this incident for all it was worth in an anti-communist way.

They were putting pressure on him and on Secretary of State Schultz, on Ken Damm, who was the Deputy Secretary of State, and on Larry Eagleburger, who was the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs. As it turned out we were wisely able to resist those pressures to go too far with this incident. We were looking for advantage because, at this point, we'd made a major move. People wanted to make sure that we got whatever benefit out of it that we could. Part of the consideration was that we'd beaten the communists.

Q: There were plenty of people, both in the United States and elsewhere, who said, “This is just the Reagan administration's early years, swaggering around and pushing around a helpless, little country that didn't need to have this happen.” Did you feel any pressure to justify what we did, or was this part of your agenda?

GILLESPIE: You mean the Eastern European, communist part.

Q: Yes, was this...

GILLESPIE: No, not until we got on the island and began to learn what was there. During those first few days we were really not able to make any serious analyses of what was in Grenada, although we were finding a lot of equipment. I didn't feel a lot of pressure on Grenada to do that. There was no doubt that we wanted to use anything that we had to advantage in the war against communism in the East-West context. We were concerned about the situation in Nicaragua, about El Salvador developments, and how the situation in Grenada would play into that. Cuban adventurism was not dead at that point. The concerns about what Cuba might do in Surinam or South America were not over. The Cubans were not exactly benign. We knew that they were actively supporting, not only the Sandinistas in Nicaragua but also the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) in El Salvador. They were still actively involved in Angola in Africa, doing various things. We did not want to lose any advantage.

I didn't really receive any written instructions, stating that, “You will do the following,” or “You must make sure that you do the following.” It was just a logical sequence of events.

In those first few days we were not doing much reporting in writing. A lot of the reporting was over the TACSAT secure telephone system. A lot of the reporting was just ad hoc, playing the situation the way it lay and the way we got it.

At the same time, and we want to get into this a little bit, the Reagan administration had informed the Congressional leadership, including Tip O'Neill, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and a Democrat, and Senator Dole in the Senate. At the time Congress had a Republican controlled Senate and a Democratic controlled House. There were other people who were unhappy over the situation. We were all looking at how to handle all of this and how all of this was going to work out.We had the American students in Grenada. You asked about them, and this is something that we want to cover. The question might be, “Whatever happened to those 1,000 students?”

Q: Before we get to the students, I'd like you to comment on your relations with the U.S. military, because, when you talk about diplomats in the field, all of a sudden you are on our ground, involving the problems of diplomacy, reciprocal rights, and all of this. The military is usually unaware of these considerations. This is fair enough. It's not part of their training. It's our bag. It was poorly done at a later time in Panama, as far as how the U.S. military dealt with foreign diplomats. At least, that's my impression. We can talk about that later.

However, there you were. The U.S. military tends to charge ahead.How did you relate to them?

GILLESPIE: Well, I have this belief, and maybe it's somewhat romantic, but I figure that when the President appoints an Ambassador and says, “You're in charge,” then that gives the individual in that office a certain amount of authority, which he or she then exercises according to his or her discretion. Well, I exercised the living daylights out of that discretion, without trying to be obnoxious. I worked with Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf III, who was a tough cookie in the U.S. Navy. I had met Joe before the decision was finally made that he would be the Joint Task Force Commander. If anything were done, I was

still a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. I had met Metcalf and had talked to him. At that time he seemed to recognize that I knew things that he didn't know about the situation in Grenada and some of the things that were going on between the Embassy in Bridgetown and Washington. We established a workable relationship then.

I think that when the President named me to be the civilian chief, Admiral Metcalf and Major GeneraGeorge Crist, the Marine Corps general who had been sent down by the JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) and who is a very savvy guy, they together or separately concluded, “Okay, we've got to have Gillespie in this game. To do that, Gillespie is insisting that he has certain authority.” I'm looking at this as coldly as I can. They evidently concluded, “We'd better let him exercise some of that authority.” I made it clear, “I'm basically not going to mess around with military matters. That's not my bag. However, the minute we get on that island, we have a situation which, if it's not handled well, can cause any gains that the military have made to suffer.” That was my argument with Admiral Metcalf in private conversation. We did not have acrimonious discussions, but we had a serious discussion of how things would relate to each other and who would do what to whom. We knew that we had, as the commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division, a very tough guy. I wish that I could remember his name. He was a typically Southern, fire hydrant type of tough, two-star general at this point. He was in command of the fighting forces on the island, which were mostly ground forces.

Vice Admiral Metcalf was in overall command. General Schwarzkopf was the operations chief. There was a number of different people. Here is an area where I really take off my hat to the importance of war college and service college relationships for Foreign Service Officers. Two years earlier, in 1981, I had graduated from the National War College.
It turned out that several of the officers, both directly and indirectly involved in these headquarters in Washington, Grenada, and elsewhere, were former classmates of mine or knew of me from classmates. I had ready-made relationships: “Do you know so and so?” By this timBill Studeman, one of my classmates at the National War College, was an admiral. I had been promoted to the Senior Foreign Service. I had the equivalent of flag

or general officer rank. Boy, those relationships have their value, if you know how to use them.

So we developed this relationship. There was no signed agreement or even much more than a handshake. It was just the acceptance of the fact that once this operation moved to a certain point, the focus would be on the island, and the civilians needed to be in charge. The minute that we moved to Grenada, I had at least two meetings a day with the senior military as well as the senior civilian personnel on my staff. I had representatives from AID (Agency for International Development), from CIA, and from every Agency that you can think of who was on the island. We had a morning and an afternoon staff meeting. First thing in the morning at 7:00-7:30 AM, and in the afternoon at 4:00 or 5:00 PM. We all gathered at the Ross Point Inn in the outdoors pavilion, ringed by armed, 82nd Airborne troops and then MP's with machine guns and everything else to protect us from what we thought might be residual, Cuban resistance on the island, including snipers and so forth. We met and went over everything. We checked the details on this and that.

Quite frankly, it was at those meetings that we finally developed the departure plan for the Eastern Europeans and the Cubans. It was all done collaboratively, but under my authority, without any question.

Q: You didn't have that clash which apparently developed in Panama.

GILLESPIE: In Panama there was a totally different situation. Let's not dwell too long on it, but it's important to know the difference. In Grenada there was no U.S. Embassy or U.S. military presence when the landings occurred. In effect, it was an open city, open terrain. It was nobody's turf; it was no man's land.

Panama has always been a point of contention since there has been a U.S. Southern Command or something like it and a U.S. Embassy in that country. Prior to 1983 the Commander in Chief of Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) had been a three-star general. After 1983 this became a four-star billet. SOUTHCOM had been one of the minor, military

commands. Once it became a major, unified command, the tension between the U.S. Ambassador, whoever he or she might have been, and the Commander in Chief of Southern Command, whoever he might have been, became palpable. The question was, “Who's in charge in Panama?”

When the Canal Zone still existed, there was no great difficulty. But when the Zone began to disappear during the Carter administration, as a result of the Canal Zone Treaty, there was a base on foreign soil, as opposed to territory under U.S. control. Those tensions became even greater, because there needed to be a relationship with the Government of Panama. The Ambassador said, “That's my job.” The CinC said, “Wait a minute, this is my territory.”

In Latin America there were dramatically different relations between our military establishment and governments, as distinguished from the situation in both Europe and Asia. In Europe, because of the outcome of World War II, we had an occupation force, which developed in a certain way. The same thing was true in Asia. However, in Latin America we were not the occupying power, leaving aside relatively brief periods when our military forces occupied Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Panama. We did not have military governments like the ones we had in Japan and Germany. Even in France we had had relations which were special. The situation in Panama was different. The U.S. Embassy had been in Panama for a long time. So it was a quite different situation. It was more understandable to me. I could come up with a rationale why we had this situation.

In the case of Grenada I could also say that the U.S. military had always been reluctant to become involved. They didn't really want to do it. The Vietnam Syndrome was still very much in their minds. They had to be pulled or pushed into this operation pretty hard. People like Caspar Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, didn't really support this intervention at all. He didn't like it. Secretary of State George Schultz and, I guess, President Ronald Reagan himself, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Larry

Eagleburger, Deputy Assistant Secretaries Craig Johnstone and myself in the State Department were really pushing for intervention.Once it began to happen, Vice Admiral Joe Metcalf, the people on his staff, and some of the people in the Pentagon, plus General Jack Vessey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Staff of the Army, whose name I can't remember, and General Max Thurman, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army all of a sudden began to see that this operation was a success. They felt that they didn't want to see any of the bloom off it. I'm interpreting their views now but I believe that they felt that those crazy guys over in the State Department pulled or kicked the U.S. military into this operation. They felt, “Well, what the hell, it's on, and let's enjoy the ride.” So, all of a sudden, the military wanted to make this work. They wanted to make it turn out well.

That's why they had the rigid press controls. The Defense Department almost literally sat on the journalists. They wouldn't let them know what was going on. The other aspect that was particularly well handled, and this was just tremendously lucky for me, was that the military decided that the command structure would be changing.

You know, the U.S. military has a schedule for handling this. An operation is initially under a Joint Task Force, with the senior Navy commander in overall control. Then, after the troops are ashore and the situation had stabilized to some extent, the Joint Task Force goes out of existence and an Army command is activated ashore to control and lead the troops. In the case of Grenada, this command was called U.S. Forces in Grenada. To command the U.S. Forces in Grenada they chose the officer who was the Deputy commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps, which is the superior controlling unit for the 82nd Airborne Division. His name was Brigadier General Jack Ferris who had been selected for promotion to Major General. So they let him pin on his second star early and sent him down to Grenada.

Major GeneraJack Ferris managed the transition out of the commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division. He assumed command as the senior U.S. military officer in

Grenada. He also then worked with Vice Admiral Metcalf on what was the dissolution of Joint Task Force 20, which had controlled the landings. Metcalf then returned to his normal billet back in Norfolk, Virginia, and whatever he did there.

Well, I don't know that I've known very many human beings as smooth as Major GeneraJack Ferris. In some ways he was, and I'm sure still is, quite ambitious. He is tremendously proud, an airborne trooper through and through, but without some of the rough edges that airborne officers sometimes have. He is tough as nails beneath an exterior of southern gentility. He was a total contrast with the commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division. He set out to woo me like crazy. I was doing exactly the same thing to him, because I needed him, and he knew that he needed me. He was superb. He couldn't say “Yes” to me fast enough. There was nothing petty about him. If I said, “You know, I think it would be a good idea if we moved this meeting from 7:00 AM to 7:30 AM,” he would say, “I'll be there.” Or if I suggested moving it back to 6:45 AM, he'd say, “Wouldn't you like it a little bit earlier?” He was a very smooth guy.

Q: While we're on the subject of State-military relations, what about the people who came with you, the Foreign Service Officers? In the old days one could rely pretty much on most officers having had military experience themselves, and this always made things easier. However, we're beginning to move into a new generation. How did you find this? Did you have to sit on some of your officers or some of the other civilian Agency people to keep the peace with the U.S. military?

GILLESPIE: Well, there were some real tensions that developed. This was a matter of individuals and not in any collective way. It was interesting. I had both kinds of people. Some people had been in the U.S. military, and others had never been around it. Their confidence in the military was not very great. They were part of the Vietnam era themselves. However, the military personnel with whom we dealt, from privates up to generals, were, by and large, pretty good, and some were outstanding. The officers that I was lucky enough to be given were good. I had asked for some of them by name, but

some of whom I didn't ask for at all. They were just sent down - selected, I think, by their bosses for this job. In a few cases the purpose was just to get them out of the office. However, this was the case with only a very few. I think this operation in Grenada hit the press hard enough and fast enough that many decision makers in a position to do so said, “I think that we'd better send somebody good down there right now.”

It was like that with the press. The first journalists who came to Grenada were the cream of the crop. In today's terms, 1996, this was like sending Tom Brokaw (NBC), Dan Rather (CBS), Peter Jennings (ABC), and Bernard Shaw (CNN) there in the first wave. Then, when the situation began to stabilize and change, they left, and a second string group of journalists came in. We had almost exactly the same thing. The CIA Division Chief for Latin America was Duane “Dewey” Claridge. I had been working closely with him. I said, “Dewey, I want good people down here. I don't want any bums.” He said, “Don't worry. I'm sending you the best I've got. This is a gold mine for us. We're going to find stuff and do things here.” So the CIA was sending pretty good people down there.

The military sent in complete units with their serving commanding officers, so that's what we got. However, from the Foreign Service I asked for and got good people. For example, I had Lino Gutierrez, a Spanish speaking, Cuban-American, who came down to work on this job. I had Larry Rossin. I can't list all the names, but they were just very good officers. They saw that this was an important situation and that a careful job needed to be done. They performed up to their skill levels. They really did what good Foreign Service Officers do.

With USIA (United States Information Agency) I talked both with the Latin America area director and with Charles Wick who was Ronald Reagan's USIA Director, an old friend from California. I said, “I've got to have the best. This is something that we have to exploit.” Wick said, “Don't worry, Mr. Ambassador. We're going to do it. I'm going to send you the best I've got. Well, he didn't know who he had. He turned around and said to someone, “Get me the best!” And somebody said, “Okay, boss, we'll get the best.” They sent me

superb officers. I got people who knew the region and people who knew a little bit about the world. I know that we got some of the USIA regional people because I know and knew them. There was Guy Farmer, who had been in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. I think that he was the first man to come in as my Public Affairs Officer. Guy was really something. He knew how to handle the press. He knew Latin America, Europe, and all his stuff. Boy, he would give me the “Ambassador's salute” and he would say, “How can I help?” I would say to him, “Well, you tell me.” So he would say, “Here's what we've got to do.” I would say, “Great, let's go.” I might change this or that a little bit but, basically, I let him run the public affairs operation. In effect, the military dumped the press on me.

Q: I know that after Vietnam the whole military idea was to keep the press out of there. How was the press unleashed and how did you handle that?

GILLESPIE: The military literally put the press, if that's possible, in a pressure cooker. The pressure kept building and building and building. Then the military took the lid off. The way they took the lid off was to put all of the press people on C-130 aircraft and fly them into Grenada. Then they told me, “They're yours.” I said, “Thanks a lot!” Of course, I'm over- simplifying this, but basically this was it. Vice Admiral Metcalf said, “We've got all these press people. We'd like to make the first press flight, Mr. Ambassador, on Saturday, October 29, or November 1 or something like that. Will you be prepared to receive them?” I said, “Who's going to bring them and who's going to escort them?”

Well, basically, the military public affairs people put them all on the plane, with Guy Farmer and the USIA guys. When they got off the airplane, they were under the joint escort, if you will, of both the USIA and the military public affairs people. The reporters were skeptical. They were angry, cynical, and doubtful. They felt that this was all a big, phoney deal. I must say, on behalf of the military public affairs people and the people from USIA, that they had done the best they could to give the reporters the best show that we could provide, under the circumstances.

Now, you asked me about the medical students, and this is a key point. If I remember correctly, we got all of the students out of there within 48 hours of the time the troops first landed.

Q: Did you have problems rounding them up?

GILLESPIE: No. We had teams set up to do this. The military were doing it. There were students in places that we hadn't expected them to be. We put out the word through people who went around in jeeps, with bullhorns and all that stuff. Within 48 hours we had collected all of these students. We said, “There's no point keeping these people on this island.” We said their evacuation was voluntary, but we didn't want to leave it at that. We wanted them out of there and back home in the U.S. We had Charles Modica, the head of the Medical School, up in New York. He'd been screaming and yelling. Then there was his representative in Grenada saying, “There's no problem here.” We had inquiries from parents and all of that.

The State Department sent a team down from Washington to pick up the students. We had to wait until the airport, Point Salines, was open. They sent in large aircraft - I forget exactly what they were. I don't think that they were C-130s, although they may have been.

In any case, the first man to come down to pick up the students was a relatively junior Foreign Service Officer, named Charles Shapiro. Charles happened to have worked in the Bureau of American Republics Affairs, in the Office of Central American Affairs. He had done some work for me because I was Deputy Assistant Secretary. He had been identified as a very sharp officer, which was obvious from the time he walked through the door. Charles came down with his team and met with me. I forget how many of them there were. He said, “Our job is to take these students back and deliver them in the United States.” I think that they flew them back to Ft. Benning or Ft. Bragg - Pope Air Force Base.

I told him, “Good luck,” and the State Department team was scared. They didn't know what these students were going to say or do. I said, “Well, it's up to you.” I shook hands with them, had pictures taken, and waved goodbye to them.

The press was there for their departure. The students were happy but kind of reluctant to leave. They didn't especially want to leave. They wanted to know what was going on and they were curious. However, they all got on the aircraft and left Grenada. Up in the U.S., the first plane landed, the door opened, and the first student came out. He fell down to the ground and kissed the ground!

Q: I remember seeing that. That was the most moving thing...

GILLESPIE: I've wondered about it ever since. How did Shapiro get this guy to do it? He insists that it didn't take much urging. It was not totally spontaneous, but the point is that, almost to a person, these students said, “This was really a bad situation.

U.S. intervention was the right thing to do. That place was a mess, and things were going to get worse before they got better.” So without any indoctrination by the U.S. Government or authorities these 800 or 1,000 students, or whatever the number was, got off the airplanes and said, “This was the right thing for our Government to do. Grenada was in real trouble. There were bad things happening and there were worse things that were going to happen.” That reaction set this up so that our military and our politicians began to say, “Wait a minute. This is not bad. This is good.” And in typical fashion they said, “Let me touch it, let it rub off on me.” They were all pleased.

The press began to change from being terribly doubtful, cynical, and skeptical about the intervention in Grenada to taking a more positive view of it, particularly as the second team of reporters came in. They were looking for stories to write. Well, there were no human rights violations by American forces, and there were no bad things happening during their watch. The reporters kept looking for my story. They wondered where they were going to

get my headline. They started to look back and said, “Well, what was here? Why did the Americans come in?”

By that time we were beginning to find a lot of things to talabout. There were millions of rounds of ammunition on the island.

As our people were looking around, we were going into the Ministry of Finance and the different offices of the Grenadian revolutionary government which had been under the control of Maurice Bishop's New Jewel Movement. The evidence was popping right up at you.

This was a thick, corrupt system. In a warehouse some of our military people found dozens and dozens of very expensive computers, molding away. Somebody started to check the paperwork and found that the Government of Grenada was paying the Government of Hungary or somebody else millions of dollars for these computers, taking it out of the hide of Grenada and running up debts. The people who were in charge of procurement were taking a percentage of these orders. Then the material was received in Grenada and was left in the warehouse because no one knew how to use it.

We found school textbooks from the Sandinistas in Nicaragua that were being translated from Spanish into English. The illustrations showed, “1 AK-47 + 1 AK-47 = 2 AK-47s = 1 dead imperialist,” or something like that. These were the contents of the book. For the press, and for our own intelligence people, this was a sort of gold mine of information. It tended to reinforce the appropriateness of some action being taken in that regard.

We found Grenadians, and the reporters found more Grenadians, who were willing to tell the reporters all about their experiences. First of all, Grenadians are very nice people. They are pretty open and responsive people. So if a journalist walked up to somebody on the street and said, “Hello, ma'am, how are you? Good day.” He'd get a friendly reply. The reporter would say, “Well, tell me what life was like, particularly under the New Jewel Movement.” The person told them pretty straight. Many of the people, 90 percent of whom

were Catholic, definitely not communist or socialist, said, “Well, the Americans saved our lives! This was better than World War II! You think that the liberation of Paris was great. We are delighted to have the Americans here.” They couldn't do enough for the Americans. They would say, “Look at these wonderful troops,” and so on and so forth. So the reaction of the Grenadian people became the story that the press reported. That generated a positive echo.

The next big event that happened was that during the first three or four days Congressman Tom Foley, on behalf of Tip O'Neill, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and a group of Democratic members of the House came down for a visit to Grenada. They were really going to go after President Reagan on the Grenadian invasion. There were Republicans in the delegation, but the Democrats controlled it. I think that we declared the hostilities ended, if I remember correctly, on November 3, 1983. In war you have to have all of these formal declarations and dates, because it changes the way that people are paid. It also determines which units are where and which units go back to their bases and so forth and are replaced by other units. It's really very formal, in a stylized way.

Anyway, I met with the generals and the admirals. We all agreed that we could say that hostilities ended, say, as of midnight on November 3. We reported this to Washington, and they said, “That's fine. We agree.”

Well, on November 4, CODEL (Congressional Delegation) Foley arrived. This was really Tip O'Neill's delegation, but Tip wasn't able to come, because of his health. So he asked Congressman Tom Foley, who was the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, to come down to Grenada. He had with him the Democratic Party hot shots. He had Congressmen Steve Solarz, John Bonior, and five or six other Democratics, the first line, foreign policy tough guys, smart as whips. Republican Congressmen also came along, because this was a bipartisan delegation. The Republican Congressman who stood out as the brightest, because I got to know him on this trip was Dick Cheney, from Wyoming.

These guys came down to Grenada. The Democratic members of the delegation were getting ready to do Reagan in. If I remember correctly, they flew into Grenada, landing at Point Salines. I met them and got into the car with Congressmen Foley and Cheney and Assistant Secretary Motley, I guess. Remember that Assistant Secretary Tony Motley's pre-government experience had been as a major lobbyist for the Alaska oil pipeline. He knew all of these guys pretty well, and they knew him.

So, as we drove to the hotel where they were going to be put up, we started our major show and tell for these guys. They made their inquiries. I would tell them, “Marines were killed here. Helicopters were there. This was the headquarters. This was the hospital that was attacked. This is where this and this incident happened. This was all shot up. This is where Maurice Bishop's body was found,” and so forth. We took them out to the first arms storage areas or depots that we had found. We had really done nothing to them. They were just as we found them. We had just opened the door, but they were heavily guarded. The guns were just stacked all over the place, with boxes of ammunition containing millions and millions of rounds.

I stood up a bit higher on a box and said, “Gentlemen, this is what we found,” and I briefed them. I said that this is what we know. I said, “Here's Colonel So and so. He'll be able to show you this. Here's Mr. So and so. He'll show you this. This is Lt. Such and such, and he'll do that.” We sent them all off to see these things on their own, with their guides, but basically they were on their own. I told them, “Ask any questions you want and do whatever you want to do.”

You could sense the beginning of a change in mood here. They began to think, “Hey, this isn't right. This wasn't a good situation. These may not have been nice, innocent people who were just sitting here, and the U.S. came in with a force like a whirlwind and whacked them around the head and shoulders to make ourselves look good in an anti- communist way. Maybe there was something going on here.” So we did that.

That evening we were having a buffet dinner at the hotel. We were drinking all of this terrible, Algerian wine that Grenada had purchased. They bought this really bad wine. The liquor authority of the island, which handled this, said, “We can't sell this. Nobody will buy it.” I said, “We'll buy it. What do you want for it? We'll give you 25 cents a bottle.” So we paid 25 cents a bottle for it and charged it to representation expenses. I said to the general commanding the 82nd Airborne Division, “Thanksgiving is coming, and our troops will be here. Can you buy some of this?” He said, “I can't buy it. I can't pay government money for it. Individuals could, if we had a way to do it, but I'm not sure I want my troops to do that.” So I said, “Okay, here's what we'll do.” We got a nice, Grenadian businessman. They bought the wine at a dime a bottle, and we gave it to the troops to have with their Thanksgiving dinner. It was optional.

In the meantime, my DCM, Mike Yohn, who was a really funny guy, said, “Don't worry. I'll make sure we have a few cases for the Embassy Thanksgiving dinner.” We were all down in Grenada by ourselves. Nobody had his family with him. He took care of that. Mike is an old-time Foreign Service Officer. I think he was a naval officer, so he's one of that generation we talked about. Mike knows how to play the cumshaw game with the military. That is, “We need this, you need that, okay, we'll take care of it.” But he kept things running very well and developed relationships with generals and admirals that were very productive. And with colonels and sergeants, too. He eventually brought his wife down, who is from the Virgin Islands. She stayed with him for a little while.

Anyway, CODEL Foley was going through this transformation. If I remember correctly, on the second night, we went to the Red Lobster, one of the restaurants on the island. It was a small place which, in fact, had lobsters. They had Bank's beer, which is the beer of the Caribbean. Congressman Cheney Republican, Wyoming, later Secretary of Defense under President Bush took me aside and said, “You know, I'm sympathetic to all of this. You people are just doing a wonderful job of convincing Congressman Foley and these other Democratic Congressmen of where the truth is. I just want to tell you what a superb

job you are doing in handling this visit. Here are a couple of other suggestions for things you might do. Watch this guy and that guy." However, he said, "You know, other than that, just continue doing what you're doing with everybody who comes through. This is the way to do it. Just let people explore. There's a story here that tells itself. You don't have to force anything." We'd found that pretty much the case with the journalists and with members of Congress.

Then Assistant Secretary Motley said, "Okay, Gillespie, you were the guy who negotiated with all of these island Prime Ministers from the Caribbean. We're flying back to the U.S. via Bridgetown, Barbados and we're going to meet with them. You're coming with me. I want you to be our guy there. "

Q: Bish was a political appointee, wasn't he, who was...

GILLESPIE: From Nebraska.

Q: He wasn't much.

GILLESPIE: He was all right but he had a very funny view of how policy was made, about relations between Presidents and the State Department. He used to say, "If you just let Ronnie Reagan be Reagan, everything will be all right." He thought that all he had to do was pick up the phone and call the President or send him a personal cable and then Reagan would read it and say, "right do these things." Bish had some very good ideas. He was very honest, very nice, but probably out of his element. We were all facing new challenges, but Bish's experience and knowledge were limited.

In any event, Assistant Secretary Motley said, "Come on." So I got on the CODEL plane, which, I think, was Tail No. 26002 - Air Force 2. We flew to Bridgetown. Assistant Secretary Motley said, "Okay, you go and tell Prime Minister Tom Adams of Barbados what's coming at them." So I talked to Prime MinisterTom Adams, Eugenia Charles, and

John Compton and they looked at me and said, “Mr. Ambassador, don't worry. We'll take care of this.”

The CODEL met with the leaders in the same conference center where we had negotiated Caribbean participation in the operation in Grenada. I think that it was called the Bayside Center. All five or six of the island Prime Ministers lined up on one side, a pretty impressive and imposing looking group. On the other side were Congressmen Foley and the other Congressmen, including Congressman Stokes from Ohio. I believe Congressman Charles Conyers was in this group.

In any event the American Congressmen started asking why did the Americans do this, why did the American administration force you to do that - really hostile kinds of questions. Prime Minister Tom Adams sat there, and I could see him beginning to react to these questions. Finally, he stood up and said, “Gentlemen, let's get something straight. This is not your country. We are Heads of Government. We are not your constituents. We are not responsible to you or accountable to you in any way. We are deeply appreciative of what the United States of America has done to help us in an hour of real need. The situation in Grenada had gone bad and needed to be dealt with.” Each of the other Prime Ministers got up in turn and made similar statements. By the time they finished, the tone of the meeting had changed dramatically. All of the energy had shifted to the other side of the table. That's the point at which some of the members of our Congress began to change their tune.

One of our Congressmen asked a question that someone else had asked earlier. One of the Prime Ministers said, “I'm sorry, but I've already answered that question.” Our Congressman said, “I want to ask my question. I don't care whether you answered that question 30 minutes ago or 30 seconds ago. I'll ask it now.” The island Prime Ministers weren't having any of that! One of them said, “I answered that question, Congressman. You heard our answer to that. What's your problem?” And that was that.

Then, when we went back to this very nice resort hotel in Bridgetown with the members of CODEL Foley, Congressman Foley had said that we weren't going to do anything and that we would have a quiet evening. As is typical with CODEL's, the Air Force escort officers had bars that wouldn't stop, with whiskey, beer, and all this kind of thing. They brought in food and a lot of snacks from the United States. So we had a kind of quiet evening, and that's when we sat around and talked.

I remember that Congressman Steve Solarz and I got into a very interesting and very friendly discussion about the Grenadian affair. He said, “I see what this situation is.” Tip O'Neill's son, Kevin, or whatever his name is, was on this trip. Kenny O'Donnell was also on this trip. There was a number of key non members of Congress on it. It became very apparent that Congressman Foley was going to have to go back and tell Tip O'Neill that he just couldn't beat the daylights out of President Reagan over this. They were just going to have to accept that the Grenadian affair was a positive development.So that's how that little event moved forward. As I said, we watched the CODEL fly off, and then I went back to Grenada.

Later, we had the Black Caucus come to Grenada. That was a very similar type of situation. These black Congressmen really were patronizing the island Prime Ministers. I couldn't believe how patronizing they were to the black leaders of these island states and other people that they met. It's a terrible generalization to make but, unfortunately, in my view it's accurate. I had a talk with Congressman William Gray, who was then, if I remember correctly, the Chairman of the House Budget Committee. He was a Democratic Congressman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I got to know him a little bit as a result of this visit. He told me, in a quiet moment, that he was not pleased or proud of the way that he and his colleagues - mainly, his colleagues, of course - had started out treating these island black leaders. Again, these island Prime Ministers would have none of it. They said, “Do not call us brothers. We are not your brothers. We are not related to you. We have had parliamentary democracy in these islands longer than you have had democracy in the

United States of America. Don't you forget it. We ended slavery here before you ended slavery in the United States, and don't you forget it." They were very direct and very abrupt with the black Congressmen.

Who was the black Congressman from Berkeley, in northern California? I can't think of his name, but he was on the Armed Services Committee. He was Ronald C. Dellums. He had a woman staffer who was really way over on the left wing side of things. She reportedly had a romantic relationship with one or another of the leaders of the New Jewel Movement in Grenada. She had used his name a lot in terms of providing support to the Revolutionary Government in Grenada. She was not on this trip with the Black Caucus.

Congressman Dellums told me, in the course of a walk in the evening, "I'll never be able to make a statement to the press to this effect, but I now understand much better what was going on. I see how misguided Ms (Whatever her name) was in all of this." He said, "I had never met any of these island Prime Ministers with whom we had our long session today, but I now see that they are very competent and pretty capable people. Nobody's telling them what position to take, how to act, or what to do. I'll never be able to tell the U.S. press that you, President Reagan, and these other people did the right thing, but I guess I'll have to mute my criticism." And he did! After that, he never criticized the Grenadian intervention very loudly.

It was a fascinating experience in that regard. From then on, when CODEL Foley and later the Black Caucus - and particularly the Foley group - came back and made its report to Tip O'Neill, that just took a lot of the heat and pressure off.

Then we got very much involved with the question of, "What do we do now?" We wanted to deal with this situation and make sure that it didn't go "sour." That was then the big challenge.

Q: Before we get to that, could you talk about the analysis that all of you received on the purpose of stockpiling all of this Soviet Bloc equipment and weapons on Grenada? They weren't that far from Cuba...

GILLESPIE: Let's take a break and then discuss that.

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Q: What was our estimate on the ground of the purpose that all of this equipment stockpiled in Grenada was intended to serve? What was to be done with it? It doesn't seem to make a lot of sense.

GILLESPIE: Well, there were lots of theories and hypotheses at the time, including the view that the Soviets were really going to make Grenada into some kind of a base. Remember, there was the airport at Point Salines. As we got control of this airport and U.S. military engineers looked at it, they said, “Yes, it's what we expected from the aerial photos that we had seen.” I learned that the length of the runway was not as significant as a lot of the other things that were going on. That is, the nature of the construction of revetments, the quantities of fuel to be stored, and that kind of thing. In today's world the fact that there was a very long runway - about 9,000 feet long, or however long it was - was interesting but not definitive. What may have been more significant was the fact that revetments had been built to protect aircraft from the effects of blast, plus the implications of substantial fuel storage capacity. This was more than you would expect or anybody would calculate, if you were going to run tourist flights from Europe in wide bodied jets, looking out 10 or 15 years into the future. Even in that case, you still didn't need as much fuel storage as they were going to put in there, so why were they doing that?

Well, to my knowledge, we never found any written evidence as to what was being planned. However, in the initial searches we found large quantities of various kinds of equipment. Surmises and hypotheses just blossomed. There was a man whose name, iI

remember it correctly, was William Ledeen, who had been working in and around the State Department and the White House. He is a foreign policy thinker of a special kind. I think that he had done some work on the Middle East and was interested in the whole East-West, communist relationship. He fancied himself a publicist as well, so he really got going on some of this.

A joint State-Defense group was established to analyze the Grenadian documents and information - no longer just intelligence. This included all kinds of information that was there and what these facilities might have been used for. The speculation ranged all the way from the view that Grenada was going to be a base for Soviet reconnaissance aircraft; a stepping stone to Africa; a base for subversion throughout the Caribbean, and especially the Eastern Caribbean, as well as North and South America, aimed at Guyana, Surinam, and Brazil; and Nicaragua at the eastern end of the Caribbean. It was thought that they would take revolution from Grenada and foment it in places like the Bahamas, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Jamaica, and the other islands. Any one of those possible scenarios and hypotheses was conceivable.

This group eventually took a look at documentation discovered in the offices of the New Jewel Movement. There had been an effort to burn some of these documents, but not all of them had been destroyed. U.S. Army intelligence teams and CIA people went through this documentation. I think that we had experts from the Library of Congress and all kinds of people. They eventually compiled a set of documents several inches thick. They prepared digests of that and summarized all of that in a public affairs, public diplomacy publication. They published this and made it available to people so that they could draw their own conclusions from it.

Just in the last year and a half, I have been told some fascinating things about Grenada. When I was appointed to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary and started to learn about the Eastern Caribbean, I met a man named Anthony Maingot. Tony Maingot, who is from Trinidad and has a Ph. D. in history, I think, is really an expert on two or three things. He

has looked into political and military affairs in South America, not the Caribbean. He is a sort of expert on the Colombian Army, of all things. However, he later developed into an expert in political science relating to the Caribbean area.

About a year ago, in 1995, I was at a dinner with Tony and sat next to him just by chance. He said, “My gosh, I was just getting ready to get in touch with you. I came back from Havana about four weeks ago. I was in Cuba for about four weeks. While I was there, I had a lot of contact with Cuban academics. I met two men whom I knew of by reputation. I know that they are very smart people. They proceeded to tell me that the plan for Grenada, some time in 1984 or 1985, was to put 10,000 Cuban Army troops and related aircraft into Grenada, and establish a Cuban base there. That's why all of that equipment was there.” I said, “Do you believe that?” He said, “We'll never know for sure. I think that these two professors are smart. I'm not sure what their access to the Cuban leaders is, but I think that it's pretty good. They are not counterrevolutionaries. They are part of the Cuban establishment. They were telling me all this in the sense of, 'The Americans really screwed us up when they intervened in Grenada.'” Maingot, of course, is not an American. He felt that this was the Cuban intention behind shipping this equipment into Grenada.

I think that I may have mentioned that, from earlier intelligence, we learned about mysterious, night time ship visits and unloadings in Grenada. We confirmed this after we had our forces ashore. A curfew would be set up, and nobody could move out of his house. People would hear trucks moving on the streets and roads. They were not allowed to see anything but they knew that something was going on. Then the ships would leave. The word that Tony Motley, the Assistant Secretary of State, got was that they were approaching a critical point. The airport, if I remember correctly, was supposed to open in March, 1984. The due date for completion was slipping, and it might have taken another year. In any case that's what Motley picked up. He gave these people sufficient credibility to say that this was not a bad hypothesis. The indications were that the Cubans really proposed to set up a major base and to do so very quickly, as these Cuban professors had explained it to him. Everything would be all set, and they would fly the Cuban troops

in. They would not send them in by ship. We and others would only learn about it after the fact, and there would be no opportunity for the U.S. to take any counter action. The next thing we knew, there would be 10,000 well armed and well equipped Cuban troops on Grenada. So what could we do? We were not going to attack them or take them out. These professors assumed that neither the U.S. or anybody else would make such a decision. It would be a fait accompli. It was certainly credible - why not?

Q: Weren't you running across people who were in the New JeweMovement? The citizens of the island would know them.

GILLESPIE: Interestingly enough, we looked into the question of why Grenada should have been chosen for this effort. We wondered what it was about Grenada that might instruct us in 1992-1995 about Haiti. It turned out, and we saw the evidence of this, that the New Jewel Movement was not truly popular, with a small “p.” It did not have the support of the majority of the people in Grenada. There's no doubt about that in my mind. They were accepted. They had taken over power. The Grenadians, by and large, live at the lower end of the economic scale, rather than the higher end.

The people who resisted the New Jewel Movement most actively were often people who were used to the Eric Gairy style of corrupt and not very good government and were losing whatever economic advantages they might have had under the circumstances to the New Jewel Movement. Or they just didn't agree with the New Jewel Movement. In short, if you had enough money, you left Grenada. If you wanted to stay, you figured out how to take advantage of the situation. So such people might have supported Maurice Bishop and some of the people around him.

As of 1983 the New Jewel Movement government was not yet doing bad things to the people. As we learned from a study of the documents, there were plans to move to a system of rationing, to redistribute the wealth on the island and to limit the people's access to food, education, transportation, and information. This was the view of Bernard Coard.

This was the hard line of what you would think was communist in the old sense - rock hard communism, a Marxist-Leninist approach - related to a state-controlled society. That's the direction in which Bernard Coard and the people around him wanted to move sooner, rather than later.

Once the U.S. troops had backed away and I was able to move around pretty freely on the island without any security protection, I would get in the car and drive somewhere. I would stop my car, get out on a corner or crossroads, and talk to people. On one occasion I saw a young man walking along with a book in his hand. It turned to be a copy of the Bible. He said, “Oh, I'm going to church now.” I said, “Tell me, what do you think of the New Jewel Movement?” He said, “Man, that was no good. That wasn't anything at all. They didn't agree with what we were doing,” and so on. The New Jewel Movement did not have strong, popular support. It was not doing things that were perceived as particularly good for the country. There was extensive corruption, which the people had heard about. It was divorced from the society. That was what the situation was.

That created problems. The members of the elite in the New Jewel Movement were a minority. We interviewed the people in the People's Army of Grenada at length. We got the Grenadian Army lists, and our counterintelligence guys went out and found all of these people. Usually, we interviewed them, with someone from one of the other Caribbean islands present. We interviewed all of them. There were hundreds, if not thousands of interviews. We asked them, “What did you do, what was your job, where do you live?” They were all identified in a data base and they knew that they had been identified.

For the Grenadians who were going to take over the government and for those of us who had intervened the challenge was finding some way to absorb all of this excess energy - and we pointed this out very clearly. This challenge related to people who had been spending their time drilling on the parade ground all day, wearing combat uniforms. Now the challenge was to figure out what to do with them. So we did what we could with them. That moves us into the next phase of the whole situation in Grenada - that is, setting up a

new government and deciding what to do with an economy that was probably hopeless, if not nearly so, before the New Jewel Movement came to power and worsened by the New Jewel Movement. Then it was shocked by the intervention on October 25 and the time immediately following that.The CIA had a plan to form a government. As I mentioned before, they had come up with lists of names of Grenadians who were outside of Grenada, in exile, if you will. Some were in Canada, others in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean, and some in the U.S. When I was given that list, with the recommendation from CIA that these were the people whom we should be promoting as a provisional government which would then take over the country, I took that list and showed it to Barbro Owens and Larry Rossin, the two Foreign Service Officers who had been in Bridgetown, Barbados, and covered Grenada from there. I told them, “Look over this list and tell me what you think of them.” This was a TOP SECRET list, with all kinds of code words on it. They looked at it and then just threw up their hands. They said, “These are some of the worst people in the Caribbean. You don't want them anywhere near this island.” I said, “Well, these are the people that CIA proposes that we bring in to set up a provisional government.” They said, “That's crazy.”

So I consulted with Washington to see how we could deal with this problem. First, I told CIA not to do anything about this list. I said that this was not the right way to go. It turned out that the CIA knew that this was the case, but this list was the best that they had. They didn't have anything else and they proposed to move ahead on this basis.

I went to discuss this matter with Sir Paul Scoon, the Governor General of Grenada. In the early days of this crisis he had shown himself, from everything that I could see, to be an intelligent and moderate man. I thought that he was probably an honorable person. London would not have put him in that job if he hadn't been okay. I asked him what he wanted to do about a new Grenadian government. He said, “What I want to do is to take a man named Nicholas Brathwaite, who works for CARICOM (Caribbean Common Market). He is now in Georgetown, Guyana. I would like to bring him back here as Acting Prime Minister until we can set up elections.” I said, “Can Brathwaite form some kind of

government?" He said, "Yes, we have a lot of smart people here. There's George Brizan," and he named a number of others, including George Wilson, who would be the Finance Minister. He said, "They're as competent as anybody around, and I trust them. I have confidence in them and I think that they'll be responsive to me."

In effect I told Washington that this is what Sir Paul Scoon wanted to do and that it made sense to me. Why should we try to make changes in it? We took some of the names Sir Paul Scoon had given us and checked them with whatever indexes we had. We didn't have anything adverse about these guys. Some of them had good reputations. Others didn't. Some had cooperated with the New Jewel Movement but weren't members of it. Some had not and resisted it. Nicholas Brathwaite had been away from Grenada for a number of years. He had worked first for the old Esso Refinery in Aruba and made enough money then to put himself through school at the University of the West Indies. He's a smart guy. Then he worked for CARICOM. The Caribbean Common Market has a formal organization, with its headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana.

In any event, that's what happened. It would have been up to us to try to stop it. It wasn't up to us to start this process, but we would have had to try to stop it, and I couldn't see any way that we could do that or, indeed, should do that. It would have cost us a great deal to attempt to stop it and then left us completely responsible and holding the bag. So this Provisional Government was established, with an Acting Prime Minister and all of that.

Well, in the great swing of things Nick Brathwaite turned out very well. He may not be the greatest thing since sliced bread, but he was honest and straight. He was able to gain the confidence of his fellow citizens and those around him. He was willing to work very closely with me and with the other Prime Ministers of the region. They all played a supportive role. The people Nick Brathwaite picked for his provisional government were, by and large, very good. Within roughly the limit of a year which we had set, they had elections. A man named Herbert Blaize was eventually elected Prime Minister. He turned out not to be as good as everybody had hoped and thought he would be. Grenada has a very small

Parliament of 15 members. All you need is to have eight members to form a majority and be the government.

All of that was all right but the essential problem was that the island's finances were in terrible shape. On paper Grenada owed the Soviets, the Nicaraguans, and all these other people tremendous amounts of money for military supplies and other assistance they had been given. The role of the banks was diminished, if not gone. Grenada had never had a very effective system for the collection of revenues. It had lived on a lot of handouts of international aid from the Canadians, the U.S., and other countries. Like a lot of these small, developing island states, which really cannot very easily sustain themselves.

Well, part of the challenge which the Reagan administration gave itself was that Grenada had to become a showcase. We had beaten the communists, and they were out. We felt that Grenada now had to be a success story. Then the problems really began. I am speaking in a non-partisan fashion now. Having seen our program in Haiti as administered by the Clinton administration, I feel that our efforts in Grenada reflected a typical American attitude that, “We're going to get in there and do it.” The investment missions started coming down. Arnold Palmer, the professional golfer, came down to see about setting up a golf resort. We got them all. We got the best and the worst aspects of the U.S. We got crooks, including a guy who was going to set up a toy factory and make toys out of local woods. We had people who were going to take the nutmeg on the island and turn it into a special liqueur. We had computer people who were going to do data processing. There was all of this and, of course, 99.75 percent of it turned out to be hot air and just so much talk - nothing much more than that. However, it made a great story and great copy for two or three years.

It turned out that the toy manufacturer was a felon. He had spent time in jail. The Department of Commerce was helping him. They didn't know about his background until the whole thing came to light. However, a few things began to happen.

Grenada had had a life before the New Jewel Movement. It was a vacation spot - and they have some lovely resorts. It had vacation homes owned by foreigners - absentee landlords, many of them from the U.S. It is a wonderful area for sailing and yachting, so there's a lot of chartering of boats and things like that.

It turned out that the Grenadians were not very good managers. They have not managed what little they have very well. They weren't doing well before the New Jewel Movement took over, they didn't do well under the New Jewel Movement, and, I'm sorry to say, they haven't done a terribly good job since then. It was probably during the Brathwaite years, when he was the Acting Prime Minister, that it was best. That was because they were under the scrutiny of the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, the U.S., and everybody else. I had AID (Agency for International Development) people who more or less lived in the Grenadian Ministry of Finance. There was a fellow named Jim Habron, who had been with me in Nicaragua. He's an AID officer. They put him in as head of the AID office on Grenada. The main regional office for AID is in Bridgetown, Barbados. AID set up a satellite office in Grenada and put Jim in charge of it. He did a great job.

Eventually, Blaize was elected Prime Minister and brought in his own government. They didn't do a terribly good job. He turned out to be somewhat autocratic. Then Blaize fell ill and was replaced by Brathwaite, who was then elected as prime Minister. Since then there's been another election and another Prime Minister. They don't have a lot to work with, they make mistakes, and they make bad judgment calls. Unfortunately, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, and all of these small, island states are a little different from Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad, which are bigger.

I have not been back to Grenada for a long time. I'd like to go back but I'm a little afraid that I'm going to be a little disappointed in what I see because I'm afraid that there hasn't been a whole lot of improvement since the time I left.

Q: If I recall correctly, there was something about sending a force of Caribbean police people. Did you get involved in that?

GILLESPIE: Yes. You appreciate that we always have to have a date certain to get the U.S. forces out, once we put them in. We had established a date by which that would happen. However, there was concern that there was a need to have security on that island. We took the RSS - Regional Security System - and really began to build that up, with Barbados the lead element in it and Jamaica in there, too, because Jamaica had their regular defense forces. The rest were police forces.

We used our military assistance and other resources to build up the RSS. By the way, we got into some problems there. We had some bad incidents on Grenada with the Jamaican police or military and some of the other police. They started getting kind of rough with the Grenadians. There were a couple of rapes, some robberies, and some burglaries. We had to deal with those. That was the idea - that the Regional Security System would take over the security of Grenada. There were some really bad guys from the New Jewel Movement - Bernard Coard, General Hudson Austin, and others as well, who were in jail up on the hill above St. George's, Grenada. We couldn't trust the New Jewel jailers, the police. So we brought in a Barbadian to head up the prison system.

The Grenadian authorities were going to try Coard and his wife for the murder of Maurice Bishop, which is another, long story. They were eventually convicted and sentenced to death. My recollection is that the House of Lords in London commuted those sentences to life imprisonment. Quite frankly, if the Coards had appeared on the streets of St. George's at any time within a month following the intervention, they would have been lynched. There was a strong, overwhelming tide of popular resentment against them, to the point where we were all convinced that they would have been strung up like Mussolini from a lamp post.

In any case, the RSS took over. This was done in phases. First, the 82nd Airborne Division left, then the XVIII Airborne Corps, then the U.S. Forces in Grenada, under Major General Jack Farris. I left myself to return to Washington. I turned over the Embassy to Loren Lawrence, who had been Ambassador to Jamaica and was a senior FSO. General Farris left, and I left. Then the Jamaicans and the Barbadians took over and were alternating the command in some fashion - first the Jamaicans and then the Barbadians. Eventually, those defense force people left, and security was in the hands of the RSS. They were training the Grenadian police to reestablish a Grenadian Police Force. There was all of that institution building that happens after you've had an incident like this and a political, civilian dislocation of society of this magnitude.

In the field of education they were looking at the teachers, the quality of the education, the curricula, books, and all that sort of thing. In the minds of many people the educational system had been tainted by this New Jewel Movement approach, which had set out to indoctrinate the youth of the country. All of that went forward. We still have a Mission there, though I think that it's down to one person.

Q: Did you ever talk to the head of the Medical School who had saithat there was no trouble in Grenada?

GILLESPIE: Oh, yes. We had long discussions at dinner. He was just an air head. He had done what a lot of people do - maybe we all do it. He had gotten in, good and tight, with the New Jewel people. They allowed him to function, with virtually no restrictions. So he was content. He was not prepared to turn against and condemn them. As I say, he was something of an air head, anyway. He didn't read the situation in the U.S., where the parents of these students were, at all properly. Ed Modica, his boss, who was the chairman of the school up in New York, knew exactly what was going on. He was deeply concerned about all of this, because he was so nervous. The man in Grenada was British, not that that's anything against him. He and his wife lived in a lovely, large home

overlooking an inlet, cooled by the prevailing breezes. I had drinks with them on several occasions. He would tell me how we had exaggerated the problem in Grenada.

I said, “Wait a minute, look at this.” He would say, “No, don't worry, Mr. Ambassador. This was not a problem. You just overreacted to this. Everybody overreacted to it. It would have worked out just fine.”

Q: Was the school reestablished?

GILLESPIE: Yes, but I don't think that it's ever done anything. I don't think that it's gone anywhere. I think that it was reestablished, though.

Q: So, to finish this off, when did you leave Grenada?

GILLESPIE: I flew out of Grenada on March 13, 1984, which was the date on which the Point Salines airport was initially supposed to have been opened - five years after the revolution led by the New Jewel Movement in 1979. I chose that date as a symbolic moment. I took a plane from that airport and flew to Bridgetown, Barbados, where I took another plane and left the area.

Q: You then went to do what?

GILLESPIE: I returned to being Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean in March, 1984. We haven't covered a few, small details involving the forensic examination on Maurice Bishop's body. I went out with a team from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Those guys were just remarkable, going over these remains. They wanted to have me there so that I could understand what they were doing. Some of the things that you're called on to do as an FSO, it seems to me, are truly remarkable. Officers are always being asked to be present for that kind of thing. I do this mentoring for junior FSO's now as they come into the Foreign Service. I keep wondering what the next group is going to be asked to do which they never thought that they'd be asked to do in their lives. This is the

kind of thing. This is why, as we look at where the Foreign Service is going, we need this because there is nobody else out there to do it.

Q: Okay, we'll pick it up from there.

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Today is September 9, 1996. This is a continuation of the interview with Tony Gillespie. Tony, we left the narrative where you returned from the Grenadian experience. Here you had been sitting around in Bermuda shorts, basking in the Caribbean sun and doing a little thing like running an invasion of a country. When you came back - this was your first time back in Washington, wasn't it?

GILLESPIE: Not really. I had come back periodically, but this wathe first time I came back and put on a suit again.

Q: You put your suit back on and were back in the Department. What was the atmosphere in ARA (Bureau of American Republics Affairs) about this whole, Grenadian episode? This was the first time that you were no longer focused on it. You were one of the guys again.

GILLESPIE: In fact, that's not totally accurate, because the U.S. had begun a process - and I'd seen this from Grenada - of trying to help Grenada to recover. It was very important, it was a key objective at that point to make sure that the Grenadians did as good a job as they could of recovering, both from the immediate surgery of the intervention and from almost five years of misrule by this socialist movement which was leaning more and more toward Stalinist communism.The first job that Assistant Secretary Tony Motley and I agreed that I would work on would be to make sure that we were managing the effort to help Grenada to recover as well as we could from Washington. Now, interestingly enough, this involved a combination of the economic actors - that is AID, the Agency for International Development, was helping the Grenadian Government, the new Provisional Government as it was called, establish itself and exert the proper

controls of the governmental apparatus of this little island. AID was also helping in the area of technical assistance and in the transfer of funds or resources. Everybody knew that this was a small, island state with no economy to speak of, producing some rum, small amounts of sugar, and not much else.

So there was a strong sense, within the Reagan administration and our government as a whole, that we had to do whatever we could to help these people not only survive but maybe even prosper. Interestingly enough, the Department of Commerce, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or OPIC, in addition to AID and the Trade Development Program, TDP, were all actively engaged in this. While I had been in Grenada, we had seen the first investment and trade missions come through, but those sort of continued. Not surprisingly, all of this focus on this tiny island in the Windward Islands, the eastern chain of the Caribbean, stimulated the flow of saliva in other islands of the Caribbean. There were the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and others who said, “Well, we have some of the same problems.” So we had much more of a Caribbean focus than we had had before. These governments were knocking at our door, either to make sure that they protected their stake in our assistance efforts and the attention that we were giving them, or to seek more assistance.

I came back to Washington in March, 1984. That whole year was a very active one, at least in the regional sense, with a strong, Caribbean focus, in addition to whatever was going on in Central America, which was still boiling along hot and heavy with the situation in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, of course. The Sandinistas were still very much in power.

On the political side Grenada was a demonstration. Whatever our intention had been, I learned later - and I think I knew at the time - there were people who said, “Well, If we hit these people - the New Jewel Movement and others and, conceivably, the Cubans - hard, it will teach others a lesson.” We thought that others would watch that. Then there was a sort of corresponding effort on the economic side to push that development and make sure

that we got out of that whatever gains we could get. As I said, whatever our clear, cold-hearted intention had been, believe me, the Nicaraguans and others read this as aimed in their direction. We were, in effect, sending them a very clear signal that they could be next. It didn't stop them from doing what they were doing, but I think that it gave them pause and showed them that there was some degree of U.S. willingness to act unilaterally. That had not gone away. Therefore, that had its consequences. So those were the kinds of things that we got into in 1984.

In the course of the Grenada operation Pete Peterson, who was the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, had gotten very directly involved in Grenada, because this was a Presidential priority program. I already knew him from a little bit earlier. I worked very closely with him and with his regional people, then, in trying to make sure that we kept things on track throughout the rest of the Caribbean and kept that in balance with what was going on in the rest of the Western Hemisphere.

I don't remember the precise numbers, but at that point, back in the mid-1980s, it's well to remember that the quantities of assistance that we were throwing into South and Central America, and Latin America in general, were substantial. This was one of the largest aid recipient areas. There was an effort to focus that aid more on investment and growth strategies rather than on direct assistance, or “DA,” as it's called, involving teachers, schools, and that kind of thing. Our focus was much more on getting businesses started. That was all going forward.Looming over all of this in 1984 was still the growth of the Contra movement in Nicaragua. That had gone forward, with all of the consequent struggle between the legislative branch, the Congress, and the administration, over authorization of assistance to that movement, the activities of the Contras, and all of the rest of it. So that was a real battle. Remember that I had been wearing at least a couple of hats - maybe three - when I went to Grenada. Assistant Secretary Motley had promoted me to be Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Caribbean. However, he had not taken away my title or my responsibilities as Deputy for Operations for the ARA Bureau, which really involved making sure that it all ran and to make sure it worked. His principal Deputy Assistant

Secretary was Jim Michael. Tom Enders had brought Michael, a lawyer, into the Bureau. Jim concentrated on policy management, per se, and I concentrated on how we were implementing that policy and the steps we were taking to make sure that policy decisions, in fact, were carried out. Craig Johnstone was the Central America impresario with Motley.

So there was Jim Michael, myself, and Johnstone. We had quite a team of people who had gotten to know each other very, very well. I was still sort of the Executive Secretary, if you will, of the Regional Interagency Group under its various names. This was that same, close-in group that Enders had started, composed of representatives of the CIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the NSC (National Security Council), and the State Department which looked at the darker side of our policies and was the place where the more sensitive matters were handled. I was still responsible for making sure that meetings of that group were scheduled and that the proper record was kept of those kinds of things. Then I had this other job of making sure that the Office of Andean Affairs was doing its work properly. I used the front office staff of the ARA Bureau for that. I had Christian Kennedy as the senior staff assistant by title - I kept calling him the Special Assistant. I think that you may know Chris. He is a consular officer who has since gone on to greater things. Chris was the man who handled all of the detailed, paper work. I had him as one arm to handle operations implementation matters. Then I had the Office of Caribbean Affairs, which has always been fairly large, because it has desk officers that cover two or three countries each, but there are 11 or 12 countries in that area.

Q: Could I ask a question about the Office of Caribbean Affairs? When you took it over, I have at least a vague impression that this was a place which was not high on anybody's list for a long time. I would think that there might have been a tendency to find a relatively weak staff there. This was not a place for officers who were regarded as able to walk on water, the high rollers, or something like that. Did you find this when you came there?

GILLESPIE: Yes. That was very much the image that the office had. Clearly, no organization necessarily matches its image in all respects. What I found initially, and this

is part of the politics of our business, was that Tom Enders had been pushed very hard to take as a Deputy Assistant Secretary a man who had worked as a political appointee for the Under Secretary of State for Management toward the end of the Nixon administration. His name was John Upston.

John's claim to fame was that his father was a general. His father had been an Air Force general, the first commandant of the Air Force Academy. Maybe he even helped to establish the Air Force Academy. Back in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, during the Nixon and Ford administrations, Upston had worked as a Special Assistant. He had a high-paying, Schedule C, political appointee job. He left the government during the Carter administration and, interestingly enough, had gone down to the Caribbean and became involved with some AID-funded activities, raising black-faced sheep, of all things. Through political channels Upston made a strong pitch to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary to Tom Enders. He was another person that Enders had to fight off.

Much to the chagrin of all of us, Tom Enders could come up with no better approach than initially to name Upston the Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs. Well, appointing a Schedule C, political appointee as an office director was anathema to AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) and to everyone else. Normally, that's not done. Normally, you don't want even career civil service people in Foreign Service jobs. However, Tom Enders felt that he had no choice.

Well, when I took over Caribbean affairs as Deputy Assistant Secretary, Upston had been sidelined to some extent and was sort of a special adviser on Caribbean affairs. What that mainly meant was that he had been given some travel money and was told to go out and look at things and do things. Just to close this section, Upston later was appointed Ambassador to an African country and got into terrible financial, legal, ethical, and moral trouble, using government credit cards for personal purchases to buy presents for his wife and so on. Then he sort of disappeared from view.

Anyhow, when Upston was sidelined, the Department took the job back into the career service and gave it to Richard Morefield, an officer who had been at the Embassy at Teheran at the time it was taken over by a mob of Muslim extremists. Dick was the Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs when I came into Caribbean Affairs as Deputy Assistant Secretary. During the tail end of the Ford administration, another career officer, Richard Brown, had been at the NSC (National Security Council). He was one of the two or three subordinate FSOs assigned to the NSC. I think that he was one of the subordinates of Ambassador Pete Vaky, who was there at a certain point, though I can't remember exactly who that was at that time. In any case Rich Brown was the Deputy Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs. Well, in all candor, Dick Morefield just didn't click as office director. Brown was a hard-charging, meticulous, organized Political Officer who had already done quite well and who had been around front offices and high levels and knew how to operate. He had been at the NSC, as I said.

As I said, Morefield was not performing well. I think that it had been just before this, or during this time, that he suffered a terrible, personal tragedy. His son was shot and killed in a McDonald's or a Roy Rogers fast food restaurant. His family was devastated by that, and so you have to take that into account. And Morefield had been through this terrible ordeal of nearly 15 months' captivity when the American Embassy in Teheran was seized by Islamic extremists. As a leader and manager, Morefield was not terribly strong. As you indicated in your question, what he was leading was a place where, more often than not, hard chargers didn't seek to be assigned there. They shunned assignment to the Office of Caribbean Affairs because it was concerned with small countries which were not perceived to be very important. Furthermore, the Personnel people felt that this was a great place to assign other than Political Officers as desk officers, to give them desk officer experience. Lord knows what other motivation was behind that - to get the numbers up and say, “We're making these assignments.”

What that led to was quite a mix. There were some tremendously bright officers who immediately began to chafe at the bit as soon as they saw what they had gotten into. There were others who had trouble keeping up with what they'd gotten into. It's interesting, of course, that, just at this point, in late 1983 and early 1984 all of a sudden the focus was on this region. Assistant Secretary Motley was saying to me, “Look, Gillespie, we have to perform. There's a lot of work here. How are you going to handle this?” Well, it had really begun to happen in the summer of 1983, even as I was taking over as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Caribbean Affairs, and maybe even a little before that. We knew that there was a leadership problem in the Office of Caribbean Affairs and had increasingly turned to Rich Brown, the Deputy Director of the office, as the man who got things done.

Eventually, like all management decisions, which are never very easy and don't always end up very nicely, we basically eased Morefield out and made Brown, who was junior in rank, Acting Director of the office. This was a Minister-Counselor-rank kind of job, and he was not yet at that level. So we made him Acting Director and didn't recruit over him. We left him in the job. He reported directly to me. Rich Brown is a very competent manager. He's a demanding boss, but he demands in an effective way. He really just said to these desk officers, “I expect certain levels of performance, and we've got to get things done. You're going to do them.” People responded very well to that. However, you're right that the raw material in the Office of Caribbean Affairs was of mixed quality. There were people who were competent and people who were not so competent. There were some who were really quite good. This was interesting because then Rich Brown made it a point to try really to reward those who were particularly good and make them more visible. They were, and we saw them move along.

That was the case with the Office of Caribbean Affairs, which ended up being my operating arm for what I was supposed to be doing during 1984.

Q: These are big issues, and we've already covered the Central American question. Did you see any problems at that time in all of these islands of the Caribbean? Were there any

potential problems that might turn into something, whether they later did or not? Where did you see your problems?

GILLESPIE: As I said, we felt that the Grenada operation had sent a very clear message. Nonetheless, in connection with the East-West confrontation, there were real problems which didn't just go away. The Reagan administration was very concerned about people's views toward Cuba. For a few months during that time there wasn't much sympathy for Cuba and establishing full diplomatic relations with that country. But that issue always comes up. We always faced this situation in Jamaica. Michael Manley had been Prime Minister before Edward Seaga. He had gotten very close to the Cubans, and then Seaga had pulled away from the Cubans. So we were concerned about that.

We were concerned about the Dominican Republic. Jorge Blanco had been elected President, in the Dominican sense, in the mid-1980s. More came out later than it did at this time, but it turned out that he was pretty much of a crook. Nonetheless, the Dominican Republic was really on the ropes economically, so we devoted an awful lot of energy to this question. The summer of 1984 stands out in my mind. Blanco made a state or at least an official visit to the United States. It took a major fight to get economic support from AID's ESF (Exchange Stabilization Fund). A number of things were done to try to maintain some degree of influence in that country.

The Eastern Caribbean countries, which were our allies in the Grenadian operation, were all standing around saying, “We got you in it and we joined you in it. Now you've got to help us out!” So the regional AID office in Barbados was under pressure to help them. Prime Minister Eugenia Charles in Dominica, a charming lady, nevertheless did not lose sight of the ball. As far as she was concerned, the ball involved a major road running along the spine of Dominica. She said, “It has never been fixed, and I want it fixed. I helped you to get into Grenada and now you'll fix my road, won't you?” So I remember that my wife Molly and I flew down, drove along that road, and visited Eugenia Charles in her little

capital in Roseau, Dominica. It was an ordeal getting over that road. We ended up helping with the reconstruction of that road.

The OAS (Organization of American States) was still sort of backing and filling. There were various problems, but there is no reason to go into the situation in Central America.

South America was interesting. There was the situation involving General Pinochet in Chile in 1983-1984. Several countries were trying to work their way out of the financial crisis of 1982. Mexico was still a problem. The Mexicans had clamped down on their economy and tried to apply various remedies. Meantime, Pinochet was opening up the Chilean economy in the face of the economic crisis. Assistant Secretary Motley went down to Chile. He came back and said, “Maybe the situation in Chile isn't too bad. We don't like the human rights violations, but so on and so forth.”

Q: Well, we've talked about Mexico, but I don't think that we've talked much about Chile at that time. Motley had had a lot of experience in South America. What was his impression and what was our impression of the Pinochet Government at that time, both internally and in terms of the economic situation?

GILLESPIE: I think that I wouldn't want to try to over-characterize Tony Motley's views of the situation in Chile, but my guess is, based on our conversations, that Tony saw this as a difficult situation to manage. However, his sympathies certainly were with the people who got Salvador Allende and the socialists out of the government. I think that that was the view of the Reagan administration, of which he was a political appointee. Remember that Jean Kirkpatrick had come out with her characterization of “authoritarian” versus “totalitarian” and “friendly authoritarians” and “inimical totalitarians.” In her book Pinochet was certainly not totally evil, I guess, to put it mildly. Tony reflected that view.

At the same time, our Ambassador in Santiago was James Theberge, who had been our Ambassador, you will remember, in Nicaragua - my boss there when I first arrived in Nicaragua in 1976 at the tail end of the Ford administration. He was a Republican

academic from Georgetown University and other places. Ambassador Theberge definitely believed that the advent of Pinochet to power was the best thing that could have happened to Chile. He didn't hesitate to say so. No situation is without worts. None of these people failed to see the problems in Chile: the human rights issues, the people who had disappeared, and all of the rest of it. However, I think that their essential view was that, “You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.” The people in the Pinochet administration had broken eggs. Maybe they shouldn't have broken as many as they did, or in the way that they did it.

However, quite frankly, Tony Motley was far less ideological than almost anybody that I met in the Reagan administration who was really brought in from the outside. In fact, that was what kind of spelt his doom in the Reagan administration. He began to be perceived, particularly in the Central American context, as, not so much a clone, but rather as a variant of the Tom Enders approach. Motley came to the conclusion that the Contras weren't going to win the struggle in Nicaragua and that the Sandinistas weren't going to be driven out of power. He felt that what you had to do was to set up these various tracks. It was Tony Motley who really convinced Secretary of State George Schultz to make a trip to Nicaragua. This was in that 1984 time frame. Schultz went to Nicaragua in a very secret way. That is, his plans were kept secret, and then he made a very visible stop in Managua, Nicaragua.

From that visit developed the talks that Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman had with the Nicaraguans. While Motley and others agreed that these talks were not likely to get anywhere, they were essential to making sure that the U.S. was perceived as not closing any doors to dealing with a problem. That series of decisions, in my view, caused the far right in the Reagan administration to conclude that Tony Motley was too pragmatic and couldn't be trusted. From that developed Tony Motley's decision to leave office as Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs. Then he, in turn, was replaced by Elliot Abrams. However, that happened a little later, as I was moving on to my next post.

Just as a personal note, at the conclusion of the Grenada crisis in 1984, I was 49 years old. In 1982 I had been promoted to the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) with the rank of Counselor. In the spring of 1984 I had been back from Grenada for a couple of months. The Department offered a Retirement Seminar. I decided that I would take the Retirement Seminar because I concluded that I must have satisfied all reasonable expectations in career terms and that the smart thing for me to do was really to think about leaving the Foreign Service as soon as I was eligible for an immediate annuity pension, which would have been in the following year, 1985.

I had never done a lot of career planning. However, I decided to take this seminar. In fact, my wife and I both attended it. We found it enlightening in many ways because it opened up areas that we hadn't thought about before. I was moving down that track, as 1984 progressed, thinking that I would probably continue working in the Department until 1985, when I would be 50. Then I would start looking around outside the Service for something to do. I had had a wonderful career, and everything had been really great.

About three or four months later - it must have been in September or October, 1984 - Tony Motley called me into his office and said: “I want to propose you for an Embassy.” I was really taken aback. It came as quite a surprise - a pleasant one, but a real surprise. He said, “We're going to have to make a change in La Paz, Bolivia, and I'd like you to be my nominee for that post. I want to push it through. I think that I can get you through the White House.” I thought that that was nice. Well, as it turned out, and to make a long story short, this didn't turn out. Helms' staff, not so much Senator Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina) himself, had apparently concluded that I had worked so closely with Tom Enders, and presumably now with Tony Motley, who was being identified as pragmatic, that maybe I wasn't reliable enough to go to La Paz as Ambassador to Bolivia. They used as a pretext for saying that they wouldn't view me favorably the excuse that I had had no experience with anti-narcotics matters. That was the big issue in Bolivia at the time.

So, in view of this development, Tony Motley said, “That's too bad, but I'm not going to let this down. Before I leave here, I'm going to help you get an Embassy.” One thing I learned about Motley was that when he sets his mind on something, he really works at it. That had thrown a new factor in the equation of my future in the Foreign Service. One of the things about the Caribbean which was sort of cooking along in the background, was that we had developed something called Cloverleaf. I don't remember exactly when this was developed. It had been going on for a while. Maybe it developed during the Nixon- Ford administrations and the Carter years. Cloverleaf involved British, Canadian, and U.S. consultations on the Caribbean, which had become quite structured. Later on, these consultations included Central America. It fell to me in my role, first as Deputy for Operations and then particularly in view of my position as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Caribbean Affairs, to be the monitor and organizer of the U.S. component oCloverleaf.

The U.S. component oCloverleaf involved the State Department anthe CIA; Whitehall and MI6 as far as the British were concerned...

Q: MI6 was the British clandestine intelligence service.

GILLESPIE: British clandestine intelligence. And then the Canadian Foreign Ministry and their intelligence component, which is kind of like INR (Bureau of intelligencResearch in the State Department), if I remember correctly. This Canadian organization is not so much involved in the clandestine collection of intelligence as it is essentially analytical in character, although they have some intelligence operational capability as well. The RCMP, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, gets involved in other matters as well.

Anyway, what I wound up doing was that I organized a Cloverleaf conference. The site of the conference shifted from Canada, to the U.S., to Great Britain, with each country, in turn, acting as host. These conferences turned out to be a very good vehicle for focusing everybody's thinking on the Caribbean, and then we eventually added Central America to it. So I went through at least two, and maybe even three of those conferences. We

met outside Ottawa, Canada, at a kind of woodsy cabin at one place. Then we met in Washington. Then, in early 1985, we went to London and met out in the British countryside at one of those lovely estates that the British Government has access to or owns. We had our talks there.

The Cloverleaf conference in Great Britain in 1985 was held after the Grenada incursion. What we tried to do at these meetings was to see who was doing what and where. There was a fair degree of disclosure, both on the overt policy front and a little bit on clandestine intelligence. Not really involving sources and methods, but what we were focusing on, where we saw problems coming up, and so forth. That involved an effort to see how we could all capitalize on the events of 1983 and 1984 in terms of moving our respective policies forward. It was a very interesting conference.

In any case in February, 1985, the Cloverleaf conference was held in London. When we were flying over to that conference, Assistant Secretary Motley said, “I think I've got another chance for you. I'm going to put you forward for the Embassy in La Paz again.” I said, “That would be fine. Do you think that we can make it?” He said, “Yes, I think that I have the way clear now. I've talked to the Helms people, and everything is okay.” In fact, he had talked to the Helms people and went ahead with the nomination. I filled in all the papers, and in due course they went forward. When I came back from the Cloverleaf talks, I was down in the airport at Miami on my way to some place in the Caribbean - the Dominican Republic or Haiti. Haiti was another problem area at the time, as it has been all along.

I had a phone call at the Miami airport from Motley. They had paged me through the airlines. He said, “I've got to reach a quick decision. Everything's on track for La Paz, but I'm going to give you a choice. Our nominee for the Embassy in Bogota, Colombia, has fallen out for health reasons. I have been thinking about that and would like to offer you the choice. You can take it either way.” I asked him what his preference was. He said that Bogota was really a challenge. He said, “I think that you're the right guy to handle

it, if you're willing." I said, "Do you mind if I check with my wife?" He said, "No, but you'll have to call me back tonight." So I reached my wife by telephone, and we made a quick decision that maybe Bogota would be more interesting than La Paz. I knew enough about that to say that it was a more challenging assignment at the time. So I called Motley back and said, "I would prefer Bogota." That sort of cut off the ARA front office preparations for me to go to La Paz. Everything shifted now to preparing me to go to Bogota. I completed a new set of paperwork and was preparing for a new assignment.It turned out that the President of Colombia was coming to the United States for an official visit in April, 1985. The Department wanted me to be presentable - I wouldn't have been confirmed by the Senate for this Ambassadorship. This meant that I had to have been formally nominated. My nomination as Ambassador to Colombia had to be announced by April, 1985, which meant getting all of the clearances and all of that kind of stuff through. So, something like a big steamroller started rolling, and we managed to complete the clearances in time. From then on I was sort of out of the ARA front office.

The man who replaced me was Richard Halwell, the first political appointee as Deputy Assistant Secretary in ARA, whom Tom Enders had once looked at but had not accepted. Tony Motley said, "What should we do with your old job? Maybe we should just eliminate it." I said, "No, let's find somebody." He said, "Well, how about Halwell?" I talked to Dick Halwell about it. He said that that would be fine with him, so we passed the torch to him. Nobody ever took the Deputy for Operations position. They couldn't find anybody foolish enough to agree to take that.

Q: I'd like to go back to a couple of points. First, you mentioned this Cloverleaf conference in the U. K., which was after the Grenadian affair was concluded. At that time did you get any feeling of why the British had not supported us? This has always seemed rather incredible to me, since we'd supported them when they needed us. It's always struck me that this time it was the one, odd aspect about the relationship that we have with the British. Let me flip over the cassette.

Just to backtrack a bit, while I was on Grenada, Lady Young came to Grenada not once, but twice. She was the Parliamentary Under Secretary at the British Foreign Ministry which, I guess, is just below the Foreign Secretary as the top political appointee, as opposed to the Permanent Under Secretary, who is the top career official. We had extremely cordial meetings with her. At that point, to my recollection, she displayed no negative attitudes, no resentment, no nothing about the U.S. presence in Grenada. We said that we were there, we were going to work, we were going to do this, and so on and so forth.

At about the same time I had occasion to talk with the equivalent of Tony Motley in the British Foreign Ministry, William Something. I can't think of his last name now. He is now Sir William Something. He later got his knighthood out of his job at the Foreign Office. He was a little higher in their scale as an Under Secretary who handles Latin America and Africa, so he had two briefs. He turned out to be very straightforward. He just said that when we intervened in Grenada, we had caught the British completely by surprise. He said that, as far as he was concerned, we had done the right thing and that it was a shame that Her Majesty's Government hadn't been able to respond more positively to what we were doing. However, Mrs. Thatcher, the Prime Minister, had been taken aback by all of this. Things were moving too fast, and they just hadn't been able to keep up.

Well, he was, of course, the big guy for the British at these Cloverleaf talks. He was the senior British representative present. Lady Young came and talked to us one night at dinner. However, Bill was really the man who was in charge for the British side. We never got into the “Who struck John” stuff. In the informal talks it was all more of what had we found, what had been going on, and there was really little dwelling on the lead in to the U.S. intervention - much more on what had happened afterwards.

I think that from the standpoint of a professional, career diplomatic officer, there was considerable British sympathy for what we were doing. I would go back to the preliminaries to the intervention. There was Bullard, the British High Commissioner in Barbados, the

equivalent of the British Ambassador. He was a very reluctant collaborator with what we were doing, whereas his DCM was helpful.

Q: How about the Canadians, because the Canadians have always portrayed themselves as a small power in North America. In a way they've acted somewhat like France. They tend to the view that anything we do is an example of America throwing its weight around.

GILLESPIE: I recall a conversation with the Canadian Ambassador here in Washington about the Grenadian incursion. Larry Eagleburger used to joke about it. Tony Motley had sat in on it. The conversation was just awful. There were angry comments thrown back and forth, with the Canadian Ambassador almost stomping out of the room. He accused the U.S. of terrible, imperialist behavior, beating up on little guys, and that sort of thing.

Nonetheless, as I can recall, soon after our forces landed in Grenada on October 25, 1983, a Canadian C-130 was flying equipment down in support of our efforts, and Canadians were coming in to help us in various ways. There was a serious, Canadian presence in Grenada. Ottawa's view, at least for public purposes, leaving aside the views of the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, was, “Okay, let's go in and take care of this situation.”

I think that you're right. The Canadians have traditionally regarded the Caribbean as sort of their area of interest in the Western Hemisphere. I would say that this is also the view of the current Canadian Government, under Prime Minister Jean Chretien. That was also the view of the Brian Mulroney government, when he was Canadian Prime Minister. That's how Canada expressed itself south of the Rio Grande or south of Miami. I have been told by Canadians that this is a vestige of the British experience. The British had been there in the West Indies, and this was sort of a hangover from those days. Basically, Canada's policy in South and Central America and the Caribbean was pretty much determined - though not dictated - by British interests and moves. Canada just followed along.

In 1994 Jean Chretien came in as Prime Minister and instituted a total Canadian foreign policy review, a piece of which involved the Western Hemisphere. By the way, Chretien's national security adviser, a career diplomat, was the head of Canada's foreign intelligence element and attended the Cloverleaf talks as the senior Canadian representative. When I went up to Canada in 1994, I met with him in the context of the Summit of the Americas. He still is the Canadian national security adviser to Prime Minister Chretien, the equivalent of Tony Lake or Brent Scowcroft. He told me that the Canadian Government was just completing that foreign policy review. For the first time in Canadian history they would have a real, Canadian policy toward the rest of the Western Hemisphere, including the United States and Mexico, Canada's two partners in NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and everything south of that. He said that this will be the first time that Canadian policies are not just sort of derivative of British policy. That is what has happened.

However, in those days - 10 years earlier, in 1983-1985 - that's why the Canadian aid agency, the CDC, or the Canadian Development Corporation, I guess it is. I think that that is the name of the Canadian aid agency. It was then basically a bilateral aid agency. That was the measure of where Canadian interest was - the provision of direct aid and assistance. It was very much concerned with humanitarian and basic needs - literacy, education, health, and all of those good things.

Q: One place that we didn't mention, because we have been going about this interview on an area basis, was the situation in Suriname. This is rather a troubled spot in the area. This is not merely post-Grenada. This is Suriname on its own.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Suriname is a former Dutch colony. Unlike the situation in the Caribbean islands, I don't think that the Dutch gave them much of a guilder handshake when Suriname became independent in 1975. I think that, at a certain point, the Dutch just pulled out of Suriname and left things the way they were. Suriname is bauxite. The economy is a bauxite economy. There is nothing else there. If the price of bauxite is up,

then ALCOA, the Aluminum Company of America, and other companies like it do well. IStandard Oil was Venezuela at a certain point, then ALCOA was Suriname at a certain point.

In any event, when I came on the scene in the early 1980s, and the exact year may have been 1981 or 1982 or 1983, in that period, there was a government in Suriname, and there was a corporal named Desire Bouterse in the Surinamese military establishment or constabulary. Basically, Desire Bouterse led a rebellion. This was in December, 1982. We can check those dates. Eight people had been murdered, and Bouterse was suspected of being behind that. It appeared that the situation was very much in doubt in Suriname. We had also picked up intelligence that indicated the Cubans were very actively interested in Suriname.

Remember that the Cubans were in Angola and moving in and out of Angola. One of the problems that the Cubans had was finding way stations on the route to Africa - for refueling and that kind of thing. Now, when we want to fly a plane from Andrews Air Force Base outside of Washington to Argentina, it has to stop somewhere. You can't just make those flights non-stop. So we often stop in Puerto Rico. I always looked at it that way. I guess that to get to southern Africa from Havana, or Cuba, you have to find a place to refuel. Well, Grenada had been a possibility, but Grenada wasn't ready yet. Suriname had a big airport which was perceived to be very attractive to the Cubans. We had intelligence that the Cubans were sniffing arounSuriname. Bouterse had been to Cuba. I think that Libyan money may have been involved in some of this. Remember that there had been a Libyan diplomatic mission in Grenada which had been traveling around the area, doing different things. So Surinam looked difficult.

The social situation in the country was difficult, and the economy was not in good shape. Bouterse was perceived to be threatening the established order. ALCOA was very concerned. We were concerned about our own people - the few American citizens who were there and the official American establishment. Our Ambassador at the time, if I

remember correctly, was Robert Duemling, a career officer who was a pretty close friend of Tom Enders. Tom had put Bob there, helping him to get an Embassy and because he thought that Bob was the right guy for the job. Duemling was a pretty savvy citizen. Bob's reporting was not panicky in any way but was serious. He reported that there was a serious problem down in Suriname. We started to get more and more intelligence that things were turning sour and could get more sour. It might be necessary to think about evacuating people. More likely, this might be a place where the Cubans might move in.

The Central intelligencAgency and its Directorate of Operations were full of beans, as they were developing the Contras. There was a guy named Dwayne “Dewey” Claridge, who was the CIA Division Chief for Latin America and the Caribbean. Dewey is nothing if not an activist. So Dewey had his people take a look at Suriname. In our Regional Interagency Group, the RIG, we started to talk about Suriname and what might be required there, what the situation was, and all of that. It turned out that Dewey Claridge had the Special Operations people from the Agency come up with an approach, a scenario, whatever you want to call it, that would basically take over the airfield in Surinam for a couple of purposes. One of these would be to evacuate the Americans. The other would be to deny the Cubans any access to it. His people came up with a very elaborate plan to do that.

I turned the detailed consideration of this over to Rich Brown. By the way this situation had come up in the Cloverleaf talks and had reached the point where we had talked to the Dutch about it, because the Dutch, although they kind of walked away from Suriname, still had connections with it. If I remember correctly, a Surinamese is entitled to a Dutch passport, which basically gives them something in the Netherlands equivalent to green card status in the U.S., although not full citizenship. They can go to Holland, move around, and do things. In any event we had talked to the Dutch, through the EUR Bureau (Bureau of European Affairs). Then we actually sent a couple of people to The Hague.

Independently of what we were discussing, the Dutch were worried about Suriname on their own account. Their intelligence pretty much coincided with ours. They had developed

a plan to make sure that Suriname did not fall into the hands of the bad guys. It was obviously a long way from the Netherlands, and their plan didn't have a lot of details in it. They were kind of counting on us to help. Well, if I remember correctly, we ended up with a combination of our own planning and then something which was called Plan Blue. Plan Blue involved bringing some Dutch troops into the situation at a certain point along the way. Unlike the British attitude on Grenada, the Dutch were very much on board. They had identified units that might be used.

Dewey Claridge got this plan all laid out. There was a little coordination with our military, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were very reluctant players. So Claridge said, “Let's brief Secretary Schultz.” This was really quite an exercise. Two or three guys in tweed sportcoats came over to the ARA offices in the State Department on a Saturday morning, carrying big map portfolios, big black cases. We joined them and took them up to the Seventh Floor of the State Department offices of the Secretary of State and senior Department officers to Secretary Schultz's outer office. Schultz was in a sports shirt. It was a Saturday, and people were kind of relaxed. These CIA guys started to make their presentation. To many people in the State Department George Schultz had a face that was Sphinx-like and sort of unreadable. However, I think that those around him could read his face very well because, at a certain point, his chin or his jaw would take a certain set, and you knew that this man was probably not happy.

Wham! He really was unhappy with this CIA presentation. I don't remember if he threw them out of his office or waited until they left and then blew up. In any event, it was very evident that he thought that this was the craziest idea he'd ever heard. It involved U.S. aircraft, it potentially involved Koreans or Gurkhas, Dutch, and a variety of different people coming in under a tightly-coordinated travel plan. If any part of it had gone wrong, the whole thing would have blown up, and we would have had egg all over our faces. Secretary Schultz very wisely said, “No, go back to the drawing board.”

Later the U.S. military got involved and devised a proposal for U.S. action. It was eventually briefed to President Reagan whose main concern was for the safety of Americans in Surinam. After he heard the details, according to Motley, his response was “This is one hill that this Teddy Roosevelt is not going to charge up, thank you very much. Let's not talk about this again until there's a real problem of some kind.”

It's interesting that the problems of Suriname did not go away. They persisted, but the Surinamese did begin to deal with them. However, they've never gone away. They keep bubbling up. Then it was Bouterse and these other people. Now it's some other sergeant. Suriname is basically a jungle with something called the population center, Paramaribo, as the capital, plus a lot of bauxite. Persistently, they have to deal with these problems.

Q: Also, there's the example of the Grenada affair. The Cubanaren't going to mess around.

GILLESPIE: That's right. So that kind of put a stop to it. However, the Suriname affair came very close to execution, in the sense that there was a lot of detailed planning done. People were serious that there was a problem that needed to be dealt with. We went into bilateral talks with the Dutch to the point of having senior U.S. Government officials, including the military - generals - flying back and forth and doing planning. And the Dutch were preparing plans. Then that just all got shelved.

Q: Before we complete this and leave your ARA front office job and all that, what was your impression of the CIA and operations in that area? This was the height of the activity of William Casey, the late Director of Central Intelligence, who had been an OSS (Office of Strategic Services) operator during World War II. From what you are saying here, I gather that really, from the perspective of the State Department and from your own perspective, these were not very serious people. They may have been serious about what they were doing, but what they were doing was not well considered. It was almost a matter of games that they were playing. Did you get this feeling?

GILLESPIE: There was a film that starred Walter Matthau about intelligence operations in Austria or somewhere in Europe. This would have come out about 10 or 15 years ago. The film was called Hop Scotch. It caricatured the CIA. It had a particular character, the senior CIA officer. It was an unkind caricature. However, it came very close to some parts and some people in the Agency. Remember, I got out of college and went into the Army intelligence business. I thought that it was a noble calling. I soon learned that while it has elements of nobility, it has some other elements, too. I don't mean by that the black, nasty stuff, but it's bureaucratic. These are bureaucracies. They are organizations consisting of lots of human beings. They're big, and there is a variety of elements in them, of varying quality. I don't want to wax eloquent on that but I saw in the military intelligence field some superb individuals doing wonderful work - wonderful, in the sense that I thought it was important, and they were doing it well. In my view they were making a contribution to the United States and the service of its interests.

When I came into the State Department and went overseas to Indonesia, one of the first things that I encountered was an attempt by the communists to overthrow President Soeharto. I saw a CIA Station under pretty damned professional leadership move smartly in this situation. I saw some military officers in the then still nascent Defense intelligence operation in the Attache Offices doing their work. I saw Foreign Service Officers doing theirs. I thought, “Boy, this is really serious stuff.” I was impressed by that. I went to Europe to Brussels, was on very close terms with the Deputy Chief of the CIA Station, a wonderful man, and his wife. From what I could see, and I did not see all of it by any means, I was impressed. I got to Mexico and saw the same kind of thing. I didn't see these people - they were not idols, just human beings - develop feet of clay until probably the mid-1970s. It was not the CIA as much as it was the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) in connection with the kidnaping and really the murder of John Patterson, an FSO assigned to the Consulate in Hermosillo, Mexico.

I saw, on the one hand, what I think is the real strength of the FBI, which is this dogged, persistent investigative activity where they just don't stop until they've looked under every rock. Then I saw the more visible thing, which was people bragging and talking, coming up with, “We'll do this” and “We'll do that” and “Don't worry,” and everything that you see.

Anyway, at some point between 1974 and certainly well before I entered the ARA front office, the CIA developed a different character. Maybe it was at some point along the way. Then there was the Grenada operation and their formally proposed manner of dealing with the post-intervention, Grenadian Government. This proposal was just awful. The people whom they proposed to be in the Grenadian Government, whom we would go out and solicit to be in the government and then support, were really a bunch of bums. The CIA thought that they were the best people available. That was a real blow to me. I don't know where you draw the line. People complain that U.S. diplomats, Foreign Service Officers, have no imagination. The complaint is often made that they don't show initiative or imagination. Probably, that's true part of the time, but guys like Dwayne Claridge who, in a sense, are caricatures of something else, at the same time had tremendous imagination and ideas. I don't think that any organization can stand very many of them in positions of authority at any given time. But if you didn't have them from time to time, maybe your organization would be in trouble. I think that in the intelligence business - perhaps less so in diplomacy, or maybe it takes a different form - you need to have people like that.

What you need is someone who is able to make sure that their craziest ideas don't go forward. We had an officer in the Foreign Service whose name comes to mind. His name is Jon Glassman. Jon is one of the most brilliant human beings I have ever known. His mind moves in ways I can scarcely describe. There are other guys who are wonderfully intelligent, but John has an idea every minute. Obviously, only the most minute percentage of his ideas are likely ever to stay alive more than a nanosecond. However, he is there. I don't think that you would want John to be in a position where he really felt that he could just go out and respond to all of these impulses. But you need guys like that. Every now

and then they'll do something that'll cause a problem.I think that the CIA has that same kind of problem.

My view of the CIA is that I am a firm believer that we need an overseas intelligence collection capability and it needs to be good. I don't like a lot of the details of the way it has developed and is developing. Nonetheless, we have to have it. If you have to have it, just as you need to have George S. Pattons in the Army, with all of the problems they cause, you need the Dewey Claridges in the Central intelligence Agency and you need the Jon Glassmans in the Foreign Service, because the rest of us just don't think fast enough. We don't come up with enough bright ideas. But every time that one of those individuals can really implement their ideas, you're always on a very thin margin, on a borderline between probable catastrophe or embarrassment on the one hand and tremendous success on the other.

Q: Tony, let's talk about Colombia and about the confirmation process. Before going to Colombia, did you have to do obeisance to Senator Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina)? Did you get involved with his staff or anything like that?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Can we go on? (Laughter)

Q: Can we talk about this and then move on to other things, but I think that we really might touch on this?

GILLESPIE: Senator Helms had problems with the confirmation of nominations before, not the least of which was Tom Enders' own confirmation, when he was nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of State for American Republics Affairs. I mentioned that in 1984 my possible nomination to be Ambassador to Bolivia was rejected by Senator Helms and his staff because I didn't have “narcotics experience.”

When we got to 1985, and I was now nominated to be Ambassador to Colombia, which is, of course, a major narcotics producing country. There were also changes under way

regarding ambassadorial assignments elsewhere, but I can't remember all of them. These included ambassadorial assignments to Ecuador, Chile, and the Dominican Republic in particular. Fred Rondon, who has retired and lives in the Washington area, was the Director of the Office of Andean Affairs. He had already been Ambassador to Madagascar. He was one of those early Ambassadors who came back to be an Office Director in Washington. Lowell Kilday, who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary covering South America for Assistant Secretary Tony Motley, was nominated to go to the Dominican Republic. I think I've got the timing right on both of those.

Q: Rondon was going where?

GILLESPIE: He was going to Quito, in Ecuador. Harry Barnes was our Ambassador in India. I'm not sure about this, but my recollection is that Harry had been the Director General of the Foreign Service and had had a number of posts but was not in great favor with the right wing Republicans for a number of reasons. Secretary of State Schultz, or somebody, insisted that Motley take Harry Barnes into the Bureau of American Republics Affairs. Motley resisted right up to the last minute. They finally ended up nominating Harry to go to Chile as Ambassador. We were all on the same list. My recollection is that the four of us eventually went up for our hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the same day and the same time, though we were not considered as a panel.In any event Barnes was in India. However, Rondon and Kilday were in Washington. Motley, one of whose strengths was managing the Hill (Congress), or knowing about the Hill, got the three of us together and said, “Look, I have taken the initiative in handling this. I have talked with Senator Helms and his people, Senator Ted Stevens (Republican - Alaska), as well as Senator Frank Murkowski (Republican - Alaska) but especially Stevens, who has more clout. Stevens supports all of this. He sent word to Helms that this is the way we want to do this. Now, the thing is, all of you make appointments to go up and see Senator Helms. I want you to go up, show him that you're human and don't have horns on your

head, and all of that kind of stuff." So we all sought appointments with Senator Helms through our various desk officers.

If I remember correctly, the first word that I got back related to Chris Manion, whose father was the Dean of the Notre Dame Law School. He was one of the staffers in Helms' office. Remember, this is 1985, and the Senate was under Republican control. Senator Richard Lugar (Republican, Indiana) was the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I don't remember what Sub Committee was headed by Senator Helms. I don't think that it was the Sub Committee on the Western Hemisphere. Anyhow, Chris Manion had invited Fred Rondon to have lunch in connection with these requests we had made for appointments with Senator Helms. I had heard nothing, and Lowell Kilday had heard nothing about them. So Fred went to lunch with Manion. He came back and said, "Wow, that was really something! Manion started to speak to me in Spanish." Fred Rondon is Hispanic. He is absolutely bilingual, and very articulate. He was born in Mexico of a Mexican father and an American mother, if I remember correctly. Fred said, "It was laughable. This guy was trying to test my Spanish! That was what he was doing. Then he asked me what I think about abortion and communism. He started grilling me. I went along with this, but only to a point. Finally, I said, 'What you're asking about has nothing to do with my capacity as an American Ambassador. Why don't we just talk about Ecuador and so forth?'" He said, "Manion didn't know much about Ecuador. So we then talked about other things and finished the lunch."Well, then I got an invitation to lunch from Manion. He started by asking me whether I speak Spanish. I said, "Yes, I speak Spanish very well." He said, "Well, let's test you." I said, "Are you a qualified examiner, Chris? Do you have a certificate?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, I've been tested by the Foreign Service Institute. Here's the score I got from them. Do you want to challenge this score in some way?" He said, "Humph, no, I just want to make sure." So I said, "I'm the nominee, and this is my test score. If you want to challenge the Foreign Service Institute, go ahead." We were at the National Metropolitan Club. I said, "I don't think that we need to sit here. I don't have to sit here and listen to you try to ask me questions in Spanish. What do you want to talk

about?" Well, he didn't ask me about abortion and he didn't ask me about some of these other, social questions, for whatever reason. We talked about Colombia. I said that I'm not an expert on Colombia. I said, "Here's what I know," and I went on from there. So, we had our lunch. Kilday then had a similar experience, but by that time there was no Spanish testing going on.

So we then went up and met with the fellow who was either chief of staff for Senator Helms or a senior guy on the Committee Staff for Helms, and Deborah De Moss, who is now an almost legendary Helms staffer.

Q: Would you explain who she is?

GILLESPIE: Deborah De Moss is the daughter of Somebody De Moss, a very, very wealthy man who set up a foundation which actively supports right wing causes. She is like people I spoke of earlier. I think that she probably has an intelligence quotient that is up at the top of the charts. However, she burns with a certain fire. She has enough money so that she doesn't have to worry about anything. She has worked on Helms' staff and on the Senate Foreign Relations staff. It is my recollection that she doesn't take any pay - or she takes very little pay because she has enough money to do this. She has the independence of not having to be on anybody's payroll. She has since left the United States and married a Honduran Army officer who wants to be the President of Honduras, eventually.

At the time of which I am speaking Deborah De Moss was much more concerned with Central America than with South America, although she is not ignorant of that area at all.

So we went up to the Hill and met with De Moss and this other guy. Finally, I met Senator Helms. I'm trying to remember the circumstances, because I had subsequent meetings with him. The first meeting, I think, was just in his office. I just went in, sat down, talked for a bit, and there was no problem. It was okay. I came back to the Department and prepared

for the hearings. I had excellent preparation. The people in Legislative Affairs worked very hard to prepare me. They did “murder boards” and took me through the process.

Q: What's a “murder board”?

GILLESPIE: A murder board is a mock hearing, a mock Ambassadorial hearing at which the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, or H, as it is known in the Department, recruits people from around the building. More often than not, from the regional bureau - in this case, ARA, but they had somebody from the Bureau of Narcotics Affairs as well. These people are asked to prepare tough questions for the nominee. So you go in and sit down. It's all staged and it's game playing. It's very useful because you're asked, and you're expected to answer, using the title of address, “Mr. Chairman” and so forth - all according to Hoyle, according to the rules. So it's a very useful thing. You do this a few days before the hearings so that you have a feel for this process. You then have a chance to go back and, if there are questions which you feel you need to check up on, you can check up on them.

I guess that people have probably told you, Stuart, that these hearings are the one opportunity for a U.S. Foreign Service Officer or any nominee to go before a committee of the Congress and say, “I don't know the answer.” You can do that with impunity, pretty much. You can't say this in response to all of the questions, but if you're asked how you are going to handle something, you have every right to say, “Well, I haven't been confirmed yet, so I don't know how I would do that.” Or you can say, “It's premature to say.” You can get away with that, whereas once you're in the job, you're expected to respond for the administration. Here, you're answering for yourself, and it's a personal response. I didn't get much of this kind of treatment, although I got some.

My hearing was chaired by Senator Lugar himself. My memory of it is a little hazy, but I think that three or four members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee actually came into the hearing. Senator Helms himself did not attend. He sent questions in writing. My recollection is that there were about 100 of them, having to do with everything but

Colombia. There were questions which I either could not answer legitimately or could say, “I don't know the answer to that. It was not my responsibility.” Or, I could say, “Here's the answer.” Those answers were basically prepared in the ARA Bureau and elsewhere in the Department. They had all been cleared and checked and would go back to Senator Helms that way. Those were the questions in writing.

The hearing itself was not at all unpleasant. Senator Lugar could not have been more gentlemanly. As I said, there were several Ambassadorial appointees who went up the same afternoon for the hearing. Harry Barnes, Rondon, and Kilday were there with me, and there may have been one or two other ambassadorial nominees. These were all ambassadorial appointees to posts in Latin America. We went up, were heard, and came away. It went fairly smoothly.All of this process took some time. The nomination was submitted to the Senate in late March or early April, 1985. The hearings, if I remember correctly, were not held until July, 1985. Then the actual confirmation followed, so that I was able to go to Bogota in August, 1985.

Q: You were in Colombia from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I got there in August, 1985, and I left in September, 1988.

Q: Obviously, you had been serving in the area of Latin American affairs for a long time. I think that when you go to a post, everybody has a certain agenda, particularly as you prepare yourself for a given country. Really, this is a two-part question. First, what was your agenda? Part Two, when we come back, what were American interests in Colombia? These two considerations intertwine, obviously.

GILLESPIE: First of all, when I learned that I would be nominated as Ambassador to Colombia, I had the sharpening experience of helping make the arrangements for the visit of the Colombian President to Washington within weeks of my selection and the announcement of my nomination. I was able to sit in on all of the substantive meetings between the Colombian President and President Reagan and other senior U.S. officials.

So, in the space of three weeks, getting ready for this visit and then being part of it, I had a tremendous introduction to U.S.-Colombian relations and the issues in that relationship.

My predecessor was a political appointee, a man named Lewis Tambs. He had been a professor, an academic, in New Mexico and was part of an organization called, The Santa Fe Group. This was pretty much known as a right wing, academic, southwestern group. It really looked at the communist threat around the world and was very concerned about it. It was especially concerned about what we were doing about it in Latin America. Constantine Menges had been associated with it, although I'm not sure that he was a member of The Santa Fe Group.

Ambassador Lewis Tambs was not at all what you might think of as a stereotyped academic. I think that Lew Tambs had gotten his start as an oil worker in Venezuela. He was a hard-talking, rough living kind of guy - absolutely bilingual in Spanish and English. He ended up in the Southwest of the United States as an academic. He had a lot of ideas. He had just recently married - or, I guess, remarried a woman much younger than he. They were about to have a child. Lew Tambs had been our Ambassador in Colombia from 1981 to 1984, a three-year tour under the arrangement set out by President Reagan.

In December, 1984, the then-current Medellin cartel, headed at that time by Pablo Escobar, had responded to the Colombian President's decision to extradite narcotics traffickers by setting off a huge bomb near our Embassy in Bogota, Colombia. He also threatened the lives of U.S. Mission members - that is, U.S. Embassy personnel and their dependents. As a result, all minor dependents of our Embassy were evacuated and barred from returning to Bogota.

Q: When you say “minor dependents” you are referring to their age.

GILLESPIE: Yes. In other words, you could have your spouse with you and/or an adult dependent, for that matter, but not a minor child at the post. Ambassador Tambs himself had to be evacuated because the threat against his life was considered to be very serious.

So he had left the Embassy in Bogota in December, 1984, and went back to Bogota in early 1985 just briefly, to say goodbye. He had not returned to the Embassy by the time the Colombian President visited the United States in 1985.

After he left Bogota in 1984, Ambassador Tambs had been working over at the NSC (National Security Council) on Latin American affairs, which he had done before he went down to Colombia as Ambassador in 1981. He was a very smart guy and a very nice man. He did everything that he could to help me to get ready to go to Bogota as Ambassador. However, the key consideration here was that we had this really notorious sequence of events.

I had heard from both Colombians and other Americans that Ambassador Tambs had developed a “persona,” a reputation in Colombia of being obsessed with narcotics. I learned later that that report was only partly true. Lew was, indeed, concerned about narcotics. He had coined a term which is now used pretty frequently - narcoguerrilla - to refer to the connection between the narcotics traffic and the guerrilla movement in Colombia. I think that he had speculatively postulated that. He didn't have a lot of empirical evidence to support it but he had some indications and he kept building on that.

In 1983 and 1984 Ambassador Tambs had been telling the Colombians that they had a real narcotics problem. A Colombian Minister of Justice had been assassinated by the narcotics traffickers, and Colombia had all kinds of problems. The image of Ambassador Tambs in Colombia and in neighboring countries, including Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama, was of a man who was obsessed with the narcotics problem.

Ambassador Tambs and I talked about the matter. He said, “I've probably pushed this issue too hard, but the Colombian Government officials just won't wake up to the problem. They see the narcotics trafficking problem as our problem - a problem of demand and not a problem that they have to deal with.” He said that the Colombian officials thought that we

just had to deal with the demand side, and the problem would go away. He said that he was not convinced that it was just a problem on the demand side.

I also learned that Ambassador Tambs, like a lot of the people on the right wing in our Government - and some people not so far on the right - were also very concerned about Belisario Betancur, the President of Colombia who had been elected in 1982 to a four-year term, running from 1982 to 1986. President Betancur's apparent effort to get into and try to manage the Central American problem - what was going on with the Sandinistas and U.S.-Nicaraguan relations - found its expression in the Contadora Group, which, I think, we talked about earlier. Colombia, Panama, Mexico, and Venezuela were the players in the Contadora Group. The leadership had somehow moved in that - at least in part. The Mexicans and Colombians were contesting for the leadership of that group, but President Betancur saw himself as the peacemaker in Central America. Ambassador Tambs was trying to blunt that effort by President Betancur. That was part of his agenda.

Then there was in Lew Tambs, and probably still is, a very deep, inherent feeling of anti- communism. He was trying to build bulwarks against Colombia's sliding to the left, particularly by recognizing Cuba. The Cubans were always working hard on this. They were working the devil out of the Colombians.

In fact, the Cubans had some points of pressure available to them. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) was a real armed and trained guerrilla movement. They were up in the mountains oColombia and had been since the early 1960s. There were two other armed guerrilla movements: the Popular Liberation Army (Ejercito de Liberacion Popular) and the National Liberation Army (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional). There was also a fourth guerrilla group, called the M-19 Movement, the Movement of 19 April. These four elements were all violence- prone, paramilitary, or guerrilla-type operations. They were being supplied from somewhere and they were using those resources. Their aim was to bring down the democratically-elected, constitutional government of Colombia.

Colombia had had a written constitution since 1861 or earlier. It had gotten its independence from Spain in 1815. They had modeled their constitution of 1861 - I hope that date is right - on the U.S. Constitution, to at least some degree. It was still pretty much a more European document, but it had a lot of elements of our Constitution in it. Colombia was considered a democracy.

Well, I looked at all of that as part of the context that I was moving into. I wondered what else was there. I tried, through the various means at my disposal, some of which were offered to me and some of which I developed on my own, to find out what the full range of interests and operational possibilities might be in Colombia. It dawned on me that the narcotics question was terribly important for at least two reasons: 1) it is a source of narcotics flowing to the U.S., and that's not good; 2) the cocaine trade, in particular, was managed by this Medellin Cartel at the time. For a long time they had been producing marijuana and shipping that out and doing all of these kinds of things. So the narcotics issue was very important. The Colombian Government, under President Belisario Betancur, was getting tough with the narcotics traffickers. It is obviously in the U.S. interest to try to stem the flow of drugs and cut the narcotics trade. We ought to support that. So that one was easy.

The second thing I learned was that after the 1982 financial crisis Colombia - and this was not very widely bruited about - was the only country that had never rescheduled its debt to the U.S. It had never missed a payment of principle or interest. It had access to the world financial and commercial markets. It was not dependent on aid money from the U.S. or anybody else. Colombia had received substantial loans from the World Bank, but these mainly concerned project related matters. In that sense the Colombians were very sound managers of their economy.

It occurred to me that it was a very legitimate area of U.S. interest to support this attitude of Colombian economic management. That would perhaps be the way that Colombia

could develop the capacity to overcome the influence of the narcotics traffickers. A sound economy could underpin democracy and further democratic development.

I should say, Stewart, because I kind of slipped past it at the beginning, that there was a device which Secretary of State George Schultz and Assistant Secretary Motley more or less cooked up together. It was a very interesting device, and the rest of the Department was ultimately required to adopt this practice, because it was part of Schultz's managerial approach. This involved the well-known instructions letter concept, which Secretary George Schultz came up with. However, Tony Motley was the real instigator of that. The instructions letter concept was an effort by Secretary Schultz to make sure that a couple of things happened. That is, that Embassies were led by people who themselves were aware of what U.S. interests were, what U.S. policy was toward the country concerned, and had some sense of “ownership” in it. Secondly, that everybody knew what the chain of command was.

That instructions letter was basically from the Secretary of State to the Ambassador. It basically said, “Okay, you're going to Country X. Here are what our interests are. Here is what our current policies and objectives look like. Furthermore, you report to the President through me and to me through the Assistant Secretary of the regional bureau,” and so forth. Then the management people got their hands on the letter and added some boilerplate about the management of resources. This was fine. There was nothing the matter with that.

The beauty of this instructions letter concept for career officers was that this provided an opportunity to write your instructions before you went to your post. I put all of these points into this letter and had them all cleared. I talked them over with the other U.S. Government agencies concerned. In this case this included the Treasury Department. I went to the Federal Reserve Board and saw Ted Truman, the international affairs person at the Fed. This was easy because, for those guys, Colombia was a country which they looked on with favor. They said, “You don't want to blunt the anti-narcotics effort, but see if you can

complement this effort with some other aspect of Colombian activity which we can use to praise and, perhaps, to entice them. You know, use this opportunity for a useful purpose."

I had decided that I had basically a two-fold agenda which was,first, narcotics-related and, secondly, concerned the Colombian economy.

Q: Well, how about the Central American initiatives?

GILLESPIE: That was done in the whole area of Colombia's international relations and foreign policy. However, we wanted Colombia to play a constructive role. If having President Betancur become involved through the Contadora group meant that they were being constructive and not obstructive, then that was fine with me. I didn't care. I didn't think that I had to try to kill the Contadora group process to satisfy U.S. objectives, and Assistant Secretary Motley agreed with this, as did others in the chain of people who cleared this instructions letter.

So my letter of instructions included all of these things. I got tlay all of those things out, and that's what I went to Colombia with.

Q: For the benefit of historians, are these instructions letters parof the official record?

GILLESPIE: They must be. Obviously, they were classified information. My letter was classified SECRET. I assume that a copy of it is somewhere in the archives, but I don't know where and how you would find it. It was an official letter, signed by the Secretary of State.

Q: This concept was developed right about this time?

GILLESPIE: Right about in 1984 or 1985. Before I knew I was going out as Ambassador to Colombia, I helped draft the basic letter with Assistant Secretary Motley because I was supposed to be charged with policy implementation in the ARA Bureau. Motley had asked me, Craig Johnstone, and others to help him with drafting the letter. He said, "Here is

this idea of an instructions letter." So we said, "Well, make sure we include this and that." The instructions letter was a complement to the Ambassadorial letter which the President signs. It was a further refinement of it, if you will.

Q: Sometimes I have heard Ambassadors - particularly political appointees - who have gone to a post and who say, "I don't answer to the Secretary of State. I answer to the President." Now, this instructions letter from the Secretary which you are referring to says something different.

GILLESPIE: Absolutely.

Q: Have you gone into this problem as to who is the boss of thAmbassador?

GILLESPIE: All the time, I think. Assistant Secretary Motley's test of an Ambassador's capacity was whether the Ambassador knew whom to salute. Ambassador Milan Bish - the Ambassador to Barbados at the time of the Grenada affair - did not receive such a letter when he went out. Ambassador Bish was probably one of those Ambassadors who either ignored the letter or would not have contributed to it. Maybe not. Maybe I'm misjudging him. However, he felt very strongly, there in Bridgetown, Barbados, that Assistant Secretary Motley and Secretary of State Schultz were essentially irrelevant to him. He felt that he worked for President Ronald Reagan. He said, "I'm one of 300 people who got him elected and I set the policy toward Barbados. He chose me to set the policy." I'm probably exaggerating that, but that was his feeling, and you run into it from time to time.

Interestingly enough, Motley's test was, "Do these political appointee Ambassadors, non-career guys - or career guys, for that matter - do they know whom to salute?" He felt, "If they salute the Secretary, that means that they're saluting me because I'm the Secretary's lieutenant for Latin America. And that's the way life is."

As you probably know, it's not necessary to prepare efficiency reports on non-career Ambassadors, because they are not reviewed by Promotion Boards. However, Tony Motley did not hesitate to meet with these non-career Ambassadors and give them his efficiency report orally on their performance. As he was getting ready to do that, he would seek the views of others. He didn't prepare a written report on them. He had his notes and he would let them know.

I think that Elliot Abrams, who succeeded Tony Motley as Assistant Secretary for American Republics Affairs, didn't get into oral efficiency reports on non-career Ambassadors to the same degree. However, he also learned that, if the Secretary of State and the White House were going to hold him accountable for policy in this region, these Ambassadors must respond to his leadership. How you do that is obviously a matter of leadership style and management skill. I can't remember now the date when Tony Motley left the ARA Bureau, but when I was in Colombia as Ambassador, it was pretty much Elliot Abrams who was in charge of the bureau.

Q: Obviously, Elliot Abrams, a very controversial figure, was coming in as Assistant Secretary for ARA because of the Central American situation. You were out of the bureau by that time. Elliot Abrams had been the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights.

GILLESPIE: And Assistant Secretary for International OrganizationAffairs.

Q: Just for the record, what was your impression of ARA when Motley left and Abrams was appointed Assistant Secretary of that bureau? Can you recall the feeling in the bureau?

GILLESPIE: We didn't know what we were getting. We weren't sure. Remember, he was a neo-con (neo-conservative). He had been a Democrat and then became a Republican. He had worked for Senator Henry Jackson (Democrat, State of Washington).

Q: Was Abrams associated with the New Republic magazine?

GILLESPIE: No, his wife is the daughter of Norman Podhoretz, the editor oCommentary. It's a very conservative publication. Abrams came from the right wing. He worked for Senator “Scoop” Jackson, who was on the right wing of the Democratic Party. Then Abrams moved further to the right. He had come out for Reagan after the nomination of Senator McGovern as Democratic candidate for President in 1972. I'm not sure of the background on that. I'll have to look it up.

Anyway, the view in ARA was that here was this man. He had been both Assistant Secretary for IO (International Organization Affairs) and HA (Human Rights Affairs). He had attacked ARA on human rights matters. He was not a strong supporter of General Pinochet in Chile, for example. He believed that there had been major human rights violations in Chile. He had been strong on that. I shouldn't try to put words in Ambassador Harry Barnes' mouth. However, Harry Barnes, who was Ambassador to Chile and whose personal instincts and interests have since become very evident but were evident enough at the time, was much more a believer in the thinking of the center-left than the center-Right. He has associated himself with the Carter school and all of that. Harry Barnes and Elliot Abrams were pursuing a basically moderate policy of support for human rights in Chile, as I later learned. They were by no means following a policy of unlimited support for Pinochet.

In any case, when Elliot Abrams moved over from the Bureau of Human Rights Affairs to the Bureau of ARA, I was either about to leave ARA for Colombia or I had just gone there. Abrams asked for my views on how the bureau should be organized, what things should be done, and so forth, because I'd been so closely involved in it. Elliot Abrams had been around the Department. He did salute the Secretary of State. He knew that the Secretary was ultimately the man in charge of Latin American policy. Whatever Elliot's relations were with people in the White House, he had to have the Secretary of State supporting him. So he had no problem with accepting the Secretary's authority.

In my view Elliot Abrams' outlook on Central America developed slowly. He did not come into the ARA Bureau saying, “We're going to do this, this, and this” in terms of funding the Contras and so forth. That outlook evolved over a period of time. I think that Elliot may often have done expedient things or things that he felt the circumstances required. However, when I saw him coming into the bureau replacing Tony Motley, Abrams, from what I could tell, seemed to have the confidence of the Secretary of State.

Q: So this was not a case of a new broom coming in or like Chriscleaning out the Temple.

GILLESPIE: No, not at all. If I remember correctly, Jim Michael stayed on as the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the bureau, and the other deputy assistant secretaries stayed on. Craig Johnstone left. The bureau wanted him to go to Managua, Nicaragua, as Ambassador. For his part Craig Johnstone wanted to go to Managua to manage relations with the Sandinistas. There he ran into an absolute stone wall in terms of Senator Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina) and the other, conservative Senators on the right as well as the White House, too. So Craig went off to Algeria as Ambassador.

Elliot Abrams was not a new broom sweeping things clean in Latin America. His appointment was just a transition. As I say, a number of us at the top of the ARA Bureau left because we had opportunities to leave and had been there for a while. It was time to leave. Tony Motley left the bureau, Elliot Abrams replaced him as Assistant Secretary, and we went on from there.

With further regard to the instructions letter, I happen to think that devices are sometimes good, though you can't rely on them to do your work for you.

I never worried too much about the Kennedy letter to Ambassadors. I felt that it was not a bad thing. I also don't think that you need to have something to pull out and wave at other people or put on the wall. Doctors put their credentials on the wall because people want to be reassured that the doctor really graduated from medical school. However, you don't sit

in an Ambassador's office if you're not really the Ambassador. You don't need to have your credentials on the wall to be an Ambassador.

I felt that the Secretary of State's letter made formally clear what had often been clear informally on the policy side. It made explicit the chain of command at a time when you had growing pressure from other agencies to take part in the foreign policy area. It's part of where we are today. We had all of these agencies involved and many of these activities going on. It isn't that an Ambassador needs something to pull out and wave at somebody on his staff or a representative of another agency.

The instructions letter means that you know that the Secretary of State, or somebody on his staff, has taken the time to say, “Okay, you work for me. If you have a problem, you come to me. You talk to your Assistant Secretary first.” It just seemed to me to do a good thing. I was kind of sorry to see the addition of all of this other stuff to the basic letter. I thought that it was enough to say that here is the policy, here is the chain of command, and that's it.

I tried to work up a paragraph which said, “You'll be held accountable for prudent management of the resources placed at your disposal,” and let it go at that. However, they had to add six pages of additional language, with references to the Foreign Affairs Manual and so forth. But that's bureaucracy for you.

Anyway, I thought that the instructions letter was important. I thought that this was a very useful thing, in terms of my discussions when I was getting ready to go to Colombia and knowing that I was going to have to articulate its points. I'm sure that I could have functioned properly if I hadn't had this letter, but since I had to prepare it and had to have other people look at it, it was a good opportunity to air disputes. For the narcotics people, it was a wonderful excuse for making sure that I saw all of the right people in the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations), and all of those

other people. I said, “Look, I'm trying to get all of this straight. Help me understand it.” They were all more than willing to do that.

I felt that the instructions letter was a useful device. It seemed to me to be the kind of thing that a professional, diplomatic Agency ought to be willing to prepare. We always talk about writing our instructions and having instructions. This was a basic reference for any instructions that one was going to get. If you were going to depart from it, it gave you a point of departure for consolidation. I thought that it was very useful. So that set me on the road down to Bogota, feeling pretty comfortable. I'd been up to New York a couple of times and talked to many of the people in the international banking community, as well as representatives of a variety of support groups for our diplomacy, such as the Business Council for International Understanding and the Council of the Americas, in the case of Latin America. They provide American Ambassadors going out to their posts tremendous opportunities to listen and to learn from people who are active in the area and to begin to articulate, and therefore to test, their own ideas.

For example, you can say to some of these people, “Well, I think that this is important. What do you think?” Or, when you're sitting around at a discussion at lunch with a smallish group of 10 or 12 people, you can say, “Well, here's what I think.” You can tell whether people agree or disagree with you by the way that they respond to that. This process helps you to shape your own thinking.

I may have mentioned to you that there is a Foreign Service Officer whom I think of as a mentor. His name is Ambassador George Walter Landau, a career Foreign Service Officer. I never worked directly for him. I met him in the 1970s, when he was the Director of Iberian Peninsula Affairs - Spain and Portugal. I met him again in 1981, when he was our Ambassador to Chile. He left Chile, and Ambassador Theberge took that job. George Landau was assigned to Venezuela as Ambassador, a post where he very much wanted to go. This was 1981. Tom Enders was then Assistant Secretary for ARA. There was a messy transition in the Embassy in Venezuela. Bill Luers had been the Ambassador. He

didn't want to leave Venezuela but he simply had to leave. Both of them turned to me, not to handle the administrative side of things, but to make sure that Tom Enders knew the views that each of them had. I was Deputy Assistant Secretary. Tom Enders sort of appointed me to mediate this problem and to get the two of them to agree as to how it was going to work. I had already known Landau and knew Bill Luers a little bit. I wound up as friends of both of them and have been ever since.

Ambassador Landau has never hesitated to give advice - particularly to people who would listen. I listened. I have found him to be an excellent model to look at and to emulate. You can certainly learn a lot from him.

George Landau had previously served in Colombia. He had started out as a Commercial Officer. He had convinced me that you could never go wrong if you kept U.S. economic interests front and center. That is, not to the exclusion of other things, but in the long haul those are probably the interests, by and large, which are going to be most important to our country and to its survival. I happen still to believe that. Our security interests are often wrapped up with economic interests. The farther away you are from the Washington-Moscow axis, through Brussels and NATO and all that, the more that's true. In Latin America that is an eminently sound view.

So that was another reason why I found the Business Council for International Understanding, the banking community, as well as the Treasury and Commerce Departments, to be very important. I did not ignore the Department of Defense. I had worked closely with them in Grenada and so forth and was able to go and talk to them about Colombia. I found that the economic-business hook was something that I could really hang my agenda on as Ambassador to Colombia. Then I could concentrate on the narcotics question and Colombia's foreign policy.

In a larger sense Colombia really doesn't have much of a foreign policy. Over the years they have really approached their own foreign policy much on an ad hoc basis. In my view

Colombia has a lot which is initially original, wonderful, and bright and then they do a lot of related things. Colombia is mildly schizophrenic. I think that it's safe to say that both Argentina and Brazil have always looked first to Europe, and then to the United States. However, Colombia looks to the United States because it is the main economic actor for Colombia, and with which it relates. However, culturally, and to some degree politically, the Colombians have always looked to Europe. They like France as much as Spain. So their foreign policy is marked by their desire always to have one foot and hand in Europe. They care a lot about the non-aligned movement. They have a high opinion of themselves and their ability to influence events, which is not often borne out by the facts.

One of my favorite discussions with the Colombians was whether they could really moderate the behavior of Cuba or other members of the non-aligned group which really had firm agendas. Colombia would walk into one of the meetings of the non-aligned group and say, “Don't worry, we're going to make things better for the good of all mankind.” The Colombians would kind of get eaten alive, but they would come back and say, “Oh, we did this, we made this much improvement.”

Q: You're measuring this with about a quarter of an inch between youfingers.

GILLESPIE: That was always a point of interesting debate. In any case, I felt very comfortable going down to Colombia with the agenda contained in my instruction letter.

We might get into the personal security side of going to Colombia, because that really was important at this particular time.

Q: This would be a good point in your description of Colombia. We've talked about getting ready to go there. We obviously will cover the business relationships, the narcotics situation, and the Contadora connection. A very important aspect of this whole experience is the security side of life for you and people assigned to the Embassy in Bogota in 1985. We'll pick that up next time, at the point when you arrived there.

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Today is October 1, 1996. Tony, can you pick up the narrative afteyou arrived in Colombia. Start anywhere you want.

GILLESPIE: Actually, I think that I ought to go back and add another aspect to getting ready to go to Bogota, Colombia, in the summer of 1985. I think that we've already covered the point that there had been the beginnings of a wave of drug-related violence, triggered by the Medellin Cartel, as it was beginning to be known. The Cartel was headed by this man named Pablo Escobar.

The Minister of Justice of Colombia had been assassinated, early in 1984. As a result of this, Belisario Betancur, the President of Colombia, ordered the extradition to the United States of some drug traffickers whom we wanted very much in the United States, and for whom we had requested extradition. It was all done very quickly. The extradition action generated a very strong response from Escobar and his minions. They set off a huge bomb in Bogota, near the American Embassy. While it did very little damage to the Embassy, it blew a huge hole in the street and blew out the windows of nearly every building around.

I'm just thinking of this recent explosion in Saudi Arabia in 1996 in front of an apartment building housing mainly American military people. We had put mylar [a protective, transparent plastic covering] on all of the windows at the Embassy, and no windows were broken by this explosion in Bogota. So there was no flying glass damage. I think that I've already mentioned - if I haven't, I'll repeat it - that the narcotics traffickers, in addition to the huge bomb they set off in Bogota, let it be known through the American School in Bogota, where most of the American dependent kids went to school, that those kids were at risk from kidnaping and murder. They indicated that this might be in the offing for them if the U.S. didn't begin to lay off in its anti-narcotics efforts.

We had evacuated the dependents shortly afterwards. Ambassador Lewis Tambs had left with his family at about Christmas time of 1984. His young, second wife was pregnant. Tambs went back to Bogota in February, 1985, basically to say goodbye. Although he was still on the books as Ambassador to Colombia, he wasn't resident in Bogota because of that security situation. The Department had decided that only adult dependents would be authorized to travel to Bogota - no children, no minors. The Embassy staff was in a process of transition. All dependents had been evacuated, as well as some non-essential people. These non-essential personnel were beginning to come back to Bogota. That's the situation I faced when I arrived in Bogota. I think that it's important to talk about what the Department's security people and other, specialized groups did, in relation to that situation.

First, this was a time when we were beginning to talk about Ambassadorial accountability for the security of U.S. Government personnel and their families overseas in ways which were, perhaps, much more sharply and crisply focused than they had been in the past. We had a terribly dangerous situation in Beirut, Lebanon. In fact, we were down to a very small staff there. The Ambassador was riding around, from time to time, in an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC). In El Salvador we had an extremely dangerous situation, with the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) guerrilla troops threatening Americans. We'd had murders of AIFLD (American Institute for Free Labor Development) people, which might have been done by the right wing. We'd had the murders of more conservative people. 1985 was a dangerous year for many people in the Foreign Service. I don't want to belittle the situation elsewhere, but the Embassies in Beirut, San Salvador, and Bogota were considered the most dangerous posts in the service.

Q: I wonder if you could comment on why the Colombians seem to be more vicious than people I can think of almost anywhere else. I mean that this translated into actions by Colombian drug traffickers in Miami and other places.

GILLESPIE: Stu, I wish I could do this in a comment, but let me tell you that sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, historians, and other, highly qualified analysts have attempted

to do that, and they've been unsuccessful. There is a British historian - I think that his name is Heppelthwaite, but I'm not positive about that - who wrote a book about Colombia. His chapter on violence can be summed up in one sentence: “Violence in Colombia is pathological.” This is probably unfair and too compressed a statement. However, Colombia is a country which, from the time of the initial Spanish conquest back in the 16th century, has been populated by people who were violent. This included the Spanish conquistadores who ended up in Gran Colombia, which included the whole Viceroyalty of that region, including today's Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Colombia itself.

Colombia is a country which is full of violence. Back near the turn of the century, in the 1890s, they had very violent periods. Then in the 1940s and 1950s Colombia went through a period of political party civil war, which is referred to as la violencia. The stories and the histories, the factual accounts which have been written about that period, include descriptions of people being flayed. There were various cortes or cuts which were named and were known. People would cut other people's tongue in two, down the middle, and tie a knot in it. They did terrible things to each other, in addition to outright murder and assassination, using guns and machetes.

So Colombia is a country which has this terrible history of violence. To my knowledge, no one has been able to explain it satisfactorily. Colombia shares with many of its neighbors things like a weak judicial system. For example, in Peru the resolution of disputes is never easy. It hasn't been easy in Venezuela. Colombia doesn't differ dramatically from those countries. However, in Colombia, vendetta or revenge killings - whether during the period before la violencia or since - have been part of this picture.

I think that the crime statistics for 1995 reflect an incidence of murder which is the highest in the world. It isn't all drug-related. Some of the crimes are political, some of them are drug-related, some are a combination of the two, still others are common crimes. Kidnaping is an art form in Colombia - both for money, as well as for other kinds of extortion.

In 1985, before I left Washington for Colombia, I was instructed to go over and talk to the security and other people in CIA (Central intelligencAgency), and everybody else that you could imagine. It was made very clear, by those briefing me, that, first of all, I was going into a dangerous situation and that I would be accountable in this dangerous situation for just under 100 U.S. citizen employees of the Embassy, probably about 300 Colombian Foreign Service National employees, and maybe 40 or 50 adult dependents of the U.S. citizen Embassy employees. So this came down to about 140 American citizens who came under the aegis of the U.S. Embassy and the American Ambassador. We faced a major, serious security situation.

I wanted to do this right. I had been in Grenada in a military situation. As Ambassador or Chief of Mission there I had troops of the 82nd Airborne Division available for security purposes. Then it shifted to what was basically a squad of Military Police, guarding me. We had machine guns around our Embassy because we thought that there were armed Cubans who were going to attack the Embassy and other points in Grenada. I had been through a serious, security situation where, fortunately, the unknown aspects became known, and it was no longer a threat. However, we had all gone through that.

When I got ready to go to Colombia, I had that experience behind me. You may recall that I had been a Security Officer early in my Foreign Service career, so I was no stranger to protective security and these kinds of things. I was briefed by our DS (Bureau of Diplomatic Security) people on what my personal security arrangements would be and what the security arrangements at the post would be. I realized that this was a different order of magnitude. This was really new and different.

The intelligence that we had did not concern threats. That is, it did not say, “If you do not do this, we will”, or, “If the U.S. does this, we will do this.” What we had were communications intercepts and agent reports concerning such and such a group which intended to kill the American Ambassador. For example, such and such a group intended to do this or that to members of the American Embassy staff. These were internal, private

conversations within these groups. They were not bragging or trying to intimidate us. These were plans that were being developed.

We didn't know how capable they were of carrying out these plans.This gives you pause.

Q: Talk a little about your family.

GILLESPIE: Well, this is the next part. We have a son and a daughter. In 1985 our son was 23, and our daughter was 19. Our son had graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Our daughter was a student at UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles). So we had no plans for either of them to come and live with us in Colombia. We were now sort of “empty nesters.” However, my wife intended very much to come to Colombia.

There's another story there which I don't think we've discussed. At that point she had had a seven-year career in the Department oState. She was kind of reluctant about going to any post, anywhere, with me, so that's another background piece that we can get into. She sat in on many, though not all, of the briefings I had on security. Remember, she has a TOP SECRET security clearance. I related to her details of the briefings which she did not attend.

Q: Would you discuss later what she was doing in the Department?

GILLESPIE: I shall.

People from DS (Office oDiplomatic Security) had really done a job on briefing me on the situation in Bogota. In addition, State Department Office of Counter-Terrorism was very interested in what was going on, and they were briefing me as well on narcotics and guerrilla terrorism. In 1985 the M-19 movement (April 19 Movement) was very active. Other guerrilla groups included the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the ELN (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional

- the National Liberation Army), and the EPL (Ejercito Popular de Liberacion - People's Liberation Army) were all targeting foreign diplomats in one way or another. Remember, we were supporting the Contras in Nicaragua. So these revolutionary groups, as they styled themselves, had varying degrees of sympathy with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and with the FMLN in El Salvador. There was money coming into these groups from Libya, logistics support from Cuba, and probably some encouragement from the Soviet Union. These groups were all very active, and they, too, were targeting the American Embassy in Bogota.

In 1985 the two lines of threat, if you will - one coming from the narcotics traffickers and one from several, guerrilla groups - were parallel but separate. They came together, and we can talk about that. In any event, all of a sudden, I began to pause in my enthusiasm for going to Bogota, Colombia. I realized how serious this was. Here I was. I had been looking at Colombia and watching that situation unfold through 1984. It was amazing how it crystallized your thinking when you realized that you, individually, were going to be the person who was going to be down there, in charge and accountable - under the microscope from Washington and possibly in the gunsights of somebody's weapon at the Bogota end. I don't want to make light of this. At that time I really was concerned, and my wife was also concerned. We had serious discussions on what we were really getting into. It makes you stop and think.

Well, I had done a lot of organizational development study, including behavioral, psychological studies and industrial psychology, early on in my career. I kept thinking to myself, “What can I do to make sure that I am as well prepared as I can be to deal with this?” I had the security aspects very much in hand. I knew what was there, I knew how to deal with it, and I was comfortable with it. I knew that I was going to use the security side of things. Now, what else should I do?

It dawned on me that the Department kept saying that it had a “support system.” I went to the Director of Medical Services (MED). I said that I would like to schedule some time with

his psychiatrists, both for myself and for my wife, to talk about us in this new environment, the kinds of stresses and strains that we were going to face, and how we might deal with them. I said that I wanted to talk about what MED was doing about the staff of the Embassy in Bogota, under these circumstances. Well, they just turned out to be fantastic. They just opened their doors. Over the space of, probably, three months, we went through at least three or four meetings on an individual basis, or as a couple. Either I would go to MED and talk to somebody, my wife would go separately from me, and then the two of us would go. We talked about what was concerning us and what our fears were. These people in MED were just wonderful in developing a kind of dialogue which helped us air a lot of these concerns.

Then, in addition, I said, “Look, I am really concerned. I want to make sure that I am doing the right kinds of things vis-a-vis the Embassy staff. How should I conduct myself? Should I be more, or less, formal? I can be a chameleon. I can act in whatever way is best. What's the best approach?” Their reply was, “Probably the best approach is to be yourself, but recognize, as you seem to do, that you have real accountability and responsibility in a leadership position. The worst thing that you could do is not to be a leader. The worst thing that you could do would be to withdraw. So, whatever you do, we think that, as comfortably as you can, you probably need to be out in front.”

That was tremendously helpful. We set up a system. Over the five or 10 years prior to 1985 MED had brought in psychiatrists and they had regional psychiatrists out in the field. There was one in Mexico, for example - I think that his name was Dr John Smith. He since died of cancer out in Thailand. He was wonderful. We met him first in Washington when he was coming through the Department. He said, “I will be in Bogota every 90 days, come hell or high water. Every 90 days, Ambassador, I would like you to encourage everybody on the staff to come and listen to me. I am not down there to do psychoanalysis. I'm down there to help people deal with what are the very real stresses and strains of this kind of a situation.”

So we did all of that. It was very helpful. I guess that there were three danger pay posts at that time. This meant that in Bogota a State Department employee not otherwise restricted got his or her base pay, housing, and 25 percent of salary as danger pay, along with a 20 percent hardship differential, because Bogota was considered to be a hardship post. So there was a 45 percent pay bonus in effect for all U.S. Government employees. That attracts some kinds of people. They say, “Hey, I'm going where the pay is.”

I had to choose a secretary. When Ambassador Tambs left Bogota, his secretary also left. She didn't want to go back under any circumstances. So I was looking for a secretary. I had a funny phone call from a friend, who said, “How would you feel about having a man as a secretary?” In the ARA Bureau I had had a series of excellent women as top flight executive secretaries. Down in Grenada I had had two or three who had come in. They were sort of senior people - Virginia Richardson and others - who had come through. They were really great. I was told, “Well, there's a fellow named Sylvester Satcher. We'd like you to interview him for the job.” I was in the Department. Satcher was there, and he came to see me. I guess that Sylvester Satcher is about 6' 1” or 6' 2”. Soaking wet, he may weigh 150 pounds. He is skinny as a rail, an African-American, and has long, black hair. Not in dread locks, but very long. He was very well dressed. For this interview he was wearing a double-breasted suit, his shirt had French cuffs, and he really looked great.

He walked in the door of my office in the Department. We sat down and began to talk. I said, “Mr. Satcher, why do you want to go to Bogota?” He said, “I don't speak Spanish and doubt that I can ever learn it, but I am an excellent, executive secretary. I can manage your time and manage all of the affairs which need to be managed. I can manage the representation accounts and the ORE (Official Residence Expenditures). I've done all of those. I have a mother and a brother. I am the basic support for both of them. I need the money. I want to go to Bogota. I've heard that you are a good Ambassador, and I can get 45 percent additional pay. That's where I want to go.”

Well, I made a few phone to officers for whom “Satch,” as we called him, had worked. They said, “Grab him. He's the best thing going!” So I did. There are some interesting, additional tales to tell about Sylvester Satcher. Don't let me forget to tell them after we get on with this. “Satch” agreed to come down to Bogota. He became very concerned and he had to be briefed on the security situation, as everybody else was. In the process of my own briefings, I learned that in Bogota, Colombia, in 1985, it was almost a “velvet jail” for the American Embassy employees working there.

Everybody was provided with excellent housing - wonderful, big, airy, spacious apartments. Bogota has some beautiful apartment buildings. The Embassy had concluded that it could not put people in houses because of security - they would be just too isolated. They tried to put no more than two or three employees in any one, apartment building - so that there wouldn't be a concentration of official Americans. Every apartment building had its own security guard. In addition, we assigned an armed, security guard to that apartment building. Every Embassy employee was given portal to portal, secure transportation in an armored van, with an armed escort car. They were picked up and delivered on schedules that were generated on a personal computer, a PC, to keep the schedules as random as possible. The routes were numbered. It really was an amazing feat of organization and planning - and it worked!

As I prepared to go to Bogota, the security establishment was responding to this new level of threat, which was growing. A man named Walter Sargent was assigned as the Chief Regional Security Supervisory Officer. Walt Sargent had been the RSO (Regional Security Officer) in the Embassy in San Salvador. He'd been the RSO in Beirut and in Southeast Asia, during the Vietnam War. Walter looks a bit like the actor, Telly Savalas. He's big, tall, and is as bald as a billiard ball. Walter had been in the State Department security business for many, many years. When I met him, he said, with a totally straight face, “Mr. Ambassador, I've never lost an Ambassador, I've never lost a U.S. Government employee, and I'm never going to lose one. You can count on me to do my job. I know what our

business is. It's diplomacy and it's international relations. It's not just security and it's not just locking ourselves up. So I'm going to make it possible for you to work." I thought, "Boy, that's an interesting statement. Let's see if he can live up to it in these circumstances." Well, that was Walter Sargent. So I went through all of this as I prepared to leave and go to Bogota in August, 1985.

Meanwhile, my wife, was working in the Bureau of Public Affairs in the Department of State, in the Office of Press and Opinion Analysis. She's a cultural anthropologist. When we'd come back to Washington from Nicaragua in the late 1970s, she had worked for AID (Agency for International Development) for a while. She wanted a job. She had gone through that transition experienced by women of our generation. She had been a teacher and a housewife. Now she really wanted to do something on her own. Actually, she was recruited for this job by somebody she had met along the way. She was going around, talking to AID and the various foundations. She thought that she might want to go back and get a Ph. D. in anthropology but she felt that that really wasn't going to work as long as I was in the Foreign Service.

So, with our kids out of the house, she had gone to work in the Bureau of Public Affairs. She was recruited by a fellow named Bernard Roshko, who was an absolutely whizz about understanding and knowing about public opinion polls, including editorial analyses and these kinds of things. Her job was basically to analyze the U.S. press and its reporting, but, more importantly, the editorial views regarding foreign policy issues. She prepared reports which were for the seventh floor level offices of the Secretary of State and of senior officers in the Department. These reports were not on the politics of the editorials but on what is editorial opinion on, for example, arms control and disarmament issues, SALT II (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks - Phase II), or whatever it might be.

By this time she had been doing this for six or seven years, when the job overseas came up. She had said, "Tony, I'd really like to go with you, but I have seen Ambassadors and Ambassadors' wives. I will tell you that I will not be content with being an Ambassador's

wife. I know how to do the job and I can do it, but that will not satisfy me. Let's see if there's any opportunity to do anything else." So we began to look around. Well, this was in the mid-1980s. First of all, she was a Civil Service employee, not Foreign Service. There had begun to be sort of breakthroughs in the rigidity of the system. If I remember correctly, Ambassador Bob Oakley was married to Phyllis Oakley. Phyllis was a Foreign Service Office, as Bob was. They had managed, somehow, to have some arrangements where Phyllis was able to work in certain ways but not others in certain countries, because her husband was the Ambassador.

At the time the idea of a Foreign Service Officer married to a Foreign Service Officer and at post with her husband meant that he or she either was on leave without pay or maybe that there was some part-time work that he or she could do. Or the spouse could be assigned to a post in a different country. I remember that the current Director of the Foreign Affairs Training Center, Tesi Schaffer, and her husband, Howard Schaffer, ran into these kinds of problems. In any event, Vivian Gillespie was the first Civil Service employee of the Department of State to be granted extended leave without pay to accompany a spouse overseas. It had never been done before. The Director General of the Foreign Service at the time was Ambassador George Vest, a super guy in the view of many, although some people don't have such a high view of his work as Director General. However, as a man and as an officer, he was superb. I had had the pleasure of working for George in the past at the U.S. Mission to NATO.

George said to me, "Let's figure out how to deal with Vivian's situation." So, without making a big deal of it and going into too much detail, the Bureau of Public Affairs has a small number of Civil Service positions. To go on leave without pay, in effect means that you have to be charged against some position. This means that that position is occupied. The Bureau of Public Affairs couldn't handle this. The Bureau of Intelligence anResearch has lots of Civil Service positions, many of which are almost always empty. So they were able to use some good accounting systems and transfer Vivian to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, where she was then put on extended leave without pay. I think that, at that

time, such an extended leave without pay could not exceed a maximum of 18 months or two years. The thought was that the Department would extend this leave without pay at the end of this period if Vivian were still in Bogota with me. So that was done.

Then the next question was employment in Bogota. Here was an Ambassador's wife. The Ambassador is in charge of everything and accountable for all of this. How could we handle this? Well, Vivian accepted the situation that she would be able to apply for any job that was open to any other dependent, but the selection would require permission from the the legal and personnel sides of the Department in Washington. As it turned out, one of the features of Bogota, Colombia, in 1985 was that the Agency for International Development had established there, on a trial basis, an office of a new sort, called an Advanced Developing Country Office. They employed one career professional AID American employee and put him in Bogota. AID, by the way, had been shut out of Bogota in 1975. It was in late 1983 or 1984 that they tried this new approach.

Peter McPherson was then the new, or relatively new, Administrator of AID in the Reagan administration. They set this job up, putting in a single AID officer. They said, “You are now an entrepreneur. You do not have a Mission or big, program package. You are part of the Ambassador's staff. You are a Counselor to the Ambassador but you have no official residence expenses, no representation allowance from AID. You are just another man on the Ambassador's staff, but you deal with development issues. The idea is to go into Colombia, which is reaching a stage of development where we don't really need to give it a lot of help. However, we can experiment, we can help shape some things, we can learn from it, and maybe we can even use Colombia as something of a resource.” They assigned a fellow named Jim Smith to that job. He was exactly what the doctor ordered.

In any event Jim Smith had already established a “personal services requirement” for someone to assist him. He wanted an American who could have a security clearance because he had four or five Colombians working for him who did not have such a clearance. By the time that we arrived in Bogota in 1985, he had already advertised that

job. My wife applied for it and, to make a long story short, after going through an extended, filtering process, to make sure that there wasn't the slightest conflict of interest or problems of nepotism, everybody's lawyers said, “Okay, it's all right. She can have the job.” So she got the job.

So my wife spent a certain portion of her time being the Ambassador's wife and a larger portion of her time - basically, eight hours a day, five days a week, plus occasional overtime - being a personal services contractor for the Agency for International Development. She helped on programs dealing with population, democracy education, and administration of justice. She really got deeply into the administration of justice program and developed her own circle of Colombian contacts, both governmental and non-governmental. This turned out to be not disadvantageous to the Embassy. In any event, she did that, and that got her set up.

Back to going to Bogota. We'd gone through all of the security briefings. Vivian had to work out the tail end of leaving the Bureau of Public Affairs, doing the paper work, renting the house, all of those things, and generally getting ready to go. I wasn't confirmed by the Senate as Ambassador to Colombia until July, 1985. We decided to go in August.

I had selected a DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission). Maybe we could talk briefly about DCM selection, if you haven't had much on that before. I recognized, and every Chief of Mission going to post has an idea of what he wants as a deputy. The DCM position is an institution. I think that some people look on that job, as I did, as something like the Navy's concept of an Executive Officer. It's someone who really, in a sense, has to be an alter ego to the Ambassador and needs to fill in whenever the Ambassador is away. At the same time he or she probably needs to be the ramrod in an organization. That is, make sure that things get done and are properly coordinated. If there is dirty work which has to be done, that is, if you have to discipline people or do those kinds of things, that's the job of the DCM and the Executive Officer, so that the Ambassador, in his pristine glory, can keep his hands

free and be the ultimate arbiter at the post. So the Ambassador always has that kind of an out.

I was looking for someone who could support me in that respect. I guess that we all look at what we think are our strengths and weaknesses. Some of us try to compensate for them. I guess that others tend to reinforce them. You're never quite sure. I was looking for someone who, first of all, knew something about the region and had area knowledge, who was experienced, and who was considered a capable officer. I had had the benefit of being Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of American Republics Affairs. I had access of computer printouts concerning senior officers, their language skills, assignments, and so on. We were doing this all the time in our own ambassadorial senior selection process. I narrowed my list down to about two or three people. Finally, I selected the person I wanted. His name was Michael Skol. He was the Deputy Director of the Policy Planning Coordination Office in ARA. He is a brilliant Political Officer who, from what I could see, had all the makings of a really good manager and person who could run things. He very much embodied this thing which I value highly, which is thought leading to action. Don't just think about something, don't analyze it, don't draw your conclusions, and then sit on it. What are we going to do about a given issue? So I told the Executive Director of ARA that I had selected Mike Skol.

At that point the selection of DCMs, unlike the Ambassadorial selections, was not institutionalized at the higher levels of the Office of Personnel. Today, in 1996, all of these things must be vetted by a committee, people look at diversity, and this, that, and the other thing.

Q: Recently, it has been designed to make sure that enough women anminorities are included.

GILLESPIE: Exactly.

Q: That's the driving force.

GILLESPIE: So at this point there was a committee headed by Ken Damm, the Deputy Secretary of State, which did the Ambassadorial selections. The DCM selections merely had to go through the Office of Personnel and be blessed by the Director General of the Foreign Service. There was no big deal about it. So I had gotten my list of a potential DCM down to two or three and then decided that Mike Skol was the guy I wanted.

Well, Tony Motley was the Assistant Secretary of ARA. Motley asked me, “Whom are you going to take as DCM?” I said, “I want Michael Skol.” He said, “The hell you will! Skol's too much like you. You're both too damned smart and you're both too operational. I don't want you to take Skol. I refuse. I won't let him go from ARA.” He just looked me right in the eye and said, “I'm not going to do that.” But I had talked to Skol, who wanted to go to Bogota. Skol, by the way, was married to a Foreign Service Officer, which was going to create new kinds of problems, if he were selected.

So it took about three weeks to “work this through” with Tony Motley. We conducted all kinds of guerrilla and trench warfare exercises. He would say, “Take this guy.” Then I would figure out why this guy wouldn't do. He would say, “Take this person.” I would say, “No, this person isn't going to work,” or doesn't want the job or is concerned about the security situation. Finally, Motley and I were talking about this subject. He asked, “Do you really want Mike Skol?” I said, “Yes, I really want Mike. He's the right guy.” So Motley said, “Okay, you've worn me down.” He said, “Gillespie, I want the two of you to promise me that you'll do one thing. When you're sitting around, thinking about how you're going to pull the wings off flies, and make us in Washington uncomfortable - whether it's a policy matter or something else - I want you to promise me that you'll wait 24 hours between the thought and the action, damn it! And then decide if you still want to do it.” He said, “I'm really afraid that you guys are going to go down there to Bogota and do something crazy.”

I said, “Okay, we promise.” Mike Skol eventually went in and talked to Motley, who made him promise the same thing. So I got Mike Skol as DCM.

Skol preceded me to post by a month. He went down to Bogota on August 1, 1985. I came down at the end of August. Shortly before I planned to leave Washington, I got a call from DS, the Office of Diplomatic Security. I was told, “You're going to go into your security envelope here in Washington. We do not want you to arrive down there without security. So your security detail will be coming up here to Washington. There will be two American Security Officers, Dolan and Moore, who will come up to Washington to escort you down to Bogota. They want to meet you. Then Dolan will go back down to Bogota, and Moore will escort you to post.”

So this sounded all right to me. What wasn't terribly obvious was that Dolan was Jim, and Moore was Mona. She was a graduate of Auburn University and had been a police officer. She stood about 5' 8”, weighed about 125-130 pounds, and was a very attractive, willowy blonde. She and I met in a DS office, or she came to my office. We went down to the cafeteria at the State Department and were having a cup of coffee. Who should walk into the cafeteria but my wife! I introduced my wife and Mona Moore. She had heard about the woman security officer. She already knew that there was a woman security officer involved but had not seen or met her. You can imagine! When I next got together privately with my wife, she said, “Tony, I'm not sure that I like this. I'm not sure that I trust this at all.” I said, “Well, don't worry. They told me that you're going to get your own security people when you get to Bogota, and you can have a handsome man!” We laughed about that a lot.

Well, both Mona Moore and Jim Nolan turned out to be two of the sharpest, nicest, most responsible people that we've ever known. I'll never forget them. Mona and I went down to National Airport in Washington. She was carrying her gun and all of that stuff, going through airport security. At that point we both had First Class seats, flying down to Miami and then from Miami to Bogota. She sat one seat behind me, on the aisle. I was covered all the way. When we got down to Bogota and got off the airplane, there was a miniature

army on hand to greet me. There were guys at the entrance to the airplane and guys out around the airplane, with sub machine guns, wearing armored vests. They brought a vest for me and so forth. Anyway, we got in the car.

It was night - 8:00 PM. I got into the Ambassador's big, black Cadillac. Mona Moore turned me over to Dolan, who was in the front seat of the car, and she went into another car. There was a follow car, a lead car, a lead-lead car, and a follow-follow car. It was quite amazing. It was an interesting drive in the dark from the airport. We didn't go into downtown Bogota on the way from the airport to the Ambassador's residence. We went to the North of the city and then over to the East side. So they took all of these routes, and we were speeding along in this black Cadillac. I had ridden in Ambassadors' cars before and been with Secretaries of State in motorcades and things like that. But believe me, it's a sobering moment when you're it and are in a new place.

We arrived at the Ambassador's residence - a beautiful, big house and very nice. The staff was lined up there, like in the movies. There was the major domo, a wonderful, elegant man. He had been around for years and had been fired by two or three Ambassadors. He was fired by Ambassador Tamb's predecessor because he got too much involved in the expenses. He was trying to cut the expenses. He had been fired by one of my other predecessors before that, because that Ambassador happened to prefer young men and brought them into the house. He didn't want to have Don Jorge, the major domo, around, so he got rid of him. Each time that Don Jorge was fired, the Administrative or the GeneraServices Officer had hidden him away, had taken him on under a contract or done something for him, because they knew that he was the man to run the Ambassador's residence.

Anyway, there was Don Jorge. At that point I guess that there must have been four or five women domestic servants. I was taken up this lovely, winding staircase by Don Jorge. I had never been in the Ambassador's residence in Bogota before. I had never been to Bogota before this. I was shown to the master bedroom by Don Jorge. There were #" to

5/8” solid-steel plates which you closed at night over the windows. The steel plates went over every window in this bedroom. There was a steel door to the bedroom. That door was shut and locked from the inside, and I was sealed up in that cocoon every night! That was the way it was supposed to work. All of this, as you can imagine, was quite something.

The DCM, Mike Skol, had ridden in with me from the airport in the car. He walked me through the residence, and we talked and so on. It was all a bit awesome, I must say, when you arrive under those circumstances.

The next morning I got up and dressed, saw the security people in the house, and all of that. It really began to dawn on me that we were getting into a situation which, despite all of the preparation, was quite remarkable. Whenever I set foot outside the house, there were six to nine men in plain clothes, with their guns visible. There were uniformed guards all around the house. There were outside lights on the house at night. It was a bit like being in a prison camp to be there.

Before getting into our relations with Colombia, let me just say that, over the next several weeks, Mike Skol, Satcher, Don Schoeb the Administrative Counselor, and I got together and set up a system that we hoped would work. Walt Sargent, the Security Officer, was very concerned because the access to the residence came down to a bottleneck, as things always do. Eventually, there's only one way that you can go. There had previously been a major bomb exploded on the corner, just a block away. People weren't sure, but this might have been directed at the American Ambassador. In any event Sargent was convinced that the best security was uncertainty in the eye of the beholder - in other words, unpredictability. So we looked for ways to make my schedule unpredictable. I had to know what I was doing but I had to do it in a way which could not be predicted in advance.

One of the reasons that I had wanted Mike Skol as DCM was that he was one of the few Political Officers that I knew of in the Foreign Service who was technologically oriented.

He likes computers, sound systems, and all of these things. So basically I had cajoled the Executive Director of the ARA Bureau to give me a personal computer, a PC.

Q: This was relatively early in the game.

GILLESPIE: It was very early in the game. I also found that we were carrying on a pilot project, handling overseas and on a classified basis what are now E-Mail connections with the Department. It involved using a Wang computer system, which the Department had. They were just putting this system in at my insistence and with my full support. In Bogota, we could also draft our cables on the Wang computer, push a button, and away they would go to the Department or elsewhere, via modem. We could also send classified E-mail within the Embassy and with the Department, between classified work stations.

We weren't in a position to do that at home, at the residence. However, I set up a home office. We agreed on a schedule that Satcher, the DCM, the DCM's secretary, a woman named Sue Nelson, the Security Officer, and I would maintain. Sue Nelson was a superb secretary. We would kind of alternate - where we were and how we worked. Depending a little bit on what my obligations were, both outside and inside the Embassy, we would, first of all, avoid having a large number of scheduled meetings within the Embassy. Meetings would pretty much be on an ad hoc basis. On certain days I would just stay home and work from there. We didn't have a secure voice system then - that came later. Even so, we could do a lot on the telephone, if we needed to. I could do a lot of reading and writing at home, and people could bring me material. I had a more junior officer bring out cables to the residence in an armored van. I could read them at home.

Q: As a matter of fact, some of the old-fashioned, more “imperial” Ambassadors used to use that system. They would almost never show up at the Embassy. Anybody who wanted to see them would go to the residence. This system goes back almost to the 1930s.

GILLESPIE: I had seen that system in operation and didn't appreciate it. I thought that the Ambassador ought to be in the office. I didn't think that people felt that they had to

come to work on time. In Bogota, “on time” was according to your computer schedule. Sometimes you came to work at 7:00 AM, and sometimes at 10:00 AM, depending, to some extent, on what your computer told you. However, I felt that it was very important, as far as the Colombian employees of the Embassy were concerned, that they should not get the impression that the Ambassador and senior management officers were huddled somewhere in a bunker. Nonetheless, we worked it out. I didn't stay home all of that often - maybe one morning a week or I would go home at noon and not return to the Embassy that day. This was mainly because I had too many other things to do. The “other things to do” were rarely handled with much advance notice. As Walt Sargent, the Security Officer, used to say, “If your lead time for an irregularly-occurring event is two or three days, it's highly unlikely that anybody will be able to mount a serious operation against you, in that period of time.” So, if you're going to go to a luncheon here, a party there, a dinner some place else, or a meeting or conference, if it's been planned three months ahead of time, watch out! If they know that you're going to be the speaker, you have a problem. However, if there is a three-day “fuse” on it, don't worry about it.

We operated that way, and it seems to have worked all right. The psychiatrists in the Department had advised me to get somebody else - ideally my secretary or the DCM, but not my wife - to watch my mood. If they saw me beginning to reflect the pressures of the job, they should be instructed to tell me that. So Satcher, Mike Skol, and I worked it out. I said, “If you see me beginning to 'kick the cat,'- which was the term I used - when the cat didn't need to be kicked, for heaven's sake, tell me.”

By the way, at the time the Under Secretary for Management was Ron Spiers. Spiers and I had talked about this. He had had a tour of duty as Ambassador during the Reagan administration. He and the ARA Bureau had both told me, “Tony, we're beginning to understand the pressures of these jobs. If you feel that you need to come out, or you and Vivian need to come out, say so, and we'll pull you out, temporarily. We'll find a reason for you to come to Washington, go to another post, or do something else.”

Ron himself had said, “I want you to know that if, at any time, you feel that you've had enough down there in Bogota, all you have to do is tell me, and we can curtail your tour, because I know that this is a high pressure job. Later, I discovered, this was the wrong approach. Nobody ever wants to say, “I quit.” I think that I said this to Spiers later on. I told him that I had been comfortable, staying in Bogota for the full three years. I didn't worry about this and would not have asked to have my tour curtailed. I said, “However, if you're really thinking about this, what you ought to say is, 'You're down there for two years. If you want to stay a third year, you may. It's your decision.'” I said, “Don't make the Ambassador say, 'It's gotten to be too much for me.' That doesn't work.”

The other part was perfect. As it turned out, we didn't have to pull the string to get out of Bogota very often, because there were other things to do. For example, there was the U.S. Army Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Panama. The commanding general there, General Galvin, said, “We would like you to come to Panama and have a full briefing.” Well, that was the first trip I took out of Colombia. I had been in Bogota for 90 days. Satcher was saying, “Mr. Ambassador, you're beginning to speak a little loudly, from time to time. Maybe...” I said, “Okay, Satch, I get the message.” I called GeneraGalvin and said, “Could we arrange a briefing up at SOUTHCOM?” He said, “Absolutely. When would you like to come? Bring your wife.” This was an official trip. General. Galvin sent a plane down to Bogota which picked us up and flew us to Panama. We stayed at GeneraGalvin's house. The cost to me was minimal. The cost to the government was - whatever it was. We stayed for four days. We had a tour of the Panama Canal. I had all of the briefings, and they were germane to all that we were doing.About six months later there was a mini Chiefs of Mission conference in Quito, Ecuador. On this occasion the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) airplane assigned to Bogota was available, so I flew down to Quito in it. Now, one of the things that we had in Bogota was relatively full access to aircraft from the Colombian Police. Our need for air transportation kept growing. Basically, we had provided funding to support these aircraft through INM (State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Matters), so I had access to that. Walter Sargent, the Security

Officer at the Embassy in Bogota, wasn't always thrilled by this arrangement, for security reasons - not because of safety considerations, but because we had to tell the Colombians when I was going to fly from one point to another. We were never quite sure how that would work. Then we got our own C-12, which is a Beechcraft King Air. Later, the DEA section in the Embassy got a couple of aircraft assigned to it on a full-time basis. In addition, DEA could always call in a flight, so they flew me and my wife down to Quito for this mini Chiefs of Mission meeting. It was a wonderful flight in a small, twin-engined aircraft.

So we were in and out of Bogota all the time. When I would go to Panama, or into some other place, an American Security Officer would go with me.

Really, I have been talking about getting to the post and doing things. I've mentioned that my wife Vivian stayed on in Washington for a couple of months. She arrived in Bogota in October, 1985. Before she arrived, Walt Sargent, the Security Officer, had told me that she would have to have full-time security protection. He was not thrilled by the idea that she was going to have to go back and forth to work every day. He had expected a more typical, Ambassador's wife who would stay home and maybe go out, in the course of the day, to a luncheon or something like that. Well, it turned out that Vivian was going to do both. She wouldn't stay home but she would have to go to work in the morning. Then she would have to leave the Embassy and go to a Damas Diplomaticas (Diplomatic Wives) affair or go to some other meeting, diplomatic reception or luncheon with me - or meet me there. In any event, the Department and Walt insisted that she had to have - and quite rightly - a full security detail of her own. So initially she had a Colombian security agent in a follow car with a Colombian security detail in it. These Colombian security people were employees of the American Embassy. They were mainly former police personnel. They had been through every training program that we could arrange.

My security detail initially consisted of one American Security Officer with me at all times, in addition to a Colombian security agent. Both of these arrangements changed during

the course of our tour, after about one year. The security situation began really to get hot and very serious, and there were reports that certain groups intended to get the American Ambassador. Reports of this kind were received sporadically, off and on by my successors. Sometimes, we would get a report that was very serious. The State Department DS people decided that they needed to augment my security protection. They decided first to assign to me a special team from the U.S. Army. These men were superb marksmen, specially trained to deal with terrorist situations. So they were brought in.

The Ambassador's residence is on a six-acre piece of land, up on the side of a hill in a suburban residential area in the northern part of Bogota. It is on a rather steep slope. There is a main road that goes along the eastern edge of the property. Then you come down from that road to the residence itself. On the southern side the front is walled, but then right outside it is a very tall, apartment building, looking right down onto the residence. All of our neighbors had been vetted very carefully with the police. They were constantly checked as to who they were and what was going on. However, we knew that a relative of one of the narcotics traffickers lived in one of the apartments facing the residence.

When this special team from the U.S. Army came down to Bogota, we arranged to rent an apartment on what I think was the eighth floor, the top floor of this apartment building. We put the Army team up there - and that's where they lived. They also used that apartment to cover the Embassy residence. They had a lot of technical equipment in that apartment to make sure that the people down below, the relatives of a narcotics trafficker, weren't doing something that would be dangerous.

Then, soon after the arrival of the Army detachment, DS decided that they needed even more people in Bogota, so they assigned additional American personnel from DS to me and to my wife Vivian. We ended up having an American security presence in the residence 24 hours a day. This security detachment had an office downstairs, which was occupied at all times. Vivian had a full-time, American Security Officer assigned to her, as

well as her Colombian security guards. When the situation got more serious, I had either two or three American Security Officers with me at all times, and this situation continued throughout my tour of duty.

Mona Moore, one of the Security Officers, played an interesting role. I told you that we had gone to the Office of Medical Services in the Department (MED) because we were concerned about the stress aspects of this assignment. We had two cars assigned to the Ambassador, and here's the State Department for you. The residence was at 8,620 feet above sea level. We had a Cadillac Fleetwood sedan, fully armored, which must have weighed, I don't know how much. It had the small, Cadillac engine in it, so it barely crept along at Bogota's elevation. The second car that we had was a fully armored, Chevrolet Suburban, which was silver in color. Walter Sargent, the Security Officer, said, “Ambassador, how do you feel about riding in the 'Suburban'? The other damned car will hardly move.” I said, “I don't think there's any choice, is there? We'll ride in the Chevrolet 'Suburban.'” He said, “I'm going to get rid of the Cadillac, and we'll replace it as soon as we can. It was a dumb decision to have it here. If you don't mind...” So that was what we would ride in.

I might say at this point that Ambassador Louis Tambs, my predecessor, carried a gun all the time that he was in Bogota. His predecessor, Ambassador Tom Boyatt, also carried a gun in a holster strapped to his ankle. Both of them were concerned about their security. Having carried a gun earlier in my professional career as a Security Officer, I decided that I didn't want to carry a gun now. I didn't think that that was important. There were professional Security Officers who would carry guns. I wasn't a Security Officer any more.

Soon after we arrived in Bogota, perhaps one or two months later, Vivian and I were riding along in the back of the Chevrolet Suburban. Vivian said, “Gee, Tony, what do you think would happen if we were attacked?” She said, “I'm very worried about two things. What if somebody is shot, and we're the ones who have to do something about it? What if somebody is coming at us, and there's a gun in the car? I don't have the slightest idea

about what to do with it." She hates guns, never liked them, doesn't want to be around them, and doesn't want to own them. When we were first married and living in Mannheim, Germany, and I had to go off for four months of temporary duty in Oberammergau, which I talked about earlier, she kept three steak knives and a baseball bat near her bed. That was as far as she would go with armament, and that gave her some feeling of security. But she didn't want guns around anywhere. She said, "I'm concerned about these guns. I don't know how to shoot one and I certainly don't know whether it's safe or not to have around me."

I said, "That's an interesting point." She said, "I'm going to talk to Mona Moore about this." She did, and Mona said, "Well, Mrs. Gillespie," in her nice, southern drawl, "I think that it's important, if you are around guns, that you should know how to handle them. I'd be very happy to teach you everything that I can about them. Then, if you want to shoot them, that's okay. I can help you with that, too." Well, as it turned out, Mona and my wife Vivian started a program of weapons training. I was told, "All right next Saturday we're going out to the Gun Club and we are going to have an orientation for Vivian." Well, I don't think that Mona could have done anything better to bolster the confidence of this whole security detachment, Colombian and U.S. The Colombian employees of the Embassy felt, "Here's the Ambassador's wife going out to the Gun Club. She's learning how to field strip a weapon, how to put it back together again, how to load it, shoot it, and do all of these things."

So there were Mona Moore and Vivian. The Colombian security guys at the Gun Club were saying to Vivian, "Senora, can we help you with this, can we carry your gun for you?" They just adored her. We then began to practice with a gun, and Vivian learned how to handle one. Then she said, "Okay, I'm comfortable with a gun now. However, I'm still not comfortable on what to do if someone gets shot. I know first aid and I know how to put a bandage on. But what if something really bad happens?"

Well, they then announced from the Department something called the First Responder course. This was for any kind of natural or man-made disaster that might happen. The course, on “What do you do if you're the first person to arrive on the scene?” was given by our Medical Division. MED had told us, “We'd like to send someone to Bogota to give this course.” Well, that was all that Vivian needed. She said, “We'll do it” and she encouraged everyone to take part. We held this course at the residence the first time the course was given. It took about two days, covering just the minimum things that you do to keep someone alive, if there is any chance at all, until real help can arrive. This covered sucking chest wounds, bomb blasts, spikes through the eye, and those kinds of things. They're all gory. However, I quickly found, and I think that Vivian did, too, that it took some of the mystery away. At the end of the course we had dealt with these conditions in a simulated situation and thought about them. We realized that we were in a real life situation where they could happen.

You don't know how you'll really react in a real situation. As far as the guns were concerned, Walt Sargent, our Security Officer, said to Vivian, “Look, you can really shoot well.” And she could. The guys from the Army detachment loved to go out with her. She could shoot fast and accurately. They and Walt said, “However, there's one thing that you have to understand. If you have a gun, it's no good unless you shoot it. You have to shoot it at a person. That may a very difficult thing for you to do. If there's someone coming at you who intends to cause you harm, you have to be prepared mentally to shoot. Don't start thinking that you're a gunman or a gun woman just because you know how to shoot. There is one additional step.” We both very much internalized that.

Walt Sargent is a fascinating man. The DCM, he, and I were all under a lot of pressure to allow Embassy employees to carry concealed weapons. Sargent was reluctant to allow that. In the Department they talk about rules covering the use of firearms. We had “rules of engagement” in Bogota for people who carried guns. They were very basic. The rule was, “In a life threatening situation, shoot first. If it's not life threatening, keep your gun

in your holster." This rule was for the professionals. We went back and forth with DS in the Department and others about this question as to whether Embassy employees, in a dangerous post like Bogota, should carry weapons. Walt was not favorably disposed to that, for two reasons. One, he said, "Put a gun on and walk around with it on your hip. You probably will feel different about this issue," and he was right. You walk in a different way, although I don't know exactly what it is. Secondly, he said, "Then think about whether you are going to pull that gun out and shoot first. It doesn't do any good to have the gun otherwise." Well, he was very concerned about this question.

Finally, the Department said, "All right employees are authorized to carry weapons." However, Sargent insisted that they must be carefully trained, they must know what they're doing, and there has to be some kind of reason for using deadly force. As it turned out, I think that only two or three of our officers ever felt that they needed to carry weapons. They were authorized to do so and they did.

Q: It's funny, you know, that there was all of this policy discussion about carrying a weapon. I was Consul General in Saigon in 1969-1970. I lived in a house, more or less by myself, although there was a maid who lived in the garage. I thought that, if something happened, I really ought to have a weapon. So I just said, "Maybe I ought to have a pistol," and the Embassy gave me a pistol. That was it. I went out to the firing range once and fired it. There was no fancy training program. Looking back on it, it probably wasn't a very good idea to have it, in the long run, and I didn't carry it around with me very often. But it was there, if I needed it.

GILLESPIE: Well, as I say, neither Vivian nor I ever carried a weapon or had a weapon at hand in the car and that sort of thing. We kept weapons under the bed, in our bedroom, since all of our security people told us that we should do so. They didn't think that there was a strong likelihood that the residence would be attacked, but with all of the armor plating on the windows in this really safe haven that we had, we should have some means of protecting ourselves. So we had a shotgun and we had an Uzi (Israeli made

sub- machine gun). We also had a couple of handguns. Later, they gave me a night vision device so I could see out at night. This wasn't a sight - it was just something to look through and see things in the dark. The Army security detachment in the apartment building across the street had night vision devices with their weapons, so that, if something happened, they could theoretically cover the grounds of the residence from on top of their apartment building.

Before we get into anything else, another thing I should mention in connection with security is that I have always believed that you manage best by communicating a lot, rather than holding information back. I said this when I talked to the psychiatrist in the Department and to colleagues elsewhere. Obviously, there are some things that you keep in reserve for lots of reasons. However, in a security situation, it seemed to me - and I was supported in this view by those I discussed the matter with - the worst thing that can happen is rumor, uncertainty, and misinformation. So I felt that it was really important to be visible as the Ambassador and to have my DCM and my security people visible. The attitude of Walter Sargent, the Security Officer, was, “We're here to make it possible to do the real work of the Embassy. Security is not the work of the Embassy. The other work is real. This is just a way of making it safe to do the real work.”

We needed to keep in close touch with our American and local staffs. So, whenever anything would happen or whenever we'd get a report of a shooting, I would call a meeting. We would invite the entire Embassy staff to assemble in the little auditorium that we had. I would get up on the stage, usually with Walt Sargent. We would say, “This is what we know. This is what happened. This is what's going on. This is what we're going to do about it. Do you have any questions?” I would say this in Spanish, if it had to be in Spanish, or I would say it in English. There were assassinations every day. One of our Colombian police contacts was the Chief of the Colombian Anti-Narcotics Police, a wonderful man. We knew his wife and children. He was assassinated within days of my arrival in Bogota. We had met him - and then, boom, he was dead. I think that meeting with the staff whenever anything happened was the right way to deal with these kinds

of things. This view was reinforced by the people from MED who came to Bogota. The regional psychologist and the people from MED would come to town. It was interesting to see how people reacted to Dr. Smith, the regional psychologist. He would come in and tell me afterwards, “This place is about ready to blow up from the pressure. It's a good thing that I came.”

You could differentiate between different groups of Americans. We had a big DEA contingent. The DEA people did not want to deal directly with the problem of stress. As a group, they felt that they were going to tough it out, although there were some differences within this group. Dr. Smith would hold stress management meetings and stress seminars. Sometimes, the military people would come. However, the members of the Marine Security Detachment would never come to these sessions. I urged the Gunnery Sargent in command of the Marine detachment to encourage the Marine Guards to attend. He would always say, “No, sir, it's not necessary.” This was typical of the damned, ram rod Marines. Well, that's just not good enough. Dr. Smith would point out that people had diarrhea, people had colds, and people had other problems. He said, “Those are all caused by stress.” He would walk us through it and talk us through it. He would say to me, “Could you come to the first session but not to the second session? I'd like to have a session when you're not there.” He thought that people would say more if I were not present. He would say, “But it's important for you to be at the first session because people want to know that it's okay to come and that you want them to come.” We did a lot of that. It took a lot of time but it was part of the management job.

I'd like to add a quick, personal anecdote. I had been in Bogota about a year. All of a sudden I began to become a little concerned. I played a lot of tennis and golf. One day I realized that I couldn't move my left arm more than a few inches away from my side. It was getting very stiff. The regional medical officer, not the psychiatrist, came for a visit. This was about October, 1986, I guess. He was concerned that it might be a symptom of heart trouble - the involvement of my left arm and pain in the arm. He said, “Maybe this stress is getting to you and it's affecting your heart. I'd like to have you checked out.” So I went

and saw a local doctor, and the EKG (Electrocardiogram) seemed to be okay. Then our daughter came down to Bogota for Christmas, 1986.

We went off on a sailing vacation. We'd chartered a boat to sail ourselves in St. Lucia in the Windward Islands in the Lesser Antilles. I had literally not been able to move my left arm. Our daughter, my wife, and everybody else saw this. One day we were out sailing. My wife Vivian, who was at one end of the boat, looked down at me and said, “What are you doing?” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “Look at yourself.” I was hanging from the shrouds of this boat with both arms. My left arm was completely over my head. I'd been away from Bogota for about five days, and the stiffness in my left arm had gone. I checked this later, and it turned out to be totally a result of stress.

Q: One of the things I'd like to ask. I'm going to come back to you and how you conducted your business. But let's talk about the effect of these conditions on the way you worked. Political Officers go out and meet people. Economic Officers pay calls on government ministries. Consular Officers have their own things which they have to do. Many of these things involve getting away from the Embassy. How did all of these Embassy staff members do their job?

GILLESPIE: They did not take taxis. They did not drive their own cars. They were always driven in an Embassy vehicle to official appointments. They were enjoined by Walter Sargent and his security team to avoid doing anything on a routine, recurring basis. There was a judgment made in distinguishing between the level of threat. The status of the Ambassador as a figurehead or symbol of the United States was very important. On the political and the criminal front it was the U.S. Ambassador who was the target first. Really, the DCM, as the number two person in the Embassy, was dramatically less vulnerable. He had a security detail, so he was covered. When I left Bogota and he was Charge d'Affaires, in effect he went into my security envelope. By the way, that envelope was interesting, because we used to make dummy runs. We had people who would dress up

and sit in the back seat and pretend to be me and my wife, going to functions of one kind or another. We would send two cars out. There were a lot of things done.

In any event the other officers and employees at the post had to do their business, just as I had to do mine. They were given a level of security which the security experts and all of us believed was commensurate with the threat to them. So they would go out on their normal business. They were urged not to congregate socially. Walter Sargent was remarkable. We had no minor dependents at post, so we had a group of older officers whose children were grown. We had officers who were on separate maintenance from their families who stayed in the U.S. And we had a large number of relatively young or junior officers who were either married and had just their spouse at post and no kids - or were not married at all.

All of them needed to do things, on the weekends and in the evenings. Walt Sargent was superb in handling this situation. He worked tremendously hard to gain the confidence of everyone. Then, to prove that he merited their confidence, he dealt with everybody's situation realistically. So if a group of young officers said, “Look, we want to go camping up in the hills.” This was possible. They would say, “Here's where we want to go.” Walt would say, “Come to me, not the day before you want to go, but come to me two, three, or four weeks ahead of time. Then, tell me where you want to go, and I'll find out what the situation is there. I'll keep you apprized right until the last minute. If there's any reason why you shouldn't go, you'll know it. However, if you can go, go ahead.” Sometimes, he'd send a security team with them. Often, he wouldn't do that, because he knew that they didn't want a security team. He would make sure at the last minute that the Colombian cops and other people he trusted knew that Embassy officers were going to a given place. He was superb.

Regarding business meetings, we'd go to lunch with Embassy contacts. I'd invite somebody to lunch, and a Political Officer would take a contact to lunch or go to the Foreign Ministry. It's surprising to realize this, but most such events are not arranged with

a tremendously long lead time. Usually, they were scheduled a day or two - maybe a week - in advance. The more formal such a meeting was, the more security would be attached to it. So this is the way we functioned. It was not easy, but we all managed to work through it.

I guess that there were two, particularly telling incidents. I arrived in Bogota at the end of August, 1985. Mike Skol, the DCM, had arrived earlier. We can go into more detail on these incidents, because they are fascinating. Two, particularly horrendous things occurred in November, 1985, in Colombia.

In the first week of November 1985 a group later identified as guerrillas from the M-19 Group (April 19th Movement) took over the Palace of Justice in Bogota. We later learned that they were operating at the direction of, and certainly with the encouragement of, Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel. As a result, about 120 people were killed - mainly innocent bystanders. Some or nearly all of the guerrillas were also killed. That was a trauma that hit Colombia dramatically. It had political, criminal, legal, and law enforcement overtones. The Colombian military reacted, and we got very much involved, because of the terrorist nature of the event. My contacts with the President and his team of advisers were not suited to crisis management.

A week later, because this sort of set up the situation which developed on the narcotics and criminal side, there occurred what in Colombia is called the Armero disaster. The volcano, Nevado del Ruiz, in central Colombia, a few hundred miles from Bogota, erupted. There was a tremendous mud eruption at about 18,000 feet above sea level, and mud slid down to the bottom of the adjoining valley of the Magdalena River. Armero was the name of the town built right in the middle of the plain below the volcano. The mud slide wiped out the town, killing about 23,000 people. That was a week after the Palace of Justice incident. That led to a major, international response, and we were in the middle of that. That was in 1985.

In 1986 Colombia was involved in elections. There was a March election for Congress and a May election for the presidency. In May a new President, Virgilio Barco, was elected, who was to take office in August, 1986. In June, 1986 - after the presidential election but before the new President was inaugurated - there was a major assassination attempt against the Minister of the Interior, who was driving along a road not too far from the American Embassy Chancery building. According to our intelligence people, it turned out that, although the Minister was not himself killed, two of his security people were. This was really an effort to kill the U.S. Ambassador. The Minister of the Interior rode in a car very similar to mine. Somehow, the terrorists had seen us using that road two or three times and thought that we would use it again. So, when his motorcade came down that way, the terrorists hit it. My intelligence and security people said that they were pretty sure that the terrorists thought that they were going to kill the American Ambassador when they did that. So that sort of tightened everything up. When this incident occurred, we reviewed all of our arrangements.

I mentioned that our daughter came down to Bogota for Christmas, 1986. She was there for a week. She had been studying at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). She had begun to race bicycles. Colombians are crazy about bicycle racing. They love it. It turned out that the chief Colombian security official at the Embassy, Major Reyes, was himself a real bicycle racer, though he was 50 years old at this time. In his view he continued to be a bicyclist. Our daughter wanted to go and look at bicycle equipment, so she went out with Major Reyes in a car, two or three times, just the two of them. There were no other security people with them, because he was a security official himself. So our daughter stayed in Bogota through Christmas. The day after Christmas, as I mentioned before, we got on a plane and flew up to St. Lucia, got a boat, and went sailing. She went back to California.

We did not go back to Colombia right away. We went to Washington, where we spent much of the month of January, 1987. We returned to Bogota in February, 1987. In early

March, 1987, an agent of the FBI of Colombia, the equivalent of our CIA, shot and killed three members of the M-19 group, whom they had been tailing for some time in Bogota. It appeared as if these M-19 members had discovered that they were being tailed and were either going to try to get away or attack the people who were following them - I'm not sure which. The Colombian police shot and killed these three people, a woman and two men. In the heel of the shoe of one of the men were some documents. One of those documents included a report on the surveillance of our daughter, Kristin, in December, 1986. This was now March, 1987. A paragraph in this report contained some conclusions which were quite explicit. It said, “Since the U.S. Ambassador and his wife are so well protected, we are not sure how successful an effort to kidnap or kill them will be. However, the Ambassador's daughter travels with only one security person. She is much more accessible, and probably we should concentrate our efforts on her.” Well, they were concluding that she would be around more or less indefinitely.

You can imagine how chilling that was when the CIA Chief of Station brought me that document. He said, “I think that you had better look at this. This is the situation.” That really drove home the fact that this situation was real and that things were happening out there. That report caused us all to heighten our security and to be concerned about it. I still get kind of chilly when I think about this. It caused us to become, not paranoid, but certainly concerned. I didn't tell our daughter about this until well after we had left Colombia. However, just a few months later, after seeing this - I guess that it was during the spring of 1987 in Los Angeles, where she was living with a roommate in an apartment at UCLA - she said that she was a little concerned about a prowler near her apartment. I didn't hesitate. I told Walt Sargent, the Security Officer in the Embassy in Bogota, “Listen, our daughter Kristin just called and said that there was a prowler who's been hanging around her apartment.” He said, “Don't worry about this.” He called State Department security, and they called their office in Los Angeles which got in touch with the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) and the FBI. They went out and talked to Kristin. They took all of this very seriously, because there were Colombian connections in Los Angeles.

There were other incidents later that year. For example, in 1987 we learned of a meeting of the narcotics traffickers with representatives of the three or four guerrilla groups in Colombia. There was some discussion of how much they wanted to kill the American Ambassador and the head of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) office in the Embassy in Bogota. They were talking about spending millions of dollars to do this. They talked about being ready to pay that much money. But nothing drove it home so much as seeing this reference, in cold print, to killing or kidnaping our daughter. This was totally unrelated to anything else. This was not an intelligencreport. For me this implied threat characterized what all of us were facing in Bogota.

I've dwelt on the security aspects of living in Bogota for some time now, but this occupied everybody's attention at the time, from the most junior Foreign Service Officer to the Colombian employees of the Embassy. In other words, all of us. It was a very real threat.

Q: We've talked about the security aspect, but other things may come up. Some of the subjects which, it occurs to me, we should cover are: 1) this terrible incident of the mud slide following the eruption of the volcano; 2) the attack on the Palace of Justice and how we responded to that. Some of the other questions might include your view of the political situation in Colombia, your assessment of it and of the Colombian leadership, and how they worked. This might also include the whole, legal system. Also, could you discuss the minor, little problem of dealing with drugs? (Laughter) You might discuss what we were trying to do and how we were trying to do it. Could you discuss the American business community and promoting American trade, because life goes on. Also, any problems involved in dealing with Colombia on the international scene, particularly on Central American issues. Furthermore, your relations with the front office of the ARA Bureau, as things got much more political in the United States. Perhaps also, your comments on Colombian relations with Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador, and so forth.

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Q: Today is October 28, 1996. Tony, where do you want to start?

GILLESPIE: Having dealt with the security aspects of the situation, let me try to set the scene when I arrived in Bogota in August, 1985. As I mentioned before, the President of Colombia was Belisario Betancur. He had been elected in 1982 for a four-year term. Colombian Presidents cannot be re-elected.

Belisario Betancur was an interesting man. There are two large parties in Colombia: the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, in the classic liberal sense. Conservative in this case means pro-Catholic Church, with the role of the state somewhat circumscribed. It was mainly the party of some of the more established oligarches, although that may have changed more recently. There are oligarches everywhere, now. The Liberal Party is somewhat anti-clerical or, certainly, not as strongly clerical as the Conservative Party. It regards the role of the state as helping to manage the affairs of the nation. During the past 50 years or so, the Liberals have been, by far, the largest party. They have the greatest number of members. In Colombia political party membership is a family affair. You are born a Liberal and you die a Liberal. It's like being born into the Catholic faith and remaining in it, no matter what your own thoughts might be.

That circumstance had begun to change. In 1982 Belisario Betancur somewhat surprised people. Against all expectations, he was elected President. It had been the traditional view in Colombia that, if the Liberals stuck together, the Conservatives never really had a chance to win the presidential elections. The country had been under constitutional law since the 1880s. When I was in Colombia, the country was about to celebrate its constitutional centennial. Colombia achieved its independence from Spain in 1810 - during the whole rash of independence movements in Latin America which sought independence from Spain.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s Colombia had gone through what was known as La Violencia (The period of violence), which was, in effect, a political, civil war during which

the Conservatives and Liberals did atrocious things to each other, each trying to get rid of the other physically. Then there had been a period of military dictatorship under General Rojas Pinilla. In response to this dictatorship the civilian political party leaders went to other figures in the Colombian military establishment and asked them to take over the country, but “just for a time.” I'm abbreviating this whole process, but out of that emerged what was called the National Front Government, a scheme by which the Liberal and Conservative Parties agreed first to alternate and then to share power after a certain period.

Belisario Betancur had a bipartisan cabinet. He had both Conservative and Liberal ministers in his cabinet. I think I mentioned before that President Betancur considered himself capable of involving himself in the Central American situation. That was his foray into the international limelight. Other than that, Colombian foreign policy had basically concerned itself with border problems with Venezuela, involving longstanding issues where Colombian and Venezuelan territory seems to intersect in the Guajira Peninsula and in the Gulf of Maracaibo. Colombia fancied itself as being somewhat internationalist in its outlook. It had always tried to be visibly active in the United Nations since World War II. Colombia was a founding member of the OAS (Organization of American States). Colombia had an internationalist tradition, but this was not accompanied by a particularly coherent foreign policy as such.

In any event, in 1984 the Colombian Government was faced with the first indications that the drug traffickers were really on the rise. Colombia had been the source of much of the marijuana that was coming into the U.S. and going to Europe. It was part of the international market for marijuana. Growing conditions for marijuana in Colombia are about right. The areas where marijuana was grown weren't really under anybody's control, so it was easy to plant and harvest it. The ports were open for its export by sea or by plane. The drug situation in Colombia, I think that you could say, was evolving or deteriorating,

depending on your point of view. In roughly 1983 or 1984 Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel began to appear on the scene and became visible.

In 1984 President Betancur agreed to the extradition of Colombian citizens to the United States to stand trial for narcotics offenses. This created a tremendous, negative reaction in Medellin from Escobar and those around him and led to a wave of violence. The Colombian Minister of Justice was assassinated. There were all kinds of problems which I have mentioned in connection with the security situation in Bogota. I think I mentioned that a bomb was exploded near the American Embassy in 1984. Threats were made against the American School, which had all of the consequences that we've described. This really set Colombia on edge.

In 1985 the situation continued to deteriorate. I arrived in Bogota in August, 1985, and spent the month of September getting my feet on the ground and learning a little bit about the lay of the land.

Then, as I mentioned before, in early November, 1985, the first major development occurred. We learned that some group attacked, apparently took over, and occupied the Palace of Justice in downtown Bogota. The Palace of Justice is the site of the Colombian Supreme Court. It is a large building, facing on a large courtyard perhaps two blocks across or 500 meters wide, of open space. At the other end of this open space is the Presidential Palace. The Presidential Palace is called the Casa Narino. An unknown number of people were reportedly being held hostage in the Palace of Justice. Among the hostages were several members of the Colombian Supreme Court. Initially, it wasn't clear who was doing this or why it was being done. As the facts began to emerge, the group occupying the Palace of Justice appeared to be one of the four most active, revolutionary groups, the M-19 Movement, which we mentioned previously.

Q: Is this the same group that had taken our Ambassador, DiegAsencio, prisoner?

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Remember, this was the mid-1980s. The term, “hostage situation,” was then very current. In this case it meant the takeover of a Colombian Government building by armed people. There was shooting going on. Nobody knew exactly what was happening. However, this was a true crisis.Under those circumstances, of course, the U.S. had a very definite, policy position of its own on terrorism, kidnaping, and hostage situations. So we reported this situation to Washington. The Department asked us to stay on top of the developing situation. I was authorized to offer the Colombian Government any assistance that they might need, obviously within reason, to help to deal with the situation. We wanted to know how the Colombian Government was going to handle it, what they were going to do, and then see how we could help them.

I asked for an appointment with President Betancur, who had received me rather well when I presented my credentials. I had met him here in the U.S. several months previously before my departure for Colombia. I met with him and offered him any facilities that we could provide. On instructions, I offered in particular communications or other technical equipment - not armed troops or anything like that, although I did say that we could make available experts in both terrorism and hostage situations - should he desire such help. We were in contact with SOUTHCOM, the Southern Command of the U.S. Army in Panama, which had some people in its headquarters who were quite adept or supposed to be adept at dealing with situations of this kind or training to deal with them.We entered into a dialogue with the President, which I handled directly. We also dealt with his chief of staff, who was acting as the day to day crisis manager. This was a very nasty situation. Demands and threats were made by the M-19 terrorists within the Palace of Justice. Reports came out that, first, this or that Justice of the Supreme Court had been killed, that another Justice had been shot, and that terrible things were happening. The upshot was that over 100 people lost their lives during the takeover and continuing occupation of the Palace of Justice. This covered a period of three or four days, if I remember correctly. I

haven't gone back to look at the files, but it was an extended occupation. It was finally ended when the Colombian military attacked the Palace of Justice through the roofs, the front door, and any available openings in the building. They even used tanks. As I said, over 100 people lost their lives.

It was pretty clear, from communications that were coming out during the takeover and during the crisis and occupation of the Palace of Justice itself that whoever was in the building was, indeed, executing people. This was in a country that was already known for its violence. This seemed to be a further affront to any standards of decency that you could think of. Colombian public sentiment was very strong about this.

In any event the crisis was eventually resolved. As I said, we offered to provide, and we may have provided, if I remember correctly, some kinds of technical devices. However, my recollection is that they were never used.

Q: It was a very short time.

GILLESPIE: It was a relatively short time. The Colombian Government felt that they could deal with it. This incident indicated, though, this very traditional gap between the civilian and the military leadership. The Colombian military's position was, “Look, this is our problem. Turn it over to us, and we'll deal with it. Don't even watch.” In this instance President Belisario Betancur and the civilian, political leadership were saying, “Wait a minute, the world's eyes are on us. This situation can't be dealt with by the unrestrained use of force.” All kinds of stories were coming out - almost hourly, in fact - about who was in charge, who was going to do what, and was the Minister of Defense or the President making decisions about what was to be done. #It reflected a very serious disconnect, if you will, between the civilian political leadership and the military. It also reflected badly on the Colombian Government's ability to manage a crisis which in fact had Colombia very much in the headlines around the world. One could see this very clearly.

In any event, the military stormed the Palace of Justice and brought this incident to a close. While the country was still reeling from this shock, a few days later the terrible natural disaster which I have already mentioned took place in the next valley to the West from Bogota. Overlooking that valley, there is a volcano called the Nevado del Ruiz, a snow-covered mountain, as its name suggests. It erupted and caused major mud slides, without much warning. The eruption sent hundreds of thousands of tons of mud down its flanks to the Magdalena River valley below it. The mud slides went right through a town called Armero, which had been built in the delta area below this volcano. This was a town with a population of some 24,000, 23,000 of whom were killed.

The reaction in Colombia to this natural disaster was interesting. There was almost an unwillingness to believe that it had happened and that its dimensions were as great as they seemed. The Colombian Government fell back into a stance that we'd seen over a number of years. Government officials said, “We don't need a lot of help. We can deal with this.” Then the dimensions of the disaster became evident, and that attitude changed. The disaster elicited a tremendous outpouring of offers of assistance and concrete aid from all over the world - from Europe, North America, and Asia.

We were then very much in the thick of that. This disaster took place in an area that is not easily reached by road from Bogota, which is the main entry area into the country, or Barranquilla, the main port on the coast. It turned out that there was a military air base at Palanquero, not too far from the site of the disaster. I must say that the U.S. military really showed its capacity for getting into this area and helping to organize parts of the rescue effort.

We were by no means alone in providing assistance. Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, and all of the neighboring countries in the region sent transport aircraft, field hospitals, and military units to help with the organization of the relief effort. They sent various kinds of rescue units. The U.S. sent in a large number of helicopters. Due to the way the system evolved and partly with our help, we were able to bring a complete air traffic

control into the region where this tragedy had happened. The Colombian Air Force, with its base at Palanquero near the site of the disaster, did not have the capacity to control the substantial air traffic bringing help. So I got to see a lot of this, first hand, through the eyes of our officers who were down there and who were keeping me informed about it. Supplies were coming in to take care of the survivors, of whom there were several thousand from the region. I forget the exact number of people affected by this disaster, but it was at least 50,000 or so, about twice the number of those who died.

In any event planes would come in to Bogota International Airport. Then the supplies would be transferred, usually from commercial aircraft, to C-130s, which could fly in to Palanquero. Then they had to be transported, usually by helicopter, out to where they were needed. We had sent several helicopter units from Panama, and the British had sent helicopters from Belize. It was quite an international effort, which went on at least for a couple of months after the event.

Q: Tony, I'd like to ask you something. I've been involved in two, significant earthquakes - one in Yugoslavia and one in Italy. Could you talk about your role as the Ambassador in the context of such a disaster? There was a horrendous, security problem in Columbia, and, all of a sudden, there was a major, natural disaster. What went through your mind and how did you approach this? How did you organize the Embassy to do it?

GILLESPIE: Well, as it may be somewhat evident now, since I joined the Foreign Service, I had been in, near, or around a lot of different, crisis situations. I guess that I had picked up a lot of ideas from watching others. I learned a lot from the evacuation of dependents for political or terrorism reasons and from dealing with kidnaping or other, major problems. I think that I learned a lot from what the Foreign Service had to offer. I had talked to people about these kinds of things.

The first thing that I did was to try to get some information. In other words, take stock of the situation. An Embassy is a gold mine of information, if the people are doing their

job. So, to bring it down to the micro level, the first thing was to get the Defense Attache, the Central intelligencAgency representative, the chiefs of the Political, Economic, and Consular Sections of the Embassy all together and say, “All right let's try to work out, if we can, the dimensions of this problem.” As I mentioned, in Bogota we had a special AID office, called the Advanced Developing Country Office, with a very savvy, experienced, and entrepreneurial AID professional. He was the only American AID employee in that office. He knew which buttons to push. The Defense Attache and our Military Group commander had their connections. They knew whom to talk to. The first thing to do is to try to define the situation, including what has happened, what are the likely requirements going to be, and what is the country's capacity for dealing with this problem. The situation was developing very quickly, of course.

We were in touch with the President of Colombia and the people around him. They were setting up a crisis management organization of their own which, in terms of numbers of people involved, went far beyond and was more open than what had been done in the case of the occupation by terrorists of the Palace of Justice. Then we asked the Colombians what we could do that would help the most. In doing this you learn that you have to advise, counsel, educate, instruct, and, sometimes, fend off people in Washington who think that they know exactly what is required.

There is a lot of potential help available in Washington in connection with a situation like this, and a lot of people who are willing to help. However, their knowledge of what's going on isn't complete, so they sort of fall back on formulas. This is true not only in Washington, DC, but is also true in Paris, London, Tokyo, and everywhere. We had people, not only in the U.S. but in Europe, who said, “These people have been devastated. They're without their homes and they're going to need clothing.” Within a short period of time we learned that some of these people were providing ski parkas, blankets, warm clothing, and those kinds of things for an area where, I think, the mean, low temperature is probably 70 degrees Fahrenheit, with the highs up in the 90s.

What that means is that I think that it is incumbent on the field element, in this case the Embassy, the Ambassador, and his staff, quickly to make sure that the folks in Washington have a sense of the situation. And we did this. We said, “Here's an inventory or catalogue - maybe incomplete, but here's what we know the local authorities have to deal with something like this. Here's what the food supply situation might look like. This looks like what the requirements will be.” Fortunately, we had some very quick responses. The Air Section chief of our Military Group in Colombia, Lt Col David Mason, had been a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force. David had grown up in Chile and spoke fluent Spanish. David had wonderful connections, both in the Colombian Air Force and Ministry of Defense, as well as in our own military establishment. He was very quickly able to get some quick reaction resources down to us. We had some helicopters very rapidly. They flew down - it was not easy to make the long, overland flight from Panama to Colombia. They had to make sure that they could get fuel on the way. The pilots hadn't flown to this destination before, and they weren't sure of the route. However, they did it. We were able to make quick surveys and go out and look at the situation to find out what was going on. Lt Col Dave Mason went out in a Colombian Air Force aircraft and looked at the area. He came back to Bogota and said, “Okay, this is the lay of the land.” Other people, particularly the AID representative in Bogota, were finding out what stocks of supplies were on hand, what would be taken care of by local donations, what wouldn't be, and what was going to be hard to get.

Through the combined efforts of Washington agencies and of our own Embassy, we were able to established some priorities. In this connection the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the Agency for International Development was of material assistance. I think that it still exists, more or less by that same name. They have a cadre of professionals in this area. All they do is handle disaster relief, dealing with crises around the world - natural, man-made, or whatever. They have money available and know where resources are, even if they don't have them on hand. They have experience. They said, “Look out for problems of shelter. One of the worst things that happens in a situation like this is

that people tend to worry about food, medicine, and all of these other, terribly important things. But people often forget that there is no place for the people most affected to lay their heads at night."

It turned out that in Panama there were reserve stocks of tenting materials, tarpaulins, and the kinds of things you need which can very quickly be turned into shelter. These materials were "palletized" - they were all packed, ready to be loaded on aircraft, and sent to where they were needed. So, within a really short time, we were able to get that kind of material into Colombia and turn it over to this developing, transportation chain and start getting it out to where the victims of the disaster were.

Q: A practical question, because I ran across this problem in another place. Who put up the tents? This is a fairly complicated operation. You don't just dump a tent on the ground.

GILLESPIE: We had a lot of U.S. troops who came down with these relief supplies. I don't remember their exact number. They instructed the local people. This was very basic shelter. These were not formal tents. I think that they found that setting up the really complicated, military tent is not the easiest thing to do. What you do first is you just get plastic, tarpaulins, and those kinds of things out at the scene. I think that within a day or two there was the beginnings of a tent city, a community. We did not try to insert ourselves into this different sort of cultural situation and tell people how it ought to be done, and all of that. We just provided the materials and worked with them to make sure that these shelters were set up and used properly. They needed everything from water purification on. You can imagine what it was.

It took quite an effort. You asked what we did. We set up an Armero Disaster Task Force within the Embassy itself. People started to come in from all over. A foreign disaster expert was assigned to the AID office in the Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica. He was on a plane to Bogota within 12 hours. So he joined my staff and became part of the team and one of the leaders of the Armero Disaster Task Force. He knew what was going on. He

had dealt with earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. Imagine the things that he had worked with! So he knew what to do and had a very good sense of how to do things.

Of course, our government is bureaucratic. There are limitations on authority. The Ambassador can do a lot, but he doesn't have unlimited authority and certainly doesn't have unlimited funds. He has to find the funds or make sure that somebody is looking for them. That's where the experts come into play. We went on what was basically a 24- hour operation basis because so many things were happening, in different time zones. We were getting inquiries from our own Embassies in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere as to what could be done or not done. It was very important to get going.

An immediate rescue effort got under way. That was what took up the headlines and dominated the photo coverage of the disaster - TV and still photographs of babies being pulled out of the mud, some of them alive and others being dug for but not found alive. Real, human tragedies were taking place. We were trying to be as helpful as we could. There, again, we had helicopters, lighting systems, and other facilities that we could make available, together with the people to operate them.

Interestingly enough, the Nevado de Ruiz truly was a volcano. Prior to the actual eruption and the mud flow, which followed a real, volcanic eruption from within, there had been a lot of smoke and volcanic ash which had been visible for quite some time. That was and still is a volcano which, from time to time, gives off plumes of smoke. We found out that at the Colombian Air Force base at Palanquero there was a layer of fine, volcanic ash over the whole airport. That meant that there was a risk to the aircraft, coming and going, because this ash was like pumice or emery-like material. When this material was stirred up and blown against aircraft, either against the propellers or into the engine intakes, it actually was like sandpaper or whatever you want to call it. It was causing damage, and that began to affect helicopter operations very soon. It was necessary to do special cleaning of the aircraft and to make sure that those things were taken care of, or the problems would have been compounded.

This was a major rescue effort. There were many thousands of people affected by the volcanic eruption, and there were many thousands of people who were trying to help deal with it. I thought that our job should be to be as helpful as we could and to make sure that we were doing everything possible - and not worsening the problem by any of our actions. We didn't want to complicate the matter. In all of this, as you can imagine, people's sensitivities were sometimes affected. There were some people who said, “Well, in effect, you are saying that you can do this better than anybody else.” I found it useful to stay in close contact, not only with the Colombian Government, but with the representatives of other governments which were helping. I tried to make sure that we were coordinating with them as well as we could. Our military people seemed to be very adept at this. They were able to deal with the British, the French, and the Germans, as well as with the representatives of the other Latin Americans who were providing help. They did this in a fairly short time, but not necessarily on a smaller scale than the Berlin Airlift of 1948-1950. There were planes coming and going, a mixture of civilian and military aircraft.

At one point, if I remember correctly, in an area certainly no larger than Arlington County in northern Virginia, we had air traffic controllers who were trying to keep some 40 to 60 helicopters from colliding with each other. All of this was in addition to the governmental efforts. You have mentioned business companies in Colombia which were trying to help. Occidental Petroleum Company, the Exxon Minerals Company, Texaco, Shell Oil Company, and other big, multinational companies were all operating, not in the immediate area of the volcanic eruption, but not too far from it. They were involved in oil exploration and extraction and mining. These companies also had helicopters available. They were some of the first helicopters on the scene, because they happened to be right there. So, in addition to government aircraft which were operating, there were private aircraft operating as well. These had to be coordinated and controlled, or they might have crashed into each other, with all kinds of tragic consequences. So there were literally dozens of helicopters moving in the same area, going to rescue someone here, taking people to hospitals there, and delivering medical supplies and food. In large measure the coordination operation

was, to a large extent, a combined Colombian and U.S. effort, involving the U.S. and Colombian Air Forces and the U.S. and Colombian Armies as well.

Then there were the civilian helicopter pilots, many of whom were Colombian, coming in. Occasionally, there were some linguistic problems. Somehow, it all worked out, and we never had a real incident or accident. I guess that that speaks well for people's capacities.

In any event, that operation lasted well into December, 1987, and, ifact, well past Christmas, 1987.

Q: Did you have an officer at the site of the mud slides?

GILLESPIE: Oh, yes.

Q: How did that work? What was his and her role?

GILLESPIE: We had people involved in coordinating our efforts. Initially, I relied on my military personnel, because it was that part of it that we were most deeply involved in. Then, we also had AID disaster experts out there. I felt that, as long as they were alert to potential problem areas and would take the initiative to make sure that we, in Bogota, knew when problems were emerging or were out on the horizon somewhere, the rest of their time ought to be spent in making sure that our aid was being delivered as it should be and that we were doing as good a job as we could.

Obviously, in a situation like this, there are all kinds of opportunities for leakage of relief supplies. Almost within hours of the beginning of our efforts, people were saying that supplies provided to help people were being siphoned off and taken away. There were problems with distribution systems in Colombia. My AID chief, Jim Smith, spent an inordinate amount of time, coordinating with United Nations and other, relief people who were there, to make sure that the right kinds of relief supplies were being requested and were coming in.

I went on the U.S. TV program, Night Line, twice, to discuss hothings were going.

Q: What was Night Line?

GILLESPIE: Ted Koppel's program on ABC in the United States. They did a program live twice from Bogota, to get a sense of it. The reason that I mentioned that is that it elicited tremendous donations of cash. One of our problems or challenges was to make sure that these cash donations got into the relief chain in the right way and were used properly. Of course, in this instance we had nothing better to offer than the services of the American Red Cross. It was quite effective and it worked closely with the Colombian Red Cross and the Swiss-led, International Committee of the Red Cross to channel those cash resources into the overall effort.

Quite frankly, we knew that, at some point, if anything blew up, someone would say, “Well, why didn't you see this coming?” So Jim Smith, the AID chief in the Embassy in Bogota, was watching this situation closely, trying to make sure that this was all going all right. He was not alone - of course, you are never alone in such a situation. Everybody was trying to make sure that this relief effort worked well.Over a space of three or four weeks, I probably went to the scene of the rescue effort in Armero, on average, nearly every other day. This was mainly because we had people coming in from Washington...

Q: I was going to ask about the visitor problem, because sometimes this causes some difficulty. I've been interviewing Charles Freeman, who was Ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War in 1991. He was saying that his real problem is that he was absolutely inundated by visitors, every one of whom wanted to be seen. Many of these visitors weren't particularly helpful.

GILLESPIE: Maybe it was due to a perverse blessing of the security situation in Colombia. However, we did not get a large amount of expressed interest on the part of watchers - for example, members of Congress who wanted to have their pictures taken. There was

some of that, but it occurred much later, after the situation was under control and was being managed properly. My most distinguished visitors included the commanding general of the U.S. Army Southern Command, a four star general, General John Galvin, whom I previously mentioned. After graduating from West Point he had gone to Colombia and spent two years in the Colombian Army Ranger School, first as a student, and then as an instructor. He speaks Spanish very well, and his knowledge of the region is extensive. He was wonderful. You couldn't ask for anything better.

Other major figures that we were in contact with included the Army Chief of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, both of whom were tremendously helpful. I called each of them by phone to make sure that they knew what we needed and how they might help. There was very valuable help from both of them. They never showed any great interest in hopping on a plane and coming down for a visit. GeneraGalvin did visit us because he was a field commander type of guy who knew what needed to be done. He came down to make sure that his troops were being effectively used. He ended up putting hundreds of U.S. military personnel into the region over time, although at any one point the total probably wasn't much more than 150-200 military personnel.

Peter McPherson, was the Administrator of the Agency for International Development. I had dealt with Peter earlier, when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean and Central American operations. Peter is just as solid a citizen as you could ask for. Peter came down to visit us. He wanted to know what we were doing, how well we were doing it, what else we should be doing, and how much more should we be involved. He and I went over to see the President of Colombia. These meetings usually were late at night. They were not social occasions. They were strictly business.

I remember that Peter came back to the Embassy with me after one such meeting with the President of Colombia. He said, “Tony, you put your finger on it. These people, this government, this society is simply not prepared to deal with a crisis like this. It's coming right on top of another crisis that hit them hard. When this is over, let's see whether there

is some way that we can help, not only this government, but governments elsewhere in this region and God knows where else to deal with this kind of problem. Everybody has to do things like this. We're not the best at it." We had an Agency called FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) which has been an on again, off again type of operation. However, Peter felt that there ought to be some way for people to talk to each other and deal with some of these issues in advance. So he was looking at the immediate situation and beyond. He was extremely helpful. If my AID people came to me and said, "We need a little help on this," I could pick up the phone, call Peter, and get a quick and nearly always positive response to whatever it was that I wanted.

Yes, we had visitors. There were a lot of relief people coming in. Eventually, within three weeks or so, this situation became something of a routine. I designated a spouse, in this case our Public Affairs Officer's husband, who was himself a Latin American, to handle the visitors. He had been a professor at American University in Washington, D.C. He is very AmericanizePeruvian. I made him the head of the continuing Armero Task Force, because our AID office was small. The people from outside the region, the people who were in Colombia on TDY (Temporary Duty), stayed on, but their numbers slowly dwindled. After a time we had a number of contractors and others who were helping. Finally, after a while, our relief effort managed itself out of existence.

Going back to your original point, this showed that you need to have information and some sense of what might work under the circumstances. I think that you need to have a "translator" who can take the principles of crisis management or disaster relief, whatever they are, as they are known, on a universal level, and bring them down to the local scene. Such a "translator" might say, "Wait a minute, that's a great idea, but let's look at it from this angle. That's not likely to work here in the same way."

We were able to do that. In a tight security situation nothing broke down. We had volunteers: our Consular, Political, and Economic Officers from the State Department. We had CIA officers and people from the U.S. Department of Defense. When there was a job

to be done, they basically jumped in and did it, asking, “How can we be of help?” There were also the Colombians from the Embassy staff. Remember, this was a Colombian crisis. The Colombian employees of the U.S. Government were first and foremost - right out there, making sure that the various jobs got done and volunteering to do various things, when needed.

As of this point, it was mid-November, 1986. I had been there for all of September and October. In other words, I had been in Bogota for a little more than two months. It was a hell of an introduction to a job! However, in a sense it was extremely useful. You can never say that it was fortuitous. It was a real tragedy. First, it was murder and assassinations on the political front, and then there was a natural disaster.

As time went on, the events at the Palace of Justice began to become clearer, and there were explanations for what had happened. However, we were not quite sure, at least not initially, what the motivations for the takeover of the Palace of Justice were. Over time it seemed to become pretty clear that this action may have had a revolutionary or rebellious content contributed by the M-19 group.

Nevertheless, there seemed to be very strong evidence that Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel, as well as those who were trying to resist any further extradition to the U.S., had their fingers in that pot. We learned almost immediately from people who were inside the Palace of Justice, and who survived this event, that documents concerning certain people, certain crimes, and certain cases had been taken out of the Ministry of Justice archives and destroyed or burned, before a lot of other things happened. Certain Justices of the Colombian Supreme Court, who were known to favor the extradition of Colombians wanted on narcotics charges in the United States, were summarily executed, within a short period of time.

We saw much of this later on. However, as recently as 1996, 10 or 11 years after the fact, the Colombian Government and other, Colombian authorities, are still trying to deal

with the question of how to allocate responsibility and accountability for what happened in connection with the Palace of Justice occupation and the decisions that were taken at that time. In the course of that process you could never be sure of how much revisionism of history was going on. This was a consideration, particularly as we couldn't follow these events too closely, since we never had enough time to do so. We couldn't be sure of how the Colombian military acted and whether Colombian civilians controlled the situation or not - or wanted to do so.

So this incident was never really over. However, it does appear that the Palace of Justice takeover was probably - at least in part and maybe in large part - orchestrated to serve the ends of the narcotics trafficking cartel in Medellin.

The Armero Disaster did not have any such origins. It was a natural disaster. It was managed by the Colombians reasonably well. Certainly, people would give them a C+ or a B rating on their overall performance - maybe even higher, say, a B+. It was a devastating event. In my view the Colombians did well. I didn't see a lot of pettiness or other problems. I saw people trying to help. The administration of President Betancur was winding down, as the country was preparing for presidential elections in the spring of 1986. As Peter McPherson, the Director of AID, had suggested, this combination of events gave us an opportunity to begin to work with President Betancur and to give priority to issues related to the management of crises, whether of political or natural origin. We could also develop close, personal ties with people in the Government of Colombia. Perhaps we could hope to influence government organizational and decision making structures and institutional approaches to these issues. This could be done in a way which, quite frankly, could help us to deal with narcotics trafficking and with what seemed to be a growing incidence of terrorism, both worldwide and hemispheric. We could hope to learn how to deal with matters of that kind.

These two crises might help us better to define how we ought to relate to the Colombian Government, under whatever administration might be in power, regarding these very

sensitive areas. These matters were going to be with us for a while. That is more or less how we came out of these events.

Q: Two questions come to mind. First, during this time, and even later, was there ever concern that Colombia might be taken over by the Colombian military? You have mentioned a tendency by the Colombian military to say, “We'll take over handling these events.”

GILLESPIE: The answer to that is, “No.”

Q: Then you weren't drawing the conclusion that these events showed that this was the first step by the Colombian military to brush aside the civilian government?

GILLESPIE: No. The Colombian military was in an interesting position. First of all, the Colombian military do not vote. They don't go to the polls. Secondly, if the military votes in the Colombian context, it's done very subtly. By that, I mean that it might try to influence political events indirectly.

You may remember that the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship represented an individual military officer's takeover of the government. GeneraRojas basically overstayed his welcome as President. I'm abbreviating this process, but basically it was civilians who went to the Colombian military and said, “Please help us get rid of Rojas Pinilla.” In effect, the Colombian military said, “Okay, we'll do it but we're only going to do it for a little while. You civilians have to bear the responsibility for this.” That worked.

As much as I could, I tried to use the military-civilian test and I tried to get all of the Embassy officers to apply the same test. This involved considering whether what many people considered an aversion by the Colombian military to military rule of the country was real or not. By and large, this thesis seemed to be correct, although there were always some military officers who reportedly might, under certain circumstances, try to use their military authority to take over the civilian government.

However, first of all, the Colombian military had its hands full. There were four separate guerrilla movements going on in the country. A lot of things were happening. The Colombian military wasn't doing a particularly good or effective job of dealing with these guerrilla movements. The civilian leadership wasn't willing to back the Colombian military 100 percent. There were no indications that the military were saying, “Well, in that case, we'll take over until this crisis is dealt with.” As I say, there were a few exceptions, involving a few, middle grade officers, who might have been considering a military takeover.

In a sense, Colombia's military is a very comfortable establishment. They had been living in a state of siege for God knows how long. Basically, what this meant was that there were pay bonuses for all of the professional military. There were very substantial, retirement benefits, as a result of this state of siege. So I always thought that there may have been a view among the Colombian military that having this guerrilla crisis going on was useful to them.

Q: What were the social origins of the Colombian military?

GILLESPIE: First of all, the Colombian military is a self- perpetuating group. A lot of them are traditional members of the military. Many Colombian officers are sons and grandsons of officers. Secondly, they have been subject to Chilean and German influences over the years, so they fancy themselves a professional, military class. They have military academies and they take young men into the military service at a very young age. Then they put them through high school or, perhaps, give them a little more than a high school education, following which they commission them as officers. Over the past 20 or 30 years nearly all of the officers have been given an opportunity for some higher education, particularly those who are deemed to be comers. For example, they may take university courses. They are and have been very much middle class in outlook. They are separated from the rest of society.

During the Colombian government which succeeded the Betancur administration, the Minister of Communications, a brilliant academic figure who is a political scientist more than anything else, set out to try to help the military improve its image in the eyes of Colombian society. Thereby, he sought to give the military the public support for actions which it might need to take in dealing with the various problems of the country. He started a campaign to do that. Prior to that the Colombian military was relatively out of sight, out in the countryside. Often, it was relatively out of mind.

There is corruption in the Colombian military, involving the acquisition or purchase of defense items. It is not rampant. There were, and there continue to be, actions by the Colombian military which violate the basic human rights of a lot of citizens. As the situation continued to deteriorate in the countryside- (end of tape)

Many landowners in the countryside saw their interests being threatened by guerrilla movements. They were able, in effect, to co-opt some of the military - though by no means all, and not necessarily at higher rank levels - to serve their interests, to become enforcers for them, and to drive guerrillas and maybe just peasants off the land. Over the past 10 to 15 years this has been the source of many reports, quite a few of them well substantiated, of human rights violations and atrocities of various kinds. Usually these involved simple killings. Those who carried out these killings didn't necessarily torture people. These were done in the sense of extrajudicial actions to clear land, get rid of trouble makers, and, occasionally, to assassinate leftist political leaders.

Back in the 1970s the Colombian military had consciously been used, to some extent, in an anti-narcotics role, mainly in the eradication of marijuana crops. This involved pulling out marijuana plants by hand. Then it became very evident that some of the Colombian military were being corrupted by the narcotics traffickers. So the military pulled out of this kind of activity and really tried to stay as far away from the narcotics traffic as they could.

You might remember that the Colombian military and Colombia as a country had been closely involved in the international area. There were Colombians who fought in World War II. The Colombians are very proud of their service in Korea in the 1950s. A Colombian battalion went to South Korea which fought alongside U.S. forces. At the office of the Colombian Ministry of Defense there is a large, interior courtyard with a replica of Pork Chop Hill, a well-known battle during the Korean conflict. So the Colombian military are aware and proud of their involvement in Korea.

Many of the officers in the Colombian armed forces are educated and articulate. Many of them are quite honest, although others are not. In our view of Colombia back in the mid- 1980s we were always somewhat ambivalent as to whether we really wanted to encourage the Colombian military to participate in the struggle against the narcotics traffic. The Colombian National Police are very much organized on the model of the Carabineros a semi-militarized police force in Chile. The Chilean Carabineros helped to train and establish the National Police in Colombia early in the 20th century, following the German model.

Early in the 1980s the Colombian National Police had set up a very special anti-narcotics unit, which was called just that - the UEAN, or Special Anti-Narcotics Unit. We referred to it as the SANU, using the English translation of the unit's name. That was composed of a cadre of police who, at the patrolman level, were taken out of their home districts, where they had joined the Police force. They were assigned to areas which grew large amounts of narcotics and were stationed away from their places of origin, so that they would not be under family pressures, either in favor of or opposed to the narcotics traffic. I think that they were only allowed to serve in SANU units for a total of four years. After a year or two they were moved to another area as a matter of policy, in an effort to build some kind of firewall against involvement with the narcotics traffickers.

Like SANU patrolmen, officers in the SANU could not be assigned to areas where they lived. Once patrolmen had been enlisted in the SANU and then left it, they could

never be assigned back to it. There weren't enough officers in the SANU to make it possible to follow the same policy, so they would serve about two years, leave the SANU, and then have a cooling off period of some years before they went back to the Special Anti- Narcotics Unit. More recently, that practice seems to have broken down, but nevertheless that was the way in which the Colombian Government, the police, and the military authorities viewed the threat to their institutions from narcotics trafficking and the corruption that goes along with it.When I arrived in Colombia, the Director of the National Police was considered to be almost a paragon of virtue and a very hard-working man. Nothing has ever happened to darken his reputation, which seems to have held up over the years. Later, however, this Director of the National Police was replaced by an officer whom many people regarded as quite honest. However, we later learned that he may have been involved in some cases of corruption. In the Latin American context, and without taking into consideration the narcotics traffic, Colombia would probably have ranked in the middle area in terms of corruption - neither the worst and certainly not the cleanest. This flows from the way Colombians have carried on their business over the years. What is perceived to be corruption in the Anglo-Saxon world in the northern hemisphere is not always perceived to be corruption in the southern hemisphere. The realization has increasingly begun to dawn on many observers that corruption has a bad effect on society and the economy.

In any event, with narcotics and especially cocaine, added to the marijuana traffic, Colombia's levels of corruption, both public and private, are dramatically up. It's a very sad situation. Interestingly enough, when I was in Colombia, the belief was very strong that the people in and around the Executive Branch of the Colombian Government were, for the most part, quite clean of corruption.

By contrast with the situation in Mexico and certain countries of Latin America, Africa, or Asia, a Colombian President serves for four years and comes into office as part of the educated, political elite of his country. He probably has spent his whole life in politics. He probably has a law, medical, or engineering degree. In Colombia people engaged

in political life are almost all involved in the law. After a Colombian President completes his four year term and leaves office, in most cases he subsequently does not behave or show any of the signs, including big Swiss bank accounts and lots of money, that he has had tremendously successful or large investments or that he has a luxurious life style. He generally moves back to a fairly modest, upper middle class existence. A former Colombian President might have a nice apartment in Bogota. Maybe he has a country estate that's not very big but has a few cows on it. Former Colombian Presidents usually live as elder statesmen in a manner befitting an ex-President, but not in a grand stylThey don't get around to places...

Q: Unlike the situation affecting former Presidents of Mexico.

GILLESPIE: Unlike Mexico, yes. When I was in Mexico, everybody knew that people like former President Echeverria and his successor, President Lopez Portillo, had Swiss, Miami, and New York bank accounts, properties in California and Florida - all of these different things. Their net worth had increased exponentially, while they were reaching the top of the political structure and then moved beyond it. That didn't seem to be the case, and still doesn't seem to be the case, in Colombia.

Up until fairly recently, in the early 1990s, ex-Presidents of Colombia, not always acting collectively but viewed as a group, really constituted a very special, national institution. They were called on by their successors as President to address key issues. They could be called in and talked to, regardless of their party affiliation. This flowed from the idea of the National Front of the 1960s and the idea that they could alternate in power. That institutional character has dramatically diminished and may no longer exist. This may be a function, quite frankly, of longevity, age, and the way events have developed over the years.

However, I know that one of the best pieces of advice that I got when I was leaving for Colombia was from people who knew the country. They said, “Get to know the ex-

Presidents. Meet with them." I forget precisely who told me this, but one of the best introductions you can get is to go and meet with each of the ex-Presidents and ask each of them how he thinks an incoming American Ambassador ought to comport himself and what he thinks the issues of greatest concern are in the bilateral relationship between Colombia and the United States. Also, how does he see the current situation in terms of U.S.-Colombian relations?

I did that religiously. I prepared a set of questions and asked each of the ex-Presidents those same questions. I received dramatically interesting and helpful answers from them. They were quite willing to give me their views and they were thoughtful. I forget now how I got off on this side track.

Q: We were looking at the role of the Colombian military. You moved over from that subject, but, in a way, it's all part and parcel of the same matter. Could we follow through on the war against the narcotics traffic? When were you in Colombia?

GILLESPIE: August, 1985, to September, 1988.

Q: Could you stick to that time and talk about what we did? One comment that the Colombians might make, and I imagine that it was thrown in your face, was more or less, "Yes, here in Colombia we have a narcotics problem, but it's your damned people up in the Colossus of the North who are buying this stuff. Can't you control your own people?"

GILLESPIE: I had talked to past American Ambassadors to Colombia, including Pete Vaky, Diego Asencio, Tom Boyatt, and my immediate predecessor, Lewis Tambs. Ambassador Tambs was President Ronald Reagan's initial appointee to the Embassy in Bogota. He is the American Ambassador who put his finger on the narcotics problem in the firmest possible way. In fact, he didn't miss an opportunity to publicize, in Colombia or in the U.S., the perverse and pervasive nature and the pernicious effects of the whole narcotics traffic. He would say that this was hurting Colombia, could hurt U.S.- Colombian

relations and was certainly killing young people in the United States. He didn't miss an opportunity to get that point across, both publicly and privately.

As you might imagine, that elicited a variety of reactions, one of which was, “Wait just a minute. It is you Americans who provide a market for narcotics.” At this point U.S. was one of the major markets for marijuana and probably THE major market for cocaine. Colombians would say, “If the United States didn't provide this market, we wouldn't have this problem. We'd have a much more manageable problem.” So that debate had been going on for some time when I arrived. I had just come out of the Caribbean area.

One of my nightmare scenarios was to see Colombians or people from the fertile crescent in the Middle East, in Turkey, where opium poppies were being grown, or perhaps from Thailand or Cambodia, where heroin was being produced, being taken over by narcotics traffickers. My nightmare involved seeing some group or somebody deciding that one of the best moves that they could make would be to take over a government in the Caribbean, in the Western Hemisphere, where there are very vulnerable, little governments. Unfortunately, in some instances these small countries are probably very vulnerable. With a little money you can do an awful lot. A government in the Caribbean might be taken over by drug trafficking interests - or be subject to such influence by these interests that these could no longer be considered honest governments. Imagine all of the problems that that would create, not only in terms of the narcotics trade but political problems - how would we deal with these kinds of things internationally?

When I got to Colombia, I certainly didn't have that fear about the Government of Colombia. However, I could see - and it was certainly evident - what was involved in the takeover of the Colombian Palace of Justice by terrorists. Afterwards, the President of the Supreme Court came to me privately and almost secretly to say, “You've got to get my family out of here. You in the United States must help me. I have nowhere else to go.” He brought with him an audio cassette mailed to him by the drug traffickers which included the voices of his wife and daughter, talking on their telephone. The message was implicit,

“You see, we know exactly where your family is. If you do not act in our favor, you will not see your wife and your daughter again. We'll deal with them.” This was quite different from asking him to step back from issues of interest to them or to be neutral where they were concerned. He said that if he did things for the narcotics traffickers, he would receive fantastic amounts of money. He said that if he refused to do this, and tried to be either neutral or negative toward the narcotics traffickers, then they would kill his family.

So he asked us to help him get his family out of the country. We did. We eventually got him out of the country as well. We helped him to get a post in an international organization. That was apparently enough to move him out of the sights of the narcotics traffickers. So he and his family are still alive.

Others with whom we worked closely and who had come to us for help did not survive. One of these people was the chief of the Colombian Special Anti-Narcotics Unit (SANU), an officer whom I had met in Washington in 1985 before I went to Colombia. I met frequently with him and with the chief of our DEA office in the Embassy, which was called at the time, NAU, the Narcotics Assistance Unit. The chief of SANU was assassinated one Sunday on the highway while returning from his country home. I went to his funeral with the President of Colombia and held his widow in my arms to comfort her. We were providing armored cars and other help to people in the police and, in the government, to Ministry of Justice officials, and to the Minister of Justice himself.

While the possibility of Colombia's being taken over by the drug traffickers was certainly not imminent in Colombia, I thought that I saw the possibility of the nightmare scenario, to which I referred previously, taking place in Colombia. When I first thought about it, I had assumed that this scenario might affect a small government in the Caribbean. I could begin to see that this narcotics trafficker group made “ruthless” a real word. They just simply were not willing to stop short of anything. The fictional creations of Tom Clancy and others and the way those traffickers have been portrayed in the movies, while ostensibly exaggerated and overdrawn in some respects, basically were not far off from

the reality we saw in Colombia. These traffickers were men and women who think nothing of exterminating or snuffing out lives, if it seems to serve their purpose.

A class of assassins has developed in Colombia. They are called sicarios (hired assassins) in Spanish. These are kids, often street kids who were basically brought up in small gangs, where they learned how to kill people. They were tested by being given a gun. They would go out and get on a motorcycle, ride up behind somebody, put their gun as near as they could to the back of someone's head or the rear window of the car, and blast away. Or they would do that when the car was stopped at a light. If the car is not armored or does not have some armor plate, that's goodbye to the victim. That's the end of it.

Colombia had democratic institutions and was apparently not under imminent threat of being taken over by the narcotics traffickers. However, you could see the beginnings of such a takeover, if you let yourself think about it, as I did then. I remember talking to my DCM, Mike Skol, about this. I wondered how long the Colombian Government could resist this kind of activity, first on the individual and then on the societal level. One of the big things about Colombia and drugs is the money involved. The narcotics traffic produces tremendous amounts of money.

The Colombian traffickers, the managers of the system, are Colombians first and foremost. I don't think that they would want to live in Davos, Switzerland, or in Miami, Florida. They want to live in Colombia. Their non-business interests are agriculture, raising cattle and horses, and leading a kind of rural, bucolic existence. They want to eat, drink, be merry, watch their kids grow up, provide for their children and grandchildren, and do all of this in Colombia. They would not particularly enjoy having $1.0 billion, or whatever the amount might be, in Swiss bank accounts which they can go and spend in Rome, Madrid, or some other place. They want their money there, in Colombia, so they bring it back and reinvest it in the narcotics system.

They buy land. If land is selling for $100 an acre, they'll buy it for $110 an acre, or $150 an acre. They've always wanted a big house, so they'll go out and hire an architect to design the house out in the countryside. Well, in the mid-1980s, during my time in Colombia, it was very clear, from talking to my contacts, that polite Colombian society was already beginning to worry a little about this. That is, bankers were a little concerned about where some of the money received in their banks was coming from, but not enough to do much about it, because it was boosting their balance sheets. Architects and lawyers were a little different. The lawyers really divided themselves into two, distinct groups. There were lawyers who would work with narcotics traffickers, and there were lawyers and law firms which simply would not do that.

The city of Cali is an interesting case. Cali is a city South of Medellin, in the Cauca River valley. It is heavily oriented toward agriculture but it also has some industry. Unlike a lot of other under developed and Latin American countries, Colombia has several large, population centers. Cali has a population of about 1.0 million. Some of the most modern printing and publishing companies in Colombia are in Cali, not in Bogota, which is the administrative capital and a business center. Medellin is a business center, and so is Barranquilla. There are other, large cities in Colombia.

There were narcotics traffickers and producers who were based in Cali. They formed the Cali cartel. In the mid-1980s one didn't hear very much about the Cali cartel. First of all, the violence level in and around Cali was relatively low. The problem there was terrible behavior, which people attributed to the police, more than anyone else. There were drive by shootings and getting homeless kids off the streets by killing them. There were transvestites and homosexuals in Cali. Every so often it was as if somebody said, “Let's go clean up the town,” and a lot of these people would end up dead - murdered or shot. However, gang warfare, corruption, and clearly drug-related murder were not nearly as evident in Cali as in the other cities of Colombia.

I remember my first trip to Cali. I spoke to the local Chamber of Commerce and met with a lot of its members. I played a round of golf at the Cali Country Club and stayed overnight. I was told, “Look, we're going to keep Cali 'clean.' We're not going to let these drug traffickers into the country club. We're not going to let them become members of our luncheon clubs, our private groups, and so forth. They will not be able to have their children married in the major churches of Cali. We know who they are and we will keep them out.” People I talked to said that, when they put land or houses up for sale, they vetted the people who wanted to buy them. They could tell whether a lawyer was acting on behalf of a narcotics trafficker. They wouldn't sell to that person. This was in the mid-1980s.

Medellin had basically gone over to the narcotics traffickers. Ambassador Tom Boyatt had closed our Consulates in Medellin and Cali. One of the arguments was that it was no longer safe to have U.S. Consulates in Medellin or Cali because the drug traffickers were so strong there. During the three years that I was in Colombia, I made two trips to Medellin but did not spend the night there. It wasn't considered safe. In Medellin there was a large amount of construction of houses and buildings. Cars were being bought and sold all over the place. Television sets were easily available in the stores. There was very little doubt that this was drug money at work. The citizens of Medellin and of the Department of Antioquia around the city were benefitting substantially from the narcotics traffic. They were making lots of money.

This gets back to this idea that people in Colombia were beginning to benefit from the narcotics traffic. Even then, although we talked about this nightmare scenario I mentioned previously, we didn't really think that it was likely to spread and take over the country, because the level of violence was so bad. We thought that, somehow, people would wake up to this situation and resist a narcotics takeover.

Anyhow, Ambassador Tambs had raised this issue dramatically. Before I went to Colombia, we had a Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM) in the State

Department. There was a Colombia task force at the Justice Department. The CIA was very reluctant even to come close to the narcotics traffic. Quite frankly, the FBI preferred to stay away from it. The FBI was much more interested in other forms of crime and international police activities (that is, Interpol), some of which got into the narcotics traffic but not all.

Within the Embassy the group of U.S. Government agency representatives was small and was mainly concerned with the eradication of narcotics crops in Colombia. We were testing Glyphosate out in Colombia's eastern provinces. This product is supposed to be a relatively benign herbicide. We had helped the Special Anti-Narcotics Unit (SANU) of the National Police to construct and occupy a camp in San Jose del Guaviare, a little cow town which is hardly reachable by anything but air, although there are some roads out to it. At a base in the Guaviare area the police had put helicopters supplied by the U.S. Government. You could fly into this base in small, twin-engined aircraft, which we had also provided to the police. I think that the aircraft were Beechcraft C-100s, or something like that.

We would fly out to this base, get into the helicopters, and go out to the area which they had been spraying with Glyphosate, to see how effective it would be to kill the coca plants. The Colombian Government had allowed us to conduct some of these tests out there. Our intention was to try to convince the Colombians that the government ought to engage in eradication of the coca crop on a large scale. However, we didn't seem to have an anti-narcotics strategy. We had an anti-narcotics policy - that is, we were against narcotics. We had an objective, which was to end the narcotics traffic. But we really didn't have a strategy to get us from where we were to where we wanted to be. I remember my DCM, Mike Skol, saying, “The only place there's ever going to be an anti- narcotics strategy is right here on Avenida Septima,” where the Embassy was located. He said, “Tony, if we don't come up with an anti-narcotics strategy, nobody else will. Nobody is really paying close attention to this.” This was in 1985. There would be an occasional story about narcotics, an occasional blurb or flurry of one kind or another - but not a lot more than that.

Ambassador Tambs had been trying to sound the trumpet against drug trafficking in Colombia. However, he had generated a tremendous amount of resentment. Although much of what he said was right, he was probably a prophet ahead of his time.

Q: I assume that he was seen as one of these right wing puritans.

GILLESPIE: He had some other, funny ideas about geopolitics. Some of them were not so funny but a little bit odd ball. He was strongly anti-communist. However, he spoke Spanish very well. He was a very nice, direct, and forceful man. He kept pushing this narcotics button, as I say. Some people listened, but a lot of people didn't. It's interesting that just this year, 1996, editorials have been appearing in Colombian newspapers saying that Tambs was right.

In any event Michael Skol, my DCM, and I sat down and tried to figure out what we could do to deal with drug trafficking. Remember that I had been in the front office of the ARA Bureau with Assistant Secretary Tom Enders, where we had sort of a restricted interagency group to consider various policy issues. We had never used the word, restricted, but we tried to define who were the people with whom we could talk who could do something in the narcotics area. We tried to identify what the strategic choices were. What could we do here? There was a new CIA chief of station in the Embassy in Bogota and a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) chief who had been in Colombia for some time. Those people were very sharp.

We had a very interesting fellow in the Narcotics Assistance Unit in the Embassy. He had been a long time Foreign Service Officer who had been a Political Officer. He took all of this anti-narcotics business tremendously seriously, but I'll be very honest. You could see why he was there and was not the Political Counselor. I don't know what had happened to him in his career. He would have good ideas, but they would never see the light of day. He wouldn't push them. He was a little shy in areas when he shouldn't have been shy and he was bold when he shouldn't have been bold. A good man, though, who worked very hard.

We formed a small, core group, an executive committee, to look at the drug trafficking problem. We decided that what we needed to do, particularly with the change of government facing us in Colombia...

Q: When was the election going to be?

GILLESPIE: In the spring of 1986. So we decided to work with the new government, whoever the President was going to be. We had a pretty good idea who it would be. All of the polls and all of our contacts indicated that the Liberal Party candidate, a man named Virgilio Barco, would be the next President. Our Political Counselor, who was very good at predicting elections, said that the new President was going to be Virgilio Barco. I would have done this in any case but I paid special attention to cultivating Virgilio Barco. He had a degree from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in economics. Interestingly enough, he was at MIT at just about the same time that former Secretary of State George Schultz was there. They were of the same, academic generation. Barco's wife, Caroline, had been born in York, Pennsylvania, and had spent a lot of time in the U.S. I forget now, but either her father or her mother was a U.S. citizen, an American. She also had a Colombian parent and was and had been a Colombian citizen for many years at the time I was in Colombia. Nonetheless, she was very “Americanized.” Barco himself had spent seven years working at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington. He was also quite “Americanized.” His English was quite good. Anyway, I got to know the Barco's very well. I met with Barco both before the election and afterwards. He shared a lot of his polling data with me, including material on the narcotics traffic. He was using modern polling techniques. The Liberal Party in Colombia was part of his campaign operation. They were no strangers to this. Colombian Liberals had a close, working relationship with people in the Democratic Party in the United States. Interestingly enough, they were in touch with Sawyer Miller, a public relations consulting firm. I think that Sawyer Miller was doing some of their polling, or arranging for it to be done - telling them what questions to ask, helping them to refine their message, and doing all of those things.

Barco shared a lot of his data with me and said, “Look, Ambassador, I know the interest which you and your government have in narcotics. I'm worried about that, too. I feel that, in addition to whatever your demand for narcotics is, we face a demand situation and a use and consumption problem here in Colombia. We know all of the other parts of it. Let me show you this data.” He reached over, grabbed some of the papers on his desk, and showed me that, according to his polling data, the Colombian people were not very concerned about the narcotics problem. It didn't show up on the list of their major concerns. Nobody appeared to be concerned about it. It just wasn't an issue. The Colombian people were concerned about their personal security, economic issues, and where they were going in terms of their economic standing. He said, “These are the issues that I have to be concerned about. My priority is to begin to help the process of development in this country and to extend government where it does not now exist. The way I'm going to do that is to build market roads. I'd like to get telephones out to rural communities and spread more widely in urban areas. I'd like to do a lot of these things, which are terribly important, and to maintain our sound economic status and base globally.” He was an economist and thought about these things in those terms.

He said, “I will listen to you and, if elected, will cooperate fully. You can count on Colombia. However, narcotics trafficking will simply not be the highest priority issue in my government, if I am elected.”

So Barco was elected. I went to call on him. I began with narcotics. He said, “I discussed this matter with you before. The situation hasn't changed.” This was May, 1986. He was elected in the first week or so of May, and I went to see him about a week after his election, in his apartment - just the two of us. We spent a couple of hours going over all kinds of issues. Colombia had had, and will continue to have, access to international financial markets. Despite the crash of several Latin American economies in 1982, Colombia never rescheduled its debt and never welched on a payment. The Colombians still had access to the financial markets. They had been negotiating what was called the

jumbo loan for the government. They were going to use its proceeds to smooth out their official debt. He said, “We're going to worry about that and the economic progress of this country. You can count on me,” and he repeated everything that he'd said before.

A week or so later the CIA chief of station came to see me and said, “Ambassador, we've just learned that President Barco intends to appoint as the head of the Colombian equivalent of the FBI, called the Department of Administrative Security (DAS), a colonel from the Army or the Police. We know that this guy is really bad. He is corrupt, he is taking drug traffickers' money, and President Barco intends to appoint him to replace a man named Miguel Masa, who has been an honest, upstanding man. We have worked closely with him. DEA has worked with him,” although the CIA and the DEA groups hated each other, institutionally and really didn't want even to talk to each other. We can go into that later. Anyway, the chief of station said, “Masa is going to be bounced, and that will be bad.” I said, “Okay, what have you got on this new chief of the DAS that you can put in writing? If you can put something down on a piece of paper, I will take it to President Barco and make him aware of this. We'll see if we can influence his decision.”

Well, at that time I had very good access to President-Elect Barco. I could call him on the phone and ask, “Do you mind if I stop by?” He was still operating out of his home. He had not yet been inaugurated. So I went over, and we talked. I showed him the piece of paper that the chief of station had given me. I said, “You can keep it if you wish.” He said, “No, take it back. I see what you mean. This officer is someone whom I have never been very close to, personally, although I know him. He has always been considered a friend of Liberal Party members and of the Liberal Party leadership. He served as an aide to somebody in the past, although I forget who it was. I see what you're saying. I take that as serious.” However, he said, “You people have a problem with Masa.” I said, “No, my understanding is that he is pretty good and could be pretty effective.” He said, “Okay, I'm not sure exactly what I'll do, but I take your point and I will not appoint this man to be the head of the DAS.”

So I went back and thought that we had gotten something done, at least. Anyway, President Barco confirmed Masa in the job as the head of the Colombian DAS. The CIA people later let Masa know that they had saved his job and that I had been instrumental in arranging this...

Q: Which is not good practice.

GILLESPIE: No, but that's what you do when you want to keep someone on your team. Anyhow, later on I saw Masa at some function or another. He made a point of coming up and say, “Ambassador, it's so nice to see you.” Well, I didn't want to be known as anybody's benefactor.

We had decided that the best thing we could do would be to convince President Barco that Colombia needed a national drug strategy of some kind, even if it wasn't initially a high priority matter. If they didn't have a way to deal with the supply and demand for narcotics in their own country, then they would be at the mercy of those who did want to do things in those areas. My objective, as I told Washington, was to try to persuade the new Barco administration in Colombia to devise and implement a national, anti-narcotics strategy, done in a Colombian way. I didn't know whether they should set up a “DEA,” a Drug Enforcement Administration. We had begun this idea of having a drug czar in the White House. William Bennett was the first such drug czar. His focus was domestic. He didn't do much regarding drug trafficking in the international area at all.

This was in May, 1986. In July, 1986, here in Maryland, in the United States, a basketball player at the University of Maryland named Lenny Bias, died of an overdose of cocaine. That hit the newspapers. I'm sure that it's not fair to say that narcotics, cocaine and drugs hadn't been part of the already running U.S. off-year campaign for the Congressional elections of 1986. President Reagan had already been reelected in 1984, but the drug issue didn't figure very large in that campaign. There had been some references to it, but not much.

However, when Lenny Bias died of an overdose of cocaine, and that hit the newspapers. In vulgar terms, that was when the shit really hit the fan on narcotics, and particularly cocaine. Colombia, Peru, and other sources of cocaine attracted a great deal of attention. Every politician became interested in narcotics, and especially Congressman Charley Wrangel (Democrat, New York) and Congressman Ben Gilman (Republican, New York), who were the co-chairmen of the Special Committee on Narcotics of the House of Representatives. They were all over the place. Narcotics had become a major, campaign issue in the United States. It's as if night turned to day or the sun came up.

All of a sudden, everyone was pointing at Bogota, Colombia. Everybody in the State Department was pointing at INM (Bureau of International Narcotics Matters), which was also pointing at Colombia. All of this was beginning to happen. I went over and said to President Virgilio Barco, who was now getting ready to be inaugurated on August 7, 1986, “Mr. President, I think that you should expect that the heat is going to rise here. Things are really going to start to get hot. Maybe, after you're inaugurated, we could talk about this subject and what we're doing to deal with it.”

Q: With his American connections, was he sort of following thsituation in the United States, too?

GILLESPIE: Sure. He was following it but, like so many, he said, “I see what's happening there, but it's your problem. Well, how did we get that stuff? I know that it's a political issue in your country and I can see that it's going to cause lots of problems here, but I don't have the political backing to go hell bent for election on this issue.” It was not a strong negative. He never said, “No, we won't do anything.” He said, “I've got to get this balance right. Here I am, about to be inaugurated. I have to move my program forward. I still think that this is the best program for me to follow. Your program may be important, but it's of less importance.” He said, “I'm not sure how we're going to do this, but I understand what you're saying.”

At that point we had already told Washington what our strategy was - that is, to get the Colombians to deal with the narcotics issue. Washington said, “Go ahead.” We told Washington what we thought our narcotics strategy ought to be, and Washington then instructed us to do what we recommended doing.

So basically the inauguration of President Barco came along, and we had that kind of approach to working with him. Secretary of State George Schultz was the official representative of President Reagan at the inauguration. While he was there, he had his first meeting with President Virgilio Barco. It turned out that they had this common background of having been students at MIT at about the same time. They were of similar ages and could talk about lots of different things - which they did. Schultz mentioned the problem of drugs. President Barco said, “Don't worry. We'll be with you on that. I've told Ambassador Gillespie what my views are. We're not going to ignore drugs but we're going to have to keep this issue in perspective.” At that point Schultz was very realistic about it. In conversation with me he said, “Well, I can understand that. President Barco doesn't think that he has a problem. He thinks that drugs are our problem.” As you know, Secretary Schultz later came out in support of the decriminalization of certain drugs. Even then, I think, he thought that the demand aspect of the problem was important and that it was not just a supply side problem.

Q: He's an economist by training, after all.

GILLESPIE: The strategic approach which we had proposed to the Department had been fully accepted. We were trying to find ways to move that forward and to achieve that objective.

However, the situation didn't look terribly bright as President Barco went into office. We knew that we would get some attention. We knew that the Colombians were already dealing with the drug issue. We were providing some assistance to them, in this field, which was rather substantial, though not overwhelming. Our aid to the Colombians in the

narcotics field amounted to several million dollars. We figured that we would continue with that and try to create the conditions under which the Colombians would make an increased effort in this area.

Just a note on this, and it relates back to the Contadora group and its efforts to bring peace in Central America, President Betancourt had left office without any major movement on the Contadora proposals. If he ever had any hopes of winning the Nobel Peace Prize in connection with the Central American question, and I don't know that he did, those sort of evaporated when he left office in 1986. President Betancourt's Foreign Minister had been Jorge Ramirez Ocampo, a Conservative Party member and a very solid citizen. To replace him as Foreign Minister, President Barco chose Julio Londono, a career diplomat. The Colombians don't really have a lot of career diplomats, though there are some. Not very many of them get to really senior positions. At that particular time Julio Londono was Colombian Ambassador to Panama, where the Contadora group was originally established.

Anyhow, Londono had been as antagonistic toward the United States about Central American issues as you might imagine. I remember that our Ambassador to Panama at the time was Ted Briggs. Ted had been DCM in Bogota, earlier in his career. Ted told me, in reference to Londono, “Tony, you are really getting a turkey as a Foreign Minister. First of all, Julio Londono is not very smart and not even terribly intelligent. He's not very quick, politically. He has a kind of one track mind. He doesn't like the U.S. and he resents the fact that we have never taken this whole Contadora process very seriously. He's been trying to push President Belisario Betancourt and the Colombian line on this matter, but without success.” Ambassador Briggs said, “I wish you luck, but it probably should be only condolences.”

President Barco chose Londono as Foreign Minister, mainly because of the continuing antagonism and contention between Colombia and Venezuela up in the Gulf of Venezuela and on common border problems between the two countries. Like so many things, the

reason he chose Londono turned out to be that Londono was the Colombian Foreign Ministry's expert on boundaries. He had served in the Colombian Army and had also spent time in the field, ultimately reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Colombian Army. His father had been a geographer. Then he had been assigned to the Foreign Ministry because of his own experience in the field of geography regarding boundaries. He had then remained in the Foreign Ministry, basically working on boundary issues for his whole career there. He had been promoted steadily, was sent to Panama as Ambassador, and got involved in the Contadora process. All he wanted to do was to help President Virgilio Barco resolve this border conflict with Venezuela, but in Colombia's favor.

He turned out to be just as Ambassador Ted Briggs had described him. He was not terribly intelligent, not very smart in the sense of having his finger tip feelings work very well for him. He was obnoxious and had a one track mind. He did not like me personally and didn't like the United States very much at all. This led to a very interesting time because President Barco and I had this relatively decent working relationship. Some even thought that it was too close and too friendly. We never did friendly stuff together. We didn't play golf. Barco liked to go and walk on the golf course, but we never did those things together. My wife and his wife talked frequently, partly because of the work that Vivian was doing as a contractor for the Agency for International Development.

I met more frequently with President Barco than I did with Foreign Minister Londono. This practice happens all too frequently in terms of U.S. relationships with Latin American countries. The relationship is with the President. It's a direct relationship on a one to one basis. Sometimes, the Foreign Ministers are included in the meetings between the American Ambassador and the President. It had begun that way with President Belisario Betancourt. I always tried to make sure that Foreign Minister Jorge Ramirez Ocampo took part in my meetings with President Betancourt because I felt that it was not to our advantage to be perceived as having a direct relationship with the President. I had this romantic belief that the day of the American “proconsul” was coming to an end and that it would be necessary to conduct bilateral relations, more or less on a normal basis. That

is, the President would receive and listen to the American Ambassador, because it's important to him to do that, but you really can carry on foreign relations with the Foreign Minister. In my view, that's probably a better way to handle it.

However, we also have our contacts in the Office of the Presidency. We were able to handle problems through national security channels. We had a multiplicity of contacts. A lot of my colleagues in the U.S. Foreign Service thought that I was crazy to think that things could be handled in that way. It isn't always easy, but I had begun to do that with Foreign Minister Ramirez Ocampo and with President Betancourt and the people around him. Betancourt's chief of staff was Victor Ricardo. If I needed to do something, I knew whom to call. If they needed something, I would get a call from a member of his staff. The President would tell one of those guys, “Call Ambassador Gillespie and do this or that.” He would say, “I don't want to call him.” Then he'd save his direct call to me for something else. He played this very smoothly.

Anyway, as it turned out, that process was not going to work with Foreign Minister Londono. We had a very antagonistic relationship. I don't think that I actively contributed to it. He just started out that way, and that's the way it went for the full time that we were there, together. I was told later by people in the Colombian Foreign Ministry that Londono's Vice Foreign Minister, the wife of Fernando Rey, who was an official in the Office of the President, was much closer to President Barco than Foreign Minister Londono was. Fernando told me that Londono's wife had told him that Londono would fulminate because I had responded to a call from President Barco to go and meet privately with him. Londono reportedly said, “Doesn't Ambassador Gillespie know that he's not supposed to do that? He's supposed to come and see me and talk to me first.”

I did what I could to improve things. I said to Fernando Rey, his wife, and others that I would like to develop a good working relationship with Foreign Minister Londono.

Then, as soon as I would get that message across, President Barco's private secretary, a woman who worked at the Casa Narino, the presidential office and residence, would phone my secretary, Sylvester Satcher, and say, “President Barco wonders if Ambassador Gillespie could come over this afternoon at 3:00 PM and meet with him. He didn't say what it's about. Would he make sure to use the garage entrance?” So my security entourage and I would go over to Casa Narino and enter through the garage, thereby avoiding the press. The Casa Narino staff would always have one of President Barco's military aides down in the garage to meet me. Then I would go up the back elevator and meet with President Barco, alone. I would always bring a note-taker unless President Barco asked me to come alone. Barco would never have anybody with him.

After about a year of meetings like this and I felt that it was all right to raise this, I said to Barco, “Don't you think that you should have somebody there from your staff to take notes? I have somebody to help me to remember,” because I didn't want to forget anything. Barco would say, “Oh, no, no, I know that your memory is good. You have your notes. I know what I want to tell you.” Well, that was the way President Barco operated. It was not always the easiest thing in the world to handle. He never really backed off from a position which he took with me. However, I was concerned because his people weren't hearing him say to me the things that he was saying. That was not good.

So then I made a practice of contacting Fernando Rey in the Office of the President and giving him as faithful a rendition as I could of what had been said. Later on, at these meetings, Fernando Rey was accompanied by another and more senior official who had served as a real chief of staff to President Barco. Sometimes, I would phone Fernando Rey and the other official and say, “I just met with President Barco. Here is what we discussed.” I assumed and hoped that, if necessary, they would go and check what I told them with President Barco.

When I would take visitors to the Casa Narino, a Congressman or even an Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary of State or whoever, we would meet with President Barco

in a very formal setting. There was a fireplace and paintings, gold leaf, and all of that. They would have chairs all lined up for the meeting. President Barco would sit here, the American visitor would sit here, I'd sit here, and over here would be the Foreign Minister or a senior Foreign Ministry official, as well as an official of the Office of the Presidency. There would be note-takers. All of those things were handled in accordance with protocol under arrangements made through diplomatic notes.

Then I would get a call to come over and discuss really serious business with President Barco. As I said, I would take a Political Officer with me. I tried to take the most junior people available who would be “serious.” I did not want to take an officer who appeared to be still “wet behind the ears” and have President Barco ask, “Why are you bringing that kid along?” I'd always take somebody and would ask President Barco, “Do you mind if John or Jane comes in and helps me take some notes?” He would say, “No, no. Come right in. That's fine.” He would ask the note-taker, “How are you?” The note taker would sit over on the side, and the two of us would sit there and talk. President Barco would get charts, papers, and maps to show me.

It turned out that President Virgilio Barco had many of both the attributes and failings of President Jimmy Carter. Barco was a micro-manager who got deep into the details of given issues. He knew how to deal in details. However, I think that he got side-tracked on some of these matters. I remember that we got into a long discussion about corruption in the military. On that occasion I didn't have a note taker with me. He said, “You know, we appropriate millions of dollars for uniforms. Let me show you.” And he brought over computer print-outs about this many thousand bolts of camouflage material and that many pairs of boots. He said, “Now, that's all been bought. Here are the delivery records. None of that stuff has been delivered. Where has that money gone?” So I said, “Well, what are you going to do about it?” He said, “I'm going to get these guys. I'm going to figure out how to get these guys.” So what did he do? He arranged that nobody could buy anything unless he approved it in advance. It was just the reverse of what he should have done. He

should have taken a different approach. He said, “I'm going to control this situation.” This meant that the President of Colombia was beginning to deal in this kind of detail.

Well, anyway, that was the kind of man he was. That was the kind of relationship I had with him, within which we were going to try to develop an anti-narcotics strategy. I think that the next time we can go into the transformation of President Virgilio Barco on narcotics.

Q: All right, we'll do that. We've discussed the fact that you didn't get along very well with the Foreign Minister. I would like to put down the usual shopping list that I would like to cover at some point. You'll continue with the drug war and narcotics and President Barco. Then I would like you to talk at some point about whether we had any role in Colombia's border conflicts, the Central American situation, United Nations votes, and so forth. At one point you also mentioned crisis management. The Government of Colombia - and the other countries in the area - didn't seem to be very good at that. You were trying to figure out with the Director of AID, Pete McPherson, what might be done about that, if anything. Also, could you talk about the promotion of American business, consular cases, arrests, coffee, CIA-DEA relations? I can't remember whether it's a Venezuelan or Colombian problem - the flower market.

GILLESPIE: Flowers. That's a Colombian problem, involvincountervailing duties.

Q: Also, could you mention working conditions in the flower markets, if that is pertinent, and whether we were concerned about them. That's quite a shopping list.

GILLESPIE: Yes, it is.

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Q: Today is November 20, 1996. Tony, let's start with the narcoticproblem.

GILLESPIE: I think I may have mentioned but will quickly recapitulate, so it isn't too long, either way. In the 1970s Colombia was tagged as the source of some of the most commercially attractive marijuana in the world. Remember, we used to talk about Colombian gold, and things like that.

Q: I think that somebody even had the name, Colombian gold, trade marked in the United States, ready to be used in case the sale and use of marijuana was decriminalized.

GILLESPIE: right. So Colombian gold, or marijuana, was a very important product. I think that I may have mentioned this in connection with our own narcotics problem, when we were talking about my time in Mexico. What was once the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, BNDD, eventually became DEA, the Drug Enforcement Administration. The overseas operations of our anti-narcotics agency, which once came under the Department of Justice, were very much a center of attention.

In Colombia the 1970s were the era of marijuana. However, during the 1970s and into the 1980s we became aware of this other product called cocaine, or cocaine hydrochloride, a distilled alkaloid, if you will. This product was derived from the leaf of the coca plant, a bush that grows into a tree. The coca leaf is otherwise benign, in the sense that it contains some of the alkaloids, but not a lot of them. Coca leaves have been used for centuries by the native Indians of the region since the time of the Incas, and who knows when prior to that? These Indians have used coca leaves either for medicinal or sacred ritual purposes, which are somewhat interconnected. However, my understanding is that, historically, people used coca leaves to gain strength. These coca leaves help the human organism to sustain some of the pressures of high altitude and hard work if they are chewed, and the juices, in effect, are absorbed into the body. If the leaves are mixed with a soda ash in the mouth, which is the way the indigenous people used it, the result is something of a buzz or a kind of high, though I couldn't tell you what it is.

That was part of the ritual and culture of the Andes mountains area, particularly in southern Colombia, although it's known way up in northern Colombia, on the Caribbean coast. The use of coca leaves for this purpose goes South into the higher elevation areas of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

So in the 1970s it was learned that you could produce a substance known as cocaine, which has been around for a long time as a drug. This, so-called recreational drug originally came to the United States in the 19th century. Some people say, and I guess that it's true, that coca - not cocaine hydrochloride - may indeed have been an ingredient in the early Coca Cola formula.

Q: Yes, and many of the patent medicine drugs had both opium and form of cocaine in them.

GILLESPIE: I'm no chemist and never would pretend to be, but I've learned a lot during my lifetime. What really happened was that in the 1970s groups of Colombians learned that there is or can be a market for cocaine hydrochloride in its commercial form, which is basically a fine, white powder, which was sniffed at this time. I don't know much about the sociology or the chemistry of that, either. In any case, Colombian cocaine came on the market in the U.S.

The commercialization of cocaine was interesting because you had the production of cocaine hydrochloride, through a very rudimentary, chemical process. Coca leaves are collected from bushes and trees, they are soaked in a chemical mixture involving, gasoline, ether, and other chemicals. Then that mass is allowed to ferment, and it is mixed by mainly poor people who stir it with their feet, much as grapes used to be tramped on to get the grape juice out of them. I'm no expert on this, but you eventually draw off a brown, ugly paste. This is then treated further and turned into a nice, white powder. That process takes leaves which, for example, sell for a couple of dollars per hundredweight, as

leaves. The cost of producing the white powder, back in the 1980s, used to be around a few hundred dollars per kilogram (2.2 pounds).

At that point it is fascinating to see the exponential kind of price markup that takes place. It moves from where it is white powder to market through a transportation and distribution chain. At each level the cost goes up astronomically, because that is where you get into what are considered higher risk activities. It is still a low risk activity to grow the coca leaves. It is a relatively low risk operation and a very rudimentary operation to produce cocaine paste. It is still pretty low risk to produce the white powder in what are called laboratories. Those were initially in Colombia, in the jungle. When you get a package of white powder, that is where you have to start moving it - and there is where it starts to become risky. The narcotics traffickers put the product on planes or smuggle it to market in some other way. People who smuggle it charge considerably more than those who produce the white powder.

By the time the kilogram of white powder is ready to leave Colombia or South America and arrive on the shores of the U.S. At that point a kilogram of cocaine has cost the owner about $4,000-5,000 for something that started out being measured in a few hundred dollars, at most, per kilogram. Maybe it isn't worth even that.

Then the cocaine hits the distribution system in a market area, where it is cut or diluted and, in effect, prepared for retail sale. It goes through another increase in price - I think an increase of 15 to 20 times the price, up to $60,000 a kilogram. I think that the prices now are lower. Maybe it is worth $35,000 a kilogram. That's both a markup which reflects what the market will bear and what the traffickers consider their risks to be. The rest is pure profit.

The largest producers of coca leaves, the basic raw materials, are still Peru and Bolivia. In the 1980s we did not consider Colombia to be a major producer of the coca leaves. However, geographically, Colombia has the eastern plains or the llanos orientales in

Spanish. If you look at a map of Colombia, Bogota is more or less in the center of the country. There are three main ridges of the Andes mountains in Colombia, more or less running North to South. There is one ridge close to the Pacific Coast, then a second ridge, and then the third ridge farthest East. From that third ridge of the Andes, against which Bogota nestles, all the way over to the Orinoco River and the Venezuelan border, are what are called the eastern plains. South of that the plains turn into jungle. The plains adjoin the eastern slopes of the third ridge of the Andes Mountains.

In the southern area of the plains you find the airstrips used by the cocaine smugglers and many of the laboratories to which the cocaine paste is flown in from Peru and Bolivia and processed. It was in that area that a lot of the drug processing was going on back in the mid-1980s. The paste would be brought in, processed, and then sold. I would characterize it as drug cultivation, the production of paste, then powder, and then the distribution or trafficking. Colombia was not considered a major cultivation country but was a place where the production of powder went on and where the trafficking started.

The commercial structure which developed in and around this was what eventually became known as the Medellin cartel. There was a similar, trafficking group in Cali, but that was much less important back in the mid-1980s or was presumed to be less important. It probably should not have been considered less important.

In any event, I'm not an expert on the internal functioning of the trafficking networks, but the Medellin cartel consisted of the Ochoa family, people like Pablo Escobar, and a number of other individuals who really came up out of the lower or peasant farmer class in Colombia. These people were not members of the Colombian elite. In my view they were very smart traders and businessmen. They had been used to dealing in cattle or horses and land, as commodities. They brought a lot of business acumen to the narcotics trafficking business. They had been in the marijuana business before. The pressure on the production and traffic in marijuana grew, as the Colombian Government cooperated with the U.S. Government to eradicate or stop its production, either by pulling the plants out by

the roots or eventually spraying the plants with Glyphosate, a herbicide. This had obvious consequences for environmentalists, health specialists, and all the rest.

Quite frankly, as we later learned, there is a strongly competitive production of marijuana within the U.S. The U.S. domestic production of high quality marijuana, often from seeds of Colombian origin, is centered in Hawaii, the U.S. Northwest, and the U.S. Middle West. The seeds are even genetically engineered to grow faster and better in different climates. If you look at it, it is scary, and it still goes on in 1996. A lot of the market for marijuana in the U.S. is supplied by domestic production.

The Colombian marijuana traffickers moved away from the marijuana traffic, though they didn't get out of that business entirely. They moved into the cocaine business, which was so terribly lucrative. Our governmental and law enforcement structure to deal with the cocaine traffic grew apace. It's not fair to say that the Colombian traffickers did not take U.S. law enforcement agencies seriously, but they certainly didn't give it the weight that the U.S. did. Their overall position seemed to be, and certainly Colombian public opinion, if there was any, seemed to be, “This is a problem for the people of countries who are consuming this drug. It is not our problem. We just happen to be the place where the coca leaves grow or are processed. So it's a U.S. and developed country problem, where people can afford to buy these narcotics. This doesn't affect us.” That had certainly been the Colombian attitude through part of the 1970s and into the early 1980s.

Three of my predecessors as American Ambassadors to Colombia had varying experiences with the drug traffic. Ambassador Diego Asencio was kidnaped by the guerrillas and held hostage, along with other diplomats. Ambassador Tom Boyatt, a career Foreign Service Officer, did a superb job. However, his concern about the drug traffic, while real enough, reflected, I think, a Washington view that we didn't quite know where we were going or what we were doing.

Ambassador Lewis Tambs was my immediate predecessor, to whom I previously referred. He had really focused on the narcotics issue. He was a political appointee of the Reagan administration. I think that he came out of the University of New Mexico and had a long history as a petroleum engineer in Venezuela, next door to Colombia. He spoke Spanish well and was a very interesting man. He had some of the characteristics of an oil field roustabout but also had a very refined approach which went along with that. During the 1983-1984 time frame he had really focused attention on the narcotics issue. He went full bore at narcotics trafficking in the press, in public, and with the Colombian Government. He never missed a chance of shaking his finger at the Colombians for not doing enough. He was perceived to be pretty much a single issue Ambassador. Interestingly enough, as recently as 1996, El Tiempo, one of the most prestigious newspapers in Bogota, had a columnist who was a member of the family that runs the paper. He said in one of his columns, “We should have listened to Lou Tambs back in the 1980s, because what he predicted has basically happened.” He said, in effect, “Look, narcotics are going to get you. It may be getting us in the U.S. now, but they are going to get you in the future.” And he said, “It's already on the way to doing it.”

So, in any event, Ambassador Tambs had pushed very, very hard on these issues and on THE issue of narcotics. Then, during this 1983-1984 time period - and even earlier - the Medellin cartel had shown a viciously, violent streak. First, in terms of their internal discipline. I guess that if you messed up, you were dead. If people on the outside seemed to be interfering with the cartel's business, whether they were police, law enforcement officials, or just about anybody else, the easiest way to take care of them was literally to get rid of them by killing them. So there was a tremendous surge of violence from the people who were running the Medellin cartel.

President Belisario Betancourt was elected in 1982. By this time the United States was very concerned about the whole cocaine business. We had identified people who were running the cocaine game, both the key players and some of the second tier people, one

of whom was a man named Carlos Lehder. In any event, back in 1983, I guess, we sought the extradition of several Colombians to the United States. Extradition has always been an extremely touchy point in Latin America, along with nationalism, sovereignty, and all of those subjects, although we have a number of extradition treaties with countries in Latin America.

Q: Extradition is not a problem, particularly if you're gettinsomebody from your country who is fleeing justice in another country.

GILLESPIE: That's right. When this involves a national of the country whose extradition you are seeking, then it becomes difficult. The treaties which outline the extradition of nationals of one country or another often put limits on it. That is, you can't extradite for what are perceived to be political crimes. The crime has to be a crime in both countries. There are a lot of technical, legal points in these treaties which are terribly important.

In any event, after a lot of agonizing over it, President Betancourt overcame whatever resistance there was to the extradition of Colombian nationals and agreed to extradite several Colombian citizens. He said, “Yes,” in a number of cases. These people were extradited to the U.S., where we put them on trial.

That triggered a very strong reaction from the Medellin cartel. There were bombings, killings, and pressures on the Colombian justice system of all kinds. That included the murder or assassination of the Minister of Justice. This murder seemed to ignite Colombian public opinion and stiffened everybody's spine. Everybody seemed to be very tough about this issue. However, the bombings continued into 1984. In my comments on the security situation I mentioned that in 1984 there had been a bomb exploded near our Embassy in Bogota. There were threats to the American School. In effect, Ambassador Tambs had to leave Colombia, and that's why I ended up going to Colombia in 1985.

Then there was a change in administrations from President Betancourt to President Virgilio Barco in 1986. I think that I may have mentioned that during the election campaign and

pre-inaugural period Barco shared polling data with me which indicated that narcotics were simply not on the minds of the Colombian people. Development issues and the Colombian economy were the most important subjects for the Colombian people. He indicated that that was where he was going to put his emphasis.

My immediate staff in the Embassy in Bogota and I all sensed that, while there was a lot of rhetoric in Washington about narcotics, there wasn't much in the way of policy guidance. Basically, the policy was rhetorical. I had a very active and energetic DCM, Michael Skol. The Political Section was very active and involved, and there was a very good Economic Section. The CIA chief of station was out to win his spurs in Colombia. The fellow running the DEA office, George Franguli, had been a long-time, overseas operator for DEA. His name also came up in connection with Chile. He was in the Embassy in Santiago in 1973 at the time of the overthrow of President Allende and the military takeover of the Chilean government. George had a large DEA operation inBogota and another one up on the Caribbean coast in Barranquilla, where we had our only remaining Consulate at the time.

U.S. policy at the time was that, “We're against drugs and don't want them to come into the country.” However, there was no clear cut, strategic approach which set out our objectives, what we wanted to achieve, and what were the various ways of doing that. In the Embassy we concluded that if anyone was going to define that strategy, at least as far as Colombia was concerned, we would have to do that in the Embassy.

So we organized ourselves to do that. We set up a sort of Executive country team group which included the people I've already mentioned, plus the head of the Narcotics Assistance Unit, or NAU in Colombia. The NAU was an arm of the still small Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM) in the Department of State.

When I got to Colombia in 1985, the head of the INM Bureau was a gentleman whose name I can't remember now. I recall that his first name was John. He was a Republican, political appointee. He had an approach to the narcotics problem which involved

interdiction, or trying to stop the flow of drugs out of South America, at the source of the drugs, whether at the production or trafficking end. In any case, he wanted to stop this traffic. But that was as far as it went. He had resources to provide the countries where the drugs were being produced. We were giving the Colombian Government aircraft and support money. At that point our military assistance program was focused much more on national security, military, and defense issues than on narcotics trafficking. At that point we were not trying to get the Colombian military directly involved in the narcotics problem.

I believe that, fairly soon after I arrived in Colombia in 1985, John was replaced by a woman named Anne Wrobleski, another political appointee. In any event, though the INM people seemed to be managing various, anti-narcotics programs, there was no single, strategic point. The Department of Justice had a Colombia task force which brought together a lot of the people from the law enforcement community in the U.S. A State Department representative, the desk officer for Colombian affairs, attended meetings of that task force. I think that the deputy assistant secretary of state who dealt with South American affairs was also involved with that task force, to some degree. This task force was not set up in the national security, inter-agency, structural institutional approach. It was separate. However, it was a point of contact. There was also a very active Commissioner of Customs, William Von Raab.

GILLESPIE: Very powerful, a brilliant kind of mind, very articulate, and not at all shy about promoting himself or the Bureau of Customs and the rest of it. He was charging forward, in effect, running his own foreign policy through the Bureau of Customs.

DEA was again under a very solid, former FBI agent who went on to become part of the New York Yankees' managerial structure under George Steinbrenner. I think that he ran the security aspect, or something like that. DEA was global in its reach: Mexico was a major source of drugs, especially heroin, and Colombia was also a major source of cocaine. The DEA was also concerned about heroin coming into the United States from the golden crescent in the Middle East, the golden triangle in Southeast Asia, as well

as Mexico. Furthermore, DEA still had its U.S. domestic drug enforcement programs, including control over pharmaceuticals and their distribution.

So there wasn't any, single point of control of our anti-narcotics efforts. At that point the NSC (National Security Council) really had no one involved in anti-narcotics policy or strategy. This area was sort of an orphan. In the embassy in Bogota we concluded that the way to deal with this was to decide what we ought to be doing in Colombia and then tell Washington that that was what we were going to do. We said, “UNODIR (unless otherwise directed), we were going to continue down this path.” In my instructions when I went to Colombia, which I had drafted, I covered narcotics. However, I didn't realize in early 1985 how vacant this strategic package was. We were “agin” narcotics, we didn't like drugs, we wanted to stop their distribution and use in the United States. Nevertheless, beyond that there just wasn't a whole lot there.

So in the Embassy in Bogota a little executive country team group would meet regularly. I named Michael Skol, the DCM, to chair that group for me. The idea was that this arrangement left me open to agree or disagree with whatever the committee did, rather than having to sit there as chairman. We started to move forward. We asked ourselves what it would take to get something moving here. What we quickly appreciated was that, if we didn't have a strategy, then certainly the Colombians didn't have one, either. We thought we needed a strategy. I said, “Everybody needs a strategy. Everybody has to have a plan.”

First we had to figure out how we could create the demand or reasons for having a strategy in the Colombian mind or in the Colombian Government. Colombia had had these terribly violent incidents. We could see what the violence was doing. We could see the pressures on the Colombian system of justice. We could even begin to see - and this came out rather quickly - the degree to which Colombian youth and others were using drugs. However, many Colombians had a tendency to shut their eyes to that and to pay no attention to it.

Ambassador Tambs had been pushing the Colombian Government very hard on this issue. My conclusion was that continuing along the Tambs' line would not make any sense. The Colombians would just say, “Well, here comes another Lewis Tambs.” So how could we persuade the Colombian Government to become concerned about the narcotics problem? We could not and would not, under any circumstances, disavow anything that Ambassador Tambs had said or done. However, I met with my executive country team group, and particularly with our public affairs people, and said, “How can we draw attention to this problem in a way that will get what we want, which is more attention to resources and activity devoted to narcotics?” We felt that this was important but that we needed to pursue our objective in a way which was not just going to turn the Colombians off.

We started off with trying to find another way of defining the U.S.-Colombian relationship and find another set of policy interests that would allow us to work with the Colombians. Then we would work the anti-narcotics effort into that.

It didn't seem that we would find in Central American political issues an area where we could work easily with Colombia. There was already some antagonism and tension between President Betancourt's Contadora process approach and our own views of that area. President Barco was clearly not as committed to resolving the problems of Central America as President Betancourt had been. Barco did not think that resolving Central American issues should become the keystone of Colombian foreign policy.

Q: We're talking here about the problems of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

GILLESPIE: Yes, the Nicaragua and El Salvador situations. Although President Barco's Foreign Minister, Julio Londono, to whom we previously referred, was very much involved in those issues, Barco kind of let Londono do his thing but didn't give Central American matters much personal attention. That would not be the area to find a new focus for Colombian-American relations. There didn't seem to be a lot of interest in the regional approach to issues of the area. To short cut this discussion, we basically concluded

that an area where Colombia really stood out was in its general approach to economics, management, and related areas. We concluded that what we should do would be to work with the Colombians in the field of economics and management, emphasizing what the Colombians had been doing right. For example, they had not had to reschedule their foreign debt after the 1982 debt crisis. They were still in touch with the commercial banks. Foreign banks were open to Colombia. So we concentrated on the economic and trade aspects of the Colombian-American relationship.

That got us into coffee questions. Remember, there was an international coffee organization at this time. Obviously, that is a commodity area where the U.S. has never been of one mind as to how it ought to deal with commodities and how they're marketed, dealt with, and received. However, this is a huge piece of the U.S. economy. There is a large number of coffee buyers, processors, and distributors. I think that Colombia is the second or third largest coffee producer in the world. Brazil is the largest, and the African countries and Indonesia also produce a lot of coffee. So it's a global commodity. However, it was an area of active interest, where we were not always in agreement with Colombia. Nonetheless, it allowed us to engage in a lot of discussion over very tangible kinds of issues which were not perceived as nearly as deleterious to human health as cocaine, the other, major commodity coming out of Colombia.

President Barco found this approach to Colombian-American relations to be quite acceptable. He was pleased that we were doing this, though I didn't discuss it with him in these kinds of terms. However, he could see that, when I had a chance to talk to Colombians or about Colombia, I would always start with this area. That is, the economic situation and where Colombia fit in the trade and investment area. There was a lot of U.S. investment in Colombia. For several years Exxon had been building a huge installation, the Norte project, up near the Caribbean. It was the largest, open pit coal mine in the world. Some 4,000-5,000 contractors had come in from the U.S. to help to build this

installation. It generated a lot of Colombian employment. It was a large operation, and we focused on things like this.

Tremendous oil reserves were being discovered and confirmed in Colombia at the time. So there was a lot going on there. We kept trying to bring the focus of our interest to such matters. Then, from that, we began to talk about how the narcotics traffic was a threat to Colombia, as well as to the people who were consuming drugs. This line of action developed over a period of time, of course. We pointed out that narcotics trafficking was infiltrating and weakening the system of justice in Colombia. Corruption was related to narcotics, and Colombia was already fairly rife with different levels of corruption. We said that that was going to be a handicap, a brake on Colombia's development. There were a lot of things to talk about, and we worked in the references to the narcotics traffic at that point - the cocaine, the marijuana, and other drugs. We tried to raise the consciousness of the perils of drugs, both in Colombia and, frankly, in the U.S. We pointed out that narcotics trafficking was another facet to the Colombian-American relationship. The only news about Colombia that was being printed in the U.S. that one could find, other than in the Journal of Commerce or The Wall Street Journal, would be stories about narcotics related violence.

Terribly embarrassing situations were coming up which affected honest Colombian government officials arriving in Miami. They had to go through the entry lines and were often strip searched, just because their passports were Colombian. There were no other apparent reasons for doing that.

One of my jobs, and one of the jobs of the Embassy, was routinely to take a blast either from the Foreign Ministry or some other Colombian Government minister, who asked, “Why was I, my wife, or my daughter stopped by U.S. Customs? Why were my employees stopped?” The crazy thing was that, every so often, some Colombian who was stopped by U.S. Customs had a load of cocaine on him or her. So it was not a clear cut case of harassment of Colombians by U.S. Customs. I felt that it was important for us to try to make sure that our handling of these examinations was as professional as it could be,

from the point of entry into the U.S. to whatever else had to happen. But our idea was to remind the Colombians that these were the costs which they were paying because they didn't have a visible, positive approach to the narcotics issue.

My efforts to convince President Virgilio Barco of this were not particularly successful. He is a very stubborn man. Occasionally, I would talk to his wife, Caroline, about this subject. She would reaffirm just how stubborn he could be. Once he got his mind set on one thing, he would move down that track. At the time that I knew him, President Barco was a man in his mid-'60s. In the light of what we know has happened since then, after he left office as President in 1990, he went to Great Britain as Colombian Ambassador and almost dropped out of sight. It soon became apparent that he was probably suffering from Alzheimer's Disease. How much that condition affected him during the time he was still President I honestly don't know. There was certainly no evidence, as far as I was concerned, that he was losing his memory. However, you never know. In any case he kept focused. As I have gone through a case of Alzheimer's Disease in my own family, with my mother, I guess that one could say that he may have locked onto certain things and didn't want to get involved in others, because he wasn't sure that he could deal with them.

In any event, I kept pushing on the question of narcotics in this way. All of our official American visitors kept pushing to persuade President Barco to come up with an anti-narcotics strategy. His response always was, “We'll get around to that. We'll do something about it, but it's not that important right now.” Well, that attitude changed suddenly in December, 1987, when the publisher and one of the principal owners oEl Espectador, the second largest newspaper in Colombia, was brutally assassinated by the narcotics traffickers. They made no bones about it. He and El Espectador had taken a position which basically supported the extradition of drug traffickers to the United States and a tough line generally on narcotics. He was well known to President Virgilio Barco. When Barco had to face the fact of the funeral of the publisher oEl Espectador and the fact that

this man had been gunned down mercilessly, that seemed to get Barco to say, “Oh, well, maybe we'd better start thinking again about this issue.”

Although President Barco didn't immediately jump onto the line, “Okay, we're going to develop an anti-narcotics strategy,” he began to realize that he had a real problem. Well, this was December, 1987. Barco had been President for about a year and some months, when this occurred. That event sort of marked the turning point in Barco's mental outlook on narcotics.

His Foreign Minister, Julio Londono, didn't get it. He maintained his previous view that the narcotics issue was not important, and so on. By this time President Barco had a chief of staff named German Montoya, who was about the same age as Barco and maybe a little older. He was the retired head, if not of Chrysler South America, certainly Chrysler for Colombia. However, my recollection is that he had been the chief Chrysler representative for South America. Montoya was a businessman, though a strong Liberal Party member, and a friend and political ally of Virgilio Barco. He came in and helped to organize the Barco presidency. He brought in a lot of bright young people in their 20s and 30s and got them organized. I found that I could work with Montoya, and he found that he could work with me very easily. It was easy to keep in touch with him.

He would say to me, “The Foreign Minister is a problem. He does not trust you. He thinks that you have too much influence with President Barco.” President Barco would call me and ask me to see him. But he wouldn't tell the Foreign Minister that he was doing that. If I really needed to communicate something to President Barco, I would always make sure that I kept the Foreign Minister informed. I felt that it was incumbent on the Ambassador to do that. However, if I really needed to get in touch with the President, I'd call President Barco first, and then I'd tell the Foreign Minister that I had done so. Whenever I tried to call the Foreign Minister first, it turned out that my request to see President Barco was not exactly lost, but it wasn't handled very well. The Foreign Minister would say, “Oh, yes, I'll get back to you.” And then he didn't do that. Finally, since President Barco had given

me his private telephone numbers, I didn't hesitate to call him directly, when it was really important.

I think that I may have mentioned before that, like his predecessor, and really like so many Latin American heads of government, at least of a certain generation, these leaders are used to dealing one on one. They didn't really have people from their office staffs with them to see how the President handled matters. I would take high level American visitors in to see President Barco. Often, if there were a ceremonial aspect to it, Barco would have his Foreign Minister or someone else with him. However, just as often he would be alone in his office. I'd take the visitor in, we'd sit down, and we'd begin talking with President Barco. I took the notes or prepared the memorandum of conversation for our side, but I don't know who took notes for President Barco. I don't think that there were any tape recorders working in Barco's office during that period. We never heard of them - then or since.

In any event, I had this problem with Foreign Minister Londono. He was a very proud man and, I think, also had a tremendous inferiority complex. I don't think that he ever expected to be Foreign Minister. I may have mentioned that he was the son of a Colombian Army general. Londono had been in the Army. The Army jokingly called him, Teniente Coronel Londono, or Lieutenant Colonel Londono, because that had been his rank in the Army. I'm not sure whether he retired or resigned his Army commission to go into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he had been the geographer of the Ministry, in effect. From that position he had been picked to be the Colombian Ambassador to Panama. He was in Panama when the Contadora Process got started, and that's how he became involved in global diplomacy. For whatever reason, President Barco picked him to be his Foreign Minister.

He was a totally unpleasant man, but not totally without a sense of humor. I remember an incident in 1986. This was the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in which the Barco administration was involved. Foreign Minister Londono was up in New

York at the UN. We scheduled a meeting between him and Secretary of State George Schultz. By this time I had gotten to know Schultz pretty well because of both Central American issues and the Grenada affair. We were on a pretty easy, relaxed basis. Schultz could call me on the telephone if he wanted to, and I felt that I could call him on the telephone on the same basis.

Before this meeting with Foreign Minister Londono, we were doing a pre-brief at the Secretary's apartment in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, where we were going to meet with Londono. Schultz said, “What's this guy like, Tony?” I told him that Londono was “crusty and hard. He thinks that he knows how to speak English, but his English really isn't very good.” However, we had Stephanie Van Riegersburg, who was the best interpreter in the Department. There was nobody better on Romance languages than Stephanie. Stephanie and I had known each other for a long time. So she was in the room with Secretary Schultz. We said, “We're going to have a meeting with Foreign Minister Londono.” So she said, “Okay, we'll take care of that. It won't be a problem.”

We went into the meeting with Londono, who refused to say a word in Spanish. He was going to convince Secretary George Schultz that he, Londono, knew how to speak English. Schultz had a behavioral quirk which, I think, others have probably mentioned. At a certain point you could see his shoulders hunch forward, his neck went down, and his eyes came to half mast. He looked at whoever it was who was the point of irritation. First he looked at Londono and then he looked at me. Then he looked at Stephanie Van Riegersburg. Then he looked back at Londono and kept staring at him while this poor man tried to express himself in English. At that point he had no control of English at all. It really was unintelligible. I tried everything that I could, and Stephanie tried everything that she could to get Londono to switch to Spanish. We'd throw in a phrase in Spanish, saying, “Would you explain that?” He would just glare at me and then go right on, as unintelligibly as ever. There were syllables coming out of his mouth that were not connected. It was just awful.

Finally, the meeting was over. Secretary Schultz shook hands with Foreign Minister Londono. Then, after Londono had left his office, Schultz beckoned to me with his finger and said, very slowly, “I never want to see that man again, Tony. Keep him out of my thinning hair.” There was no humor at that point. Secretary Schultz felt that it had been a waste of his time, and Schultz took that seriously. In fact, it was a waste of everybody else's time. I had to go back and, without any particular reference to that, figure how we were going to do this. Well, I'm a sucker. I kept trying. I knew that Londono didn't like me. Superficially, we had some things in common. He liked to run for exercise. I was a runner. We would talk about running together. We jogged occasionally. However, it was just a waste of time. None of the overtures that I would make had the slightest effect.

Well, this probably compounded the problem, because then, it seemed to me, he seemed to look for opportunities to tweak me or to tweak us. You mentioned the United Nations, and I quickly added the non-aligned movement. For some reason this did not involve just the Barco administration and Foreign Minister Londono, but seemed to involve both their predecessors and successors. Colombians in general have believed that there is merit in an active role for Colombia in the non-aligned movement. They see their role as being what Yugoslavia's role might have been near the tail end of the Tito regime. That is, as sort of a moderator, truly not really aligned. However, in Colombia's case, a little more aligned toward the West than the communist countries in the East. They thought that they could play sort of a moderating role and give the non-aligned movement some merit and get something out of it.

Well, the Colombians just set themselves up to be taken advantage of. Under Foreign Minister Londono this was particularly the case. Colombia fought to be the President of the non-aligned movement. They supported Castro in Cuba and did different things in an effort to moderate the positions of the non-aligned movement, or the NAM, as it was sometimes called.

We would get these crazy instructions from Washington. I felt that Washington's handling of the NAM was often rather flaky. The State Department would remember that the NAM meets every year in a General Assembly. They have this huge kind of orgiastic event. At the time of the Cold War, and particularly the hot parts of the Cold War, the non-aligned movement was nothing like non-aligned. It was essentially taking positions that were antagonistic to the United States and the developed world in general. It reflected North-South antagonisms, from the South position. Invariably, this annual Assembly of the NAM would produce a communique or declaration of some kind. It did everything from condemning Israel, to Zionism, to the United States, to our Cuba policy or anything else that we were doing at any given point. The communique didn't always praise the Soviet Union, but by saying nothing, by being silent, the implication was that the Soviet Union was just fine.

These NAM communiques were terrible diatribes. Weeks before this annual meeting was to take place every American Embassy throughout the world would receive an instruction, saying, “Go in and tell the government to which you are accredited that they should not support this line or should make sure that certain points are excised from any statement the NAM makes.

So we were supposed to approach the Colombian Government, use whatever political capital we had, whether it was by bold force or persuasion, and try to get the Foreign Ministry, in whatever capital, to do something and not support this terrible diatribe, either as a whole or in part. So all of our Embassies would dutifully go into the governments to which we were accredited, in this sort of annual rite. We would use up some chips just to get in the door, just to raise this kind of thing. Many governments would say, “Oh yes, we agree with you completely. However, we think that if we take this position, we'll be able to influence the communique this way. So, even though we're going to say something that you won't like, please understand that it's to prevent something worse from happening.” So

it cost us something to get in the door. We paid our price to get in the door and we got an unsatisfactory answer.

I don't want to beat this straw horse to death, but I think that Foreign Minister Londono took some glee in making sure that Colombia's position in the NAM would always be at the optimum level of antagonism with the United States. He just had a problem with that. It turned out that he was very interested in, and afterward showed himself to be actively involved in, multilateral diplomacy. So, he was never an easy person to deal with as Foreign Minister. He was also preoccupied with things like the NAM and the UN and what was going on there.

Colombia's approach to its foreign policy over the years has varied considerably. In fact, Colombia has not always HAD a foreign policy because Colombia, in my view, has not always defined what its interests are, in a coherent way. Succeeding Colombian Governments have wanted to keep Colombia on the map. There are some people who say that Colombian culture, at least that which is not indigenous, is highly derivative and that the Colombians tend to turn to France, to Spain, and to Europe generally. They pride themselves on speaking a variety of Spanish which they consider more pure than that spoken in Spain or on the Iberian Peninsula. They are a proud and very accomplished people. As a nation, they have done some very good things. However, in terms of projecting Colombia overseas, you've had everything from its more recent efforts in the Contadora context to opening up to the countries of the Pacific Rim. However, by and large, these efforts have been pretty feeble in that sense.

I think that Foreign Minister Londono wanted to make as much of this as he could. As I said, he had come out of this Contadora process, with his own star somewhat ascendant, because he had been there in Panama at the beginning of the Contadora process. From which, by the way, grew what is now, in 1996, a fairly active institution, called the Rio group. Where it's going, no one is sure. I think that it now includes 14 countries, including observers, in South and Central America and Mexico. At that point, if I remember correctly,

it was first the Contadora group of six countries. Then it grew to a group of eight countries. Colombia was active in that. It was more of a political forum. There are those in Colombia and elsewhere who did not trust the OAS, the Organization of American States, because they think that it is under U.S. dominance.

So they've looked for other outlets. This Group of Eight was concerned about Central American issues. They wanted to develop contacts with European countries and primarily, at that time, with the Common Market, the European Community and then nascent EU (European Union), which was beginning to look at political issues elsewhere.

Londono spent a lot of time on Contadora or Rio group issues. That seemed to occupy him for a time. Then, what he really got involved in, in 1987-1988, was the border dispute with Venezuela. Basically, this was over where the dividing line between Colombia and Venezuela ought to be in the Lake Maracaibo and Guajira Peninsula areas, adjoining the Gulf of Venezuela.There was an awful incident that involved ships and could have come close to armed conflict. President Barco had to be involved in that, and was involved in it. He had to turn to Londono. It was not something that we, in the U.S., wanted to see turn into something more than a discussion of boundaries. I think that, as a matter of support for stability, we would like to see all of these border disputes in South America resolved, in whatever way that they could be resolved, with the least hard feelings and the least effect on regional stability. That was our basic position.

There has always been a certain economic differential between Colombia and Venezuela, which shifts back and forth at one point or another, depending on the rate of exchange between the Colombian peso and the Venezuelan bolivar. There was contraband or illicit trade moving in one direction or another. There was migration to or from Colombia, depending on which way the economic situation worked. More often than not, the migration moved from Colombia to Venezuela because traditionally Venezuela has been the richer country of the two. This is because Venezuela has more actively exploited its oil wealth and has therefore gotten more money out of that resource. More recently,

Colombia has begun to exploit its oil resources more actively. However, at the time of which I am speaking, Venezuela was very rich, so Colombians would go to Venezuela to work as maids, servants, and so forth - similar to the situation that we have between Latin America and the U.S.

It was often advantageous to smuggle goods into Colombia which had been originally imported into Venezuela. You could see how the economic situation between the two countries was working at any give time, reflecting which way the flow of goods and people was going.

In any event, that border incident I mentioned was a major issue. The tension arising from it was tamped down but still has not been completely resolved. It continues but does not really come up. President Barco explained to me that the timing of the electoral cycles in the two countries was wrong. Each new President of Venezuela and each new President of Colombia has in his heart settling this border dispute. The trouble is that just as one President is coming into office, the other one was going out of office. A new President is getting ready to enter office, so this is a campaign issue in one country just as it has stopped being a campaign issue in the other. So you could never get the two sides to get together and quietly work it out. There have always been politics involved. That's the problem.

One hopes that, as the process of economic integration of the region continues, these border disputes will be of less importance. This process has already begun to become clear. The movement of trade between the two countries has become so much more open. Under the circumstances the problem may begin to be dealt with and may disappear because it is perceived to be interfering with the ability of people to pursue their livelihoods. Common sense will take over where the politicians have been unable to work.

However, this is the typical Colombian, and indeed South American view. Everything is a political issue, and there is a feeling that problems should be dealt with politically.

That was the major border problem facing Colombia. Colombia also borders Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela, but the major border concern involved the frontier with Venezuela. Ecuador has an oil pipeline near the Colombian border, and there were some issues involved there. However, they were never matters of great concern.

Q: It's not the way that Ecuador and Peru have been going at each other for many years. We got ourselves in the middle of this dispute back in the 1940s.

GILLESPIE: Up in that same general, northeastern area of Colombia, somewhat South of the disputed border area in the Guajira Peninsula there were continuing, festering problems involving Colombian guerrillas. These guerrillas belonged to the FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or the ELN, the National Liberation Army. They would move into Venezuela or seek safe haven there. Venezuelan troops were either killing some of these Colombian guerrillas or driving them back. Or Colombian troops were pushing these guerrillas into Venezuela.

The problems associated with these guerrillas raised very practical difficulties. Although they could be an irritant in the relationship between Colombia and Venezuela, they were often dealt with as practical problems. The question was, “How can we resolve this problem? Can we have talks between the two countries, and so forth?” Problems like that happened, and still happen.

Today, in 1996, there is the problem of drugs related to the guerrillas. When I was in Colombia, at that time we were just beginning to see, and our intelligence was beginning to show us, how the narcotics traffic and the guerrilla problem were developing linkages. I guess that the way this struck us most directly was in some reports that we were getting. First, we knew that out in the remote areas of Colombia the guerrillas were taxing the narcotics producers. The narcotics laboratories were located in these remote areas, and the traffickers had their landing strips there, where they based their aircraft. The basic image was of guerrillas coming up to the people operating these laboratories and landing

strips and saying, “Look, if you want to continue to operate here, you have to pay your share.” So the guerrillas just collected tribute from the narcotics traffickers. In return for that tribute, our assumption was that the traffickers were getting some protection. So it was kind of like a New York Mafia protection deal. I'm not quite sure what they were protected against, but the traffickers paid the tribute. If they didn't pay the tribute, they would certainly need protection from the guerrillas.

Even back in the mid-1980s - the 1986-1988 period - we were beginning to get some reports that the guerrillas were finding other ways to make profits out of the narcotics traffic. My recollection of this situation isn't perfect, but at that point I don't think that we had much information which said that the guerrillas were really producing drugs and that they were really running the laboratories. We still thought that there was a connection between guerrillas and drug traffickers, involving the payment of “taxes” and protection money to the guerrillas. We knew that the Medellin cartel of Pablo Escobar or his lieutenants had had some meetings with the guerrillas. At that point the guerrillas formed something called the Coordinadora, or Coordinating Board of activities directed against the Colombian Government. This was an attempt to bring the M-19, the FARC, the ELN, and the EPL, or the People's Liberation Army, together in some way. I don't think that it was ever very formal.

In any event, there were reports that the Medellin cartel was in touch with this Coordinadora. In fact, we had one report that the Medellin cartel had met with representatives of the major guerrilla groups and had said, “We want your help in dealing with some of the threats to our enterprise.” That is, the narcotics traffic. Specifically, the narcotics traffickers were interested in three issues. There was the head of the Department of Administrative Security, the DAS, which I mentioned before and which was like the FBI in Colombia. This was a domestic, federal intelligence and counterintelligence body composed of plain clothes police. The other people in whom the Medellin cartel was interested were the head of the DEA group in the Embassy and the American

Ambassador. In other words, me. The cartel representatives said, “We want to get rid of them. We want to threaten them” and things like that.

One report quoted the cartel representatives as saying, “What would it take and how much money would be required to go after these people? Would you all go after these people, or would one or two of you do it?” I was never quite clear on the gory details, but we knew that there had been discussions of that kind. The first word that we had was that nobody in the various groups was very much interested in that. We knew already, and later had it confirmed, that some of these guerrilla groups were interested in each one of these targets - each for its own reasons. If they were interested in these targets, they were planning to kill the American Ambassador and members of his family, the head of DEA, and the head of the Department of Administrative Security. These three people were always a target, I think. This had nothing to do with the people holding these jobs. It sort of went with the job description.

Later, as time went on, we began to see what seemed to be a closer linkage between some of these guerrilla groups and narcotics traffickers. The FARC was the largest and best organized guerrilla group. Our own estimates, which were derived from figures obtained from the Colombians, primarily through the CIA and our Defense Intelligence Agency people, the military attaches, and other sources, suggested that the FARC had a core strength of 5,000 to 8,000 guerrillas. That was a big guerrilla organization. It covered most of the country, although it was concentrated primarily in the central part of Colombia. The leadership was the same as it had been in the early 1960s, when the FARC was formed. This organization had linkages to Cuba and Fidel Castro, to Libya, and to other parts of the world. It had always maintained a high degree of national independence. They had not become part of the international revolutionary movement.

The M-19, which was a more recent creation, was the group which took Simon Bolivar's sword and did similar things. They were just as ruthless and just as violent as the others, but with sort of a youthful, romantic aura about them. They were often university students

who were out to end oppression, defeat Colombia's Government and military, and deal with other problems. However, until this period the Colombian Government and military were not very repressive. The Colombian military, in particular, was quite ineffective in going after guerrillas. The death squads, the assassination groups going after the peasants and presumed leftists, were just beginning to be active at that point. The linkages to the Colombian military were not believed to be really institutional. There were relationships with individual officers, commanders, and non-commissioned officers doing things like this, at the behest of landowners and private groups. This was not a plan by the Colombian military to do this.

In any event, the FARC seemed to be the group that was, perhaps, becoming more intermixed with the drug traffickers. The traffickers in the Medellin cartel were finding that they could provide arms, equipment, and money, and relationships like that were beginning to develop. Ambassador Tambs had used the term, narcoguerrilla to describe this relationship in Colombia. We started to follow developments concerning the narcoguerrillas. The other reason that we did so was that, quite frankly, we saw the guerrilla movement as a continuing, festering problem. Because we were trying to generate some support in Washington for programs that would deal with both the guerrilla and narcotics problems, we found that this linkage was useful in my conversations with U.S. Members of Congress in our briefings. When we could demonstrate this linkage, we did so. That seemed to elicit some bipartisan or non- partisan support.

Later, I found this even more the case in Chile, when I went there as Ambassador. However, in the U.S. Congress, and particularly with the 435 members of the House of Representatives, there were extremes on the right and left and then this big, middle group. The big middle in terms of foreign policy seemed to be willing to go along with whatever was reasonable. You could get active support if you could approach them in a reasonable way and brief them. There was an active, narcotics approach. There was a special committee on narcotics in the House of Representatives.

At this time the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives. Representative Charles Wrangel from New York was the chairman of this committee. The ranking minority members of the committee was Representative Ben Gilman, also from New York. They were very active in narcotics affairs. Interestingly enough, Representative Larry Smith, from Florida, was a member of this committee. He later went to jail for corruption. He was a thorn in our sides all the time.

Representative Wrangel could be a thorn, and Representative Gilman was like a bulldog. He would get hold of a particular aspect of the narcotics problem and just never let it go. That could get on your nerves after a while. We would say, “But Congressman, we've already dealt with...” He would say, “I don't care. You've got to keep going on this.” Representative Wrangel would be all over the lot. He had been a prosecutor and took a very prosecutorial attitude. Actually, we all got along with Representative Wrangel quite well. Both he and Representative Gilman came to Colombia and both of them were very supportive of what we were trying to do. So we didn't have a major problem with them. Anyway, narcoguerrilla was a good term to use with Congress to get the support that we needed.

Q: What type of support are you talking about?

GILLESPIE: First, money for the INM (Bureau of International Narcotics Matters) budget. Then, it was a matter of getting them to come to Colombia, getting them to understand that the problems in Colombia were not unidimensional, that it was not only narcotics but that there was a guerrilla movement, and that there were economic problems that flowed from this situation.

One of the issues on which you could get superficial acquiescence from Congress fairly quickly was that the justice system in Colombia must be in trouble. However, Congressmen would say, “Oh, no, we're not going to give them any aid for their justice system. We're not going to help them. No aid.” What we were trying to say was that

the root causes of the problems facing the justice system in Colombia were not well identified. However, we said that we can at least put our fingers on what we think are some of them. For example, the administration of the Colombian judicial system is still in the 17th or, with luck, maybe the 18th century, in terms of scribes writing down testimony and other documents in long hand. That was the only way in which court documents could be prepared which were considered acceptable. You couldn't use a typewriter. The typewriters that they had were old Smith-Coronas - nothing electric. At the time they hadn't seen a computer. During the 1980s the Minister of Justice did not really know how many employees the Ministry of Justice had throughout the country. For example, the Ministry of Justice did not know who the Justice of the Peace was in a particular place in the northern part of the Department of Santander. They didn't know how much money was being paid out in salaries. That's how antiquated and bad the system, which was supposed to be a national justice system, really was.

This is still the case today, in 1996. I just saw a figure today. Out of 4,500 people accused of crimes, 4,402 never came to trial. So the system of justice in Colombia is still bad.
We thought that part of our strategy, which would help to resolve all of the problems and particularly the narcotics problem, would be how to strengthen the system of justice. What could we do? Well, it's not our system. It's not based on our system of common law. It's based on civil law, which goes back to the time of the Romans. So we really don't speak the same language. However, where we could speak the same language in the 1980s was in the field of administration, management, and those kinds of things. President Barco was building the computer system in the Office of the President, and the Foreign Ministry was getting computers. Well, we thought, maybe the Colombian Ministry of Justice, their prosecutors, and their attorney general could use computers, too.

The problem was that you could go into the Office of the President. It didn't make any difference how you kept records. The trouble was that the laws said how records had to be kept for the purposes of the administration of justice. So you had to change the law. There was a very inefficient and corrupt National Congress. Voters elected members of the

National Congress by lists. There was no individual, constituency responsibility. Nobody was accountable to anyone. There is no exact equivalent to accountability, in Spanish. The nearest equivalent is responsibility. Accountability as a concept has only recently emerged in Spanish-speaking countries.

We had this fellow I mentioned before, Jim Michael, a lawyer who had become the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the ARA Bureau. He had really worked on what became the administration of justice program in AID (Agency for International Development). This was an effort to get our Justice Department, the United Nations in Costa Rica, the Canadians, and the different bar groups to come together and cooperate. We would say, “Democracy is a value for all of us. It cannot really function if you don't have a way to settle grievances. You need a system of justice to settle grievances. It has to work to be effective. So how do you get it to work?”

Jim Michael had come up with a programmatic approach for this kind of problem. We wanted to help to initiate that approach in Colombia. My predecessor, Ambassador Tambs, didn't want AID in Colombia at all, because AID supported, as I think I mentioned, the Tropical Research Center where, in the view of Ambassador Tambs, the commie Sandinistas were allowed to be part of the group, because Nicaragua under the Sandinistas was still a member of the UN. So he didn't want to have any AID office in Colombia. I brought AID back in. We mentioned Peter McPherson, the AID Director.

So that's how we dealt with the narcoguerrilla question. We sought to get support when we needed it. This term was a good way to encapsulate things, it was a good, sound bite for the press, if we needed that. However, it also had an increasing amount of reality to it. What was happening was that there was terrorism - out and out bombings and assassinations. These things were happening in Colombia. They were frightening. They were directed, in part, at the U.S. However, they were being increasingly directed at Colombian institutions and other Colombians.

The M-19 movement was engaging in what we now call terrorism. The Libyans were supporting some of this activity. Fidel Castro, in Cuba, was not at all quiet, even in the late 1980s. He was still involved in the Central American situation. The U.S. Ambassador to Colombia was still being identified in internal guerrilla documents as imperialist, anti-democratic, counterrevolutionary, and all of those terms of abuse.

The Colombians were still no more adept or organized to deal with this kind of crisis now than they had been in 1985, when the Palace of Justice was briefly taken over by the M-19, and all of those killings had taken place. The Colombian military had still not organized itself very well, and the civilian population was not at all organized.

However, President Barco had a team of very intelligent people. Maybe even Foreign Minister Londono was intelligent, although we didn't get along very well. Barco had kept as Minister of Defense General Rafael Samudio, who was the senior military person in Colombia. Samudio was a very intelligent man, whose honesty remains in question, if not doubt, but who, nonetheless, was a very efficient manager in some respects as the Minister of Defense.

I had been in touch with friends like Jerry Bremer, who was the head of the counterterrorism staff in the State Department. I knew a lot of people at CIA and the Defense Department in Washington. I was trying to find a hook which would get President Barco in particular, and those around him, thinking along a particular line. This was, “How do we organize and how should we deal with the narcotics issue, the guerrilla problem, and the threat to the oil fields which the guerrillas posed?” There were big U.S. interests in the oil industry.

Remember, this was the 1980s. We had had the Bhopal crisis icentral India. What U.S. company was involved?

Q: It was National Carbon, one of our big firms that producebatteries and chemicals.

GILLESPIE: There had been a tremendous, industrial disaster at Bhopal. Other kinds of disastrous incidents had happened. Increasingly, it appeared to me, and I think that I had seen it during my own career from Indonesia through Nicaragua, and Mexico, with the kidnaping. The better prepared you are for a crisis, the better able you're going to be to deal with it. So setting up something to deal with a crisis seemed a good idea. “Crisis management” was a current term at that time. This was something that intrigued me intellectually and organizationally. I thought that, maybe, I could get President Barco, who had been trained as an engineer, to understand the concept of crisis management and say, “Yes, this makes sense. I'll organize it in some way.”

So I said to President Barco, “What would you think if we look at the terrorism and the narcoguerrilla problems as a mixture of things. Then we might look at how different people might deal with this. What does it mean, and how do you deal with it?” He said, “Well, that would be very interesting. Could you put something together on this?”

Well, I spent about four months putting together what turned out, to my knowledge, to be something quite unique. President Barco invited us to the Presidential Guest House in Cartagena, down on the Caribbean coast, for a long weekend - Friday through Sunday. We arrived Thursday night and left Monday morning. He was there, together with the Minister of Defense, General Samudio; the Minister of the Interior, Cesar Gaviria, who was later President of Colombia; his Minister of Communications, Fernando Cepeda, a brilliant intellectual and academic and a political scientist; and the head of the Department of Administrative Security (which was like the Colombian FBI).

I brought along to this meeting Brian Jenkins, a recognized, counterterrorism expert from the United States; Cesar Cereceres, an academic from UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles) who has also been very much concerned with both the Central American guerrilla problems and other politico-military problems leaning toward guerrilla and other kinds of informal warfare; and a woman from the University of Connecticut, whose name I cannot remember. She had looked at the same sort of problems from another angle,

including the organizational one. In other words, she had studied how to deal with these things.

We all met for this long weekend. I was able to get the Colombian Government to pay to bring these Americans down for the meeting. We helped a little bit, I think, but not very much. We had three, solid days with the President of Colombia and these, key members of his cabinet. We did nothing but examine the roots of the Colombian guerrilla movement and narcotics traffic. We considered the kinds of activities that might occur which might create a national crisis and how one might deal with them. As a result of this meeting we then developed a program under which the CIA and our counter- terrorism people from the State Department, including Jerry Bremer, brought down to Colombia some exercises. We were able to bring together, for the first time ever in Colombia, civilian ministers and military generals and colonels in real exercises, crafting or gaming various kinds of crises which might occur, particularly on the terrorism and military-guerrilla front. These exercises did not deal with natural disasters.

I remember that Colombian Minister of Communications Cepeda said, “You know, I never knew a general well enough to know what he did. I knew and talked to generals. We've talked about their role, but I never knew what a general really did until we did this exercise. Then I saw that, at times, generals have to make decisions and how they make decisions. I saw how I needed to relate to what the generals did.” It was really quite an eye opening experience for Cepeda. I feel rather proud that we put that exercise together. It really helped define their outlook.

Fortunately for me, Foreign Minister Londono was not in the country. He was on a trip somewhere, when it took place. It hadn't been planned long in advance. Had he been there, he'd have had to be invited. There was no way that this could have been avoided. However, as it turned out, he wasn't there. I think that he resented the fact that this exercise took place without his being there - and that he had not been part of it.

In any case this exercise was very important. I think that it eventually helped the situation, after these assassinations that I've talked about. My successor, Ted McNamara, was able to work with President Barco and to begin to get a narcotics strategy adopted in late 1988 or 1989. However, it took all of that time to overcome the initial inertia and turn Colombian government policy in another direction. This experience got us into the crisis management area. I was still in Colombia during 1987 and the first nine months of 1988. We were doing these exercises. The CIA was beginning to train Colombian military units to be reaction forces. We provided some aircraft which could be used to support these reaction forces.

My idea, however, was always to get the civilians into this, because, at the same time, President Barco and I recognized that the whole issue of human rights was clearly beginning to attract more attention. There were bad things happening, particularly up in the northwest part of Colombia, up near the Panamanian border. There was a lot of land there and a lot of landowners. There wasn't much effective authority exercised by the Colombian Government. What government authority there was, responded very much to local interests. The local interests were saying, “There are communists here.” A political party known as the Union Patriotica, or the Patriotic Union, perceived as the civilian wing of the M-19 movement, was the leftist party, whose members were being killed routinely. They would have a rally with campesinos, peasants, and then there would be somebody who would come in and shoot them up. Well, those responsible for shooting them up weren't really military men in military uniforms, but the assumption was that they were connected to the military. And they probably were - although off-duty personnel. These operations of repression probably weren't ordered out of Bogota or even by the nearest, major command of the Colombian Army. It was probably a local captain, major, or colonel who had been provided money by the landowners, who said to him, “Hey, clean up this problem for us.”

So President Barco appointed a Human Rights Coordinator in the Office of the President. We supported that actively. In an institutional sense the human rights coordinator went

to Geneva and met with UN Human Rights Commission people. Obviously, he was concerned about what was going on in Colombia. That's where the problem was, not in Geneva. We were making representations to him. He was the man who, each year, would go to the meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission as Colombia's delegate. Well, we were trying to get anti-Castro human rights resolutions passed. We had all kinds of efforts under way there in Geneva.

The Castro issue is fascinating. Even Foreign Minister Londono, before I left Colombia, was very candid about Cuba. I went in to see him, on instructions, to make a major, hard-hitting demarche. It was friendly in tone, but I said that we really had to come down on Castro, who was supporting the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) in El Salvador. He looked at me and said, “Do you know how much trouble Fidel Castro can cause us? Do you know what he can do with the FARC, the ELN, and the EPL? And he will do that. So we'll go this far and no further.” In the view of Foreign Minister Julio Londono and, therefore, of the Colombian Government in the late 1980s, Castro had more leverage on Colombia than the United States did. Castro was perceived to be, not only capable, but willing to act against Colombia. We might bluster, almost threaten, and orate, but Castro would move. That was the Colombian Government's concern.

Q: The Colombian Government's concern was that Castro would geColombians killed.

GILLESPIE: The concern was that he would get Colombians killed and would cause strikes. There would be an action that would follow, if he became sufficiently annoyed by something that the Colombians did. If the Colombians took a position that led Castro to threaten action, he was regarded as likely to carry out that threat.

I saw that same tendency later in Chile under the new, civilian government which replaced General Pinochet. The people in the Pinochet Government had said, “Well, we'll kill them. We don't care.” I saw that in Argentina, where the government under President Alfonsin also told us, “Wait. We don't want to antagonize Fidel Castro too much, because he still

has long arms." He had his supporters in Latin American countries who could do things and cause difficulties for the various governments.

We were not perceived as likely to do that. We might threaten to cut off a pittance of aid or do something else. However, we were not perceived as likely to do something that would really mess them up. But Castro could do that. He was perceived in this way.

Q: I think that this is something that is forgotten by people today who look at Castro. For many years they have considered the Cuban Government as a kind of dying regime. They do not realize the influence Castro can still wield, often through support of groups that can cause death and damage to other countries.

GILLESPIE: I agree. I think that there is a tendency not to understand, right up to the point that the Soviet Union really tightened the purse strings for Cuba, that Fidel Castro was fully capable, and perceived to be willing, to use any means at his disposal to accomplish his ends. And he had considerable means available to him. That could have meant active assistance with weapons, support for guerrilla movements, moral pressures, and other kinds of safe haven support - for Sandinistas from Nicaragua, FMLN guerrillas from El Salvador, and revolutionary, anarchistic people from South America. All of this did not end with the death of Che Guevara on the slopes of a mountain in Bolivia - believe me. That kept going.

When I got to Chile, and we can go into this later, Cuban intelligence was very active regarding me, for reasons that turned out to be wrong. Nonetheless, they were very active.

There is the case in today's press involving Nicholson of the CIA. To my knowledge, Cuban intelligence was functioning and continues to function very, very actively in South America and in this hemisphere. Anyway, Foreign Minister Londono expressed his concerns to me about Castro. Nobody among the Colombian guerrillas was dependent on Castro, but there were linkages and lines of communications with Castro. There

was money flowing from Libya, from Mohammar Qadhafi into the Colombian guerrilla movement.

So, over the short term, this counter terrorism, crisis management approach seemed to serve the U.S. interest. I happen to think that armies are going to be around for a long time and that civilians need to understand the military better, and vice versa. I thought that it was quite an accomplishment to get the Colombian military and civilians talking to each other, on the basis of actual work. It wasn't just an academic discussion. I think that there are still major gulfs in the understanding between the military and civilians in Colombia. However, things are better now. They now have the second, civilian Minister of Defense in Colombia in recent years. The current Minister seems to be pretty good, so who knows where this process will go? However, nonetheless, that was important.

I was fascinated by your observations on the export of Colombian flowers to the United States. We've touched on the coffee situation. In 1985 one of the first things that I was involved in after arriving in Colombia was bilateral trade talks. The Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, Michael Smith, came to Colombia. In that same Presidential Guest House in Cartagena where we had the crisis management session later on, we had the first bilateral trade talks with Colombia while I was Ambassador. They were the first of a series of such trade talks.

Coffee was a key question then, because in Colombia the U.S. was perceived as representing the consumer interest. Of course, Colombia, Brazil, and the others represented the producers' interests. Coffee has a huge role in the Colombian economy. Now, oil is growing. Every additional barrel of oil that Colombia produces now goes to the export market. However, until recently, Colombia was still importing about 15 percent of its requirements for oil. Coffee was THE major money maker for Colombia. They have quite a structure of institutions for dealing with coffee. The Colombian coffee growers all get together in the Coffee Council. That is quite a bureaucracy. It sets the coffee prices, levels of protection, and all kinds of other things. Coffee was always part of the U.S. relationship

with Colombia. The question was, “What is the U.S. position, and particularly that of the U.S. Trade Representative, who had action responsibility for developing that position?” That's what got me into the trade end of things, more deeply than I ever expected. If I had gone to another country where coffee was not so important, I would not have gotten to know the U.S. Trade Representative quite as intimately as I did. Coffee raised hot issues and involved many millions of dollars.

So coffee was a big issue. We would often take positions which the Colombians considered antagonistic. We were always trying to get competition into the system, open it up, and deregulate the industry, in effect. The producers of coffee wanted to keep the industry regulated and to control the stocks of coffee on hand. They wanted to ration the coffee and keep the prices high. This was a classic, commodity management position.

Q: As the Ambassador, did you have a personal problem of adjusting your priorities? You understood the coffee situation. You had this major drug problem facing you. The coffee producers in Colombia are very important. In a way, they were our allies but, at the same time, the coffee consumers in the United States want something different. Obviously, you represented both sides. However, did you ever find yourself getting too involved in presenting Colombia's position? How did you find the coffee buyers' side in the United States?

GILLESPIE: I was fortunate because I never had to sit down at the negotiating table and pound on the Colombian side. These negotiations are very technical and generally take place in London. They rarely take place in either the producing countries or in the U.S. So I was relieved of having to be the bad guy for the Colombians. I had no trouble supporting the U.S. position on coffee fully. I happen to think that competition in the coffee market would be a good thing.

Eventually, it was agreed to do away with the International Coffee Agreement. Colombia's coffee industry has not crashed, though they still have not figured out how to manage

their stocks and do various other things. Nonetheless, I never found that to involve any particular conflict. I had no trouble with really explaining the U.S. position to Colombians, publicly or privately with the Colombian Government. I just wanted to make sure that the U.S. had the best intelligence on coffee that it could. For example, this is how the situation is and how it is working out. Coffee is a controlled, regulated industry within Colombia. The Coffee Association in Colombia sits on millions and millions of dollars worth of their resources. Who's to say that everybody wouldn't be better off if the Coffee Association didn't exist, and every grower were on his own? Probably, the situation would not be better, in such a case. However, I don't think that I would support that view, as a matter of principle.

The U.S. position on coffee caused me no problems. John Rosenbaum was the coffee negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. He was about a third or fourth echelon official in that office - pretty high ranking. John came to Colombia two or three times when I was there as Ambassador. He was never quite sure that somebody wasn't going to throw a coffee bomb at his car. I'm kind of joking, but the Colombians didn't like John Rosenbaum. He was a tough negotiator. He took the U.S. position and drove it forward. I supported John in public and in private. However, this didn't rub off on me.

I took the position that it is not the U.S. Ambassador's task, nor does it particularly serve U.S. interests, to seek opportunities to antagonize your host government. Very honestly, I would not look for opportunities to go to the Colombian press and say, “The way you handle the coffee issue is all screwed up.” I didn't think that such an attitude would persuade them to change their behavior. I thought that it was much better to talk more generally about trade, opening it up, removing protection, and keeping such discussion about coffee less specific. There was a drug cartel over here and a coffee cartel over there. One product is more benign than the other. However, it is an emotional subject. I don't think that an American Ambassador should go after the coffee cartel the way he goes after the narcotics cartel.

Q: You're raising this issue of what is relatively more benign. There was something in the press today concerning this matter. Did you ever get involved in promoting American tobacco interests? We are talking about the situation in the late 1980s. By then we knew that tobacco was a potentially deadly commodity, probably worse than drugs in many ways and in the sense of the harm it can cause people. In our generation many of those who used to smoke are now dead, and many of those who once smoked but gave it up are alive. That's almost the way it is. With that in mind, could you talk about that?

GILLESPIE: Yes. I've thought about that and I cannot recall that it was ever brought up as a programmatic issue at any post. Early on in the 1960s, when I was the GSO (General Services Officer) in Mexico, I very clearly remember going over to the Zona Rosa, Rose Zone, or tourist area in Mexico City for lunch with American colleagues or Mexican contacts. There would be young, Mexican women there, dressed in the most abbreviated, mini skirts, and with legs that didn't stop till they got to their waists. They went around handing out these little packs of four cigarettes, samples of Winstons, Marlboroughs, Camels, and some of the other brands.

Q: I was getting them all over the world, too.

GILLESPIE: I had stopped smoking the year before this. These young ladies, but sometimes young men, would come up and give you these little packs of cigarettes. I would say, “But I don't want them.” Soon, I found that it was just as easy to take the damned things and throw them in the trash later on. I wasn't going to give them to a friend, since I'd quit smoking, although my friends would take them. That's what I remember - a very visible kind of corporate promotion of smoking. I don't think that the U.S. Government was doing very much about the matter at the time.

In Colombia it seemed that nearly everybody smoked. I didn't. My DCM, the Political and Economic Counselors, and the CIA chief of station didn't smoke. So there was no question of smoking at my country team meetings. I wouldn't have allowed smoking anyway. I

didn't have ashtrays in my office because I didn't smoke. However, when you went to the Colombian Foreign Ministry, the Foreign Minister, for example, would offer you a cigarette. He would never say, “Do you mind if I smoke?” He just did it. However, I cannot recall any programmatic, Department of Agriculture literature during this period. I would have noticed it if it was there. I never really got involved in this. I didn't have U.S. tobacco representatives from Philip Morris, R. J. Reynolds, and so forth knocking at my door. We had Kodak, Esso, and other companies represented in Colombia.

Q: So you didn't have that sort of moral dilemma.

GILLESPIE: I didn't have that as a dilemma to worry about, nor did in Chile, as it turned out. So that was not a problem.

However, I would like to go from a potentially dangerous commodity like tobacco to the pleasures of flowers, which you asked about. This is very interesting. The flower industry had been going in Colombia for a long time, and one of the major growth areas in the Colombian economy was flower exports. The savanna or plains area where Bogota was located is a 7,000 to 8,000 foot high plateau of volcanic soil which is tremendously fertile. It is primarily devoted to raising cattle and turning out dairy products. In an East- West direction it goes for miles between two of the ranges of the Andes Mountains. Actually, going from East to West, there is the range of mountains called the Eastern Andes, then the savanna area around Bogota, then a drop off down to the Magdalena River, and then the next range East of there. This is a huge area. There is plenty of sunshine and rainfall the year around. The growing seasons are wonderful.

Somebody found out that you could really grow flowers there, and there was a major market for the flowers in the United States. I am talking about the mid-1980s. Flower growing was an established but dramatically growing industry. I was interested in it, primarily because the product was so pretty. Furthermore, the U.S. flower industry was very concerned about the competition from Colombia. Unlike the seasonal fruits from

Chile, Colombian flowers provided year-round competition for the U.S. flower industry. So it wasn't a seasonal matter - they were producing while we were not, and vice versa. U.S. rose, carnation, and other flower growers were very concerned.

Q: The importers were flying Colombian flowers into the U.S.

GILLESPIE: Yes, all of these flowers moved by air. So the thought arose in Colombia, “What else can move by air in small packages?” The answer was cocaine. So the level of air traffic between Colombia and the United States was growing dramatically. The number of air cargo flights and air carriers involved was also growing dramatically. Opportunities for smuggling drugs into the United States were also growing dramatically. So, from all of these different aspects, I got very much involved in this traffic. Flowers were a nice product - associated with Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and all of those kinds of things.

Well, we got to know some of the flower growers. I guess that you could say that it was like anything else. There were flower growers and then there were flower growers. Some of the flower growers whom we got to know and got close to, on a more personal basis, routinely invited us to come out to their growing areas, which were outside of downtown Bogota. Most of the growers also had places in Bogota, but some just lived out where they grew the flowers. I don't know whether I mentioned this previously, but one of my cautions to all junior Foreign Service Officers is that it is unlikely, once you reach the Senior Foreign Service, that the friendships that you make then are pure friendships. They are not personal relationships. They are based on your position.

We really got to know some of the flower growers. We saw their growing facilities and got to talk to some of their employees. Some of the growers were really quite responsible. A lot of their employees - not all, but a lot - were women. They used two production methods. One of them was plant ownership. An individual employee, usually a man, was the owner of the plant on this huge facility, which was covered over with plastic and was like a big greenhouse. This one man owned a certain number of rose plants. He was, in effect,

responsible for their growth - from initial planting until the plants died. Women employees did a lot of the flower bed tending. They had these beds. Water, humidity, and temperature were controlled. There were also a lot of other kinds of controls.

As you can imagine, everything was geared to get the flowers to be at the right stage of bloom, just before the peak demand period. This was related directly to Mother's Day, Valentine Day, and holidays in the U.S. As we know now, these holidays were established for commercial purposes. Those holidays were not set up by mothers.

Q: Or by Hallmark cards and flower producers.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. This was looking at the flowers as commodities. I've always been captivated by production operations. Producing the flowers was becoming increasingly computerized, scientific, and genetic, with lots of exchanges of information between the Netherlands and the States of Oregon and Washington, where they also grow flowers, and Colombia. There is a tremendous exchange of information and sharing of data. At that point not so much investment from one country to another, but I don't know what the situation is today.In any case, flower growing was a big operation. I used to take people out to see it. People would often like to see a flower farm. These were people who, like other agricultural commodity producers, make a decision, say, in 1988 about what you're going to plant, because that will pay off, for example, in 1994 - six years later, when those flowers are at their peak. So they predict what the market will be six years from now. Then you try to shape the market so that it will be that way.

There are also the inputs - the chemicals, the fertilizer, and the rest of it. I would say that the flower growers were sensitive to the impact of the flower industry, both in terms of the environment, including pollution, and socially. These were the people whom we got to know fairly well. You couldn't avoid using certain fertilizers, in certain quantities, but they were always looking for ways to moderate the effects on the water system of the area, and so forth. They were concerned about how you get water and how you re-use water.

These were fairly young people, often educated in the U.S. These were usually family operations. They were making lots of money, which they were willing to reinvest in what is called research and development. In other words, how do we produce more flowers, at lower cost, and increase our productivity. At the same time, do the least damage, or no damage to the environment. Then, on the personal or human side, I never had the impression with these people that those working on the flowers were at substantial risk from the inputs - from the chemicals or the pesticides. I don't know how much pesticide was being used, or what kind.

It is entirely possible that they were at some risk. What struck me that, in this family operated industry or business, the women played substantial roles. This is true, by the way, in the Colombian economy. In fact, women play serious roles in the Colombian economy. There are women bank presidents, for example. In the flower industry I remember that the wife of the operating manager was herself very much concerned about the productivity of the workers, many of whom, as I said, were women. She knew that these women needed to be free of worry about what their children were doing. She was concerned about having schools on the property. She was concerned about the diet of the workers - the caloric value and the content of what they ate. Everybody was fed, by the way. As part of the compensation I think that all of the employees got one full meal and one light meal every day. This was a case of enlightened self-interest. These workers, by the way, were not the poorest of the poor. These were farm workers. The employers were very concerned about the health of their workers. They had volleyball leagues and other sports, including soccer for the men. It was quite a setup.

I know that there were other flower growers who operated on a smaller scale who didn't do many, if any, of these things. I'm sure that there were growers who didn't give a damn about how much and what kind of fertilizer they used and whether that would affect the water supply. Of course, Colombian institutions were not geared up to deal with this. There was no Colombian equivalent of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) at the time,

though there is now. At this point such institutions were beginning to be established in South America. You see this process in Chile, Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil, but all to greatly varying degrees, both in terms of their effectiveness and their impact - as well as the support they get from the respective governments.

So that's my view of the Colombian flower industry. I was always impressed by it. At heart, this is the same thing as producing carrots, potatoes, peas, fruit, or light manufactured goods. Quite frankly, the way you grow these flowers involves setting everything up on a production line basis. The product has to be coming off the line and going into the next phase at a certain time. The flowers have to get to the airplane at a certain point.

Then they get to the United States, and there's where they face the countervailing duties. Frankly, the U.S. industries want to protect their interests and themselves. They are quick to charge dumping when, in fact, it is often not a case of dumping at all. The fact is that when the peak period in the market passes, you sell those flowers for whatever you can get. The market determines the price. It isn't that these Colombian producers are necessarily offering the flowers at a lower price. That argument about dumping gets the U.S. Department of Commerce and the USTR (Office of the United States Trade Representative) all worked up.

Q: To go back just a bit, I would think that anybody who is trying to push our drug policy runs into the problem that we have Senators who are adamant about doing something about drugs. At the same time, they're worried about protecting their tobacco industry. Did you ever have that comparison thrown in your face? I'm talking about the people at the lowest level, the coca leaf or marijuana producers, compared to the tobacco farmer. Did this comparison ever come up?

GILLESPIE: Not to the tobacco farmer as such. I think it did come up - it may have been in the newspapers. However, it really wasn't that sharp an issue. When did Everett Koop enter office as Surgeon General?

Q: He would have come in under President Reagan. In a way, he turneout to be not what Reagan wanted.

GILLESPIE: He's the one who said that tobacco is harmful to you. That was just about this time. My recollection is that there were articles in the press about tobacco and cigarettes, and I'm sure that somebody must have drawn the parallel with narcotics at some point. However, I didn't have to defend the U.S. on that score. What they were really going after at that point were the stories out of Hawaii. We were trying to get the Colombians to eradicate, that is, use herbicides against drugs, and particularly marijuana. They were using some herbicides on marijuana. We were barred from using those herbicides in the United States, and particularly where we grow the most marijuana, which is in the lush, mountain regions of Hawaii. In Hawaii the DEA people can't go onto the land because of legal barriers. We were telling the Colombians, “Go in and get that marijuana trafficker.” They said, “Yes, but you can't go in and get that marijuana trafficker in the U.S., and we can't, either.” We said, “Well, we don't care about your laws.”

Q: Tony, what's left on our list regarding Colombia?

GILLESPIE: Regarding Colombia? I think that we want to talk a little bit about business promotion and some aspects of consular activities. I'll have to remember that some of Oliver North's Iran-Contra activities spilled over into Colombia and San Andres Island. We can go into that next time. Some other things are likely to come up, but we've really covered everything else on the list we started with.

Q: Then, at the end, we might talk about when you left Colombia and how you felt about what you had accomplished, particularly on the narcotics side, as well as drug relations.

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Today is December 16, 1996. Tony, let's start here with businespromotion.

GILLESPIE: Yes. During the last couple of decades Colombia has been identified as an area with major petroleum reserves. That's not surprising, given the fact that it has the spill over, or whatever you call it, of the Lake Maracaibo field in Venezuela, which is one of the richest oil reserves in the world. This area is increasingly a source of petroleum for the United States. Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s the Colombians used a contractual arrangement to open up their oil reserves, which were considered part of Colombia's natural patrimony. They were, obviously, state property.

I may have mentioned previously that it was provided in either Article 1 or Article 2 of the Colombian Constitution of 1886 or 1887 that economic activity was a responsibility of the state. Statism was early enshrined in that version of the Colombian Constitution. The Constitution was rewritten after I left Colombia in 1990.

These large, new oil reserves were discovered in Colombia. We were dealing with a situation in which they could begin to see in the petroleum sector prospects for moving from an oil importing economy to an oil exporting economy. They had set up what they called “association contracts,” which were pretty reasonable. While they guaranteed a level of income to the Colombian state through ECOPETROL (Colombian Petroleum Enterprise), as it was called, the private enterprise companies which were the prospectors and extractors of petroleum could make a very good profit from their operations. Particularly with regard to United States companies, Armand Hammer and the Occidental Petroleum Company were able to enter the Colombian market. That brought with it the construction of a huge, pipeline. Bechtel Corporation of San Francisco had won the major contract to build it. Bechtel brought in all kinds of sub-contractors in that area.

At about the same time or during roughly the same period extensive coal reserves were discovered or defined in the Guajira Peninsula in northern Colombia. Exxon Corporation of Houston, TX, received the rights to exploit that coal find. Exxon was in the course of building the largest open pit coal mine in the world. Basically, they were digging into this

desert peninsula which didn't support much human life at all. All of that area surrounds the Lake Maracaibo basin in what are Venezuela and Colombia today.

Projects like the petroleum and coal projects brought in tremendous sub-contracting activity. You had everything from machinery suppliers to other kinds of activities. This also boosted the Colombian economy. Colombia had the reputation of not having had to renege on any of its official debt during the 1982 financial crisis in Latin America. Colombia continued to service its debt and still had access to commercial and financial markets in the rest of the world - Europe, the United States, and Asia.

The Colombian economy was doing well. There were still a lot of restrictions, import permits were required, and there were tariffs and other kinds of barriers to trade. There was a mixture of statism and a healthy economy that presented many opportunities for U.S. business.

Of course, on top of all this was this god-awful security situation, which was, in large measure, directly related to the narcotics traffic. However, it also reflected what I think we touched on earlier. That is, this atmosphere of criminality in Colombia was directly reflected in kidnaping. These kidnaping took place for political reasons, for quasi- political and economic reasons, and they also involved straight economic crime. There were threats of kidnaping and actual kidnaping of either government officials or senior business executives to send some kind of political message. Political figures were being kidnaped - and even journalists a little later on. Then there were cases of kidnaping involving the guerrillas, the revolutionary armed forces that we have talked about. We mentioned the ELN (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional - National Liberation Army), the EPL (Ejercito Popular de Liberacion - People's Liberation Army) and the M-19, the April 19th Movement. These groups were carrying out kidnaping aimed at making people understand that they controlled the regions in which they operated. The kidnaping were also a source of funds. The kidnappers were just being paid off. Then, you just had people who were out

kidnaping persons for ransom - to make money. That was the security situation which overlaid the economic opportunities.

Our Embassy was a focal point for a lot of enquiries about doing business in Colombia. American businesses wanted to know what the security situation was in Colombia. They wanted to know how honest the government was. Colombia was considered to be corrupt. The official sector had a level of what we would clearly define as corruption. I've always thought that in Latin America certain practices are not considered corrupt or as corrupt on their scale of values as they would be in our terms. However, everybody understands that at a certain level a payoff is a payoff, and that kind of activity was going on pretty regularly.

I had seen in Grenada how important trade and investment promotion could be, if you looked beyond the immediate situation, in terms of how significant these matters were becoming to the United States. Our foreign trade account was becoming an increasingly important part of our economy and of our own economic well being.

I may have mentioned that one of my mentors in the Foreign Service - for whom I never worked directly but from whom I received a lot of good advice and to whom I talked a lot - was George Landau. He was a career Foreign Service Officer who had started out in commercial assignments and then moved beyond that. By the time that I met him he was the Country Director for Iberian Peninsular Affairs in the Bureau of European Affairs. He later went on to be Ambassador to Paraguay, Chile, and Venezuela. I hope that I didn't leave one of his assignments out.

Interestingly enough, he had a number of personal contacts in Colombia. His parents were buried there. They had retired in Colombia. He and I had talked a lot about the role of the Ambassador vis-a-vis the business community. George's comments to me were roughly along the lines of, “I can promise you that the task of being a U.S. Ambassador involves many ingredients. A major part of these ingredients has to do with our national security and with what one thinks of as traditional diplomatic activities of communications

between the two governments and capitals, making sure that U.S. national interests are properly protected, preserved, and advanced." He said, "One of those interests is our economic interest. We should not forget that. It may involve potatoes. When all is said and done, how well an Embassy or an Ambassador has recognized where the economic and business interests of the United States ought to fit is a significant measure of his performance." I took all of this to heart. When I got down to Colombia, I found that my predecessor had allowed to slip a practice that earlier American Ambassadors had followed, and which I had seen as a junior officer all over the world. That was that the Ambassador would arrange periodic meetings with the American business community in the capital of the country where he was located. I arrived in Colombia at a very interesting time - and I think this was also the case in the rest of Latin America. The Ambassador would meet with what was called the American business community - what one might call the expatriate American business corps in the country.

Well, increasingly that American business corps was less and less made up of United States citizens and was becoming a lot more international. For example, I found that the head of Exxon in Colombia happened to be a Canadian. The head of IBM in Colombia was a Brazilian, and so forth. I learned that an awful lot of people who represented U.S. business interests in Colombia were Colombians or of other nationalities. Some were British, some Canadian, and some were French.

My country team in Colombia included a Commercial Counselor who was a very thoughtful man and who was bilingual in Spanish. He had been engaged in business and had come into what was called the Foreign Commercial Service by this time in the mid- 1980s. It was no longer the State Department's Foreign Service in the mid-1980s. I had an excellent, Economic Counselor and a very good DCM. I met with a small number of members of the country team and asked them how we should deal with this American business community, which was increasingly international in character. We concluded that the U.S. economic interest was being affected and driven, in large measure, in Bogota and elsewhere in the country, by people who were not U.S. citizens. However, they were

just as important in the corporate structure. For example, if a senior partner in a law firm in Colombia was associated with the law firm of Arnold and Porter in the United States and represented the interests of Chrysler, we should be hearing from him and should pass on useful information to him. So we set up approximately monthly meetings at the Embassy residence. We invited people whom the Commercial Section knew to be as directly associated as possible with U.S. business interests.

Q: I have heard that the fact that so many non-Americans represented American firms is a reflection of local tax law. We are about the only country that taxes our own expatriates, and this tends to make American citizens too expensive to send abroad. Therefore, people of other nationalities often represent American firms. What do you think of that?

GILLESPIE: There may have been some of that, but I think that at this particular time, in the mid to late 1980s, there were still some benefits that could accrue to expatriate Americans. They were given some tax breaks. I am not an expert in this matter. My wife became involved in it in the 1970s, when she was a contract employee in Nicaragua. She fit into the category of expatriate Americans, as it turned out.

I don't remember all of the details but I would say that, given everything that has happened since then, what I see today, and I think that it was occurring then, was that the range of executive salaries was about the same wherever you went. Today, if the economy in a given country has reached a certain level of development and maturity, people who do business in that environment are going to have to be paid at a level that is competitive with what they would be paid elsewhere. That is, if you want that level of person. This results in the globalization of executive salaries and allowances in some ways.

My impression is that in Colombia during the mid to late 1980s there may have been a differential between the salaries paid to American executives and those paid to other foreign executives. That is, an executive in Houston, Texas, would be paid more to work in Bogota, Colombia, than a Colombian, Argentine, or German citizen. However, I think

that, increasingly, those differences, in salary terms, were narrowing. If you looked at the total compensation package, there might be some savings involved in hiring somebody who was already resident in Colombia. However, my guess is that bringing a German - or even an Argentine - to Bogota to work for, say, General Motors would mean that such an individual would have to have a benefits package which would be comparable to what you would have to give a comparable executive from Detroit, Michigan. Or you wouldn't get the quality of person you wanted. Increasingly, you see now - less than 10 years later - that executives, whatever their nationality, share backgrounds in terms of such things as study at the Harvard Business School, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), or Stanford. It doesn't seem to make any difference what their nationality is. What you are buying is that skills package.

For us in the Embassy the citizenship question was an issue. My inclination was to tell the American business community as much as I possibly could about U.S. policy in Colombia and in the rest of Latin America. I would give them my views on how other events in the world were having an impact on our relations with Colombia and on the business environment. I made a practice of telling them about trade policy developments in Washington. It seemed to me that the Embassy's value to U.S. business interests in Colombia would require a two way street. I would have to give them useful information.

I would hope, in return, that they would begin to share information with us which would be focused and to the point in terms of what was going on in Colombia. For example, from such information could we understand corruption better? Could we understand how narcotics money laundering and illicit activity in the business sector related to the narcotics traffic had an impact on business developments and thereby might affect U.S. interests later on? What would be the risks to U.S. investors? My sources of information on these subjects were, obviously, the Government of Colombia in the traditional way. Government officials were talking about these matters from one angle. The collection of this kind of economic intelligence from such intelligence sources was incidental at this time.

A major issue was whether the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) should be collecting information about narcotics. It was already trying to collect information on terrorist groups and guerrilla - national security issues. So CIA sources were not as yet really geared into the collection of economic intelligence.

I felt that these business people, regardless of their nationality,would be useful sources of information, and we would have to go to them.

Well, we had our discussions, and I concluded that we would open our doors to business people, regardless of nationality. We collected their names and checked them out, primarily through DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), the Central Intelligence Agency, and other agencies, such as the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation). We had a Legal Attache Office, which was the cover name used for FBI activities in Colombia. We wanted to make sure that individuals who were representing U.S. companies would not come back and bite us later on. We wanted to avoid having someone say, “You should have known that that person was an agent of Cuban Intelligence,” or something like that. So that's all that we really did in the way of checking their backgrounds.

I met with these business people regularly. I sought every opportunity to attend functions of the American Chamber of Commerce and to go to the newly-constructed World Trade Center in Bogota. I felt that one of my major duties as Ambassador was to show the U.S. flag, to travel in the country, and to visit some of the major economic installations. I went to Occidental Petroleum's drilling sites. I flew in a helicopter along the entire length of the new pipeline which was under construction. This took the better part of a day. I went to the big Exxon coal mine. There was a British company which was actually printing Colombia's currency. It had a major installation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and there were significant U.S. investments involved in this activity. The U.S. investors had asked if I would visit their operation in Bogota, which I did. I felt that this was part and parcel of the job of the American Ambassador.

There were American airlines active in Colombia. These were the days when Eastern Airlines and Pan American Airways were flying into Colombia. Braniff Airlines had been involved in Colombia. These are airlines which no longer exist or which operate on a far different level. There was a constant set of issues involving them with the Colombian Government.

My Economic Officers from the State Department and Commercial Officers from the Department of Commerce continued to be busy in these areas. We had a Petroleum and Minerals Officer in the Embassy who did superb work.

Furthermore, the Embassy in Bogota was big enough so that we had a considerable contingent of junior officers. Nearly all of them were assigned to the Consular Section. However, I was blessed with two, absolutely outstanding Consuls General who headed the Consular Section. One was named Arturo Macias. He was replaced by David Hobbs. These men were Foreign Service Officers who had specialized in the consular field. They saw their job as involving a major facility for providing consular services. That is, issuing visas, both non-immigrant and immigrant, protecting American citizens, and, at the same time, developing the Consular Officers and the Foreign Service National staff assigned to the Consular Section. They encouraged their staffs to do their job more effectively and to become better professionals at what they were doing. Both of these Consuls General took their jobs very seriously. They would come to me and ask me to discuss the performance of the Consular Section. Both of them had common sense approaches to their position. They knew the laws and regulations in detail. In my view they had superb judgment and knew how to apply it.

Macias went on eventually to the American Embassy in Beijing, where he was involved recently in some of the major human rights problems concerning Harry Woo and other human rights activists. He received press attention in that regard. David Hobbs went on to move well up in the consular service. He became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Consular Affairs and then Ambassador to Guyana in Georgetown,

Guyana. Before that he became Political Counselor and then DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) in Bogota.

Their idea was to help to develop the Consular Officers assigned to their section. By developing them, they made it possible for us to take these Consular Officers and give them additional duties in the Embassy, if the officers concerned so desired. I remember one young officer, Rich Sanders, who came to me after discussing the matter with his boss, Art Macias, and the DCM. He said to me, “Ambassador, I've talked to everybody, and they say it's okay if you say it's okay. I would like to be more directly involved in the petroleum mining sector and do some work in that area, on my own. Would you mind?” The Economic Counselor thought that that was a good idea, so we took some of our travel and representation funds and gave this officer, who was on his first tour in the Foreign Service, the resources he needed to travel and work on petroleum developments. He produced some outstanding reports on the petroleum sector, which really helped out the Economic Section. As far as I was concerned, this helped in this young officer's career development.

That was the way we looked at business affairs. I remember vividly the concerns which a number of American business people had about corruption and personal security. Obviously, there was only so much that we could do for them.

Q: If a businessman came to you, either from a firm already well established in Colombia or, perhaps, a firm that was considering coming into Colombia, and they referred to both the security and corruption problems and asked you whether it was advisable to open up an office in Colombia, what was your response?

GILLESPIE: Well, we gave them the cold, hard facts on the security situation. My Security Officer was superb in dealing with such questions. He, or one of his Assistant Regional Security Officers, would sit down with the businessman and lay it all out. Eventually, we had a very large staff in the Security Office, because we had Americans doing protective

security for me and my wife, in addition to other duties. The Security Officer in charge of that office said that his staff was in Bogota to handle protective security, but he also wanted them to see how the Embassy operated. He would rotate them through the various Embassy functions, and they would end up giving some of these briefings. We would send a business person down to them and say that I was interested in this matter or that the Security Office ought to be interested in it. The Security Office would have a map on the wall and charts to support their presentation. They would say, “Look, this is the situation concerning kidnaping and crime. These are the areas where the guerrillas operate.” Let's say that the businessman was interested in some aspect of coal processing in North Central Colombia. The Security Officer would say, “This is the city where you're thinking of operating. These are the guerrilla groups that operate around here. These are the crime statistics in that area.” We tried to make sure that the business people understood that. We also told them, “This is how other business corporations deal with these problems. They hire security people locally. Here is a list of the people they hire. We make no guarantees on this. You may want to consult with them. You should go to the Chamber of Commerce and talk to them, because they deal with these same problems.” We tried to make sure that business peoples' eyes were as open as they could be, in that regard.

Similarly, regarding corruption, we worked very hard and were successful in developing close and cooperative relations with virtually all U.S. business firms and other organizations connected with them. There was still strong reluctance on the part of many business people to open up to us on what corruption they were seeing. They weren't quite sure what might blow back at them in that area, although we would make sure that they knew that we had no intention of running to the Colombian Government and pointing out a particular person or office, saying that “This is the bad person involved” in a way which would finger the American company as the source of the information. I tried to do everything that I could to get that kind of information and take it to the Colombian Government, without endangering the source.

If I was sitting with the President of Colombia and had an opportunity to do so, I would say, “Look, we've heard that on these import permits the current, going price for people in this office is about X number of dollars,” or whatever it might have been. I would say, “You should know that, Mr. President. This is awful for Colombia. This is keeping Americans who are subject to the American Corrupt Practices Act from coming to your country, investing, and doing business. It hurts them and it certainly doesn't help your country and its reputation.” The President of Colombia would often react. He would say, “Gee, I didn't know that.” He would pick up a phone, call somebody, and often there would be a change of some kind. How long the change would last and how permanent it was always remained a question. I felt that it was important to do that.

I think that Ambassadors whom I know - my colleagues in Buenos Aires and Caracas, for example - were doing the same thing. It's part of the job of being an Ambassador. Just as in the field of consular affairs, we always told our constituents that we want them to have as level a playing field as possible. We may not be able to change the laws and we can't change the mores and customs of a given country. However, we certainly don't want our Americans to be at a disadvantage.

Well, in the case of corruption, you start out at an immediate disadvantage if corrupt practices are going on, and American firms decide that they're going to follow U.S. law and not be corrupt. So the Ambassador has to fight for them to have this matter taken care of. I remember one specific case. At the time I wasn't sure of all of the details, but I learned more about it later. In 1987 I was approached separately by representatives of both Bell Helicopter and United Technologies. One of the affiliates of United Technologies produces the Sikorsky helicopter. Representatives of the two American companies said that there was a competition to provide helicopters for the Colombian Air Force. The two American companies said that they were very disturbed that the French company, Aerospatiale, had won the contract with its big, Puma helicopters. They said that they did not think that the

award had been fair. They felt that either their bids had not been given fair consideration or that they were not given the opportunity to do what the French company was able to do.

I consulted with my country team and asked its members what we could find out about this matter. They couldn't find out a whole lot, but from what we could learn, it seemed that the U.S. firms were probably on pretty solid ground in complaining to me. I had developed a relationship with General Rafael Samudio, the then Colombian Minister of Defense. I went to Samudio at a private meeting - just the two of us. I told him that I had heard a report that the award of the helicopter contract had not been fairly made and that this seemed credible to me. I said that, if this were true, I was upset. I said that I was prepared to go to the President of Colombia and raise holy Cain about this. I said that two U.S. manufacturers were involved in this matter which apparently had been handled in this way.

General Samudio and I had a friendly relationship. We'd done a lot together in other areas. He looked at me and said, “You're really serious about this, aren't you?” I said, “Yes, I'm absolutely serious, General. I'm going to follow this matter all the way.” It was very interesting. Within a matter of about two weeks, I received a phone call from General Samudio himself. He said, “We're reopening the bidding on the helicopters. We have already informed Bell and United Technologies of this, but you yourself may want to tell the two American firms that we would welcome their bids. This is what we want,” and so forth. They already had the specifications desired. General Samudio said, “This presents real problems for me because I've already signed the contracts with Aerospatiale,” the French company. This turned out to be a pretty large contract. Samudio said, “However, we're going to do this. I don't want there to be any questions about this contract.” So I called the two American companies and told them what Samudio had told me.

Eventually, Bell Helicopter chose not to enter a new bid, for whatever reasons. However, Sikorsky and United Technologies did. They called me and said that they were going to bid. They said that financing arrangements would be very important and that they needed all of the support that the American Embassy could give them. They added that they knew

the technical specifications that the Colombian Air Force was interested in and that they could meet them.

At this point there was only one U.S. firm involved in the bidding. I personally must have devoted two full weeks of my time, spread out over a longer period. Members of the Embassy staff spent a great deal of time on working with people from the Defense Security Assistance Agency in Washington to use some security assistance facilities that we had to improve the financing package. Sikorsky worked with various commercial lenders. I talked to those lenders, as did the staff of the Embassy Economic Section, to make sure that we gave them as straight a picture of the Colombian economy as we could. Later on, General Samudio telephoned me and said, “You can call the people up at the headquarters of United Technologies in Connecticut and tell them that they have won the bid for the helicopters.”

I felt that this was a case where the U.S. Ambassador and the staff of the U.S. Embassy had really jumped in and made a difference. This was 1987, and efforts of this kind were still not always made. It was happening around the world and so it was not unique. However, it wasn't the traditional Foreign Service approach to matters of this kind. I found that we could do this. We all sat around later with Sikorsky representatives. They were very nice about it. They brought some champagne and said, “Let's celebrate. We've never had this kind of service from an American Embassy before. We think this is great.” I said, “Well, neither I nor the Embassy staff has ever done this before, either.” We liked the outcome and felt good about it. It was a significant accomplishment to be able to chalk up real, dollar sales of U.S. equipment.

Q: Did you get any reaction on this from your French diplomaticolleague?

GILLESPIE: The French Ambassador treated me very coldly for the remainder of my tour of duty in Colombia. We spoke to each other, but relations with him were distant. He tried to undo the award of the helicopter contract. Later on, General Samudio called me on the

phone and said, “Boy, you really set me up on this. The French Ambassador isn't giving up. He's back in here, yelling and screaming about this.”

The same thing happened again in 1996, but the Blackhawk Sikorsky helicopter is still the aircraft of choice for the Colombians. We initially sold Colombia five helicopters, with spare parts. If I remember correctly, it was probably an $80-100 million sale, which is not peanuts. The sale meant jobs in the U.S. for the people who build these helicopters, and it obviously helped our balance of payments and foreign trade. In any event, it also did other things - and this was one of the reasons that we were so interested in getting an American company into the Colombian helicopter market. I happen to believe that, through these relationships with a country's military establishment, you extend our country's influence. There is no question about it that if you are the supplier of their helicopters, then your people have an opportunity to show them what's good about the U.S. and get to know them and work on them. Also, it established a basis for subsequent procurement of the same kind of aircraft. If I am right about this, up to 1996 we have now sold Colombia 15 Blackhawk helicopters. This means that the total contracts for these sales probably have amounted to some $400-500 million - say, half a billion dollars' worth of sales. In October, 1996, the Colombians announced that they were going to buy additional Blackhawk helicopters. So this initial contract built something which has continued.Later on, after this initial contract for the helicopters, General Samudio contacted me and said, “I need to buy for the Colombian Ministry of Defense about $70-80 million of non- lethal equipment. I need to buy trucks, ambulances, cots, and other equipment for my troops.” He added, “I know that you're going to be interested in this. However, I'm going to need financing. I need to figure out how we can get financing. At present all of our trucks and ambulances are Ford Motor Company products. What can you do to help me?”

Well, I checked into it and found out that there were all kinds of export licensing requirements. It didn't make a whole lot of difference whether the equipment was lethal or non-lethal. There were real limitations on how the Export-Import Bank of the United States

could assist with financing and providing credit for these sales, because this involved military equipment.

That set me out on a new jousting match. I went to Washington and met with a woman named Rita Rodriguez, who was a Vice President and a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank. She was originally appointed to the Export-Import Bank by the Carter administration. However, she had been kept on. Her term had been extended during the Reagan administration, which was when I was in touch with her. Rita Rodriguez is married to a Latin American and is also a Cuban-American herself. She is a very capable economist from, I believe, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) or some other well-known university. She is very knowledgeable.

I developed a collaborative relationship with Rita Rodriguez, much to the annoyance of John Bohn, the then President of the Export-Import Bank. I helped to engineer, here in Washington, an amendment to the Export-Import Bank's legal authority for lending which would permit Ex-Im support for sales of military equipment if it could be shown that this equipment was to be used, to a substantial degree, in anti-narcotics activity. We were able to show that the Colombian military out in the field was doing exactly that. These trucks and ambulances were being used to carry people and do different things related to anti-narcotics activity. It took two years and two sessions of Congress to get the amendment passed. However, we got that legislation through, and it is still in force. We were able to get Ex-Im financing for that $70-80 million order for that kind of equipment. Samudio held off procuring the equipment until we could get the legislation approved and arrange for Ex-Im financing.In the case of both transactions we didn't pay Samudio a dime. There was no payoff to Samudio from United Technologies or any other U.S. vendor. The Ex-Im Bank and the Department of Defense, in the two cases, were directly involved. We found that these American companies could do business with the Government of Colombia without having to pay any kickback.

Now, exactly at the same time the Colombian Air Force wanted to upgrade its jet fighter fleet. It had a lot of old equipment, some of it of U.S. origin, including some A-37 aircraft, a small jet acquired years ago. It is used as an attack fighter but it isn't very powerful. The Colombian Air Force wanted something bigger and more capable. We had good relations with the Colombian Air Force. We had already sold them some helicopters and were selling them other equipment for anti-narcotics purposes. Obviously, we were not going to sell them advanced jet fighter aircraft. Our policy on arms transfers precludes that. We made one exception in the case of Venezuela but we weren't going to do that in the case of Colombia.

It turned out that IAI, Israeli Aircraft Industries, signed a contract with Colombia to provide a number of Kfir jets, which have a lot of U.S. components. Some U.S. licensing was required for this transaction, but it was otherwise strictly an Israeli sale. For the sake of discussion let's say that the was worth $250 million. I'm not sure that the Israeli Ambassador, Yakov Gotal, had really thought this through. He was a retired Israeli General, probably in his late 60s, and just as rough as a cob. He had a delightful wife about his age. We had become rather friendly with them. He had none of the diplomatic patina that one might expect from an Ambassador to any country. He had a guttural voice. His English was accented. He worked very hard on his Spanish which, nevertheless, was also heavily accented.

Jakob told me on the golf course one day, “This is a sick society. 10 percent is what that Kfir deal cost.” I tried to get him to tell me how the 10% was parceled out and spread around, but he just didn't want to go that far into the details. He was angry that it was costing $25 million in commissions of some kind to somebody - with the money probably going into Colombian Air Force pockets - to get that sale. That's the level of corruption that was going on. I don't think that any individual got all of that money. It was probably spread around to some extent, and I'll bet that a number of Colombian Air Force officers got lots of money as a result.

Q: If we may consider consular problems, did any consular questions come up to you when you were Ambassador in Colombia which were particularly troublesome or dramatic?

GILLESPIE: There were some that were both dramatic and troublesome. When I arrived in Colombia in 1987, I found that a U.S. citizen, an employee of the Tenneco Company, had been kidnaped and was being held for ransom. I had been involved in cases of kidnaping when I was in Mexico. Here I saw the problem from another vantage point. An American had been kidnaped. We had a U.S. Government policy on kidnaping of not paying ransom to the kidnappers. This is when I really got into the kidnaping business. I found that a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Security, Carl Ackerman, was working for Tenneco. I had a phone call from Carl, whom I knew. He had been senior to me in the Foreign Service. He had been the director of the operations center in the State Department and was a very bright guy.

Anyway, he called me and asked if he could come and see me. When he arrived, he said, “I want you to know what we're doing here. We're advising Tenneco on this kidnaping case.” He said that this was their approach and he laid it out for me. He said, “We tell people that they should not pay ransom, but if it comes down to a question of fish or cut bait, we'll work these things out. They always start out at very high ransom levels, and you usually wind up settling for 10% of what was first demanded.” In this case I forget the size of the ransom demanded, but let's just say that whoever was holding this man had asked for $50 million. As I recall it, they settled for 5% of that about $2.5 million. That's when I learned that corporations were insuring their executives through Lloyd's of London.

Yes. I learned that people like Lloyd's of London and other insurance companies sell insurance policies against executive kidnaping. There is a whole industry of negotiators available to consult with. Interestingly enough, it may have been around this time that I

started reading mystery novels by the British author, Dick Francis. In one of his novels he described exactly this kind of thing. That was fascinating.

I found that, usually, the level of corporate interest in the kidnaping of business executives was very high. For example, such senior executives as the chairmen of the Board of Directors, the presidents of given companies, and the CEO's (Chief Executive Officers) were concerned about their employees being kidnaped, even if the employee who had been kidnaped was, say, only a geologist working for an oil company. I would get a phone call, a letter, or a visit from a very senior officer of the company concerned, because these executives wanted to show their employees, their executives, and the families of the victim that they were doing what they could. They wanted as much help as they could get from anybody they could get it from.

Q: You know, I got involved with Tenneco when I was in the Embassy in Athens in 1973 or so, because the Chairman of the Board came to Greece to see about some employees of the company who had been kidnaped in Ethiopia. I told him at the time, “For God's sake, don't you go into Ethiopia.” We sent out a number of cables on this issue. GILLESPIE: Interesting. Well, when kidnaping are involved, the Ambassador has to be directly knowledgeable, interested, and engaged in it. I did this. A lot of the people coming in to see me had been senior, government officials involved in such things, like Carl Ackerman. I also had to make sure that we were minding our P's and Q's with the Government of Colombia. Colombia had a law which basically stated that you may not negotiate with guerrillas. I couldn't stop a private company from negotiating with guerrillas but I wanted to make sure that the officials of the company concerned knew what the Colombian law was. My Security Officer and other people in the Embassy were ready to help them, give them as much information as possible, and engage in as much contact work with the Colombian Government as we could. That was one level of consular work, if you will, that was a little out of the ordinary and which called for the involvement of the Ambassador.

Q: How did the kidnaping of the Tenneco employee work out?

GILLESPIE: In that case the person was eventually released. We had several other such cases during the time I was Ambassador to Colombia. We had two American citizens who were kidnaped at the same time. One of them had a heart attack and died. Another American in a later case had a heart attack and survived. We had American missionaries who were kidnaped by the guerrillas and held for lengthy periods of time. It was a very messy situation. My recollection is that most of the Americans who were kidnaped were eventually released. As I recall, we only had one fatality during my time in Colombia, and that was a natural death from a heart attack. Nobody shot or killed him, though his death could have been attributable to a lack of medication or care. There isn't a whole lot of difference there.

I didn't get directly involved in traditional consular work, such as prison visits and so forth. Where I did get involved, and this was a spin off from consular work, was the constant demand for visas and for special treatment for Colombians wishing to go to the United States. This is worth mentioning, as, I'm sure, others have mentioned it.

For example, I would get a phone call from the wife of a cabinet minister who would say, “My Aunt Susie needs to go to the United States. Can you, Mr. Ambassador, please get her a visa quickly? Can't you just give her a visa?” So we had to set up a system for dealing with such cases. I would say, in the nicest, possible way, that I myself do not issue visas. I would say, “Please contact the Consul General.” As I told you, I had two, superb Consuls General during my tour as Ambassador to Colombia. When a visa case came up, one of them would say, “That's my job, Mr. Ambassador. Leave it with me.”

Q: Also, you, as an Ambassador, cannot legally issue a visa.

GILLESPIE: That's right. I couldn't give the person the visa. All could do was funnel or channel the application.

Q: An interesting part of our visa law is that the one function whicthe Ambassador does not technically control is the issuance of visas.

GILLESPIE: right. I could agree with or approve our system for handling requests for special treatment for certain visa applicants, which I did. We discussed this matter. My two Consuls General gave me the same advice, which I followed. They told us how to handle this kind of case. Their advice was, “Mr. Ambassador, just tell these people that you don't handle visas yourself but that the Consul General will handle it. If it's a high level person, give him or her a certain telephone number. If it's a low level person, give him or her a different number. They'll tell me that you told them to use this telephone number, and I'll deal with the case. Don't worry. It will be taken care of, and you'll never be embarrassed.” That was exactly the way this arrangement worked. I think that, probably, in 99% of these cases the person was eligible for a visa anyhow. There was never the slightest question that they were going to get it, and they really weren't going to be put at the head of the line. Nevertheless, the Consuls General knew how to give these people the impression that they probably had been put at the head of the line. (Laughter)

This is an issue which comes up all the time, in nearly all countries where we have Embassies. There is a high demand for U.S. visas, and only limited resources to issue them. Limitations on our resources are increasingly common, even though the consular function is fairly well protected in terms of budgetary resources. Another issue which was a source of true difficulty was the abominable behavior, from time to time, of selected members of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and U.S. Customs at ports of entry in the United States. The Colombian Foreign Minister, Julio Londono, was searched in the United States. I think that that is one of the reasons why he never liked me and carried a big load of animosity toward me. I'm convinced that one of the reasons for his attitude had to do with the fact that he, while Foreign Minister of Colombia and holding a diplomatic visa and passport, was stopped and searched. This was apparently because he was from Colombia, the country which produced drugs. I had a phone call from the President of

Colombia on that. The Colombian Ambassador in Washington protested to the Department of State. That was the other side of this coin that one gets involved in and has to deal with. There isn't a whole lot that you can do about it, because the damage has been done by the time you hear about it.

Other things happened, involving cases which were truly more upsetting, in a way. There were incidents which concerned good, honest Colombian business people whom I might have heard of or met at some point. They would tell me these stories. They wouldn't pick up the phone and scream and yell, but I would hear about it later. They would say, “Well, my wife was strip searched,” or something like that. My stomach would turn over when I heard that, and I would say to myself, “Damn it! What are we doing to these people? Don't we know how to treat them? There's a way to do this kind of thing.” However, there's very little that I could do to deal with that situation, so I had to figure out how to grin and bear it. Other matters did not truly involve consular cases, but we had a terrible tragedy in Colombia. One of our Marine Security Guards was shot and killed accidentally in the Marine House by the head of security for the Shell Oil Company. Gun accidents are accidental, which means that they shouldn't have happened. However, they do. The Marine Guard was killed with his own gun. The security chief for Shell was examining the pistol, a heavy, .45 caliber pistol. He made two, terrible mistakes. He didn't check to make sure that the gun was not loaded and he pointed it at the owner of the gun. We had excellent Marine Security Guards, and the Marine who was killed was a bright, young fellow. The gun almost literally blew him away in the Marine House, with many other members of the Marine detachment and several members of the Embassy community there. Of course, we had to go through the whole process of reporting an American death abroad - in this case, a member of the Embassy family. We had a memorial service at the Embassy residence. It was truly disheartening and disturbing to have that happen. This is one aspect of the job that an Ambassador has to deal with. However, I must say that the Consular Officers concerned - the Consul General and all the others - handled this case very well.

Another major concern that we became involved in - not so much involving the Ambassador directly, although it did to some extent - was adoptions. Colombia was a major source of children for adoption in the mid to late 1980s. I would get phone calls from Members of Congress, either about themselves or about their constituents who wanted to adopt a child and felt that they were not getting the proper treatment in Colombia. They wanted the Embassy to intervene in some way. Again, it was a case where our Consular Section became expert in dealing with this. We had some truly caring and thoughtful people who dealt with this area, both Americans and Colombians. They did really good work.

On the business side I might mention another, major dispute which I didn't touch on previously. I think that it has come to mark a lot of our trade relationships during this period. This involved intellectual property. Colombia, like many other countries, was pirating audio and videotapes and things of that nature. Satellites were coming into service, and people were taping material over satellite transmissions. They weren't just handing it around but were selling it. Jack Valenti, the President of the Motion Picture Exporters' Association, came to Colombia several times to discuss this matter. He stayed with me at the Embassy residence. We would go in to see Colombian Government officials on this matter. The government didn't really have a policy on the situation and wasn't sure how to handle it.

We had similar problems with pharmaceutical licensing and patenting. This whole area of intellectual property rights and patent protection involved many countries whose development had reached a certain stage. They were beginning to understand that patent and copyright protection was important, although they had previously felt that it didn't hurt them to allow this kind of activity to go on. Until they began to develop, they didn't care much about the matter. However, all of a sudden Colombian authors were becoming known around the world.

For example, Gabriel Garcia Marquez had won the Nobel Prize for literature. He was world renowned, as were other Colombian authors. Incidentally, I will mention him later as a consular case.

Regarding this intellectual property matter, I was interested to see that certain members of the Colombian Government and the intellectual and economic elite, if you will, were beginning to say, “Wait a minute, this intellectual property issue does not just involve the industrialized and developed countries trying to freeze us out. We're going to have these same problems to deal with as our economy develops and the level of our activity goes up, whether it's cultural or whatever. For example, software development, licensing of patents, and so forth.” So we were able actually to develop some cooperative efforts with the U.S. Patent Office to send people down to Colombia to move this issue along. However, it is still an area of great contention.

Let me return to Gabriel Garcia Marquez. I learned about “Gabo” before I got to Colombia. I had a phone call from Gabriel Garcia Marquez before I left for Colombia. He said, “I understand that you are the new Ambassador.” He said, “I am under a particular restriction in the U.S. I need a visa waiver every time I want to go to the United States.” He added, “I wanted to talk to you and to introduce myself to you over the telephone. I live in Havana, Cuba, or Mexico, and I rarely visit Colombia. I go to Colombia from time to time but, more often, I'm in Mexico. So my practice is the following,” and he proceeded to tell me what he would do. He said, “I'm invited frequently to New York and other parts of the United States to lecture and to do different kinds of things. I enjoy visiting the United States very much and I love the United States.”

Well, that was one aspect of this case. On the other hand the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence agencies were reporting that Gabriel Garcia Marquez was an agent of communist Cuba and things like that. This meant that he was not eligible to receive an

American visa in the ordinary way. So if he was to be allowed into the United States, he had to obtain a waiver of eligibility from the U.S. Attorney General.

He told me, “I will let you know when I want to go to the United States.” What he wanted was for me to get him a kind of blanket waiver. I found out that I couldn't give him a blanket waiver. At least, nobody in the U.S. Government was willing to consider such a thing at the time. I told him, “Please contact the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City when you need an American visa. I'd be delighted if you'd let me know when you want to go to the United States so that I'll know and can inform the U.S. Government.” This was all on the advice of people back in the Bureau of Consular Affairs in the Department of State. When I got to Colombia, this was reiterated by my Consul General.

In 1994 Gabriel Garcia Marquez introduced me to Fidel Castro in Cartagena, Colombia, at the Ibero-American Summit meeting, which I attended as an observer, after I had retired from the Foreign Service. I was the first American ever to attend such a summit meeting. “Gabo” was at this meeting, as was Castro. This was the only occasion on which I ever shook hands with Fidel Castro or ever been that close to him. I learned later that Castro said, “Who is that gringo over there?” Garcia Marquez said, “Oh, that's the former American Ambassador to Colombia. I know him. Would you like to meet him?” Castro said, “Oh, I don't much care.” Then “Gabo” asked me if I would like to meet Castro. I said, “Oh, I don't much care.” So “Gabo” said, “Why don't you come on over?” So I did, Castro and I shook hands, and that was that.

It turned out that Garcia Marquez was rather easy to deal with. Hjust wanted to make sure that he could get into the U.S.

Q: I think that the time had passed when he used that issue as a kind of red banner to attack the U.S. Time went on, and it was no longer much of an issue.

GILLESPIE: When Cuba was actively supporting the guerrilla movements in Colombia and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, I think that we had a lot of reporting that indicated

that Gabriel Garcia Marquez was a conscious agent of Castro. He may have carried money or information back and forth and done those kinds of things. By the mid to late 1980s, he was mellowing. His support of Castro was not unflinching at that stage, and it is even less so today. So he became less of a problem, and his views were not a major issue.

Another consular problem which came up when I received a telephone calls in the middle of the night from the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. I was told, “We've got an airplane up on San Andres Island. It's a U.S. plane and is carrying drugs. It is on a U.S. flight for the contras in Central America.” This was not connected with the Iran-Contra question as such but with Lt. Colonel Oliver North and his operations in support of the contras in Nicaragua. It turned out that flights of this kind were activity carried out by the FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Front) as part of the support structure put in place by Ollie North, to move weapons and supplies in and out of Nicaragua. They had been using San Andres Island as a refueling and stopover point.

Q: Where is San Andres Island?

GILLESPIE: It's in the Caribbean Sea, about 100 miles more or less due East of Bluefields, Nicaragua. It is Colombian territory. San Andres and Providencia are two islands belonging to Colombia in that area. These islands are a free trade zone for Colombia. What happened was that the Colombian authorities in San Andres checked the tail number of this airplane after it landed. It was on the alert list issued by something called the El Paso Intelligence Center, or EPIC, which was operated by the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration). However, the aircraft was on an official mission for the United States. That was a sort of interesting game to have to dance around. This matter has come up again and again. I was asked about this flight about 12 months ago by the press here in the United States, which was trying to find out more about this incident. On this occasion it didn't come up specifically in connection with the CIA or possible CIA

involvement in sales of crack cocaine, although it has usually come up in that regard. So that was Ollie North's little operation.

Colombian President Virgilio Barco had been somewhat involved in the Contadora process in Panama in connection with peace in Central America. However, by this time the situation in Central America had begun to quiet down, in any event. President Barco, unlike his predecessor, President Betancourt, was not that much interested in the Contadora process. So this was my big operation in connection with Ollie North.

Q: First of all, you got the tail number of the aircraft from the Colombians.

GILLESPIE: I went to the DEA and CIA offices in the Embassy in Bogota, which had information on this matter. We checked with everybody we could. We didn't know that Ollie North was doing this, but we had a situation where DEA and CIA learned what was involved. They informed me that this was part of the contra resupply effort, which was being paid for out of U.S. appropriated funds. The flight of this aircraft was handled by a private contractor who was being paid with U.S. appropriated funds in a legal and authorized fashion. The activity itself was authorized. However, the aircraft which had been hired to carry this cargo was suspected of having been used in the past for narcotics shipments.

Q: What did you say to the Colombians?

GILLESPIE: I went to the Colombian Government and said exactly that. The aircraft had broken down on San Andres Island, and this raised the problem. I said that we would appreciate it if the Colombian authorities would let this aircraft be repaired and go on its way. I described what the aircraft was doing. There was no way to play around with this, given the facts, except to tell the Colombian Government the truth.

Q: But there are two truths involved here. One was that the aircraft was engaged in resupplying the contras. That's one truth. However, what about the drugs? If there were drugs on board the aircraft...

GILLESPIE: There were no drugs on board the aircraft. The Colombiaauthorities on San Andres Island had not found drugs on the aircraft.

Q: But the Colombians had searched it.

GILLESPIE: They had searched it. They had identified it through its tail number, using U.S. sources of information as a suspect aircraft. So they then said, “Whoa! Freeze the aircraft. Stop it. The aircraft's broken down, and don't let anybody do anything to repair it. Put the air crew in jail,” which the Colombian authorities did. They searched the aircraft and found no drugs. Then they informed us. They said, first, that they were not sure what the people on the aircraft were doing. Secondly, the air crew was not prepared to tell people what was going on. They were supposed to have a cover story. The question was, what is the United States of America doing?

This matter was reported to us as a consular matter. American property and people had been detained. That's when we learned who they were, what was involved, and what was being done. The question for us was, “What do we do about this?” To me the answer was very simple: we would tell the Colombians everything that we could tell them. If there were drugs on the aircraft, presumably the Colombians didn't find them. The Colombian authorities said that they had searched the aircraft for drugs and hadn't found any. Our DEA people were alerted to this development. They didn't suspect this aircraft of being involved in the drug traffic at this point. They told me that this plane had a record of involvement in the drug traffic but they said that they didn't think that it was engaged in such traffic at the time. Then I learned through State Department channels that this plane was under contract to the U.S. Government, was on a mission that was known and approved, and was being paid for by U.S. appropriated funds.

At this point my only recourse was to approach the Government of Colombia - not in writing but orally - tell them what the aircraft is, and what it was doing. Then I asked them to let it go. The Colombian authorities sort of smiled and said, “Yes, we'll let it go.” They did, and that was it.

We had another incident, however, involving a kind of Ollie North case. It also involved San Andres Island. There had been a rather heavy battle in Nicaragua. The contra survivors of this battle - or some of them - somehow made it to San Andres Island. I forget exactly how they did so. I think that it may have been in a boat, not in an airplane. One of those survivors was a young man who had his leg badly shot up. At the request of Washington I arranged for him to be flown to Bogota for treatment in the Colombian military hospital there. We sent a young woman, a Consular Officer, up to San Andres Island to get him and accompany him back to Bogota, even though he was not a U.S. citizen. I felt that it was important that, if we were going to take on that responsibility, we should have somebody representing us there. She turned out to be a very competent officer. I believe that her name is Hanke. She took over this young fellow and his case. I think that he ultimately lost his leg and eventually resettled in Colombia. We were able to get him a prosthesis and did other things for him. Part of the name of the game is doing things like this.

There had been other cases like this, but we didn't have to get involved in them. They were handled in Bogota and then sent on their way.

That's the consular side of things. My sense of the whole experience in Colombia was that it had certain, surreal qualities that had to do with the security situation, the narcotics, the corruption, the kidnaping, and the rest of it. It is a very intricate society, in many ways. It is not at all an exaggeration to say that the Colombians think that they speak better Spanish than the people in Spain. They tend to believe that they are a pure race of Spaniards because they came to Colombia and haven't intermarried with indigenous people to any great extent. However, they have this tremendously violent pathology which affects their

society. They live in a land that is part desert, part jungle, and part high, Andean Mountain plains and valleys. It is on the Andean trail of volcanic eruptions and monsoon rains. It is a tremendous mix of things. It is a rich country. It is the fourth largest trading partner with the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere and has been so for many years.

In many ways the Colombian people are very independent but very orthodox in their views. There was a national poll carried out by a very reputable polling company while I was in Colombia, covering both rural and urban areas and rich and poor. This was one of the early polls which showed us that drug consumption in Colombia was actually on the rise - something that the Colombians had not wanted to face up to. Perhaps most important of all, in connection with this poll, was that the Colombians did not place a high value, or didn't at that time, on something called democracy. However, they certainly value liberty - the ability of the individual to fulfill himself and to do what he thinks is right. And “he” is probably the correct pronoun, although in contrast to many other countries, women are major economic actors up to a certain level in the society. They are in the managerial and executive class.

Like all other countries, Colombia is obviously involved in some kind of transition. However, in many ways it is still coming out of a colonial and into a more modern era. The Colombians fought alongside the United States during World War II and the Korean War. They have been good allies of the United States in many ways.

Today, in 1996, the Colombian-U.S. relationship is as troubled as it ever has been. When I left Colombia in 1990, I felt that we had not had an effective anti-narcotics policy or strategy and I still believe that we do not have one. We were trying to interdict or stop the flow of drugs from and through Colombia to the United States. We were trying to do this either by finding the drugs and destroying them on the ground or by eradicating the cultivation of coca leaves. During the time I was in Colombia we were dealing primarily with marijuana and coca which was processed into cocaine. We had only marginal success in doing this. DEA representatives and other people on the Embassy staff could

and did boast of large seizures of narcotics in terms of tons of marijuana and cocaine discovered.

After I left and even while I was in Colombia, we spoke of tens of tons seized. We said that 1987 was a huge year. Around the world something like 210 tons of cocaine were seized, of which a certain amount was in Colombia. Well, since then the total seizures have just skyrocketed. We have not been successful in stopping the flow. In my view we have absolutely refused to face up to dealing with the demand side of the problem in the United States and come up with a strategy or strategies for dealing with it. It's so much easier for domestic, political audiences in the United States to say that this is a problem that comes from overseas, and there's where we should deal with it. We tend to say, “Don't worry about it. We're okay.” In 1996 we are spending some $15 billion on anti- narcotics activities, and most of that is going to support programs overseas.

I have become very skeptical and, to some degree, cynical about our ability to deal with this problem. At the same time my fear, or concern at least, is that in the same way that drug trafficking has further corrupted the societies in which it goes on we are also being corrupted in ways that we do not fully appreciate and have not faced up to. Colombia is a perfect and perhaps extreme example of the corruption which the narcotics traffic has created, although Mexico also suffers from it, as does Peru, Bolivia, and other countries. I feel that the corruption is in our police and judicial systems in ways that we are not aware of. I don't think that there are huge conspiracies in our country in this respect but I think that it's happening. There's a lot more drug consumption than people want to admit.

I remember vividly that, at our residence in Bogota, we had a wonderful clay tennis court which I take credit for improving over what it was when I arrived in Bogota. It was possibly the best tennis court in Colombia. The Embassy residence is a single dwelling on a six acre plot of ground on the side of a hill in the best residential area in Bogota. Around it several very attractive, high-rise apartment condominium buildings were being built.

The new manager for Barclay's Bank came to Bogota from England. He was a very bright man. His wife was the daughter of the British Ambassador to Bolivia and Peru when she was younger. He was a tennis player. We would invite them over to play tennis and got to know them fairly well. They had come to Bogota from New York. After we had become pretty well acquainted, he confided to me that when I would go to a party - not necessarily a diplomatic function but especially a Colombian society party - it was not absolutely unheard of that, when the American Ambassador and other senior officials had left the party, people would bring out cocaine and other drugs for people to sample. He said, “This is just like Manhattan and Washington, DC, where they do exactly the same thing.” He said, “Ambassador, don't be misled by all of this. Colombia's not any different from New York, Chicago, or Washington, because I've done it.” His wife said, “Absolutely. We stopped going to parties given by certain members of major law firms, investment banking houses, and others in Manhattan - or, just going very early, dropping in, and leaving. Because if you stay around long enough, somebody will come out with a silver tray and offer you narcotics.”

That was going on in the late 1980s. Nancy Reagan, President Reagan's wife, was saying, “Just say No.” My skepticism at that point was growing. I don't think that I was cynical about it but I was wondering if we were on the right track. Nobody was in charge. We had the beginnings of an Office of National Drug Control Policy, but they weren't really doing anything. It was mainly a matter of making political hay in the 1986 and 1988 elections. I remember coming back from Colombia to a meeting in the White House in the Cabinet Room. I sat directly across from President Reagan. Vice President Bush was there, as well as 16 American Ambassadors from around the world - not just Latin America - where the drug issue was important. We all talked about this and how important it was. The basic line was that, “We've got to keep these narcotics out of the United States.” There was nothing about what we should do in the United States, although at the end of the meeting President Reagan - or maybe Vice President Bush, I can't remember which one said this - “Now we've all been drug tested here in the White House. Have you all been drug tested?”

Well, there was no drug testing program in the State Department. We all got up, went over to the dispensary in the Old Executive Office Building, and peed in a cup. I had Bill Swing, Dan Donohue, and a mixture of career and non-career Ambassadors with me. We all lined up to have our drug test. They sent us all the results later and said, “Don't worry, you're all okay.” (Laughter)

Anyhow, I had thought, when I started my tour of duty in Colombia, that the drug question was important but that my predecessor as Ambassador had, perhaps, devoted too much attention to it. I felt that I should try to find some approach that would allow us to have an impact on the Colombian drug strategy. My objective had been to persuade President Virgilio Barco to come up with a narcotics strategy for Colombia and fit it into his vision of what he wanted to accomplish during his Presidency. As of the time that I left Colombia, he had not done that. He was beginning to do that and actually approved a narcotics strategy when my successor, Ted McNamara, was Ambassador to Colombia. He was a really effective Ambassador.

Barco eventually came up with a narcotics strategy - not necessarily a good strategy and certainly not the best one. However, it was a strategy of sorts. It devoted resources to it and identified responsibilities. It defined Colombia's objectives in this respect. Even so, the levels of narcotics related corruption, as we have seen, have grown. The narcotics problem has not declined at all, and this complex of difficulties remains.

In one sense I came away fairly frustrated after spending three years in this surreal, threatening atmosphere, where I felt for the first time in my life real fear associated with my job. My wife felt this fear, also. I was concerned that we had not been able to do very much either in Washington or in Bogota to deal effectively with this set of problems. We'd been very successful, in my view, in understanding the political dynamics of Colombia and, perhaps, in influencing some of the events. We'd been very successful in focusing attention on some of the positive aspects of the relationship between Colombia and the United States, primarily in terms of economic and some of the political and other security

issues. However, in terms of this core set of issues that revolved around the narcotics traffic and the illicit activity associated with it, we just didn't do as much as we hoped. Q: This problem reminds me of a friend of mine who was Deputy Chief of Mission in Dublin. His Ambassador was a political appointee who was getting close to the end of his tour of duty. The Ambassador was in the habit of saying that he really felt bad about the fact that he hadn't been able to settle the problems of Northern Ireland. Maybe the narcotics problem in Colombia and elsewhere is of that nature.

GILLESPIE: Oh, I think it is.

Q: So when did you leave Colombia?

GILLESPIE: I left Colombia in mid-September, 1988. I'd already beeselected and nominated to be Ambassador to Chile.

Q: Could we talk about how that assignment came about?

GILLESPIE: I believe that I got on a plane on September 13, 1988, to return to Washington for a scheduled hearing before the Western Hemisphere Sub Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Christopher J. Dodd was the Chairman of the Sub Committee. You may recall that by 1987 I had been in the Latin American orbit for almost six years. In about April, 1987, Elliot Abrams, who was then the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, decided to have a meeting with American Chiefs of Mission in South America, rather than from the whole region. The meeting was to be held in Buenos Aires.

Q: When you say South America, this excludes Central America?

GILLESPIE: It excludes Panama and the countries North of it, as well as the Caribbean area. It also excluded countries like Surinam and Guyana. It included Venezuela,

Colombia, Brazil, and Ecuador, as well as the countries south of them. I attended that Chiefs of Mission meeting.

At that meeting Elliot Abrams arranged individual meetings with each of the Chiefs of Mission to discuss specific issues and situations, including personnel and management matters. In the course of my meeting with him, he said, “I've been talking to the Secretary of State and others. It will be time next year for you to leave Bogota. What would you like to do?” I said that my wife Vivian and I had pretty much decided that we were ready to come back to the United States. I was considering retiring from the Foreign Service and would probably get into a job search for something else to do. At that point I was about 53 or 54. I had had a wonderful time in the Foreign Service. I was delighted with everything that had happened, but Vivian didn't want to live overseas any more. I had had a fascinating time in Colombia, but it seemed time to go back to Washington. I said that I'd like to have a job in the Department from which I could begin to look around for something else to do. Everybody had said that if you're going to look for something outside the Foreign Service, don't try to do it from an overseas post. Do it from Washington.

Elliot said, “Well, that's not exactly what we had in mind for you.” I said, “Oh, what's that?” He said, “Harry Barnes, who was confirmed to be Ambassador to Chile at about the time you were confirmed to be Ambassador to Colombia, has told me that he intends to retire.” Harry is several years older than I. Elliot continued, “We've considered all of the possibilities. The Secretary and I would like to make sure that we have an Ambassador in Chile on whom we can count during what could be a period of major transition in that country and a change in our relations with it. We think that you're the right person for the job. You've done a fine job in Colombia, have the experience, and know the players. What do you think of that?”

After thanking him for the compliments, I said that I would like to talk to my wife about this. Fortunately, the Department had decided that, if officers were willing to foot the bill, wives could accompany their husbands to Chiefs of Mission meetings, and Vivian was in Buenos

Aires. So I said, “Let me talk to Vivian tonight about this, and I'll be back to you.” In the event both Elliot and I talked to her, separately, on this matter. Surprisingly, Vivian said, “You know, I would have said flatly, 'No.' I would have said that you can go down there by yourself if that's what you want to do. However, I really think that Santiago is an important Embassy. Furthermore, I'm not sure that I've ever experienced a normal diplomatic life. Maybe Chile will be more normal.” She didn't set down any rigid conditions, but she said, “I sure hope that I can have a separate, professional life in Chile, like the one I've had in Bogota.”

To make a long story short, I agreed to the assignment. When I told Elliot Abrams this, he said, “There is a hurdle that we will have to get over - our Ambassador in Montevideo, Uruguay, Malcolm Wilkey.” He was a non-career Ambassador who had been a member of the First District Court of Appeals in Washington. He was an active Republican and had been, I think, a fund-raiser for the party. He had sought to obtain an overseas assignment - or people in the Reagan administration had sought him out for such a position. His wife, Emma, was Chilean. Ambassador Wilkey had ended up going to Montevideo because, quite frankly, the Reagan administration, Secretary of State Schultz, and Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, Tony Motley, had reservations. They did not like having Harry Barnes, who was from outside ARA, as Ambassador to Chile. They certainly didn't want to have a non-career person going in to Santiago while General Pinochet was still in power. They were very...

Q: Particularly with that tie to Chile, in the person of Mrs. Wilkey,which could have been...

GILLESPIE: Yes, and a particularly right wing tie. Deeper in Ambassador Wilkey's background was the fact that he had been the General Counsel for the Anaconda Copper Corporation, which has major interests in Chile. That is how he met his wife. So Ambassador Malcolm Wilkey knew Chile and was closely associated with the right in that country. Not necessarily with General Pinochet, but with people in the elite on the right wing side in Chile, where Emma Wilkey's family came from. So the Reagan administration

people had concluded early on that they didn't want Ambassador Wilkey in Chile. He wanted to go to Chile in the worst way. It turned out that he was making a major pitch for this job. He said, in effect, “When Ambassador Barnes leaves Chile, I want to move from Montevideo and go to Santiago.”

Elliot Abrams said, “I think that the best way to deal with this is to make sure that Ambassador Wilkey knows you and who you are, and begins to appreciate that you are an experienced, knowledgeable, professional diplomat, that you're not going to go into Chile and mess things up. He needs to know that you're a serious, career candidate. I would appreciate it if you would take the time while you are here in Buenos Aires at this Chiefs of Mission meeting to try to get to know Malcolm over the next two to three days.”

As it happened, that same afternoon, I think, Malcolm Wilkey, whom I had met and talked to briefly, but whom I didn't know well, came over to me and said, “Emma and I are going to have dinner at a very nice restaurant here in Buenos Aires, and we'd love to have you and Vivian join us for dinner.”

Q: You were both in Buenos Aires for the Chiefs of Mission meeting.

GILLESPIE: This was in April, 1987. It turned out that at that particular time Jose Sorzano, a Cuban-American, was the director of the staff of the National Security Council for South America. Sorzano was attending the Chiefs of Mission meeting. For whatever reason Malcolm Wilkey said to me, “I hope that you don't mind that I've asked Sorzano to join us for dinner.” Of course, I did not object to the inclusion of Sorzano.

Well, the five of us went to a very, very swanky and very nice restaurant that Emma and Malcolm Wilkey knew quite well. We had a lovely dinner. However, it was obvious that we were being auditioned.

Q: Presumably from the right. I don't know about this Cuban-American, but that immediately sends up the signal that you were being vetted.

GILLESPIE: Well, I think that if Wilkey were to try to prevent any career officer from being assigned as Ambassador to Chile, he would try to line up NSC (National Security Council) support in the White House. That would be my approach, anyway. I don't know that that was the case. If it was, in fact, an audition, and I believe that it was, we passed the test and remained on friendly terms with the Wilkeys. Wilkey is now 77 years old, so there's a difference of 15 years in our ages. He had been a sitting judge on a prestigious appeals court and all the rest of it.

I can vividly contrast Ambassador Wilkey's audition of me - and that of Sorzano's also - with what I think I mentioned much earlier, when the Helms people wanted to audition me for Bogota. This was all done very smoothly, in a cosmopolitan, sophisticated way. However, in the course of conversation during that dinner I think that they decided that I was not some kind of fire brand, nor was I a complete dud. So Malcolm Wilkey wasn't going to have any grounds for objecting to my assignment as Ambassador to Chile, at least on the basis of what he had seen and heard. Elliot Abrams had done exactly what Tony Motley had done earlier, which was, if you've got some potential obstacle or opposition out there, the smartest thing to do is to move right in on it. You take the initiative, get to know them, and let them see you, so they can never say that they don't know who this person is.

My dear wife Vivian made a very good impression on the Wilkeys. Emma Wilkey immediately said, “Oh, Vivian, you're so wonderful.” At the end of the evening Emma said to Vivian, “I'll have to tell you about friends in Chile.” Obviously, we had passed that particular hurdle. This is an example of one of the things that can happen to you in the Foreign Service.

Q: To pick up on some of this, what were their concerns and how did you meet them - that you weren't too much of a starry-eyed liberal regarding Chile? Were there any pointed questions asked?

GILLESPIE: Well, you see, what the general public doesn't understand is that our relations with and attitudes toward the Chilean government under General Pinochet were evolving. One has to go back and say that, whatever would have happened without it, President Carter's human rights policy had set in motion forces which the Republican right in the United States didn't attach much importance to. However, I would argue that, when you get right down to it, our country has values which are basically shared. There is the value of democracy, for example.

Jean Kirkpatrick former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations went through what, to my thinking, was a somewhat convoluted distinction between such terms as authoritarian, totalitarian, friends, and not friends. She said that an authoritarian friend is better than a totalitarian enemy. She categorized Pinochet as an authoritarian friend. Pinochet was anti-communist. President Salvador Allende whom Pinochet overthrew in 1973 was “bad.” She said that Pinochet had probably saved the Southern Cone of South America and Chile from a fate worse than death. Who will ever know?

Roughly from 1981, when President Reagan was inaugurated, until 1987 - this particular point - Elliot Abrams had been the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights before becoming Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. Whatever one thinks of Elliot Abrams, the man, or Elliot Abrams, the person involved with the contras, the Congress, the courts, or anything later, in 1987 Eliot was absolutely behind a policy of trying to move toward greater democracy in Latin America, whether in Central America or elsewhere. Remember that the argument from the right in favor of the contras was that we had to have these people in there, putting pressure on the commies or the bad guys and get them out. The object was not to reimpose Somoza or right wing dictatorships. Rather, the big word was democracy, including elections, freedom of choice, liberty, free markets, and all of those good words.

That really was the policy stance toward Chile, whatever the Far right - and I might call it the reactionary right, the ultra-right, or the “wingers,” as we used to call them - would do.

Well, I was an advocate of greater democracy throughout the region where I had been working. I was concerned about the threats to democracy, where I was serving, both from guerrilla movements, a radical left, and an armed and violent left, as well as the nascent threats that came with this perversion of institutions and systems with narcotics trafficking and international crime. Those were already elements of our policy in the region.

When Malcolm Wilkey asked me what I thought about Chile, at this point in 1987 I simply knew that there was supposed to be a plebiscite, to be held the following year, in 1988. In this plebiscite the Chilean people, under a design which Pinochet had agreed to and which he thought he could control - and we'll get into that later on - were to express themselves on how they would go in the future. U.S. policy was that it was up to the Chilean people to make that decision. However, we made clear that we supported democracy. Even then Ambassador Barnes, Assistant Secretary Abrams, and those around them were organizing and planning what action the U.S. would take in support of our policy, as the plebiscite approached. There were debates as to how far we ought to go and what we ought to do. Ambassador Harry Barnes was an activist and a liberal. He tried to make sure, whatever his personal feelings and whatever motivated him most deeply, that his actions would ensure that whatever the Chilean people decided should be done in as open and democratic a fashion as possible.

Harry may have favored the immediate termination of the Pinochet Government, and I suspect that he did. Although I was not an expert on Chilean affairs in 1987, I had been an Ambassador in Colombia for over two years at this point, in a country where the civilians had called in the military to help them straighten out the situation. It was not a right versus left situation. There had been political violence and civil war. The Colombian people basically said that they wanted the military to come in and help to clean up the situation. The Colombian military had done just that, left the government, and didn't want to come back.

I felt that these long-standing, military controlled governments were not good. I had seen this in Nicaragua under the Somoza regime and all of that. I was comfortable saying to Ambassador Wilkey, “Look, in my view this is our policy, as I understand it. I think that we have to find ways to implement that policy. The job of the U.S. in Chile is to make sure that we do this right. In my personal view I do not think that military people are necessarily very good governors. They may be capable and efficient people, but there is something lacking in an authoritarian or totalitarian regime. We all consider that democracy is essential for the continuing health of the political system.”

I let it be known that I was not in any way a supporter of the continuation of the Pinochet Government. However, I made it clear that I would follow Washington's instructions.

Q: Did you get any feel for the views of Ambassador and Mrs. Wilkey and Sorzano, the NSC staffer? They represented the pretty hard line right. Did you get any impression about how they felt about Harry Barnes?

GILLESPIE: Yes. There were two distinct views. The Wilkeys, I think, were probably influenced by Ambassador Harry Barnes' public persona. Soon after his arrival in Santiago, Harry was faced with a very difficult situation. There had been the death, I guess in a fire, of a young man and woman, one of whom had U.S. connections. I don't think that he or she was a U.S. citizen, but one of them may have been a permanent resident of the U.S. or was the child of a permanent resident. This incident occurred in the course of actions taken by the Chilean government authorities. This became a cause celebre. Harry decided that he would go to the funeral of this person. The funeral turned into a demonstration, with Harry very visible in it. There were pictures of him all over the place.

Harry was an outspoken advocate of human rights and an ardent proponent of democracy. He never missed an opportunity to make these points and did it in a very sophisticated and very professional manner, as far as I was concerned.

I recall that, as a much more junior officer, while I was in Nicaragua, I had gone to the funeral for Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, as had a number of Embassy officers in Managua who knew him. Nobody made much of a fuss about this. I don't think that the Somoza regime, then in power in Nicaragua, liked it, but the situation was entirely different. There was a very carefully controlled press in Managua at the time, which was beholden to the military government, for economic reasons, as much as anything else.

In the case of Chile at the time of this incident, Harry's picture, attending the funeral, was plastered all over the place. There was the American Ambassador marching in the funeral procession, and all of that.

The Wilkeys - and particularly Emma Wilkey - thought that this was terrible behavior on the part of the American Ambassador to Chile. She didn't contribute too much to the conversation, but I suspect that, as far as she was concerned, some of the people in Washington were critical of her Chile, which the Chilean military had saved from perdition and disaster. She probably felt that people shouldn't speak badly of the Pinochet Government. Its opponents were all a rabble who were out there doing bad things. Malcolm Wilkey, whom I got to know better later on, would have and did question the judgment of anybody who would let himself get caught, like Harry Barnes, in a situation like that. Wilkey's view was probably that if you thought that something like this might happen, it would be best to avoid the situation. In other words, he was speaking with something like 20-20 hindsight.

Sorzano is an interesting guy. He is a Cuban-American and holds strong, traditional views regarding Castro. I don't think that he supports the Cuban exiles who would like to go back and take over Cuba from Castro. He would probably like to see Cuba without Castro, and probably a more democratic Cuba. He is something of a firebrand when it comes to that. He is a fairly reflective kind of guy. He had worked closely with Jean Kirkpatrick at the UN before moving down to the National Security Council staff. Sorzano is probably not an ultra right-winger on issues across the board. I never thought that I had any difficulty or

problem with him. He was one of the serious people on the National Security Council staff dealing with Latin America, as opposed to those who were not serious. There were several of those, as you may recall.

So that is how this dinner conversation went. However it served the purpose, and before he left Buenos Aires, Elliot Abrams told me that he understood that I had had a nice dinner with Ambassador and Mrs. Wilkey and Sorzano. He said that he thought that this assignment to Chile was going to work out and he said, “We'll be in touch.” This was all in April, 1987, and they hadn't started any of the paper work. This was all to be done in the 1988 Ambassadorial selection cycle. You may recall that the Reagan administration was pretty rigid about three-year Ambassadorial terms, for both career and non-career people.

So that was basically how I went to Chile as Ambassador. That discussion with Elliot Abrams in Buenos Aires in April, 1987, in turn, gave me a motive for learning more about Chile, its history and background - while I was still in Bogota. That isn't always easy.

Q: I assume that you went up to Washington for your hearings.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I made frequent trips to Washington from Bogota because of the security situation in Colombia. I would see people like Assistant Secretary Elliot Abrams or people like Deputy Assistant Secretary Bob Gelbard, who handled all of South American affairs. Bob would want to discuss what was going on in Bogota and the policy issues there, in terms of drugs, the economy, politics, and the rest of it. Then he would say, “Oh, by the way, I was talking to Harry Barnes about..., and you should know that...” Nobody was saying, “Drop Bogota and pick up Chile,” but you could tell, as time went on, that Chile kept coming into the conversation with the people in ARA and with Elliot Abrams himself. Jim Michaels and later on Michael Kozac were the principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries in ARA. I would have conversations with them about what was going on in Colombia.

Then, knowledge of my nomination as Ambassador to Chile became known in three stages. First, the important people in the Department knew. Then a few more people

knew. Then it became public knowledge. At each stage different people would refer to my forthcoming nomination as Ambassador to Chile. By 1988 it was evident that there was going to be a plebiscite in Chile. The question was whether it would be an honest plebiscite or whether Pinochet would try to manipulate it. Senator Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina) and his staff were infuriated by what they considered was the way that Ambassador Harry Barnes and his team had been operating in Chile. It was a very contentious situation. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) in Santiago, George Jones, had been accused by Senator Helms and his staff of withholding information from the Senate staff.

Q: I might add that I've had a long interview with George Jones ithis Foreign Affairs Oral History series. It is being transcribed now.

GILLESPIE: George Jones, I'm sure, has given you a very good flavor of this. George had first run into his right wing buzzsaw back in Costa Rica, where he had been DCM to a political Ambassador, who was a piece of work if there ever was one. I am referring to Ambassador Curt Windsor. The situation was contentious.

Nevertheless, we had begun to put in place, in 1988, a number of programmatic approaches to this plebiscite. First of all Harry had recommended and received approval for the establishment of an Agency for International Development office in Chile. I should point out that Harry Barnes succeeded a political appointee, James Theberge, for whom I had worked when Theberge was Ambassador to Nicaragua. I think that Ambassador Theberge was another reason why the Reagan administration didn't want to put another non-career person into Chile.

Q: It was a “tricky” situation.

GILLESPIE: Ambassador Theberge had done the expected thing. He had cozied up to the regime. He was very much a man of the right in political terms. He had an academic background and considered himself a foreign policy expert. His links were all into the

Chilean government. As he had done in Nicaragua, he had not been terribly comfortable dealing with a democratic, leftist opposition. He left Chile and died not long after that.

In any event Harry Barnes had replaced Ambassador Theberge. The way Theberge left things in Santiago was that the U.S. Ambassador had close ties with the Pinochet regime. Nonetheless, the Pinochet Government was not terribly friendly toward the United States. That was a reciprocal kind of relationship. At the lower level in the Embassy in Santiago, particularly as far as the economic and political sections were concerned, it was almost like operating in the Soviet Union. Chile was then considered more or less a denied area in working terms. The Chilean government was not open to the U.S. Our political officers spread themselves as widely as they could, trying to establish contact with the nooks and crannies of what was the Chilean political reality ofthe time.Harry Barnes came in but did not follow the practices developed by Ambassador Theberge. Theberge was extremely social. His wife, Giselle, originally an Argentine, became very active in the Municipal Theater. This is a wonderful, jewel box of a theater, modeled after, I think, the La Scala opera house in Milan. There is a Municipal Theater in Italy, in Buenos Aires, in Santiago, and in Bogota - all very similar. Mrs. Theberge was very active in theatrical programs. The Theberge's got to know a number of the cabinet ministers in the Pinochet Government. They would spend weekends with them, doing various things.

Harry Barnes did not do that. He did not see that as the role of the American ambassador. In fact, he made it a point to transmit the message that the U.S. wanted to be in touch with everyone in the country. Harry made no contact with the communist party of Chile and had no overt or formal contact with the socialist party of Chile. However, he had intimate, close relations with the Christian Democrats and the people from the center- right who were anti-military and opposed the military regime or wanted to see it changed. Harry directed his embassy's efforts to make sure that there was as broad contact with Chilean society as possible in a situation like this. By the way, I think that that's the way you should operate.

Harry Barnes was involved in the incident we mentioned previously at the funeral of the person who died in a fire. This incident really turned a whole segment of Chilean society, and certainly opinion makers, against Harry. He became an easy target for cartoonists, satirists, and editorial writers of the far right who would just fulminate against Ambassador Barnes. This was not unnoticed in Washington, and I was told and warned about it. Harry himself told me about it, although he never regretted what he had done.

Q: Sometimes, you have to make a statement, no matter what it is. Particularly, if I recall correctly, it was an important statement to make, especially because there was an American connection. It was a horrible incident, showing the brutality of the Pinochet regime.

GILLESPIE: It happened. Everything that Harry did was legitimate, but it had consequences, and those consequences may have made his job as Ambassador to Chile more complicated. As I said, Harry had arranged for a programmatic approach to the plebiscite, including having an AID (Agency for International Development) office established in the Embassy. Interestingly enough, this was the analog of the AID office I had in Bogota. It was called the Advanced Developing Countries Office. In Colombia we had no problems working with the Government and government agencies, although we did not provide substantial funds to these agencies. We still preferred to work through private organizations, an early version of what are now called NGOs or non- governmental organizations.

In Chile, of course, there was an absolute prohibition against providing official U.S. assistance to the Chilean government. So the idea was to use non governmental resources and organizations to begin to stimulate the process of redemocratization. Chile has a democratic tradition which goes back many decades. The idea was to do what the U.S. could do in a positive way to support this effort. For obvious reasons it was attempted first in Santiago and then in Washington and the rest of the United States to avoid the appearance of taking sides and to try and stay in the middle, as much as we could. We

used the tried and true approaches. We said that we support democracy and democratic processes. There is going to be a plebiscite, there's going to be a vote. People should know and understand what they're voting about. We will support those elements which are trying to make the redemocratization process as clean, efficient, and open as possible - that is, the balloting, the counting of ballots, and so forth. We also said that we will support, after careful screening, those who purport to engage in civic education about the process of making choices. Harry Barnes, his team, and the people in the AID office did just that in the period the plebiscite was held in October, 1988.

Meanwhile, I had finished up my tour of duty in Colombia and left the country in September, 1988. I had a scheduled hearing before a Sub-Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the following morning in Washington. I flew in and was told that there would be no hearing. There was a very interesting arrangement. I don't know if I discussed it.

Q: I don't recall your doing this. Why don't you describe it?

GILLESPIE: Basically, the Democrats were still in control of the Senate. Senator Claiborne Pell (Democrat, Rhode Island) was the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Christopher Dodd was the Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Sub Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There had been all kinds of discussion about scheduling hearings and whether there would be hearings. It was 1988, a presidential election year, and the election campaign was under way. President Reagan, of course, was now completely out of the picture, having nearly completed his second term.

In September, 1988, a number of nominations had been sent up to the Senate by the Reagan administration which were coming up for consideration by the different committees. The Senate Foreign Relations was dealing with Ambassadorial nominations with a certain reluctance. I don't remember exactly how or when it happened, but at a

certain point the Democrats on the Committee said, “Wait a minute, why are we doing this? Why are we sending out a bunch of Ambassadors, political appointees as well as career officers, in the Fall of 1988? In November, we could easily have a turnaround in the White House. Then we'll just have to go all through this again.” The upshot was that Senator Dodd had recently visited Santiago and talked to Ambassador Harry Barnes. In September, 1988, Senator Dodd, who knew what was going on in Chile after his talks with Ambassador Harry Barnes, said, “We need to get an Ambassador down to Chile to replace Ambassador Barnes. We'll schedule a hearing.” Well, I was in Bogota and received a message, asking me to show up before the Sub Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a certain day. I went up there, walked in, and was told in the committee room that the rules of the Senate provided that if the Senate was in session, no Committees could meet, except with unanimous consent. This means that one Senator could say, “I don't want any Committees to meet while the full Senate is in session.” That means that all committee work would have to stop. I don't think that anybody told me at the time who the Senator was who objected to a Sub Committee meeting or what the reason was. I was simply told that there would be no hearing because some Senator had invoked the unanimous consent rule.

So I flew back to Bogota, finished my packing, and eventually left Bogota a week or two later. I still didn't have a date for a hearing on my nomination to be ambassador to Chile. I came up to Washington, and moved into temporary quarters. Then we had a sort of funny series of scheduled hearings. There were several other Ambassadorial nominees waiting. We would sit around the Department, waiting for a 2:00 PM hearing. Then we would learn, “No, there will be no hearing because a Senator invoked the unanimous consent rule.”

To make a long story short, I guess that it must have been just before the 1988 elections, so it must have been in late October that we learned that the reason that the Foreign Relations Committee and its Sub Committees were not being allowed to move on Ambassadorial level nominations was that Senator Brown (Republican, Colorado) was infuriated when he learned that the Reagan administration had concluded that it was going

to withdraw the nominations of all non-career Ambassadorial appointments. It would only persist with the nominations of those career officer nominees who were going to posts where there either was no Ambassador or the incumbent Ambassador had a definite, departure date. That applied in the case of Chile. Harry Barnes had said that he was retiring and that he was going to leave Santiago in November, 1988, on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. So on that basis the Reagan administration withdrew the nomination of a political appointee Ambassador and friend of Senator Brown, who was supposed to go to Copenhagen.

In effect, Senator Brown was in a fit of pique. He said, “Well, if he can't go to post, I'll make sure that nobody goes.” I went up for a hearing, which was scheduled at the last moment. My wife Vivian and I were standing around with Janice O'Connell, a member of the staff of Senator Dodd who handles Latin America, together with Senator Dodd - plus probably somebody from H (Bureau of Legislative Affairs). Senator Dodd said, “You know, we're going to have to figure out how to beat this blockage of nominations.” Turning to me, he said, “Would you mind coming up here at 7:00 AM?” He said, “I can have a hearing as long as the Senate is not on the floor in plenary session.”

Senator Dodd asked me if I could come up for a hearing at 7:00 AM. He said that he could hold a meeting of the Sub Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before the Senate opened its session. He said, “If you don't mind, we could take care of this in the next few days if you don't mind coming up here early in the morning.”

So I looked at Vivian and said, “That would be fine with me. Let's get this done.” And that, indeed, is what we did. The hearing was held at 7:00 AM in the Senate Foreign Relations Hearing Room. Present were Senator Dodd, one of his own staffers, a staffer from the office of Senator Helms, and, if I remember correctly, a staffer from Senator Lugar's office, as well as Vivian and I, with Styrofoam cups of coffee in our hands. There was also a recorder there, just as if it were a regular hearing. Senator Dodd made it sound as if it were all happening normally! He said, “The maiden name of my mother (or perhaps it was

his grandmother's maiden name) was O'Higgins. She always told me that when the Irish got pretentious, they had to put an O in front of their names, just as other Europeans put a De in front of their names. We've always known that Bernardo O'Higgins, the liberator of Chile at the time of independence from Spain in 1824, was really just a Higgins. I would like you to pay a lot of attention to O'Higgins." He quizzed me on what I knew about Bernardo O'Higgins. It was all done in good fun. Then he said, "You know, there really are some wonderful, human rights groups in Chile which are not as well known as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, next door." He said that, when he was down in Chile a few months earlier, "I bought a wonderful tapestry made by a group of these Chilean mothers. It's still there in Chile, and one of your major jobs is to make sure that I get that tapestry." (Laughter)

So I made a little note to do this. Then Senator Dodd asked me some questions about human rights, democracy, Chile, the Humphrey-Kennedy legislation restricting contact and sales to the military, armaments transfers, and all of those things. It wasn't a grilling. He just wanted to get these hearings over with. Then he said, "As you know, my colleagues are not here this morning, although some of their representatives are." He said, "I'll take the questions from Senator Helms' staff." There was a big, thick envelope that looked as if it contained about 130 questions about Chile. Then there were other questions. We took those and promised to get back in touch with him. As you know from previous interviews, the Desk Officers in the State Department take these questions from the Ambassador-Designate, who says, "Let's get these questions answered. I want to make sure that the answers are right." That is basically what we did that morning.

Peter Deshazo was the Desk Officer for Chile - he was a little different from most Desk Officers because he is a USIA (United States Information Agency) Foreign Service Officer, and not a State Department Foreign Service Officer. He is very capable. He had served in Chile and knew the country. He spoke very good Spanish and has been promoted steadily in USIA during service elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. Deshazo was the guy who

had to deal with all of these questions. He also helped me in the intervening period before Senator Dodd worked out how to hold the hearing.

Senator Dodd's colleague for Europe did the same thing for Dick Barkley. Barkley and I were twinned. We were the last two nominees proposed to be ambassadors by the Reagan administration to be hung up by the Senate. Barkley was going to Ankara, which was just like Santiago, either vacant or about to be. It was a very important post. Barkley was coming out of East Berlin, where he had been Ambassador. So Dick Barkley and I went through this process sort of arm in arm.

While we were waiting for this process to be worked out, I had had plenty of time really to do what I had done prior to going to Bogota. That was, to write the letter to me from Secretary of State George Schultz with my instructions to carry out in Chile. I am sorry to see that this system has fallen into disuse. To me it is a wonderful way, first of all, for me to get my own thinking straight about what I was going to do in three years in Chile and why I was going there as Ambassador. Then, I used that device to get other people to help me define my goals and, maybe, affect my thinking, as well as get them to agree that this or that was what I was supposed to do. I had a lot of time to do that. I did a lot of consulting around Capitol Hill, within the Departments of State, Treasury, and Defense, and with everybody that I could think of. There was a tremendous desire that, in fact, the outcome of the plebiscite in Chile would amount to a decision by the Chileans to vote for civilian government and reject the continuation of Pinochet in office.

The American military thought that a positive outcome to the plebiscite was important, because they wanted to reestablish relations with the Chilean military. They knew that they couldn't do that if Pinochet stayed on in office. Reestablishing relations with the Chilean military would continue to be blocked by legislation and policy, if Pinochet remained in office. The human rights people wanted a change in Chile, so I met with groups of every kind. As a result, I produced what I thought was a pretty good set of instructions, which got it all down on paper. Like anything else, once you've got a plan on paper, the real world

may intervene and you don't get around to doing what you said you were going to do. However, you at least start off right.

Q: At least you have a set of priorities set out. Back to these questions from Senator Helms, which are renowned in the Department. In the first place, this seems like an exercise in setting up a road block. The idea seems to have been to tie things up. What was the purpose of these questions, and how did you answer them?

GILLESPIE: Remember that Senator Helms had a problem with Chile, in that he had met with Pinochet. Other people around him had also met with Pinochet. He believed that the U.S. Embassy in Santiago, under Ambassador Harry Barnes and DCM George Jones, had tried to block such meetings with Pinochet, had mischaracterized them, had done all sorts of bad things, had refused to give information to Senator Helms which he felt he was entitled to, and had reported on Helms' meetings and then refused to give copies of those reports to Helms. Helms and his staff sought every opportunity to make those points.

Q: Was it also in this context that there was a charge that Helms had given classified information to the Pinochet Government which led to unpleasant consequences to somebody who had provided the information? This was a nasty accusation. Helms denied it, and...

GILLESPIE: That's right, and then there was reporting about that. This was material which Senator Helms had never been able to get anybody to tell him about. In my view the questions from Senator Helms did not get down into the nitty gritty on this. They were more general in nature. They were more like, “What do you know about...?” and, “What will you do about...?” or, “What is the position of the administration on...?” It is very easy for a nominee, if he's fast enough on his feet and careful enough with his drafting, to be able to answer those questions, saying, “That's a matter which I will look into when I arrive at post.” Or you could state what U.S. policy is, and you could assure Senator Helms that you would follow U.S. policy. No question about that. However, always looming over this, and

specifically in the case of George Jones, although Senator Helms didn't do this to me, was the suggestion, “If you don't give me this information which we want, we will not allow this nomination to go forward.” Senator Helms and his staff evidently decided not to put that much of a road block in the way of the confirmation of my nomination as Ambassador to Chile.

On other matters, as people have told me, and I have told other people since then, this is the only opportunity you have to play dumb. You can say, “Well, Senator, I am fascinated by that, and I will look into it when I get down to my post.” You can't do that quite as easily in writing as you can orally, but you do it, one way or another. So we got all the questions answered and sent them up to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. However, then you have made a record. If anybody ever wanted to, and the Helms' staff always thinks in these terms, although I'm not sure that other staffs do, they can later ask, “Did he do what he said he was going to do?”

So we got through the hearing part. Then the question was, when will the nominations be voted on by the full Senate? It turned out to be a real cliff hanger because, once again, Senator Brown kept throwing road blocks in the way of confirmation. He didn't want even the subcommittee hearings to be held. There was nothing personal or regional about it, but he was still annoyed with his own Republican Party and the Reagan White House...

Q: For not getting a friend of his approved as Ambassador to Denmark.

GILLESPIE: Well, in the final analysis I forget whether Senator Brown relented or whether Senator Byrd (Democrat, West Virginia) did what he usually does. When he was presiding temporarily over the Senate, as he did from time to time, he did a little mumbo jumbo, sliding the nominations into a number of other routine matters and getting a voice vote in favor.

So that's what happened. Somebody said that if you really want to see this process in action, turn on C-Span television channel devoted to proceedings of the House of

Representatives and the Senate. Approval of my nomination was handled late on a Friday night, just before the adjournment for the 1988 presidential elections. At first we didn't know that it had been done, but that's when it happened. We watched what happened on television later on. Then the Senate adjourned, and I got a call from somebody in the Bureau of Congressional Relations who said, “It's all okay. You and Dick Barkley have been confirmed by the Senate. The President will attest that, and the oath of office can be administered.”

With that out of the way, then, we completed our arrangements for getting down to Santiago. As I mentioned earlier, Harry Barnes said that he wanted to stay in Santiago through Thanksgiving. We were delighted by that. We knew that it was important to get down there and not have much of a gap between Harry and me, both physically and figuratively.

I had very interesting conversations with some Chilean officials in Washington, including the new Foreign Minister, Hernan Felipe Errasuritz. He was a younger man, a lawyer who had been the head of the Central Bank. He was very sharp. He had been Chilean Ambassador to the United States. Then Pinochet pulled him back to Santiago to be Foreign Minister. While I was in the process of waiting for confirmation by the Senate, or perhaps immediately afterwards, Errasuritz was in Washington. The Chileans asked me to come and meet him at the Chilean Embassy residence. The Ambassador who had replaced Errasuritz was a very capable, career diplomat, but very much from the right wing in Chile. I met with the two of them. It was very obvious that they expected some dramatic departure from Ambassador Barnes. By this time the plebiscite had been held - on October 4, 1988. We can go back over that. I'm sure George Jones touched on this in his interview with you. I can give you my view of it, too.

The point is that the plebiscite had been held. The No vote, that is, a rejection of the continuation of the Pinochet Government, had been victorious. The Pinochet team knew that their time in office was limited. They were really hoping for some kind of new

approach from me as the new ambassador to Chile, compared to the line followed by Harry Barnes. Almost as if he were reading from a list, Errasuritz gave me advice on do's and don't's when I got there. They, too, did not want to have any grass grow between Barnes' departure and my arrival. They were very cool. There was nothing very cordial about this. It was all very formal. They referred to me as “Mr. Ambassador” throughout the conversation. They were flipping back and forth between their colloquial English and Spanish - perhaps to test me and keep me on edge. It was sort of an exercise in gamesmanship.

They said that I was expected to present copies of my Letters of Credence to the Foreign Minister no fewer than seven days before I presented them to the President of Chile. They said, “This means the following,” and then they gave me a series of dates. They said that absolutely the last day that President Pinochet would be available for me to present my credentials would be December 15, 1988. That meant that I would need to present copies of my Letters of Credence to the Foreign Minister no later than December 7. The Foreign Minister said, “You'll have to plan your arrival accordingly. We will be pleased to have you come when you wish but we want to make sure that you understand those dates.”

I said, “Well, can I be assured of a date for the presentation of copies of my Letters of Credence to you prior to December 7?” Errasuritz said, “Well, we'll take that under consideration. Tell us when you're coming, and we'll see what dates are available.” They were playing little games with the schedule. They seemed to be implying that if I didn't present my credentials to President Pinochet before December 15, there would be problems. The Chilean government basically goes on vacation between December 15 and early February. This meant that if I was an “uncredentialed Ambassador” in a country where things were happening, particularly as a result of the plebiscite, I would be at a disadvantage, even though much of the country would be on vacation because of the difference in seasons from the United States. Things would be happening, and an

ambassador who hadn't presented his credentials has some limitations on what he can do and how far he can go.

We then planned our departure from Washington around that. If I remember correctly, we arrived in Santiago on December 1. On about December 5 or 6 - I don't remember exactly - I presented copies of my Letters of Credence to the Foreign Minister. On December 15, 1988, I went over and presented my credentials to Pinochet.

The ceremony was very interesting. The Chileans are very traditional in the way they handle this. La Moneda, the Presidential Palace, used to be the Mint - hence the name - in the old, colonial days. It was the building which was blasted by bombs in 1973, during the military takeover which overthrew President Allende. It had been fully repaired. It's a large, imposing building about two or three blocks square, right in downtown Santiago. It's not at all ugly. Right in front of it is a huge plaza, fairly open, without a lot of tall trees. There is a cobblestone street along the front side of the Palace. For many years the Office of the Presidency occupied one wing, and the Foreign Ministry had another wing. The Ministry of the Interior occupied still another wing. In Chile the Ministry of the Interior is the chief political ministry and also the ministry which controls the police and law enforcement activity. In nearby buildings the Ministries of Finance, Justice, and other departments are located. It's very compact - a little like Washington, DC, in that sense.

The presentation of credentials was like many others. They do it all very formally, although in business suits. You don't have to dress up in white tie and tails or anything like that. There is an escort, a military guard of honor, when you arrive at the Palace. A band plays the national anthems of the two countries. The new Ambassador takes with him his “suite” - in this case, the DCM, the principal Counselors of Embassy, and the Defense Attache. You go through a very carefully choreographed presentation. I had never seen President Pinochet in person. I hadn't the slightest idea of what really to expect. George Jones, still the DCM, had given me a detailed briefing and was very helpful in every way.

The Chief of Protocol turned out to be a delightful person - very traditional and very European in orientation. He sort of walked us through it and told us how the ceremony would develop.

For the ceremony itself I had written my remarks which had been cleared with Washington. I had gone over them with my staff in Santiago to make sure that they were right - and they hit all of the points in my instructions: human rights, democracy, and a desire to build a strong relationship, especially during a time of transition. The U.S. wanted to be of assistance, and so forth. When I referred to human rights, I looked directly into the eyes of President Pinochet. He is a man of medium height - not heavy set at all but sturdy. He was dressed in his white Army uniform, so I addressed him as “General” throughout the ceremony. I did not call him “Mr. President.”

My Letters of Credence had been drafted in Washington and were addressed to “Mr. President.” However, I was careful to say, “General Pinochet.” I thought that that was the most appropriate form of address to use, since he was in uniform. I probably would have done the same if he had been dressed in civilian clothes. The Chilean Army has a uniform patterned after that of late 19th Century Prussian Army.

When I looked him in the eye in referring to human rights, he looked me right back. When I referred to democracy, I made sure that I was looking him right in the eye. He looked right back. He then made some observations, responding in a prepared set of remarks which had obviously been drafted for him. He didn't seem to ad lib much at all. We didn't know how this was going to work out. Pinochet had refused to allow Ambassador Harry Barnes to come and say goodbye. He asked me to join him to talk for a few minutes. In fact, we talked for about 20 minutes. We talked a little about everything. We did not dwell on the political situation. I asked him how the plebiscite had gone and so on. I wasn't trying to rub in his defeat but I wanted to make sure that I covered that and heard whatever he had to say.

Pinochet knew that I had served in the U.S. Army. I guess that that impressed him, even though it had been some years before. In that context he raised a point which he also came back to later, saying, “You Americans pride yourself on your military prowess. Chile's Army has never lost a war. You have. You lost in Vietnam. Your Army has become a corps of managers. I'm not sure if you're fighters.” He didn't say this in a mean or nasty way, but these were stated in carefully measured terms, coming at these subjects obliquely. He said that and repeated this point in any meetings he had with senior American military people whom he met. We had a couple of visits from the Commanding General from our Southern Command and some senior U.S. Air Force people. Pinochet didn't hesitate to make those points: first, you lost a war, but Chile has never lost a war. Secondly, you are managers, and we are fighters. It was a very interesting comparison which he made.

Anyway, at the conclusion of this ceremony, we stood up and went outside. By that time the band and the honor guard were formed up for the ceremony where I would take leave of Pinochet. There were a small crowd of, perhaps, 120 or 130 people, out in front when I came out of the Palace. Something happened then, for the first time, which was repeated on several occasions after that. When I came out and took my leave of the honor guard - you don't actually review it but you go up to the commander and thank him - there was tremendous applause out in this plaza in front of the Palace. People were applauding and shouting, “Vivan los Estados Unidos!” Long Live the United States! and “Viva el Senor Embajador!” Long Live the Ambassador!. It was really nothing personal at all. It was strictly a matter of people who were expressing some very interesting views about the United States of America. As I say, the same thing happened on several occasions after that. I was always touched to be the United States representative on such an occasion. I felt that these people really had good feelings toward us.

Q: I'd like to go back now to the period before you went to Santiago. How did you see the situation in Chile? This was a very interesting time. What impression did you get from the Chilean Desk in the State Department, from the Embassy in Santiago, and as a result

of your own reflections? Also, what were your specific instructions for Chile, beyond the general ones?

GILLESPIE: First of all, we knew that Pinochet had not intended to lose the plebiscite. His polling, his opinion testing, and his own judgment led him to conclude that he would win the plebiscite - that the “Si” or “Yes” vote would prevail over the “No” vote. However, we learned through clandestine intelligence, he had planned to make sure that the release of the results of the plebiscite would be tightly managed. If there were any reason to engage in any hanky panky, he would be able to do that. He thought that he could remain in control.

We knew that and knew that he was not prepared to leave power. That conclusion predated my arrival in Santiago and really affected some of my relationships in Chile. There were several reasons why Pinochet's plot didn't work. Ambassador Harry Barnes, Bob Gelbard, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South American Affairs, and other people in Washington made sure that the Pinochet people knew that we knew that Pinochet was planning something. As we learned, that didn't stop Pinochet from making his preparations. However, the Pinochet people at least knew that we knew that if they implemented a plan to jigger the results of the plebiscite, for example, by delaying the announcement of the results, we were going to blow the whistle.

Furthermore, Harry Barnes did something which perhaps few people have ever focused on. Harry had developed a relationship with General Fernando Matthei, the commander of the Chilean Air Force and a member of the governing junta. Remember, this was a Presidential system with basically a four-man “legislature.” This legislature was the junta consisting of Pinochet as President and commander of the Chilean Army. His deputy, General Sinclair, often sat in and did the work of the junta on the Army's behalf. Another member of the junta was Admiral Merino, the commander of the Chilean Navy. Merino was, perhaps, more of a key actor in both the move to overthrow President Allende- and in the conduct of the Chilean government over the years - than public opinion was aware of,

at least in the years immediately following 1973. Another member of the junta was General Stange, the commander of the Carabineros, the semi-militarized, national police force. It included both uniformed and plain clothes police. The plain clothes police were called the Investigations Police. Most of the other Carabineros were uniformed. They are something of a combination of the Texas Rangers, the California Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Forest Service. The other member of the junta was the Air Force commander, General Fernando Matthei. He was the second Air Force commander since the 1973 coup d'etat.

Pinochet had obviously stayed on in office since 1973. Admiral Merino was from the same period. General Stange was a relatively recent appointment as chief of the Carabineros. General Matthei had replaced his predecessor, an Air Force general, who had concluded in the mid-1970s that it was time for the military to relinquish power. He felt that they had done what they needed to do and that, therefore, it was time to go. He was basically eased out and replaced as Air Force commander. General Matthei was an Air Force officer who, although a hot shot fighter pilot and truly dedicated to his service, had proven himself to be very efficient and effective as the Minister of Health in the military government. He had also held other, political posts, which we can discuss later.

General Matthei just treasured - and still does - his relationship with the United States and the United States Air Force. He was a committed supporter of the move to displace President Allende and was an effective and committed political actor in the junta. He never hung back. As I said, he was selected to replace another junta member who had said that it was time for the military to leave power. The clear implication was that General Matthei didn't necessarily think that it was time for the military to leave power. As I had been briefed before I went to Chile, General Matthei had been a voice in the junta in favor of giving the people more options, more choice. He had really incited the anger and enmity of General Augusto Pinochet, to the point where some sources were saying that General Matthei had a mistress, that he had accepted bribes, that he was corrupt, and a number of other things. However, these allegations did not go so far as to suggest that General

Pinochet had decided to ease General Matthei out of the junta, as he had eased out his predecessor in a very tricky little political game.

Harry Barnes had gotten to know General Matthei on a cordial and friendly basis. Harry told me that if there were anybody in uniform that I needed to talk to in Chile, it was General Fernando Matthei. The key to Matthei was that he had learned how to fly in Chile but, I believe, had had advanced training with the U.S. Navy, I believe, at Pensacola, Florida. He was as closely associated with the U.S. Air Force as a person could be. Interestingly enough, Admiral Merino had a similar relationship with the U.S. Navy, dating from World War II. During World War II he had served as a young Lieutenant and gunnery officer in the Pacific, in combat, aboard a U.S. Navy cruiser. He never forgot that.

I have mentioned that we obtained from clandestine intelligence reporting information on an alleged Pinochet plan to upset plebiscite results which would be unfavorable to him. I don't know if the ultimate source of these reports was General Matthei. Harry Barnes may also have obtained information of this kind from Matthei. Certainly, Harry discussed this possibility with Matthei, prior to the plebiscite. Matthei knew that we knew from various sources that something was going on.

The following events occurred prior to my arrival in Chile. However, in my view, and putting it very briefly, General Fernando Matthei saved democracy in Chile because of his actions on the night of October 4, 1988. The plebiscite had been held, the polls had closed, and Pinochet called the junta to meet at La Moneda Palace. General Matthei drove up to the Palace. The Palace has an underground garage. The junta members, more often than not, would drive up to La Moneda Palace and then down the ramp into the underground garage, where they parked their cars for security reasons. Remember that there was some anti-government violence occurring in Chile from time to time.

However, on this occasion Matthei drove up to the front door of the Palace, walked through the front door. As he did so, the press surrounded him and clamored for him to

say something. There is a press corps assigned to La Moneda, equivalent to our White House press corps. The press was all around the entrance to the Palace, which was guarded by Carabineros - not by the Army, interestingly enough. The press asked him, “What's going on? Why the meeting?” and so forth. General Matthei replied, “Well, I guess we've lost it.” The results were in and General Matthei did the one thing which General Pinochet could not stand to have happen, under his alleged scheme. General Matthei, a member of the governing junta, announced the results, which were negative.

Q: This was deliberate on General Matthei's part?

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. He went into the Palace through the front door and made his statement. He had probably prepared in advance what he was going to say. He basically pulled the rug out from under General Pinochet and the gang around him, who had set up an elaborate scheme to postpone the publication of the results, alleging that the returns were not in from this or that part of the country. Meanwhile, they were going to stuff the ballot boxes or whatever they were going to do. So General Matthei pulled the rug out from under the junta, and the press went out with the story.

From that moment on, during the remainder of the period of the Pinochet Government, this animosity toward General Matthei on Pinochet's part grew steadily. To the point that my CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) chief of station told me that General Fernando Matthei had better watch out, from the physical and personal point of view.

I arrived in Santiago in December. One of the first people whom I met was General Fernando Matthei. You wanted to know about the Washington end of this story, but that set the scene that I was walking into. We knew that Pinochet had lost the plebiscite. We knew that Pinochet really did not want to leave power. In my view the Chilean military at the time fell into three categories. There were those who were the core of Chile's military establishment. By and large, they were professional military officers and probably not

terribly politically oriented. However, because of the way that they had been raised and trained, they tended to think in very conservative terms.

There was a second set of military personnel, mainly officers, who had all of the characteristics of the first group but who believed that it was time for the Chilean military to get out of the government and somehow turn it back to the civilians. They needed to protect their military institutions and themselves, and there had been human rights violations to be concerned about. There was tremendous tension, anxiety, and animosity toward the military among the general public.

The third group was composed of the political-military actors. These included generals, colonels, captains, and a few NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) - but mainly officers. They had basically made their careers in politics, whatever their professional qualifications as members of the military. They had a vested interest in sustaining the military in political life. If the military left power, they had to protect their butts, because they had been so closely wrapped up in policies, the implementation of these policies, and perhaps other actions which were not particularly good. They wanted to preserve and protect themselves and these policies.

Then there was a civilian, political structure. Some 17 political parties had gathered together for the plebiscite campaign in something called la Concertacion para la Democracia, the Concertation for Democracy. They ranged from everybody to the right of the Communist Party of Chile almost far as you can go. That really amounted to the center right. In addition, there were two parties which wanted to sustain the military government. One was relatively new, the Independent Democratic Union. The other, traditional party of the right was called Renovacion Nacional, or the National Renewal Party. Some of the members of Renovacion Nacional felt that it was not yet time to return to civilian rule, while other members actively supported it. So the 17 groups to the left of Renovacion Nacional and to the right of the Communists joined together to support the “No” vote in the plebiscite and the transition back to democracy.

It was fairly clear in 1988 that the traditionally strongest political party was the Christian Democrats, probably followed by the Socialist Party, in terms of numerical and political strength. They had been thinking about a return to democracy but not, in all cases, in a very practical way. They apparently just wanted to get the military out of political life. There was a 1980 Constitution which had been drafted by the military government and its civilian allies. Renovacion Nacional had been involved in drafting that constitution, which provided for the plebiscite process and which set the rules under which the transition to civilian government would take place.

During the period of the military government Chile had begun a far-reaching process of economic transformation and change from a largely state-controlled economy to a fairly definite, free market orientation. Chile was viewed as a favorable place for investment, where law and order prevailed under the military. By the way, this was only partly true. This view reflected a lot of good public relations effort.

I began to learn more about Chile, particularly after I left Colombia and really started to read into the situation, particularly about the plebiscite which was to be held. If the vote was “Yes,” that is, keep Pinochet in office, a lot of difficult pressures would have been unleashed in that country.

In any case, you could see the situation developing. Had the plebiscite gone in the direction of keeping Pinochet in office, the Constitution provided what would happen then. However, a lot of forces would have been activated and indeed had been active during 1988. If that were to happen, you could see continuing difficulties and challenges facing the military, both in political, public relations, and public affairs terms, as well as, perhaps, the real emergence of various kinds of rebellious acts. An American Ambassador going into such an environment would need to be prepared for that. There was a lot of discussion in Washington about what happens if that should occur.

Based on everything that we knew, I think that there was an assumption from our own opinion polls that the outcome was uncertain. By the way, the Republican Party in the United States, through the International Republican Institute, was funding the Center for Political Studies CEP - (Centro de Estudios Politicos), a right of Center polling organization in Chile. However, it was very honest and very credible. Polls undertaken by the Center for Political Studies indicated that the outlook in the plebiscite was very close. That is, Pinochet could lose the plebiscite. His own pollsters were giving him another interpretation of the CEP polls. Meanwhile, the IRI basically supported that activity under the NationaEndowment for Democracy. It seemed that the plebiscite could go either way.

However, if, on the other hand, the “No” vote were to win, then there would be a kind of reopening of the political landscape and of the political Pandora's box. This was because it wasn't really clear to those of us who were outside and looking into this process, how well organized the various political parties were. I don't think that there was a lot of confidence about the situation. At that point many of the civilian figures hadn't been directly involved in government in Chile for 15 years. How were they going to function? What should the U.S. position be?

Well, first, we supported a change in the political situation. We felt that it was time for the military to leave government. I knew that that was an underlying assumption. When I went to Chile, that part of the basic equation had been defined for me. The plebiscite had occurred, and the Chilean people had spoken. So I saw my job and my instructions, both those on paper and, more importantly, the ones that we talked about with the Assistant Secretary of State, as calling for this line of action.

By the way, I had come to the conclusion in Colombia that the Ambassador really is the President's personal representative. As the President's personal representative the Ambassador has a license which allows him to go and knock on the doors of cabinet and sub cabinet officers in Washington and say, “I want to talk to you about my problem, my challenges, or my program” in the place where I represent the United States. I had

done that. I had met with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). In effect, as a practical matter no door was closed to me, when I was getting ready to go to Chile. I could get in to see whoever it was that I needed to see. I could talk to them and I did. I told them where I thought that we ought to be going. I made sure that they understood it and I walked out the door of their offices with what I believed was their strong support.

I also had the benefit, particularly up on the Hill (in Congress), and especially in the House of Representatives, of a Concertacion of the political Center. We had people like Doug Bereuter, a Republican Congressman from Nebraska. We had Howard Berman, a Democratic Congressman from California. We had the support of people from both parties. There were also some other people who were over on one side of the political spectrum. For example, Toby Wright was way over on the right. He thought that we should be supporting Pinochet and shouldn't support change at all, that it was not our business but was completely the business of the Chileans. He represented a district in Wisconsin and was something like Senator Helms in his outlook. Then there was a Congressman from New York who died of a massive heart attack a few years ago. I can't think of his name right now, but he was the man that I would have typified as being on the left in the U.S.

There was nothing that the U.S. Government under President Ronald Reagan, or anybody else, could do that would sufficiently satisfy the need for justice, peace, and democracy in Chile.

Q: There was the Letelier case.

GILLESPIE: I always put a hyphen in this and refer to it as th“Letelier-Moffitt”case.

Q: You might explain what this was all about. There was also the time when Allende was overthrown and killed. Among fairly moderate people in the United States, there was a lot of focus on all of the awful things that the Nixon administration was alleged to have

done in Chile. So Chile was not a really normal country to go to. There were real emotions aroused.

GILLESPIE: However, some of that had been dealt with - I guess that's the best way to put it - in the reports of the Special Committee on Intelligence Activities, of which Senator Frank Church (Democrat, Idaho) was the Chairman. This Special Committee of the Senate was set up to examine the U.S. role in Chile, and particularly the role of the Central Intelligence Agency and others. I had the benefit of these hearings, if that's the right word, and so did Harry Barnes. We knew what the U.S. Senate investigators had concluded and published. This put the situation somewhat in perspective. I think that if you considered what the report of this Special Committee said, it took some of the sharp edges off. The Report said, in effect, “Yes, the U.S. was an important actor in the overthrow of Allende but may not have been THE most important actor in what happened in Chile.” That was it in a nutshell.

Yes, what had happened in Chile stirred emotions. It was interesting to me, and this phenomenon struck me, that, first of all, there was support for change within the Reagan administration. There were people within the Reagan administration who didn't agree with this, but the policy line of Secretary of State George Schultz, which really was the policy of President Reagan, was that we support democracy in Latin America. Chile was not a democratic country. Therefore, there needs to be a change in Chile.

Q: Was Jean Kirkpatrick still a “power” at all in the Reagaadministration?

GILLESPIE: Not that I noticed. In practical terms I felt no compulsion to clear anything with Jean Kirkpatrick. My instructions were pretty clear - maybe that's the way it was. I felt that it was more important for me to find out who my champions in Congress might be, as I had done in Colombia. I also felt that it was important to know who my opponents might be - or the people who might be trying to work against whatever I was trying to do.

I was able to do that. I found, for example, that Senator Ted Kennedy (Democrat, Massachusetts) was emotionally and viscerally anti-Pinochet. However, he understood very well that it would not do any good to have the new Ambassador to Chile, particularly after the plebiscite, go down there and just keep poking his finger in Pinochet's eye. Nancy Soderberg, who has since become part of our National Security Council leadership in the Clinton administration, was Senator Kennedy's principal staffer. Nancy and I met regularly and routinely on this. Senator Kennedy himself was a little bit distant, because all of this was sort of out of the past. However, every time that the subject of Chile would come up, Senator Kennedy would be back and be alert to it. I found that it was really important to let Senator Kennedy - and Senator Dodd, who had just been to Chile and was helpful in this regard - understand that there had been a lot of change in Chile. In other words, the clock didn't stop on September 11, 1973, when Allende was murdered. I should say died because it turned out that he probably was not murdered. In fact, he committed suicide, which gets to another point.

In any case, the clock didn't stop when Allende died, and Chile hamade steady progress since then. We probably should stop fairly soon.

Q: Let's stop now. What you have really been talking about is the atmosphere regarding Chile back in Washington before you went down to Santiago. You've already addressed what happened in Chile before you got there in terms of the plebiscite. You've talked about presenting your credentials to Pinochet. So we can pick it up again with discussing the issues which came up after you arrived. Could you describe the Embassy a bit and how they were dealing with your takeover of the Embassy from Harry Barnes? We can talk about many other elements, including the economic reforms, and how we dealt with the transitional, Pinochet Government.

Also, a question I didn't ask but which I would like to pursue the next time is, what was the estimate or feeling about Pinochet? I don't mean his psychological profile, but where

was he coming from? What were you getting from Washington about Pinochet before you arrived in Santiago?

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Today is January 17, 1997. Why don't we start with Pinochet? What sort of profile of him were you getting before you went to Santiago and also immediately from the Embassy staff? In other words, who was this character?

GILLESPIE: As you know, as part of your preparation for going to a post, you have a lot of briefings and meetings with other people in the various communities in Washington - including the intelligence community.

My recollection is that Pinochet was characterized here in Washington as a strong-willed, very rigid individual. I think that he is now 75, in 1997, so, subtracting seven or eight years from that, and he was 67 when I arrived in Santiago. His health, according to the people at CIA who keep track of these things, was supposed to be okay, and maybe even good. He had no serious health problems. His mental state was characterized as sound. So I started with that.

The reading was that Pinochet was very antagonistic, maybe resentful, toward the United States and the positions it had taken. He was a staunch anti-communist. It really wasn't clear until I arrived in Santiago, met him, and had a better view of him to know what that meant. So that was the picture of Pinochet, this very firm and very tough man. Remember that he survived several attempts on his life. The most recent had been a year or maybe two years before I reached Santiago. In this abortive assassination attempt several of his bodyguards had been killed. There had been an attempt to ambush his motorcade. So a lot of attention was devoted to his security. He was not at all universally admired. There were very strong feelings against him, as well as a strong sense of support for him. I guess that's the picture of Pinochet that I had as I went down there.

I think that I may already have mentioned that my predecessor as Ambassador, Harry Barnes, had been refused a pro forma request for a departure interview with President Pinochet. I think that Harry had tried to do the right thing, which was to offer to make such a call. However, his request was rejected. No one really knew how I would be received by Pinochet. I've described the credentials presentation ceremony, in which he affected a certain cordiality, although perhaps that's too strong a word. However, his attitude was certainly not one of rejecting me. His attitude wasn't warm, but it wasn't cold, either. He seemed to display some interest in me.By 1989-1990 his government was essentially civilian in composition. There was a civilian Foreign Minister, but he had a Deputy Foreign Minister who was a colonel in civilian clothes. The deputy was a serving Army officer who never wore his uniform. He was not normally referred to as colonel, although you could call him colonel. There was no problem with that. The same thing was true in the case of a number of the other ministries. My introduction to Chile, by the way, followed the traditional introduction of any new Ambassador to any country or most new countries which follow what are called the traditions of diplomacy.

I was expected to call on the cabinet ministers and other key figures in society in Santiago. I did so. I presented my credentials on December 15, 1988, the very last, feasible date to do so prior to the summer vacation period. Then the country really went on vacation, so I wasn't able to begin my calls, although I was legitimate and could function as an Ambassador. I couldn't really begin my calls until after January 1, 1989, when people started to drift back from vacation. Remember, it was now high summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

So I began by seeking and making calls on various ministers and vice ministers, as well as others, beginning a process of introducing myself into Chile at the governmental level. My instructions which I, of course, had written or helped to write, were that we were to promote the return of democracy to Chile. That was our primary and overriding objective.

My activities, those of the Embassy, and those of the U.S. Government as a whole, were supposed to be calculated and pointed toward doing that.

To me that meant two things. First, be careful. Don't get in the way of what the Chileans themselves are doing. They have a process which, I think I said, was stipulated in the 1980 Constitution, which was largely written by the military government. However, whatever the expectations might have been 10 years earlier, this Constitution had served to bring Chile to where it was in 1989. That is, there was going to be an election in December, 1989, and a new, civilian, elected government. At this point nobody really knew who the candidates were going to be.

The new, civilian government would be taking office early in 1990. It was my judgment that the last thing that the U.S. Government wanted to do, was that, having taken a visible and energetic approach to civic education under my predecessor, and moving or helping the country move along toward democracy, if that's the right word - we should move with great care. Remember that the Reagan administration was still in office at this point. We were accused of all kinds of collusion and various bad things by those who lost the plebiscite in Chile, both before it took place and afterwards. We were allegedly trying to buy the plebiscite and do all sorts of things. We had been very careful to calibrate our activities in ways that would not support those accusations.

So I considered that I was starting out on pretty firm ground. I could say, “Look, in October, 1988, the Chilean people voted in the plebiscite. They made a decision by a 56% majority that they wanted to return to an elected, civilian government. All right thinking democrats in the world should support them, but it is their decision.”

I had to figure out how to deal with the government, and particularly Pinochet and the military in that context. Pinochet was now faced with a fait accompli in the plebiscite, which was now over and done with. Pinochet wasn't able to reverse the verdict of the plebiscite. Would he now, as the new year of 1989 began, really comply with the terms

of the constitution? Of course, they had carried out an extra-constitutional act in 1973 by overthrowing the government of Salvador Allende. They remained in that position for a long time. What were the military going to do and how were they going to do it? So we had a lot of discussions about this.

In Washington, the results of the plebiscite were considered to be so fresh that people there weren't exactly sure how this situation would evolve, although the odds all seemed to indicate that it would come out the way it did. There hadn't been a lot of thought given to alternatives. As you know, the U.S. does not do much advance planning.

I arrived in Chile and found that there was an excellent Embassy team there. You've interviewed George Jones, the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission). Ron Goddard had just gone down there in 1988 as the Political Counselor. Ron and I had met each other back in the early 1980s. He is a real Latin American specialist, a Political Officer, a superb Foreign Service Officer. He is currently the DCM, actually, the Charge d'Affaires, in Buenos Aires, until a new Ambassador is named. He will probably continue as Charge d'Affaires throughout much of 1997. In any event, Ron was the Political Counselor. He had an excellent staff of four officers, as I recall it, in that office. One of them was Nancy Mason, who had been my Desk Officer for Colombia. She was the Labor Affairs Officer in Santiago. There were two other bright officers there. The Economic Section was just superb. Glenn Rase was the head of the Economic Section. He is now our Ambassador to Brunei. He had three Americans working with him. They were superb, both in terms of their substantive knowledge of economics, and, what was particularly important to me, their ability to articulate economic issues, the importance of exchange rates, and developments on the economic side, including fiscal policy and the political decisions that were being made and had to be made. In other words, the political economy.

Q: I would imagine that the Embassy in Santiago at this time really needed a top quality economic team to keep you and Washington informed of what was happening. This goes back a way, too.

GILLESPIE: Well, there are two things to say in that connection. First of all, since some time in the mid-1970s - 1976 is a year that kind of sticks in my mind - we had had to operate in Chile in an atmosphere where there was substantial governmental antipathy if not hostility toward the United States Government. Some people compared the atmosphere to the denied status we had in some parts of Eastern Europe. In other words, there was no free, open communication between the U.S. and Chilean Governments. It was not that way at all. At one point we had been perceived as trying to overthrow the Allende Government and supporting the Chilean military in their efforts to do that. That was not true.

Q: But that remained the conventional wisdom, particularly in thUnited States until the present.

GILLESPIE: But it was not the view of the military government in Chile. They said, “No, that's not right. You never offered to help us.” There were some American interests which wished us to help the Chilean military. The fact is, we never did that, and the Chilean military government knew that, even though democrats, with a small d in Chile and probably around the world thought, “Of course the Americans helped to overthrow the Allende Government.” So there was that view, even though it was wrong.

Then another situation began to develop about the mid-1970s - perhaps about 1976. The Chilean military government believed that because of the policies, first of the Congress and certainly then those of the Carter administration with its emphasis on human rights, the U.S. Government was actively trying to subvert and displace the military government of Chile.

So we had it from both sides. There was a residual feeling of distrust that you couldn't trust the Americans because they had brought these bad guys into the Chilean government. Then the bad guys in the military government said, “You can't trust these Americans because they're trying to get us out of office.” I would say that neither of these views was

accurate. No matter what evidence was adduced to support both cases, there wasn't enough to say, “Yes, that's really the way it was or that's really the way it is.”

Q: Let me stop here just for a moment. Now, please continue.

GILLESPIE: We had a situation in which the officials of the Chilean military government, from the highest levels, were relatively hostile to the United States. However, the government bureaucracy, although it had not been completely turned over by the military government, now bore a relatively strong stamp of the military government, because it had probably gone through a generation or a generation and a quarter of fairly extensive turnover, in terms of governmental structures and personnel. Military officers had been installed in office as cabinet and sub cabinet officials early on. I think I mentioned that, by now, this initial military influence in the government had been diluted, to some extent. The Ministry of Defense was something of an exception because it was headed by a person in uniform or a retired military officer. I think that he had left the military service. In any event he was at least nominally the Defense Minister.

However, there was the governing military junta, which was composed of three generals and an admiral - Army, Navy, Air Force, and the National Police or Carabineros. Then there was the bureaucracy of the junta, which had a lot of military people in it. There was the staff and a lot of the officials in the various, junta departments. Each member of the junta oversaw certain parts of this bureaucracy.

In any event, what I'm getting around to is that my calls on the cabinet ministers and the heads of the various offices were quite formal and stylized. Some of them were reasonably cordial, while others were not. I was the new American Ambassador. To a degree they had resented and rejected my predecessor, Harry Barnes. However, they didn't know quite what to make of me.

We had a pretty good idea of what their intelligence on me was. That is, that I was a career Foreign Service Officer with more knowledge of Latin America than my predecessor

had had. I had just finished service in this very dangerous post, Bogota, Colombia, and I was reportedly in the good graces of Secretary of State Schultz, President Reagan, and other people in the administration because, obviously, I had been selected to come to Chile as the American Ambassador. Was I a bleeding heart liberal and an anti-military person? Well, I had served in the U.S. Army for five years. They knew that and made a point of that.

I've talked about our Political and Economic Sections. We were operating in a situation in which we did not feel that we had access to the usual sources and ways of collecting information in a reasonably decent relationship. In other words, day in, day out contact. Diplomacy is conducted every day for 24 hours a day. You collect information from the newspapers, radio, television, and the people you talk to, including government officials with whom you are in touch, on matters of common concern. That's what you do, but it's harder when you don't have many areas of common interest and you are perceived to be the bad guy.

Since 1982 Chile had been going through a really major economic transformation. We knew that. They were renegotiating their debt and were getting back into the world market. We were interested in that. They did not publish a lot of material about what they were doing. We didn't know whether we could trust what they did publish. So we needed good economists or good, research analysts - intelligence collectors, if you will. That's why we had a fairly large, Economic Section.

Similarly, because during the time of the Reagan administration it had been deemed the right thing to do and in our interest to maintain contact not only with the Chilean government but, quite frankly, with the opposition to the government, short of the violent opposition, we had done that. To me that proved the value of a diplomacy which, in fact, is open and in which you maintain contact, not only with the in's but also with the out's. You try to get everything that you can from the in's and make sure, as far as possible, that they do everything that you'd like them to do, if possible. You also maintain contact with

the out's, not so much because you think that they are going to come back into power tomorrow. However, you know that they are a factor in what's going on. It is still true today, and we see this in different parts of the world, that, for a variety of reasons, we tend to maintain our contacts with one side or the other. To me, that's not good diplomacy, although sometimes you don't have much choice. When you have a choice, you ought to maintain contact with both ins and outs.

Anyway, we had a substantial Embassy establishment for that reason - because Chile was somewhat of a denied area. We needed to have a lot of contacts because we wanted to know what was going on. Chile was important to us.

During the cold war, remember, there was this term called SLOCs - sea lanes of communication. The thought was never far from the minds of planners in the Pentagon and in military headquarters that, if something happened to the Panama Canal, then Cape Horn was it. For example, shipping from our East to West Coasts was going to have to go around Cape Horn. In fact, even if nothing happened to the Panama Canal, our large carriers and super tankers couldn't go through the Canal anyway. They were too large. So we needed to be concerned about Chile, Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego, and southern Argentina for those reasons. There were strategic imperatives involved - the sea lanes of communication. If bad people could control those areas from the land, that would really compound our problems. So there was interest in Washington in developments in Chile, as to who was in charge, why, and what was going on.

We had a Defense Attache Office with pretty good people in it. They were trying to maintain contact with the military establishment in Chile, and by and large they succeeded in doing so. These contacts weren't always very warm and cordial. However, and this shows you how our bureaucracy works, after 1976, no military assistance was provided to Chile, and military sales had been cut off. However, the military were still dealing with residual programs going back to the period before 1976 - and this was 13 years later! (Laughter) There were accounts to settle, deliveries to be made which had

been contracted for previously, paying the bills, and these kinds of things. It was just remarkable.

In Colombia I had had a small, but still active military assistance program. Here in Chile I had an inactive military assistance program - which was somehow still alive, to some extent. There were contacts with the Chilean Air Force, contacts with the Chilean Navy, and we can talk about that. It was remarkable that they maintained these contacts. Not much was going on in terms of contacts with the Chilean Army.

There was a very good CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) station. I was blessed in this way. I had started out in Colombia with an excellent station. I had a chief of station to replace the original chief, who was not so hot. I had good relations with the station as a whole and knew how to manage contacts with it when the new chief of station arrived in Bogota.

I guess that I am kind of lucky. When I got to Chile, I found that the chief of station was comfortable in the Embassy. He was confident of his own ability. He set out, if not to co-opt, at least to show me that he was going to be on my team and that we were going to work together during this transition. The station had earlier been successful with a lot of the domestic intelligence collection and other programs. Quite frankly, this was because there was no Soviet, Eastern European, or Cuban presence visible in Chile. Our station didn't have the other parts of the task of the Directorate of Operations of CIA to worry about.

Q: Which would otherwise have been taking up their time. I imagine that when you arrived in Chile, you must have had some concern about the CIA operation because it had become such a political point, domestically in the United States, back in 1976. It is an article of faith among intellectuals in the United States that Pinochet was in office because of the CIA. I would think that the CIA station would be a very sensitive office there.

GILLESPIE: It was sensitive, but not in the way you describe it. It operated very normally. The station had a relationship with the Chilean government. The chief of station was known to the Chilean government for what he was and had been declared to it. Most of the people in the station were not declared to the government. However, the chief of station was sure, and we were sure, that they had all been identified by the Chilean military intelligence people. The station had some relationships with Chilean military intelligence but didn't do much with them.

There was a lot of interest in what other countries were doing in and around Chile, including some of the things that the South Africans were doing. There was a lot of activity going on, including the transfer of arms and that kind of thing. However, there was no terrible sensitivity, if you will, about earlier CIA activities and involvements. In fact, over the years the CIA had developed some contacts in the democratic community in Chile, in an effort to learn what was going on in what one would call the opposition. So the CIA had sources of information in those areas and was able to cast some light on what was going on. I found that I had a pretty reliable, intelligence operation.

I found the Defense Intelligence Agency people, like their counterparts in Colombia, were of very mixed quality. They had contacts with the Chilean military and were handling the residual aspects of the previous military assistance program. However, they spent a large amount of time on order of battle information, covering which units were where, how large they were, and what their equipment was. This is all legitimate activity. However, many but not all of the American military people tended to slip into what I called just backstairs gossip. For example, which general was sleeping with which other general's wife, if, in fact, that was going on. Also, who drinks too much, and so on. I guess that all of these are legitimate subjects for collection, but with a couple of our military it seemed to be their main concern.

I talked with the Defense Attache who, interestingly enough, was a naval officer. Because of the question of the sea lanes of communication, the relationship of the U.S. and Chilean

navies was close and had been for many years. The Chilean Navy was the senior service, as far as the U.S. was concerned. That's why our Defense Attache was a Naval Officer.

The Defense Attache I had in Chile when I arrived in 1988 was Captain “Pete” Peterson. Pete was an oddball, because he was a naval attache and a SEAL. He was as far out of the ordinary line as you could expect a senior Navy captain to be. First, he was a special operator involved in jumping off airplanes...

Q: SEAL's are sort of the commandos of the Navy, like the Rangers ithe Army.

GILLESPIE: Exactly - the Special Forces or Rangers of the Navy. Secondly, he had had about three postings as Naval Attache. If I remember correctly, he had been assigned in Israel as an attache or assistant attache. The reason that he was in Chile was that he had been Ambassador Harry Barnes' naval attache in India, and Harry brought him to Chile. The real area of interest to the U.S. in Chile was the Army, because that's what Pinochet ran, and that's where the power in uniform was, to a much greater extent than in the Navy, Air Force, or anywhere else.

We had a pretty good army attache. He spoke excellent Spanish and was extremely well connected in Chile. However, my defense attache group as a whole wasn't nearly as competent or well plugged in to the whole Chilean scene as the CIA station was.

The CIA station was also very concerned, interested in, and collecting intelligence on, the far left in Chile. That is, the Communists and the far left of the Socialist Party. The station wanted to know what was going on. That was appropriate, and they should have been doing that.

Q: You mentioned a special relationship with the Chilean Air Force athat point.

GILLESPIE: Two things had happened regarding the Chilean military during this period of frost in the relationship between Chile and the United States. I think that I

mentioned earlier that General Matthei, the chief of staff of the Chilean Air Force, had been recommended to me by Ambassador Harry Barnes as someone to pay attention to. Matthei, in his and the immediately following generation of Chilean Air Force officers, were all fighter pilots. The Chilean Air Force had some transport aircraft, but fighters and light bombers were mainly what the Chilean Air Force had for defensive and attack purposes. They had all been trained in the U.S. back in the 1950s or 1960s. They had gone to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama where the U.S. Air Force War College was. Some had gone to Pensacola, FL, and trained there with the U.S. Navy. Others trained in Texas. Many of them wore U.S. Air Force pilot wings, rather than Chilean wings. They were very pleased to do so, and General Matthei and those around him treasured their personal relationships with particular U.S. officers. They maintained these relationships over the years.

They had institutionalized those relationships. I learned that the Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. Air Force all knew General Fernando Matthei, because he had been Chief of Staff of the Chilean Air Force for a long time. They knew the principal Chilean generals who were subordinate to General Matthei. After I arrived in Santiago as Ambassador, I found that one of the earliest official visits to Chile was going to be made by the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force. In the course of the preparations for this visit, I learned about the relationship between the Chilean and U.S. Air Forces.

The Chilean Air Force had about 40 Hawker Hunter, British-made fighter-bombers. These were really old. They had probably been produced in the 1950s. Now they were 35 or 40 years old. General Matthei had a burning desire to replace them with U.S. made F-16's - at that point produced by General Dynamics, which has since been purchased by Lockheed and Lockheed-Martin. In any case, his burning desire, before he left active service, was to have the Chilean Air Force acquire about a dozen, F-16 aircraft from the U.S. and have his air force cooperate, in the fullest sense of the word, with the U.S. Air Force. He wanted his air force to be interoperable with the U.S. Air Force. Every Chilean Air Force officer speaks English very well. They fly, using English language terminology and procedures,

and a lot of their training is conducted in English. Their uniforms are far more a mix of U.S. and British models than they are Latin American. They also have some German military antecedents that go back to the 19th century, as does the Chilean Army.

Our Air Force had these high level, personal relationships with the Chilean Air Force. General Matthei had done the right thing in making public the results of the plebiscite. I got to know him. He turned out to be very friendly. He was a member of the Junta, but I could pick up the phone and ask him if he could tell me what was going on with this or that. He would give me an answer or say, “No, I can't tell you.” This either meant that he didn't know the answer, which was unlikely, or he just wasn't going to tell me. I had a very straightforward and honest relationship with him, as far as I could tell. Other Chilean Air Force officers behaved in the same way.

The Chilean Navy had Admiral Toribio Merino as Chief of Staff. He died just recently. Admiral Merino himself had served in combat as a gunnery officer aboard a U.S. Navy cruiser during World War II in the Pacific. His ties to the U.S. Navy were as deep as those of General Matthei with the U.S. Air Force.

It's interesting when you think of it. I've always thought of Navy officers as being very conservative, with a small c. That is, they don't much like change. This doesn't mean political change necessarily, though it could. Much to my interest and surprise - this hadn't been made clear to me and I hadn't heard it in Washington - General Matthei and the Chilean Air Force had this attitude of reaching out to the U.S. in a desire to restore relationships that had been broken off after the coup d'etat of 1973. They wanted to buy U.S. aircraft. However, the Chilean Navy, under Admiral Merino, had accepted the coup d'etat in 1973 but said, “That doesn't mean that we have to change our relationships with the U.S. Navy.” They understood that, after 1976, there was no military assistance of any kind. This meant that the U.S. could not provide the Chilean military any benefits.

However, there was no legal barrier to Chilean naval officers being in the United States, nor was there any legal barrier to American naval officers visiting Chile. When I got to Santiago, within three months I learned that there were a couple of American naval officers at the Chilean Navy War College, down in Valparaiso, and that there were - and had regularly been - two Chilean naval officers at Newport, Rhode Island, at the U.S. Naval War College. That situation had continued without interruption throughout this period. Nobody had ever done anything about it, if they'd ever noticed it - not Senator Ted Kennedy, not Senator Hubert Humphrey back in the early years, and nobody later on, including any of the human rights activists who tended to focus on Chile. Nobody had said anything. The way they did it was that we, basically, paid for our naval officers in Chile, and the Chilean Navy paid all of the costs to the U.S. Navy for their people at the Naval War College. In effect, they paid tuition charges to the U.S. Navy.

I also learned that there was a Chilean Naval Officer who was assigned as a Liaison Officer to CINCLANT, Commander in Chief, Atlantic Area, with headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia. CINCLANT is the U.S. Navy Atlantic Command billet, calling for a four-star admiral. The same person is also SACLANT, or Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, a NATO command. The Chileans were all plugged into that. No other Latin American country that I know of was there. The Chileans had an office at CINCLANT headquarters. I happened to visit it. Comandante or Capitan Rodriguez, or some name like that, was the Chilean Naval Liaison Officer. That was fascinating.

In fact, another thing struck me before I had been in Chile very long. Capt Pete Peterson, the Naval Attache, said that he had approval from the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations to give such and such a Navy Commendation Ribbon to Admiral So-and-so, who was the Chilean Naval representative in Washington, DC. Peterson showed me his biography. I looked at it, and it turned out that he had had several Navy billets on the way to being assigned as Chilean Navy representative in Washington. So we had him over to the Embassy residence. We popped a bottle of champagne and pinned the medal on him.

There was no press coverage, as it was all done quietly. The Chilean admiral was thrilled to receive this award. About 12-14 Chilean naval officers attended the ceremony. I found that, despite all of the prohibitions, the bars, the bans, and everything else, the military had sustained these relationships over a number of years. There is an annual, Naval exercise run out of CINCLANT in Norfolk called, UNITAS. I don't remember exactly what UNITAS stands for as an acronym, beyond the surface meaning of unity. However, it is the name of a naval exercise involving navies from various Latin American countries. U.S. Navy ships go from West to East one year and the next year from East to West, exercising with naval forces along the way. They show the flag, and it's an example of traditional diplomacy - not gunboat style, per se, although there is some of that. It is naval diplomacy. They work the local U.S. Embassies in. It's a very good thing. There had been U.S. naval officers involved in it. Capt. Pete Peterson's replacement, a man named Capt. Tom Smith, had actually come to Chile much earlier as a U.S. Navy “ship driver” commander of a U.S. Navy ship in connection with one of those UNITAS exercises. He knew a lot of the Chilean Navy people and so forth.

Anyhow, I found that there had been a whole range of connections like these between the U.S. and Chilean military. However, there had been a sharp break in relationships between the Chilean and U.S. Armies. The kind of relationships I've mentioned above did not take place although, surprisingly enough, I was skiing in Fortillo, Chile, one lovely day. I was up in a sort of cafeteria line on a beautiful, outdoor deck. There was a Chilean Army Officer there in his skiing uniform. They have a special ski suit which they wear when skiing. He had on a pair of really neat, late model ski boots. He was a lieutenant. I was just wearing a ski suit. I had no idea that he'd know who I was. I said to him in Spanish, “Gee, Lieutenant, those are really spiffy looking boots that you're wearing. Did you get those here in Chile?” I assumed that he had not, because I hadn't seen them in Chile. He said, “No, Mr. Ambassador,” immediately recognizing me. He said, “What a pleasure that you are speaking to me. No, I got these boots in Alaska.” I said, “Oh, how did you get up there?” He said, “I've just finished a year's exchange with the U.S. Army Cold Weather Command

in Alaska." (Laughter) I said, "What?" He said, "Yes, this is a program that began under Ambassador Barnes, and it has continued."

So I found out that these contacts were continuing, despite your impression that nobody would be assigned to a billet like this. That made it different from real cold war incidents. So I found this situation, and that is what I got into. That was all of the official relationships and some of the interesting, cosmetic aspects of the situation.

More serious, though, was our objective of promoting democracy and really pursuing our human rights objectives. Elliot Abrams, the Assistant Secretary of Latin American Affairs, made it perfectly clear to me that this was part of my instructions. I was expected to pursue the objective of promoting human rights in Chile. Ambassador Harry Barnes had done that - going well beyond his marching in a funeral parade.

One of my very first calls in Chile was at the Vicariate of Solidarity, which was run by the Catholic Church. By the way, I also called on the Cardinal Archbishop of Santiago and on the senior bishop in Santiago. Their antagonism toward Pinochet and the Chilean military was palpable. They had never hesitated to speak out. In fact, there was an interesting display of Vatican politics involved. Both the cardinal and the bishop were old. The cardinal had actually retired from more active assignments. The bishop was going to retire and, in fact, did so while I was in Santiago, because he had reached the mandatory retirement age of 75. My visits to these two prelates made headlines in the press. The headline said, "Gillespie Goes to See the Cardinal." I had a statement for the press for each of these visits, which I issued either as I walked in the door or left - or both. In these statements I made it very, very clear that my position and that of the U.S. was that we supported the return of democracy in Chile and the strict observance of human rights. I praised the work that the two prelates had done in Chile. This was all part of the policy package and set of objectives that we had in Chile.

The Vicariate of Solidarity was really involved in all of this. It had been raided by the police. While I was there, there were efforts to suppress it. I took it on myself to visit the Vicariate immediately after it was reported that there was an attempt to suppress it. There had been a problem with some of its people. I assembled the embassy country team and asked, “What should we do?” The conclusion was, “Let's get the Ambassador physically over there and,” as the Latins always say, “ visibly showing solidarity with” the Vicariate of Solidarity in this case. I made the visit and came out and made the requisite statement to the press to record the occasion.

It was interesting, because Chile has a fairly sophisticated media, although, even then the government owned and controlled, or had a heavy hand in many elements of the Chilean media. I will go into this later. The press didn't hesitate to report, so there was always photo coverage of the American Ambassador doing this or that - and other prominent personalities, too, not just me. Activities like that always got TV coverage on the evening news programs. I think that doing this established the fact that the U.S. and the American ambassador had not departed from the position of Ambassador Harry Barnes. In essence, I put my own stamp on this position by the way I did it.

I'd like to go back to what I thought our overall approach should be on the transition to democracy in Chile. I had talked to many people in Washington and to the country team in Santiago. I quickly sensed that I had a very competent embassy staff, a very dedicated and hard working group. It works that way in a situation where not everything is perfect. Not everybody loves you and you're in a somewhat hostile environment. You sense that there is a spark and that people are working together. Morale was good, and that soon became apparent.

I used to enjoy our country team meetings. We had a “tank” a supposedly bug-proof plastic conference room developed in the United States and installed at many of our Embassies abroad. The Embassy chancery was located in a crazy, old, 10-story building in Santiago. We had about three or four floors of this building. It was well located in

downtown Santiago, but it was very insecure in many respects. We were pretty sure that efforts were being made by the Chileans to bug our Embassy and learn what we were doing. So we had this secure, acoustic conference room, where we would hold our more sensitive meetings.

During my first days and weeks in Chile, in meetings in the “tank,” we developed the approach which I thought would work best. Perhaps this was because I had served in the military. From everything that I had read, heard, and seen so far - and I'd gotten this also from civilian Chileans, even in the opposition - there was a high level of respect for individual military officers in Chile. The Chilean military, by any standard, is not particularly corrupt as an institution, although there are individual cases of corruption. There was respect for the Chilean military as a whole, even though, in many instances, some people also felt a terrible animosity toward the military for what it had done. What struck me and what I emphasized was the word honor.

I talked to my USIS people - Information Officer, Stan Shepherd and the Public Affairs Counselor, Marilyn McAfee - about this concept. She had worked closely with Ambassador Harry Barnes. Stan Shepherd, the Information Officer, was a man of long experience who turned out to be a really good skiing buddy for me. Ron Goddard, the Counselor for Consular Affairs, had an excellent Consul General and a very good staff. I brought him and the Consul General into these country team discussions. I very much appreciated his views. I proposed that we basically take the line that where Chile was today was a function of the Constitution of 1980, which had been promulgated by Pinochet and the military government as men of honor. We expected them to live up to their commitment. That was my basic line. Every chance I got I was going to use it. I would say that this was a situation where the honor of the Chilean armed forces was at stake. They made the commitment to do things this way. I referred to the Chilean Army, Navy, and Air Force and I used the term honor, repeatedly. I kept on saying that. I thought that that was the best way to do it. It didn't make this a U.S. term. That was my line.

When the Vicariate of Solidarity was in trouble, I said, “I do not understand how men of honor - meaning the military - could permit things like this to happen. It's not an appropriate thing to do.” This seemed to work pretty well.

As far as the democratic transition was concerned, that first year I was in Chile seemed to be crucial. It seemed to be going along all right, except that the 17-party concertacion group which supported the “No” vote was becoming the concertacion for democracy. It increasingly looked like the coalition that was going to run the Presidency, in some fashion. The 17-party concertacion did not like certain provisions in the Constitution of 1980 as they affected the upcoming elections in December, 1988, and what was going to happen after that. They basically came up with a set of desires, demands, or whatever you might want to call them. They proposed to the military government that these changes be made.

Well, the initial reaction of Pinochet and the junta was that they were not going to make these changes. They said, “No.” Well, a lot of pressure was generated, and we added whatever we could to that, though we had to be careful not to appear to be interfering in anything. So it had to be subtle. However, in the final analysis the Minister of the Interior in the Pinochet Government, a civilian named Carlos Caceres, working through the internal processes of the government, convinced Pinochet that they ought to negotiate with the Concertacion. The Minister of the Interior felt that this would be okay. He could manage the negotiations, and they wouldn't have to give up more than they had to. This would be an appropriate thing for them to do.

Well, Minister of the Interior Caceres began these negotiations in February, 1989, and continued through March and April, 1989. A crucial event occurred on the afternoon of May 10, 1989. I forget where I was, but that afternoon I received a phone call - maybe it was from the CIA or maybe from Ron Goddard - reporting to me that Pinochet had pulled

the plug on the negotiations. He was not going to let Minister of the Interior Caceres go any further, since he felt that he was going to have to give up too much.

Then an amazing thing happened. Carlos Caceres said, “If you do that, Mr. President, I resign.” Pinochet had never had people talk to him that way before. He wasn't used to that. Two other cabinet ministers, including Hernan Felipe Errasuritz, the Foreign Minister, said, “If Carlos Caceres leaves the cabinet, the three of us go also.” So there were three, key ministers who told Pinochet that they would resign if the negotiations with Concertacion were ended. The third minister was the Minister of Mines and Energy. The three of them were all civilians and Pinochet loyalists to the core. So when they said this, Pinochet backed down. I received a phone call at 5:00 or 6:00 AM the next morning saying, “Pinochet has backed down.” Meanwhile, we didn't say or do anything. We acted as if it hadn't happened. We just let things ride and kept our mouths shut and our hands out of it. The fact is that Carlos Caceres probably is the reason that the democratic transition proceeded. He then went forward and negotiated. He was a tough negotiator.

Another plebiscite was held in July, 1989, in which the various changes proposed in the Constitution were validated and legitimized. A constitutional amendment was also approved, and that set the stage for what was to follow. Those are the kinds of things we observed. I had begun a process of introducing myself to Chile and Chile to me, as I indicated. One of the trips that I needed to take was to a city called Temuco, about 350 miles South of Santiago. There was a university there and a lot of activities. It was really a sort of environmental hodgepodge. There were some bad things going on with timber cutting, and other things were happening. I visited there on March 13, 1989, if I remember correctly. I had by now been in Chile for about three months. My wife was with me. We had been having meetings of various kinds.

On the night before we were to fly back to Santiago I received a phone call from George Jones, the DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission, in the Embassy, to the effect that the U.S. Customs Service had just stopped all fruit shipments into the United States from Chile.

The reason given was that cyanide-poisoned grapes had been discovered in a shipment of fruit from Chile. This was described as a terrorist plot of some kind to kill Americans. George told me that the Chilean Foreign Minister wanted me back up in Santiago right away. Well, there were no flights until the next morning. I discussed this with George, and we agreed that I had better call the Foreign Minister.

George told me what he knew, which was that a few days earlier we had received a phone call through the Embassy switchboard. Because the call had to do with agricultural products, the call had been passed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. A young Chilean receptionist/secretary had taken the call. The caller was some man who was ranting and raving about how he was going to cause all kinds of problems for us. He wasn't very specific. The Inspection Service had made note of the call. The receptionist, quite appropriately, reported the call to her boss, who reported it to the Embassy Security Officer. The Security Officer considered that this was not a direct threat to the Embassy's safety, but he had told everybody to be alert to the fact that we were getting threatening phone calls. He had done everything by the book. In fact, because of bomb threats received in the past, he had a taping device attached to the phone. He had said, “If anyone calls again, make sure that we get this kind of call on tape.”

A few days later, another call came in. This one was probably from the same person, and the Embassy taped it. On the basis of this, the Embassy had prepared a reporting cable. I was traveling on this trip to Temuco, so I didn't see the every-day reporting. George Jones had approved the cable and sent it on to the Department of State, saying that we had received this report about Chilean grapes and other fruit that might be poisoned.

You have to put this kind of incident in context, which was very hard for the Chileans to do. A couple of years earlier we had had the Tylenol case, involving poisoning Tylenol pills with cyanide. More recently, there had been an incident in New England of cyanide-poisoned yogurt, on the shelves of grocery stores. Only a few weeks before the phone call to the Embassy there had been testimony, if I remember correctly, by Merryl Streep, or

someone like that, about Alar, the chemical used to treat apples in northwestern United States and keep them from spoiling. The allegation was that chemicals like these were going to kill American children - cause cancer and do all sorts of things like that.

Q: Now, Merryl Streep was an actress and so obviously an authority owhatever she could get publicity for.

GILLESPIE: Right. So against the background of these incidents we had received two phone calls, the second seeming to confirm the first, that someone in Chile might be doing something to fruit exports to the U.S. The embassy dutifully reported this.

We did something else. We not only reported this to Washington but we also reported it to the Foreign Ministry. We sent the information we had, including a memorandum of conversation by the receptionist who received the first phone call and then a transcript of the recording of the second phone call. Our security officer told the Chilean Police about these incidents. This was all done almost immediately. Unbeknownst to us, the U.S. Customs Service began to ask what shipments had left Chile that might be coming to the United States since these phone calls had been reported. The reality is that nearly 97% of the Chilean fruit exports were going to the U.S. These exports were growing. I think that they amounted to about $8.0 billion worth, or some huge amount like that. It was right in the middle of our winter and the height of the Chilean growing and shipping season.

Q: So there was a natural relationship.

GILLESPIE: Yes. The fruit left Valparaiso, Chile, on ships going to the U.S. The ships went North through the Panama Canal and up to Philadelphia, where they were unloaded.

So the U.S. Customs Service immediately put out the word that we should be careful about Chilean fruit. They began to inquire into what ships had left Chile, bound for the United States, since these phone calls were received at the Embassy in Santiago. They worked out that there was a particular ship coming into Philadelphia. The ship arrived in

Philadelphia about a day or so before I received this phone call from the Foreign Minister. The Customs people in Philadelphia started a search and sampling of all of the fruit aboard this one vessel. I think that Customs was checking about 10% of the fruit in this particular shipment. A Customs inspector opened a box of grapes, unwrapped the paper in which the fruit was shipped, and found some grapes that looked suspicious. He sent these grapes to the U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratory in Philadelphia. They ran tests of the grapes and found cyanide. They had found the smoking gun, or the poisoned grape. At that point Customs ordered a halt to the import of all fruit from Chile. That was when I got the phone call from the Foreign Minister.

I called Foreign Minister Errasuritz. He really let me have it in low grade Spanish, using angry expletives throughout what he said. He said, “Ambassador Gillespie, what's going on here? What are you people doing to us? You're ruining our economy. This affects our whole export structure. Good heavens, this is terrible!” Finally, I just yelled at him. I said, “Stop! Shut up! Hold on! Mr. Minister, we can either yell at each other, with you doing most of the yelling, and I'll hold the phone away from my ear, or we can start talking about what's going on and figure out what we're going to do about it.” I could almost hear him take a deep breath. He didn't apologize or slow down. He just said, “You're God damned right! You're absolutely right! How soon can you be back in Santiago?” I said, “I'm going to take the first flight tomorrow morning, which leaves Temuco at about 7:00 AM. The flight takes about an hour. I'll arrive in Santiago at 8:00 AM and I'll be in your office by 9:00 AM.” He said, “Okay, I'll be waiting for you. What can we do in the meantime?” I said, “You've got to ask the Chilean Ambassador in Washington to talk to the U.S. Customs people and find out what's going on. I'll be finding out as much as I can,” and so forth.

In the meantime, that night, I had a phone call from the Commissioner of the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) in the U.S. He said, “I'm not sure that this is the right thing to do. I'm not sure that we really know what's going on here, but we absolutely have no choice. It has to be done this way for now. However, I want you to know that my objective is to resume these shipments of Chilean fruit to the United States as quickly as humanly

possible. To do that, I will need cooperation from the Chileans. Here is what I will need." And he listed what he needed.

When I went in to see Foreign Minister Errasuritz the next morning in Santiago, I said, "At this particular moment, let's not think about what has happened. Let's think about what we can do to get the shipments of Chilean fruit going once again." He said, "Okay, let's do that."

This involved making arrangements for Foreign Minister Errasuritz to go to Washington to meet with Secretary of State Baker, Vice President Quayle, and President Bush. Now it was 1989, and the Bush administration, and no longer the Reagan administration, was in office. Meetings were set up. The Chilean Ambassador in Washington was very capable and effective. Everyone was working together. In the State Department they didn't know what had happened. Nobody thought that it was a plot by the Chilean government to do any harm to the United States. Economic harm had been done, both to Chile and to U.S. commercial interests as well. The biggest loss was suffered by Chile, but there was some loss in the U.S. as well.

It also turned out that many of the shipments of fruit that leave Chile headed North to go to Canada. Some went to Saudi Arabia. On the basis of an alert that the U.S. FDA put out, Canada and Saudi Arabia shut off imports of Chilean fruit. This incident started to have repercussions all over the world, so it wasn't just in the U.S. It wasn't just one ship that was affected. This situation really hit Chile very hard.

So Secretary of State Baker and other, senior U.S. officials took time to meet with Foreign Minister Errasuritz. It turned out that the White House, in fact, had approved the decision to shut off imports of Chilean fruit. The judgment was that, on the basis of the information they had, they ought to go ahead and shut down the import of the fruit. Secretary of State Baker argued strongly against this, as had a couple of other people. However, the handwriting was on the wall, and I later learned that Baker knew that. He was just making

that argument, quite frankly, so that he could tell the Chileans that we had not lightly reached the decision to cut off the import of Chilean fruit and that the decision had not been unanimous. I'm not sure that this was the right thing to do or not. However, against the background of what had gone on in the U.S., given the attitude of U.S. consumer groups and so forth, there was enough evidence of some kind of a problem. If anything bad had happened, you could never defend not having stopped the import of Chilean fruit.

Q: Oh, no!

GILLESPIE: Now, was it right or wrong? Was it justified or not justified? Those are other questions. The facts justified the action taken.

It turned out later that there were a lot of questions about the identification of the fruit - and even more questions about the testing of the fruit, including the way it was done and how large the sample. So it wasn't easy.

This incident presented me and our Embassy with a challenge which was not unique but not often paralleled in the Foreign Service. It was really something, because it colored and continues to color, to some degree, U.S. and Chilean relations. This incident probably cost the Chileans something in the neighborhood of $350 million, which is not inconsequential. However, as it was happening, it touched or looked as if it were going to touch Chileans whose livelihood depended on their ability to export their fruit all over the world. There was enough evidence that that ability to export fruit was being interfered with by the U.S. Government. The Chilean fruit exporters couldn't care less why this was happening. They just knew that their livelihood was being threatened.

Interestingly enough, the same General Fernando Matthei, the Chief of Staff of the Chilean Air Force, called me up about two weeks after this problem began. By the way, we got the fruit shipments to the U.S. started again after seven days. Everybody worked to make that happen. It wasn't anything that I did or any one person did. The Chileans did their thing,

and we did ours. The FDA did a super job in cleaning up this matter, whatever they did or didn't do to cause this mess. They really worked on the cleanup.

For example, the FDA sent experts down to Chile. For their part the Chileans were just remarkable. They basically asked, “What do we have to do to get these exports of fruits started again?” The FDA people said, “We need to make sure that we can all say to the public that no grapes are leaving Chile with any indication that they have been tampered with or contaminated. Now, what do we need to do to be able to say that?” They went back to examine the grapes on the vine. The growing season had another month to six weeks to run. The Chileans grape growers had just taken this tremendous blow. If they could sell at least some grapes between that point and the end of the season, that would help a little bit. So the FDA people came to Chile and worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, my Economic Section, the Political Officers, and the Security Officer. What was involved here? The grapes were on the vine. People picked the grapes. The grapes went into boxes, the boxes went to the packing plants where they were sorted, sized, and wrapped. The boxes were put on trucks, and the trucks went to the ports. Maybe they were put in containers and then went to the ports. They were loaded on ships and then sent off to markets in the U.S. and elsewhere. Where was the area of control? You have to control the shipment from the vine into the container, which can be sealed. They set out what needed to be done. It was a remarkable and systematic approach. The Chileans said, “Okay, we will monitor the picking, we'll do this in the sorting. We will do this here.” The FDA said, “If you'll do that, it will be great. We can certify the rest,” and so forth.

So they worked it all out and did it very quickly and smoothly. People from the FDA spoke Spanish, or we were able to twin them with people from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Inspection Service who did speak Spanish and who came down from the U.S. They were able to do it. The fascinating but tragic thing is that the man who ran that operation for the FDA came back to Chile some months later and was warmly welcomed by the Chilean government and the fruit growers because he had helped get the fruit exports started

again. They were flying up in northern Chile to see some vineyards where they produced table grapes. The plane crashed and he and his partner were killed, along with the pilot. It was just tragic.

In any event in seven days we got the exports of fruit to the United States going again. This showed that you could do that kind of thing if you can get everybody to agree on what the real objective is. I must say that the U.S. and Chilean Governments worked together to this end. The incident completely changed the relationship of the U.S. Ambassador and the Foreign Minister and, to a large degree, the U.S. Embassy and the Foreign Ministry. Not necessarily other parts of the Chilean government, but we developed that shared sense of having been through a crisis together, having agreed on an objective, and having achieved it. Even though there had previously been some differences and antagonisms which did not disappear on certain issues, nonetheless we had this shared and positive experience which you cannot discount. At that point I was Tony to the Foreign Minister, and he was Don Felipe to me. It was possible, then, to deal with a lot of other issues in probably a different tone of voice than might otherwise have been the case.

The lingering effects of this fruit export crisis have been pernicious and nasty. The head of the Chilean Fruit Exporters Association, a man named Ronald Browne and a Chilean through and through, met with me. He told me that the exporters had been taking as much as $1 a crate and putting it into a marketing emergency fund. I forgot how much money was in this fund, but it amounted to some millions of dollars - perhaps $6-8 million. He said, “Ambassador, none of us knows what happened, but we suffered tremendous harm. I have this money in the emergency fund. I want you to know that we will spend every bit of that and will continue to collect money. We're going to see that our situation is made right. We've been damaged and we think that your government did that to us, for whatever reason, and it owes us compensation for what it did.” Well, feelings like that still remain in 1997. They have not gone away. They are not a major item, but they are on the agenda every time there are U.S. - Chilean trade talks.

President Frei of Chile will come to Washington in 1997. At some point in the meetings which take place - perhaps not in the talks between the two Presidents - the grapes will be mentioned. This incident certainly will be in the press in Chile. The question will be asked, “What is President Frei going to do about the grapes when he is in Washington?”

Q: Let's move on to another issue which is on the other side, the Letelier case. I'm not sure whether it was still reverberating during your time in Chile. Could you explain what this is and then what happened?

GILLESPIE: Yes. It happened in 1976. Letelier was the former Chilean Foreign Minister and maybe later Ambassador to the United States. I can't recall that point right now. However, in 1976 Letelier was working with the Institute for Policy Studies, a liberal think tank in Washington. He got into a car with his assistant, a woman named Ronni Moffitt. They started the car, it exploded, and they were both killed. The car had been rigged with a bomb. The incident happened on Massachusetts Avenue.

Q: What Circle was that? Was it Sheridan Circle? There's a littlplaque there.

GILLESPIE: I think that it was on Massachusetts Avenue at Sheridan Circle. There is a plaque there. The case was investigated in detail. In the final analysis some Cubans resident in the U.S., one or more of whom may have been American citizens, were accused of having set the bomb in the car. However, the instructions to set the bomb had come from Santiago, from DINA, the National Intelligence Directorate.

The U.S. prosecutors completely mishandled this case in terms of legal procedures, so that the Chilean authors of this act were never formally convicted or charged. However, the Cubans were charged. One or more of Letelier's children were U.S. citizens because they had been born in the U.S. They brought suit in a U.S. civil court and obtained a judgment against the Government of Chile which was never executed. It was never

satisfied. The Chilean government ignored it, so the government was and has been in default of this judgment.

When Ambassador Harry Barnes and I served in Chile, this case was still very much outstanding on the civil side. The criminal side was over and done with, for all intents and purposes. The Letelier bombing case was also cited as one of the reasons why we cut off all assistance to Chile in 1976, and especially military assistance, under the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment. There had been an amendment to that amendment which said, in effect, that there can never be any military assistance for Chile until this matter is resolved. The language of the second amendment is very specific. It states that it will remain in effect until the Chilean government takes steps to bring to justice those responsible for the murder of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt. Ronni Moffitt was a U.S. citizen. Letelier was not. This case did not involve just the killing of a Chilean citizen in the U.S. This was also a case of international state terrorism, directed against a U.S. citizen in Washington.

This was really an atrocious crime. It turned out that this murder was ordered and, to some degree, directed by a U.S. citizen who was working for Chile, in Chile. Eventually, he was arrested in the U.S. and was eventually sentenced for this and other crimes. In terms of the procedural steps taken, it was very convoluted. In terms of diplomacy, however, it really remains a tremendous shadow, obviously hanging over the Chilean military government. The military government was responsible for it, in the final analysis, and is accountable for it. However, the incident also overhangs any government of Chile, including any that might be elected during the transition to democracy. It also means that if the Chilean system produces free elections and a civilian government, there can be no relations with the Chilean military as long as this issue remains unresolved. So the Letelier-Moffitt issue needed to be brought to an end to some degree, both on the criminal end and on the civil side. If this was not done, it would not be easy to have decent relations, even with a new, civilian government in Chile, no matter what it was or how it

was composed. That was also part of my continuing instructions and was part of the real backdrop to U.S. relations with Chile in 1989-1990.

The Chilean military government absolutely refused to deal with this issue in any way. So nothing was going to happen until 1990, when the civilian government took over. However, it was already evident that our relations with the civilian government of Chile would be dramatically affected by how the people in it dealt with this problem in their context.

We know that what is called in Spanish the “intellectual authors” of the crime of killing Letelier and Moffitt (that is, who ordered the murders) were General Manuel Contreras and Brigadier Jose Espinosa. They were the chief and deputy chief of DINA (National Intelligence Directorate of Chile), respectively, at the time of the murders. Then there was a civil suit, in which a U.S. Court has handed down a judgment of wrongful death and deprivation of rights in favor of the survivors, the families of the two people who were killed. We had to figure out how to deal with this situation. I think that it was a diplomatic success for those of us who had to work with this problem. We and the Chileans in the civilian government were able to get this resolved.

Q: Let me put this comment at the end here. When we finished up this segment, you were describing the Letelier case and how, when the civilian, Chilean government came into office in 1990, the case was worked out. Also, we will want to talk about your impressions of the civilian, Chilean government as it entered office, the change in relationships, and how that went. Then we want to talk about the Chilean economy throughout your whole time in Chile.

GILLESPIE: We talked about this in terms of Colombia. We can discusU.S. business in Chile and the rest of it.

Q: Yes, U.S. business in Chile and relationships between the intellectual economists in Chile. One thinks of the Chicago school economists in Chile. We will want to discuss what that really meant during the time you were in Chile. Then we might discuss some other

issues. For example, were there any problems in relations of Chile with its neighbors, such as Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. Was the Shining Path guerrilla movement in Peru a problem in Chile? Was there any spillover of these Indian type movements into Chile? We will also want to discuss the narcotics problem. Was Cuba fooling around in Chile? We'll go into these issues next time.

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Today is March 6, 1997. Tony, let's start by finishing up the Letelier case. The civilian, Chilean government had entered office. During your time in Chile, what was your role and what was happening?

GILLESPIE: It turned out that the resolution of the Letelier case was crucial to clearing the field for U.S. relations with the civilian government, because, beginning in about 1976, the U.S. Congress had passed a piece of legislation which came to be known as the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment. This amendment was itself amended later, but that is just a detail. The original amendment was named for the late Hubert Humphrey, a Senator and later Vice President under President Jimmy Carter, and Senator Ted Kennedy. This law basically put a freeze on U.S.-Chilean military relationships. It provided, after it was refined during passage, that until steps had been taken to bring to justice the murderers of Orlando Letelier, a Chilean citizen, and Ronni Moffitt, an American citizen, no U.S. military assistance, including training, could be provided to Chile.

The Humphrey-Kennedy amendment loomed very large in Chilean-American relations. It had fascinating consequences during the period between 1976, when it was passed, until 1990, when the civilian government came into office in Chile. I don't think that there's much argument today that, because of that amendment, Chile certainly accelerated the development of the Chilean arms industry. Chile became a rather large producer in South America of weapons and ammunition. Chile developed very close ties with the white, apartheid government of South Africa and with the Israeli Government. Neither South

Africa nor Israel had any qualms about selling equipment to Chile during the period of the military government. The only criterion of the Chilean military government was that the country selling military equipment to Chile must not be a communist government. In addition to the South African and Israeli Governments, the British Government became very active in working with the Chilean military government.

However, with the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment we had basically said that there would be no more U.S. military assistance to Chile. I don't recall whether I mentioned that prior to 1973, when the military government took over in Chile, there had been fairly close ties between Chile and the U.S. in the field of military assistance. This involved the Army, Navy, and Air Forces of both countries. After 1976, when the Humphrey- Kennedy amendment was passed, all of that began to freeze and dry up. In fact, even today, in 1997, we are still feeling the effects of that development.

In any event, the crucial trigger to relax the restrictions provided for in the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment was taking steps to resolve the Letelier case. In essence it called for the Government of Chile to take steps to bring to justice the killers of Letelier and Moffitt. By the way, since Orlando Letelier had lived in the United States and one or more of his children were born in the U.S., his family had a U.S. citizenship base. Of course, Ronni Moffitt's husband and her family were U.S. citizens. As I mentioned before, they brought a civil suit for wrongful death in a Federal District Court. The judgment was uncontested by the Chilean government. It claimed sovereign immunity and refused to contest the suit. The judge in this case, ruled in favor of the Letelier and Moffitt families and handed down a judgment accordingly. By the time I arrived in Chile in the late 1980s, the total in damages due the two families, with interest, penalties, and so forth, amounted to, if I remember correctly, $6-7 million. It was a substantial amount of money.

A civilian government was elected in Chile in 1990. It was called the Concertacion essentially, a coalition of 17 parties, led by President Aylwin, who was head of the Christian Democratic Party. It was very anxious to get Chilean relations with the U.S. back

to normal. One of the principal anomalies or abnormalities was the lump constituted by the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment. I worked very closely with Senator Ted Kennedy and his principal foreign affairs staffer on this, a woman named Nancy Soderberg. Kennedy was very reluctant to see the gates of military assistance open again to relations with the Chilean military. I think that his motivation, which he never really expressed to me, probably included the concern that our military would jump right back into the arms of the Chilean military, or vice versa. He was concerned that our people would be hob-nobbing with the Chilean military.

I won't try to go into the very complicated arrangements involving the murders of Letelier and Moffitt. Michael Townley, an American citizen and the son of a businessman who had been actively working in Chile, was an agent for the DINA, the Chilean intelligence service. DINA developed poison gases, and Townley himself was involved in assassinations. Townley was, indeed, eventually convicted in a U.S. court on another charge, sentenced, and was in jail during this time. As I said before, my memory may be incorrect, and he may have been out of jail in a kind of witness protection program. There was some contact with Townley.

In any event, as I said before, we were convinced, as were others, that the “intellectual authors” of the Letelier and Moffitt assassinations were the then head of DINA, General Manuel Contreras, and his deputy, Jose Espinosa. In this whole tragedy Letelier was assassinated. Unfortunately, Moffitt was an innocent bystander in all of this. She was not a prime target. Contreras and Espinosa were completely at large in Chile. They still retained links to the Chilean military. It was one of those situations where neither had been formally retired or cashiered from the Chilean military in any way, because, as people on active military duty, they would enjoy some of the protections that went with that status. Therefore, they could not be brought into court very easily and couldn't be required to talk about what had gone on.

Thinking that we knew the answer, we always questioned whether General Augusto Pinochet, President of Chile back at the time of the murders in 1974, was aware of the assassination attempt before it happened. We certainly never doubted that he knew, at least after the fact, who had been responsible and how it had happened. In any event, the specific intellectual authors of the crime were deemed to be General Contreras and Jose Espinosa. I considered it a major obligation of the United States, and I was fully supported by Washington in this regard, that, first, we too wanted to get Chilean- American relations back to normal. We wanted to support the democratic government of Chile as it attempted to begin to assert civilian authority over a military which, under the Chilean Constitution and the realities of the preceding, seventeen years, was in a very strong position. It had a real power base in Chile. It could, conceivably, disrupt the return of democracy to Chile and cause trouble throughout the Western Hemisphere, as a result.

We in the Embassy in Santiago began to work very closely with the civilian, Chilean government. By the way, if I haven't mentioned it before, Chile has a long tradition of democracy, of multiparty involvement in the government, and of all kinds of political activity. When I say political activity, I don't mean it in any negative or corrupt way. We were dealing with a coalition government in Chile. I may have mentioned before that 17 political parties formed the concertacion para la democracia, coalition for democracy, which supported the civilian government. It was important for President Aylwin, the head of the Christian Democratic Party, who were sort of the heavy hitters in Concertacion, to make sure that they spread the power around.

President Aylwin and his team chose as his Foreign Minister Silva Cimma. His father's family name was Silva, but we always called the Foreign Minister Silva Cimma. He was from the Radical Party, which was somewhat to the left of the Christian Democrats. This party had a very strong, agricultural base. Silva Cimma, I guess, was in his 70s, I believe, at the time he took over the Foreign Ministry.

Silva Cimma knew administrative law. He had been kind of like the comptroller general of Chile, earlier in his life, before the military government took over the country in 1973. However, he didn't know anything about foreign affairs. He really hadn't been involved in foreign affairs very much. Did we discuss the grapes case? A few table grapes of Chilean origin shipped to the U.S. in 1989 were found to have had small quantities of cyanide injected into them. When this was learned, the U.S. prohibited any further import of Chilean table grapes for some time after that.

Q: Oh, yes.

GILLESPIE: That's what I thought. Silva Cimma's daughter had suffered financially from the prohibition of imports of Chilean grapes into the U.S. early in 1989. He regarded the prohibition on the import of Chilean table grapes into the U.S. very personally. He never hesitated to tell me that we in the U.S. had to settle this case because so many Chileans had lost so much money. That really seemed to be one of the motivating factors in his dealing with us. He was otherwise extremely friendly and accessible. I could call him at home, day or night. He would call me at home, day or night. We had long talks. I think that he was trying to learn as much as he could. I think that he did that with embassies from other countries, as well.

So, Silva Cimma was the Foreign Minister. He didn't know how to deal with the Letelier case. It was really his Vice Foreign Minister, a Christian Democrat named Edmundo Vargas, who handled the matter on the Chilean side. This was part of the politics of this issue. President Aylwin had named a coalition partner, a Radical Party member, as Foreign Minister, but he was very careful to name a Christian Democrat, from his own party, to the Foreign Ministry as Vice Foreign Minister.Vargas is a very interesting person. He had been the head of the Inter American Human Rights Commission at the OAS (Organization of American States) for several years. I think that he was with the OAS for six or eight years. I had met Edmundo Vargas even before I went to Chile, and before there had been an election or anything like that. I had gotten to know him. He had been an

expert on international law. He is a soft-spoken, very gentle man. For years his wife taught school in Bethesda, MD. They had a home in Bethesda which they had purchased. As I say, they had lived in the Washington area for six or seven years. So Vargas was not at all unfamiliar with U.S. ways of doing things.

We really were able to work out with Edmundo Vargas the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment affair dealing with the Letelier-Moffitt affair, We spent a long time talking about how to do this. Even as early as 1975-1976 the U.S. had hired a Chilean attorney named Alfredo Echeverri. He was a fascinating man, sort of diminutive in size but huge in brain power and with a very big heart. He had really gotten on top of the whole Letelier-Moffitt case, from the Chilean angle. He had worked with Ambassador George Landau and his successors, right up through Harry Barnes and me. The U.S. Department of Justice had had him under contract for a number of years. He was sort of the U.S. legal affairs adviser on this issue.

Here's an interesting story about how U.S. minds work. As soon as there was an election in Chile, and the democratic system was back in play, I received word that the U.S. Department of Justice was going to cancel the contract for legal services with Alfredo Echeverri, on the ground that it would no longer be necessary to have this kind of legal advice. We went through months of correspondence, trying to convince the Department of Justice that now, more than ever, they needed to have good legal advice, because this was the time when something might be done about the Letelier-Moffitt case in Chile. The Department of Justice had been paying as much as $20-25,000 a year for over 10 years to Echeverri for legal services. All of a sudden, the Department of Justice decided that it no longer needed Echeverri. It was a Washington type of decision. I had to return to Washington and meet with the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General to convince them that this was not the case. I got the Legal Adviser of the Department of State involved in all of this. In any event, working with Echeverri, we got from him the idea

that the most promising approach would be to put the Letelier-Moffitt case back into the Chilean justice system.

Interestingly enough, in about 1978 the Chilean military government had basically declared an amnesty for all of the events which had occurred up until that time. They thereby amnestied, not only themselves and members of the Chilean military and National Police, but also the people on the other side, including the guerrillas, the left, and various other groups. The Chilean military exempted from the amnesty Generals Contreras and Espinosa. So they were still susceptible to criminal prosecution or to suit of some kind in Chile in connection with the Letelier-Moffitt case. So Echeverri's advice, coming from his angle, was that the Chilean government had the means for dealing with this case in the Chilean legal system. The trick would be to get the Letelier-Moffitt case out of the military court system and in front of a civilian court. Remember, under Chilean civil law the judge assigned to the case is investigator, prosecutor, and judge, all at the same time. He deals with the defense attorneys. In effect, the judge makes the decision as investigator whether there is enough evidence on which to prosecute the case. Then he prosecutes it.

In any event Echeverri was giving us this advice. We wanted to see this matter handled via a legal process, in order to lift the provisions of the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment. By this time the legal action being pursued by the Letelier and Moffitt families was primarily under the control of the Letelier family. Jose Letelier, the son of the late Orlando Letelier, had returned to Chile. Although he still carried a U.S. passport, he had been elected to the Chilean Congress as part of the democratic transition. He was a member of the Chilean Congress and was a very vocal and articulate exponent of justice and human rights and bringing to justice the people who had killed his father and Ronni Moffitt. His mother, Mrs. Letelier, still lived in Washington and had not returned to Chile.

There were U.S. attorneys who had been involved with this case for 10 or 12 years and were still involved with it. They were bringing pressure up here in Washington on the U.S. side through Senator Ted Kennedy and through other members of Congress. The State

Department's legal adviser and I developed a very close telephonic and, occasionally, a close face to face relationship, trying to figure out how to deal with this case.

The U.S. Department of Defense was champing at the bit. They really wanted to get back into a normal relationship with Chile. They wanted to supplant the South Africans and the Israelis and anyone else that they could and reestablish relationships with what they perceived as the most professional military establishment in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, the Chilean armed forces probably were the most professional military force in Latin America and still are in terms of efficiency. Despite all of the problems associated with the 1973 coup d'etat period, the Chilean military were probably the most honest and least corrupt military forces in the Western Hemisphere. So the U.S. Department of Defense did not want to see Europeans establish an influence base in the Southern Cone of South America in that way.

So there were pressures from all sides. With Chilean Vice Foreign Minister Vargas, the number two man in the Foreign Ministry, we worked out what turned out to be the eventual solution to the civilian suit. We used one of the Bryan Treaties for the Advancement of Peace of 1913-14, which were concluded with twenty-one countries - not all of them from the Western Hemisphere - and established five-member commissions to which disputes would be submitted if they had not been settled by diplomacy and were not arbitrable. The treaty calls for the establishment of a binational commission with a neutral chairperson from a third party, picked by the other two countries. I don't believe any of the treaties had ever been used.

In effect, we agreed to use the mechanism of a binational commission, without invoking the treaty, as such, which would have led us to a totally binding result which we didn't want, although the Chileans would have been glad to accept it. Instead of saying that the binational commission would determine a remedy or resolution of the dispute, the Chileans took the initiative in what I think was a pretty slick and fairly bold move. They said that they

would make an ex gratiapayment. They proposed that the binational commission's job was to determine what the amount of this payment would be to the Letelier and Moffitt families.

Q: Tony, was there concern that we didn't want a binding agreement if, for some reason, the decision did not go in a way favorable to us? If this happened, we would be stuck forever and ever with the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment.

GILLESPIE: No, this was the resolution of the civil suit brought by the Letelier and Moffitt families. However, it was obviously crucial to get that settled before we even began to worry about the criminal question. Politically, the Letelier's were not perceived to be a major problem by the Chilean government. This was a U.S. matter which needed to be resolved to clear U.S. decks, as it were, and to clear the Chilean-American relationship of a U.S. problem. The civilian Government of Chile did not perceive the Letelier case as a major problem. The Chilean government was under pressure to ensure that this civil suit was dealt with. The Letelier family was very careful. They didn't particularly want to be painted, and this applied particularly to Jose Letelier, as somebody who was wringing the last dime out of the Chilean government. And a civilian, democratic government at that!

So the Letelier case was perceived by the Chilean government as a U.S. problem with the question coming down to how they would deal with it. That required us, on the U.S. side, not only to accept a formula, but to make sure that the Letelier and Moffitt families in the U.S. and their attorneys, who were the most vocal advocates for them, would not make a major problem out of it and that we would not have a tremendous, Congressional problem.

I spent a lot of time myself in the U.S., in conversation with members of Congress, with the Department of Justice, and with all of the estate lawyers, trying to make sure that, as we moved this matter forward, it would be found workable. As it turned out, the formula held. The binational commission came up with a figure on the settlement. If I remember correctly, it amounted to a little over $1.0 million, which was then divided between the two families on some basis. I flew up to the U.S. when the checks in settlement of the

civil suit were presented. The checks were actually presented to the Legal Adviser of the Department of State, who then handed the checks to the representatives of the Letelier and Moffitt families. I don't think that the families were overjoyed by the amount of the money involved in the settlement. However, like everybody else, they were probably relieved that the matter had been brought to a close. So this arrangement resolved the civil suit.

The other problem involved bringing to justice those responsible for the murders. This took much longer. However, before I left Chile, the case had been heard in a Chilean military court, transferred to a civilian court, and then referred to the Chilean Supreme Court. The Chilean Supreme Court is a presidentially appointed body, but the appointment pool of judges is very limited. The judges have to be people with certain qualifications who have served for some time as judges. When there is a vacancy on the Chilean Supreme Court, the President of Chile is given a list of two or three names by his advisers. He then chooses one of them to fill the vacancy. It turned out that a very upright and very outstanding judge was appointed by President Aylwin as one of his first acts as chief of state. The Chilean Supreme Court has three or four different rooms or salas, as they are called, to handle different matters. This recently appointed Supreme Court judge was assigned the problem of dealing with the cases of generals Contreras and Espinosa.

In effect, over a period of many months, he moved that case along to the point where he, in effect, said that Contreras and Espinosa were responsible for the murders of Letelier and Moffitt. The case was not concluded by the time I left Chile. It was concluded after I left, and that is part of another story. What did happen was that I was able to convince the Department of State in Washington that the matter was being satisfactorily resolved. By the time President Bush came to Chile in 1990, we were able to say that the Government of Chile had taken steps to bring to justice those responsible for the murders of Letelier and Moffitt. The Chilean Supreme Court had moved the issue that far in that period of time because they assigned an appropriate, civilian judge. There was every indication that that judge was going to do whatever was necessary under Chilean law. Nothing had been said

in the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment that those responsible had to be convicted in the steps required to bring them to justice.

So, by the time President Bush came to Chile in the fall of 1990, we were able to say that relations with Chile were back to normal or were as normal as they could be. There were no residual barriers left over from the time of the military government in Chile standing in the way of a normal relationship. The Letelier and Moffitt families had the settlement, the Humphrey-Kennedy restrictions had basically been lifted, and that's where we took that. So that was a major accomplishment.

Q: This meant that military to military relationships between Chiland the United States could be restored.

GILLESPIE: Right.

Q: Did you find yourself saying, “Let's not upset some of the people in the United States who still had a residual resentment toward the Chilean military? In other words, we shouldn't jump into Chile with both feet, as far as our military were concerned.

GILLESPIE: I believe that, to a large degree, my successor as Ambassador and I were able to rebuild the Chilean-American relationship and direct it from the office of the Ambassador in the Embassy in Santiago. In this we had a lot of help from the Departments of State and Defense in Washington. The Defense policy makers were very sensitive on this point. Quite frankly, our interest in this matter was reciprocated by the Chileans in a noticeably, differentiated way. The Chilean Army did not then, and this applies even to today, seek terribly close relations with the U.S. Army. As I think I mentioned, the Chilean Navy had maintained fairly close relations with the U.S. Navy throughout this period, so they were very pleased to see the impediment of the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment effectively removed.

However, the fact of that impediment influenced, and continues to influence, the thinking of many senior Chilean officers. You have to remember how these things are viewed. The Humphrey-Kennedy amendment was a major consideration for the Chileans. It was not much of a consideration for most Americans, except for a few American military people at a particular point, who saw opportunities lost to influence the Chileans.

However, the Chilean military believe that they did absolutely the right thing in removing the Allende Government and bringing an end to that experiment in socialism in Chile. I think that they really expected, and in some ways they may have been led to expect, that removing Allende from power would be, if not welcomed by the U.S., certainly recognized as a positive development in the great cold war sweep of things. Perhaps if they hadn't gone out and killed, exiled, or arranged for so many people to disappear afterwards, as well as taking the opportunity physically to eradicate socialists in Chile, who knows what might have happened? Maybe if this process had been handled more humanely and without the violence, who can say what would have happened. Nonetheless, the Chilean military regarded the overthrow of the Allende Government as a major, positive development. This became doctrine in all three of the armed services of Chile, in their war colleges, and strategic study groups.

The Chilean military also tended to believe that Chile should be self sufficient, should not depend on anybody else, and should not develop relationships of dependence on other countries. So this view affected and continues to affect the thinking of many Chilean military people.

My objective was to begin to rebuild relationships with Chile which would serve United States interests. Remember, this was in the period 1989-1990. We thought that the Cold War was coming to an end but we didn't know exactly what was going to happen. The sea lanes of communication, or SLOCs, around Chile were very important. There were no major guerrilla movements in Chile. There were no internal security problems in Chile which were particularly harmful to U.S. interests. So that was not a problem and in a

global strategic sense we wanted Chile as an ally. Quite frankly, I think that it's probably a good idea for the U.S. military to be in touch with other military establishments in the Western Hemisphere than almost any other group that I can think of. The U.S. military establishment is an institution under civilian authority and is a part of our democratic society. Its members are steeped in and instilled with the ideals of democracy and respect for human rights. We can ignore a few examples of practices which ran contrary to this general trend.

One of the first issues which I faced was whether to permit the establishment of a large Military Group in the U.S. Mission in Santiago. I agonized over that decision. I was struck by how much an ambassador really can influence the course of events. I found that the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Southern Command was very chary about opposing an ambassador on a matter like this, particularly in a place as sensitive as Chile. This might not be the same in other places, and I've seen some where this hasn't been the case. However, I was able to go through a careful, analytical process. I discussed this with my country team. My political and economic counselors were in agreement with me.

The Chilean military, by the way, benefits from a device which is left over from the Pinochet era. Remember that the Chilean economy to a large degree was and still is heavily dependent on one mineral export, copper. What the Chilean military government did was to say that, until the constitution was changed, the Chilean armed forces would receive each year 10 percent of all of the revenues from copper exports. This allocation would not be used for day to day operating expenses but rather for capital investments to keep the armed forces modern and up to date. Well, that's a big chunk of money. In effect, it is not in the budget and is not subject to the budget process. Even though the civilian government came back and Congress resumed its former position of power, the Chilean military have a fair amount of cash in their jeans to spend on military equipment. Recognizing that, our own defense industry was interested in what the Chileans might

want to buy. The U.S. military saw this situation as providing an opportunity to work with their Chilean counterparts.

The U.S. reaction to developments in Chile was interesting because there were groups in the U.S. that were strongly opposed to the reestablishment of any kind of military relationship with Chile. These groups tried to fight against all of this. They felt that resuming close relationships with Chile was a bad idea. However, the civilian Chilean government wanted closer military relations with the U.S. President Patricio Aylwin himself; the Minister of Defense, Patricio Rojas; Edgardo Benninger, the Minister and Secretary General of the Presidency, all assured me privately and in confidence, and then more openly, that they wanted direct, military to military relationships between the two countries. They said that it was important to Chilean democracy for that to happen. They said that it was important to the Concertacion coalition to arrange for these kinds of normal and, hopefully, close relationships between Chilean and U.S. military establishments. Benninger, by the way, is a brilliant man who is really responsible for the smoothness of the transition from the military to a civilian, democratic government. In the same way, as I think I mentioned, Carlos Caceres was very important in the transition to a civilian government. Benninger will probably wind up in the history books as someone who played a crucial role in making sure that things worked smoothly during the first four years of civilian government.

So these key figures in the Chilean civilian government were basically in favor of this development, and that was the message which I was transmitting back to Washington in my reporting. I said that I was getting this message strongly from the civilian side of the Chilean government. That attitude on their part was very important to making sure that the growing development of relationships between Chilean and U.S. military people could go forward.

So this was a very lively time within Chile. There were, and still are, people whom the Chilean military considers bad and of dubious reliability to Chile. They are anathema. Did we talk about the Reconciliation Commission?

Q: I'm not sure if we did.

GILLESPIE: Briefly, what was to be done when the military government and the military dictatorship ended, when everybody knew that horrible things happened during the period of the dictatorship, and people still had to live with one another? I think that I may have mentioned the inauguration of the civilian government.

Q: Yes, you did.

GILLESPIE: I was telling this story to someone else, though I can't remember whether we reported it or not. If we didn't, I'll put it in here. After the civilian government was reestablished, a systematic way of dealing with the problem of human rights violations committed during the time that the military were in power involved setting up a truth commission. President Aylwin and his government had studied the examples of Argentina, where they had prosecuted and jailed military leaders, and Uruguay, where they held a plebiscite, in addition to other countries where amnesties had been declared. Basically, President Aylwin was faced with an amnesty which had been imposed well before he entered office. He could not easily turn this around in any legal way. He didn't have the power to do so.

Politically, the Chilean National Congress was composed of a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, whose composition was basically stacked by the outgoing military government under a constitution written in 1980. It was fascinating. The military government leaders foresaw the possibility of the military in general and people like General Pinochet in particular leaving power. They wanted to keep a strong executive and to limit the power of the National Congress.

One of the last things that General Pinochet did was to make sure that the Congress and the Executive were physically in two different places. He moved the Congress to a god awful, Mussolini type building in the port city of Valparaiso, about an hour and a quarter's drive on a then not very good and still not great highway from Santiago. It was far enough away from Santiago that you could not easily go down to Valparaiso just for the day. It was too long a commute. The ambassador could make the trip in an hour and a quarter with an Embassy driver and with a follow car, but it was a scary trip for passengers not used to it, driving at 75-90 miles an hour. So Pinochet set things up so that the Congress would be physically apart from the Executive.

The Chamber of Deputies is elected by proportional representation, by district and province. The Chilean Senate also has special features. In addition to directly elected members, there are members appointed by position. Certain people hold positions in the Senate on an ex officio basis, including former Presidents, Presidents of the Supreme Court, and so forth. Well, it turned out that everyone who held a Senate seat on an ex officio basis had been a Pinochet appointee. So in addition to the political party split in the elected Senate, there was a group of 11 Senators, iI remember correctly, appointed by Pinochet. Their loyalties were clearly with the military government, whatever their personal beliefs were. They constituted a barrier, if not a total blockage, to any constitutional change. You had to have more than a simple majority to change the constitution.

So, in effect, the constitution couldn't be changed. The civilian government was not going to end the amnesty which it found in place when it entered office. President Aylwin and those around him came up with the idea of setting up a truth commission. This commission was formed from a really broad political and ideological spectrum of Chileans, including both men and women. Its job was to invite anyone to come and give testimony about the events following the 1973 coup d'etat. They invited military and civilians, victims, family members, and all kinds of people to come forward and give their testimony, which was taken privately. The idea was that the commission would then publish the results.

Of the greatest concern were the so-called disappeared, meaning the people who had disappeared from view and of whom there was no real trace. People did not know what had happened to them. It was amazing. I'll have to check the number, but the commission came up with well over 1,000 cases of people who had disappeared. The commission also had a good idea of who might have been responsible for the disappearances. However, the clear understanding was that this would not result in criminal proceedings or civil action of any kind.

The work of the commission went forward, although all sorts of experts from the United States and Europe told people that this process would never work and that it was wrong. Well, the simple fact is that it seems probable that this process seems to have been as good a way of dealing with the situation as anything that anybody could come up with. It allowed some kind of expression of people's views and concerns. It got the facts out. Basically, the commission did its work and has been dissolved. While there are still people who undoubtedly harbor great bitterness and disappointment, the whole idea of fear has probably been largely reduced, if not totally eliminated. The commission seems to have done its job.

Q: Where was General Pinochet during all of this?

GILLESPIE: On March 11, 1990, he handed over the sash, the emblem of office of the Presidency of Chile, to Patricio Aylwin, the new civilian President. He didn't actually hand over the sash directly to Aylwin. He handed it to someone else, who then handed it to President Aylwin. At that moment General Pinochet reverted to the position oCommander in Chief of the Chilean Army. Under the terms of the Constitution Pinochet was and remains Commander in Chief of the Army until he leaves this office voluntarily or until March 11, 1998, whichever comes sooner. He has not yet left office voluntarily as Commander in Chief of the Army.

President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, the current President of Chile, visited Washington on the first state visit of the second term of President Clinton on February 26-27, 1997. Public Television, the News Hour program with Jim Lehrer, carried an excellent discussion of Chile, led by the PBS (Public Broadcasting System) correspondent Charles Krause, a very knowledgeable man on Latin America. His report was one of those cases where you know a given fact, and the journalist gets it a little wrong. You wish you could whisper into his ear and tell him that he is wrong. Charles Krause kept talking about General Pinochet on February 26, 1997, as the “head of the Chilean armed forces.” He wasn't head of the armed forces. The civilian President of Chile, Eduardo Frei, is the commander in chief of the Chilean Armed Forces. He has a civilian minister of defense, who is part of the chain of command. That's the way it is on paper. Then you have the heads of each of the three armed forces, just as we do. They are the chiefs of staff or, in Chilean terminology, the commanders in chief of the Chilean Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as the commander in chief of the Carabineros, the national gendarmerie or police.

Anyway, Charles Krause kept saying that Pinochet was the Commander in Chief of the Chilean Armed Forces, and I kept wanting to say, as I watched this otherwise excellent telecast, “No, he's Commander in Chief of the Chilean Army.”

It's important to keep this distinction in mind. The Chilean Armed Forces, having gone through a military government, a dictatorship or junta, whatever you want to call it, obviously stick together. However, believe me, before General Pinochet left office as President of Chile, the then Commander in Chief of the Navy, Admiral Toribio Merino, who just died a couple of months ago, retired, thereby allowing Pinochet to name Merino's successor, Admiral Martinez Busch. He did so. The Commander in Chief of the Chilean Air Force, General Fernando Mattei, about whom we have spoken earlier, chose not to do what Admiral Toribio Merino did. In my view General Mattei, who is a very solid Chilean democrat, a nationalist, and a loyal Chilean Air Force officer, chose not to retire. He retired a month or two later, after President Aylwin had taken over as the civilian President

of Chile. He did this so that President Aylwin would have the authority to appoint the Commander in Chief of the Chilean Air Force. Mattei is a smart guy and a good politician. He had been part of the governing junta under General Pinochet for almost 10 years. Fernando Mattei made sure that President Aylwin would appoint the man whom Fernando wanted to have as Commander in Chief of the Chilean Air Force. This man happened to be Fernando Mattei's deputy, General Ramon Vega, an excellent choice. General Vega is equally comfortable with democratic, civilian rule.

The Chilean Armed Forces stick together. There's no doubt about that. The case of General Manuel Contreras came to a head in 1995, I believe. As I said earlier, Contreras figured in the Letelier murder case. Contreras was sentenced by a civilian court. He didn't want to go to jail, and there was a flurry of activity, in which the Chilean Armed Forces seemed to be coalescing to prevent him from having to go to jail. Some people said, “Chilean democracy is about to die! The military is about to take over again!” President Frei said to us, “No.” I happened to contact him, and others did, also. Echeverri, the Chilean lawyer, said, “Please, do not panic. It's going to work out under our judicial system. The Chilean military is making a statement which it has to make at this particular point. However, the civilian process of justice is working.” By God, the Chilean military put General Contreras in jail, as well as Brigadier Espinosa, who had been associated with Contreras in the murders of Letelier and Moffitt! Anyway, the Chilean military stick together, but the fact of the matter is that General Augusto Pinochet cannot today, as he might have before the transition to civilian rule, order the Air Force and Navy to join with him to take some particular action. This is not to say that the Air Force and Navy couldn't join with the Army in taking some action, but Pinochet just doesn't have the power to order such action.

I read recently that General Pinochet has made some statement that he might find it convenient to retire even before March 11, 1998, and take his position as a designated Senator. What he may be concerned about, and I think that this is something that he ought to be concerned about, is that, as time goes by, and these designated Senators disappear

from the scene due to age or death, their successors will not be Pinochet appointees, and the ability to amend the Constitution becomes greater. Therefore, there is some risk, if Pinochet waits for another year and a half, that he could see the Constitution changed and he would no longer hold an appointive, Senate seat.

Nevertheless, the Pinochet situation is very interesting. He has been the head of the Army and he still has a voice that can command attention. The press listens to him. They're always wondering what he's going to say. I think that people legitimately wonder whether he's going to try anything, because many people wouldn't put it past him. In my view, whatever he was prior to the coup d'etat in 1973 and the end of the Allende Government, Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, to use his full name, has become an extremely adept political actor. He has a pretty good sense of his own limits and how far he can and should go. For example, he may be talking to the press and saying something. Then, all of a sudden, he'll just clam up. That has two effects. One, he doesn't say too much and, two, he leaves with an air of mystery about what he was going to say or what he might have said if he hadn't stopped.

Tom Boyatt is an officer in our Foreign Service who knew Pinochet well when Pinochet was a lieutenant colonel. I think that Tom was the last U.S. Consul in a town in northern Chile called Antofagasta. Then Lieutenant Colonel Pinochet was a battalion commander or something like that. I happened to see Tom last week, and we were talking about this. One of the things that had struck me about Pinochet was his ability to do and say the unexpected and to manage a situation extremely well. As the situation in Chile was changing, our military people wanted to come to Chile and wanted to begin the reestablishment of some kind of relations with the Chilean military. Our senior military people all wanted to meet General Pinochet. He would meet any four-star general who came to Santiago. However, he would immediately throw them off guard by saying, “You know, the Chilean military, unlike the U.S. armed forces, has never lost a war. It's a shame that you couldn't manage the Vietnam conflict better. We don't believe that soldiers are managers. We believe that soldiers are soldiers and that their job is to defend the nation,

to fight, and to win wars, not to manage. My officers don't get master's degrees in business administration. My logistics people do, but my fighting generals do not." He really got some of the U.S. military angry."

I remember his telling me, "Your military are a bunch of managers. They're not fighters." (Laughter) He loved to do that. I don't think that I've mentioned that on one occasion after the transition to civilian, democratic government, the then assistant secretary of State, Bernard Aronson, came down to visit Chile. I gave a reception in his honor. I used to invite Pinochet, along with the heads of all of the Chilean armed services. He would come to some of my receptions but not to others. Well, he chose to come to the reception for assistant secretary Aronson. He showed up with no entourage. He had a big, security contingent, but they all stayed outside the gate. He came up to my residence in his car, with one aide. He got out, and the aide came in and stood over in a corner. Here was Pinochet in a gray, Eisenhower type jacket. He stood there with a drink in his hand, although he never drinks. He is very abstemious and watches his diet and health very carefully.

Anyway, on this occasion Aronson said that he had never met Pinochet and would like to do so. Bernie and I had talked about Pinochet before. Aronson didn't like Pinochet and didn't like the idea of Pinochet. Anyhow, they talked for 45 minutes. When it was over, Bernie came up to me and said: "Wow! That guy Pinochet is really something! He is smart, quick, knows what he wants, and knows how to deal with people." I said: "Sure, he governed this country for 17 years and did a pretty good job." Of course, I had never met General Francisco Franco or General Josef Tito. You don't hold positions like that for that long without developing some of the skills necessary, no matter what is below the surface.

Q: Before we move to the Chilean economy, did you get involved in any Chilean foreign relations problems? I was looking at the map, and Chile borders on Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. Argentina immediately comes to mind because of boundary claims, and I guess that the same thing pertains to Peru, too.

GILLESPIE: Chile has latent border problems with both Peru and Argentina. However, those issues didn't impinge too much on U.S.-Chilean relations during my time in Santiago. I remember that Argentina was going through its transition to democracy, and in Peru Alan Garcia was President. Chile does not have formal, diplomatic relations with Bolivia. Q: Is that because of the War of the Pacific (1879-1885)?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Bolivia wants an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, presumably through what is now Chilean territory. Chile says, “Forget it. You lost the war.”

Problems between Chile and Argentina came up during my time in Chile. Discussions began between the two countries and have now led to the resolution of 23 of the 24 border disputes outstanding. The last border conflict is now under some form of arbitration and will probably be resolved in the next couple of years, which would eliminate all of these problems. In fact, if I remember correctly, just in the last month or two, they have begun to open or to talk about opening a whole series of new border crossing points between Argentina and Chile.

The same thing is now true along the Chilean-Peruvian border. The border problem there has not been resolved. There are mine fields along the border. They are residual, left over from the past. They are not the result of ongoing tension. In fact, I think that the two countries would get rid of the minefields if they could.

However, Chile got involved in disputes with the U.S. on two areas. One of them involved the U.S. intervention in Panama and the arrest of General Manuel Noriega. I guess that that happened in December, 1989. Pinochet was still in power as President of Chile, which was a member of a body called the Rio Group. I remember going to the Chilean government on this matter. We needed Latin American support. We went to the Chileans, and they reluctantly gave it to us. Remember, the outgoing military government under General Pinochet was still in power.

In 1989 President Raul Alfonsin of Argentina realized that he had lost control of the situation there and resigned from office before his term was up. Carlos Menem was elected to replace him. So Aylwin was being inaugurated as President of Chile in 1990, just as Menem was being inaugurated as President of Argentina. At that point the Chileans and Argentines began to come together and to deal with their differences.

Q: How about Antarctica? I've just finished an interview with someone who was involved in the 1959 negotiations over Antarctica, when Chilean-Argentinian antagonism played a major role. During your time in Chile, did the Antarctica problem come up?

GILLESPIE: Antarctica did not arise in any specific way. However, the Chileans were very careful to assert their sovereignty over part of Antarctica, at every opportunity. You may recall that the Chileans placed and maintained navigational buoys in the channels of what I think they call the Straits of Guerlach and around the Palmer Peninsula or Graham Land. The Chileans claim that those areas are their territorial waters. Chile maintains an active Chilean Air Force Base on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands, which is just offshore of the Palmer Peninsula. This area is a bridge area between the southern tip of South America and the land mass of Antarctica. The Chileans fly the Chilean flag there, and there is a Chilean military presence. That air base is the point of entry and transition for many nations' aircraft going to Antarctica, including those of the U.S.

What I always had to be careful about, and this is an interesting, little diplomatic twist, is that I was invited by the Chileans and by our own National Science Foundation to go to Antarctica on separate occasions. On each occasion, when I went to Antarctica, I was very careful to designate a charge d'affaires in the Embassy, so that it was very evident that I believed that in going to Antarctica I was leaving Chilean national territory. The U.S. does not recognize the claim of Chile or of any other country to territory in Antarctica. The Chileans would always joke and say, “Well, you're not really leaving the country. You're

just staying in Chile." I would say, jokingly, "No, I left Chile. David Greenlee is charge d'affaires of the Embassy."

Q: You still had to be very careful about that but you observed thforms.

GILLESPIE: Because underneath the form is the substance! (Laughter) If you're not careful, somebody, some day, will pull a relatively careless reference to the Chilean claim to a part of Antarctica out of his hat. So this was very important.

Q: Let's talk about the Chilean economy, from your point of view,when you were there, as well as the ambassador's role in it.

GILLESPIE: When I was in Bogota in 1987, I learned that I might be going to Chile in 1988. I had had the opportunity to meet a former Colombian finance minister, Rodrigo Botero. He is a Harvard graduate, a brilliant man, married to a delightful American woman. When Botero learned that I would be going to Chile, he began to feed me information about Chile, and particularly the Chilean economy. Botero is an orthodox, Keynesian economist. He would pass me information from Chile, particularly from the civilian, democratic opposition. This was highly critical, but it contained a tremendous amount of information and data about Chilean economic policies and management.

To go back into history, after the Allende regime entered power in Chile in 1970, it had nationalized industries, like most of the other countries in Latin America. Then General Pinochet and the junta came to power and privatized and denationalized the economy. However, for the first few years the Chilean military government borrowed money from abroad and followed a lot of the old practices of Latin America. They borrowed money to the hilt and followed an import substitution policy. From 1973 until the crash of 1982 the Chilean government, under the control of the military, acted like other countries in Latin America. I think that there was a period in the very late 1970s when the Chilean government tried to take a little tougher approach, but that didn't work.

However, in 1982, after the financial crash throughout Latin Americand much of the developing world...

Q: You're talking about the foreign debt crisis.

GILLESPIE: Yes, the debt crisis of 1982. The price of oil declined, and many countries just couldn't pay their debts. Well, Chile had an economic crash like many other countries. At that juncture, some economic policy makers and managers appeared on the scene in Chile who basically said that Chile was not going to follow the old ways. Chile was going to change the policies of the past, and they did! They took the bitter medicine of opening up the economy to imports, working down their foreign debt, and selling off state enterprises. Even though Chile had denationalized, if you will, they hadn't fully privatized the economy. They began to privatize.

Q: Excuse me, when you say, “they,” I assume you mean the military government of Chile, because it was not just some economists making these decisions. Economists may have been hired to give advice...

GILLESPIE: Let me tell you. The interesting thing is that the Chilean economists had to convince the governing junta that this was the sensible thing to do. This really meant convincing Pinochet. I became close enough to a couple of these economists to learn that convincing Pinochet was not easy. The inclination among the Chilean military leaders was to follow the old system. These economists were the famous group of Chicago boys. These were men who had studied with or at least listened to and purported to adhere to the economic policy approaches or theoretical and policy approaches of Milton Friedman and the very free market and liberal economic school, to use liberal in the classical sense. These Chilean economists ranged in age from their 30s to their 60s and 70s. Remember, the Chilean military was on top of the government but didn't try to supplant civilian bureaucrats and officials throughout the government.

There was a mix of civilians and military people in the government. More often than not, Pinochet's cabinet ministers, with the exception of the minister of defense, were all civilians. There might be a military officer holding a senior position in a given ministry, but most of the cabinet was composed of civilians, such as, for example, the Ministers of Mines and Education. Fernando Mattei had been the Minister of Health prior to eventually becoming the Commander in Chief of the Chilean Air Force. He might also have been the Minister of Education at one point. That's probably how he was able to supplant the Commander in Chief of the Chilean Air Force when that officer became dissatisfied with military rule and suggested that the military return the government to civilians. So he was out on his ear, and Fernando Mattei was in as commander of the Air Force. With the exception of Mattei and maybe a few others, the members of the Chilean cabinet were civilians.

There was a series of civilians as Ministers of Finance. I think that between 1982 and 1987 or 1988, there were at least four Ministers of Finance. They all followed in this pattern. They tightened up on the budget, particularly spending. They privatized state enterprises, social security, and the retirement system. They accepted high levels of unemployment and lowered real wages in the country. They tried to build additional housing. They took a number of steps which, at the time, were considered revolutionary, unorthodox, and unlikely to work. Before I went to Chile, I was receiving in Bogota, Colombia, a lot of critical comments from the civilian democrats outside the Chilean government, who criticized the actions of the military government as hard line, inhumane, and anti-social.

The election campaign of 1989 in Chile opposed Patricio Aylwin and the democratic Concertacion group against two other candidates. One was a businessman who owned the largest supermarket chain in Chile. He had made a lot of money from that. He was quite successful, but he became known as “Mr. Blah Blah Blah,” because he talked all the time on TV and in political advertising. The other candidate was Hernan Buchi, who was the last finance minister under the Pinochet, military government. He was a really weird

man. I can't describe him in any other way. He's a Chilean of German descent, called Prince Valiant by many of his American friends and detractors because he has blonde hair which he cuts in bangs that hang down over his eyes. He wears his hair long over his ears and almost down to his collar in back.

Q: Prince Valiant is a comic strip character who wears his hair likthat.

GILLESPIE: Right. When I arrived in Santiago, Buchi was famous, in a sense, as an active marathon racer, a pure vegetarian, and a physical fitness enthusiast. He was a tall, skinny, lanky man. He was muscular, but not heavy. Buchi had married young to a socialist woman. He had gone to Columbia University and gotten his master's degree in business, not in economics. He was not literally a Chicago boy, i.e., a graduate of the University of Chicago, where Milton Friedman was a Professor, but he was a Chicago boy in all other respects.

He described for me how it was to work with Pinochet. I asked him how easy it was to convince President Pinochet to agree to these various economic actions. He said, “Let me tell you. Every time I sit down in a cabinet meeting or I meet privately with President Pinochet, it's a battle. When I'm in a cabinet meeting, I'm lucky if I have two or three allies out of the 10 or 12 cabinet ministers sitting around the table. The governing junta, as a whole, is always opposed to what I want to do. Essentially, if I can make my case strong enough, then I can often convince President Pinochet that this is the course that we need to follow. However, I do not win all of these discussions, and sometimes I have to do things that I think are not right in terms of a particular step at a particular time.”

Buchi was the candidate who was running against Patricio Aylwin, the Concertacion candidate. In effect he was considered, and was, for all intents and purposes, Pinochet's candidate. The belief was that if Buchi had been elected, he would somehow have acted as a surrogate for General Pinochet. I'm not sure that that is true. I don't think that he had a chance of being elected, but in any event, all during that campaign the civilian democrats

were arguing that Chile couldn't sustain these neo-liberal policies and that the government would have to provide more help in the fields of education and housing, more of this and more of that, and more public and less private investment. The Concertacion approach wasn't totally statist, but it was right in line with the materials which I had been provided with in Bogota by Rodrigo Botero.

If I remember the date correctly, the presidential election was held on December 15, 1989, and the Concertacion candidate, Patricio Aylwin, won. Of course, he wasn't scheduled to take office until March, 1990. I had an immediate, hot item to deal with. The Pinochet government, through its Foreign and Finance Ministers, had promised the U.S. Government that it would deal with intellectual property protection before it left office. Even before it knew that it would be leaving office, it promised to deal with this issue. The foreign minister had promised our trade representative, Carla Hills, that Chile would take care of this. Carla Hills had told me that it was time to call in our markers on this matter. She felt that we had to get this issue handled before the Pinochet government left office. She felt that the incoming civilian democratic government was not likely to do what we wanted done, which was to provide full protection for patents.

In Chile the pharmaceutical area was the most sensitive. In Latin America, as you may know, governments have tended to take the view that medicines were special “social goods”, and prices for them needed to be controlled and regulated. If they provided full respect for patents, this would mean that the consumer would pay more for medicine, and that would create a real problem. What that had led to was that Argentine business interests had come into the Chilean market, bought up the pharmaceutical industry, and were copying U.S. pharmaceutical products. This was a case of out and out piracy. There was no doubt about it. This involved tens of millions of dollars in losses to U.S. businesses annually in patent protection foregone.Hernan Felipe Errasuritz, the foreign minister, and Hernan Buchi, the finance minister, and others had all said, “We will pass world class intellectual property legislation. We think that that is right.” Well, as soon as they got into the presidential elections campaign, preparations to take action on this issue stopped.

Then, when the campaign was over, and they had lost, they more or less indicated, “Hell, that's not our problem any more.” This was a real disappointment to us because they had all led people to believe that they really were going to come through on this.

So I thought that I would try this issue out with the new government. I went directly to Patricio Aylwin, the President-elect, whom I had gotten to know during the elections campaign and earlier. I said: “Mr. President, you know that we have outstanding this issue of intellectual property protection. From our point of view it is a very important matter. We want our relationship to get off to a good start. Is there any way that we can begin to make sure that you understand the nature of the problem?” And so on and so forth. Aylwin designated Edgardo Bettinger to handle this. He said at that point: “Edgardo is going to be very close to me in the government. I may or may not have told you that he is going to be Secretary General at the Presidency.” This was the closest thing to a chief of staff with cabinet rank that you could have in Chile. As it turned out, Bettinger was the real political operator in the Aylwin administration.

So I arranged to meet with Edgardo. We briefed him. We gave him the whole background. Meanwhile, we were trying to work with the outgoing junta. They started taking steps which indicated not only that they were not going to do what they said they would do but that they would work in a contrary way. So Carla Hills, the U.S. trade representative, and I decided that we should concentrate on the incoming Chilean government team.

It was in those contacts that I began to sense that a process of - I don't know what you'd call it - realization or understanding of the realities of the situation was beginning to take place. Edgardo Bettinger is a brilliant man, probably now about 73 or 74 years old, full of energy and life. He is very articulate. He taught for a time at the University of California. It became pretty clear that the new government was going to look very carefully at all of the economic policy questions as a package, taking both a macroeconomic and microeconomic approach. Edgardo told me: “We will work with you to achieve this objective. I can't tell you how far we're going to get. We're going to have to work through

our Congress in a way that the military government wouldn't have done. However, we'll work with you on it." And they did.

The upshot was that they didn't give us absolutely everything that we wanted to have, but they gave us such a substantial part of it that everybody in Washington up to a very high level was satisfied with the result. In the process I also got to know Alejandro Foxley, who was to be the first finance minister of the civilian government. Foxley had been one of the major critics of Buchi and his predecessors in the military government. Then, all of sudden, Foxley began to sound like one of those neo-liberal thinkers. We heard from him comments like, "responsible social spending," and "we understand the limits on what we can do and can't do." And President Aylwin himself began to say things which, I think, were extremely difficult to say. For example he said publicly to the nation, "We're going to give you a hand, not a handout," "Chileans are going to have to work for themselves" to move forward. The key phrase that began to appear, roughly beginning in December, 1989, right through the inauguration of President Aylwin in March, 1990, was, "the private sector is the engine of growth" and, "in Chile's economy we have to have an active, vibrant private sector." It was said, "We're going to review all of the privatizations that the previous government did but we're not going to nationalize anything."

In a way that was really rapid, when you think about it, although it seemed rather slow at the time, the new, civilian government made a 180 degree turn in their whole approach to Pinochet's economic policies. In some ways they are out in front of where Pinochet was and in some ways they're lagging a little bit behind it. The average is right down the same path. It was really quite remarkable to see.

Now there has been a second transition in the Chilean Presidency. Patricio Aylwin has completed his constitutional term of office and has been replaced as President of Chile by Eduardo Frei, but the present Chilean government carries on right down the same line.

Q: So this policy is well and truly in place. During your time iChile what was your role with regard to American business?

GILLESPIE: By 1987 or 1988 Chile's economic performance was very clear to people who were looking for places to make money, particularly in the copper mining business. Chile's levels of direct, foreign investment had already gone up. Remember that this is something that the Pinochet government did. They threw the economy open to foreign investment! They unilaterally lowered Chilean tariffs down to about 11 percent across the board. Basically, foreign investors were and are treated as domestic investors. There is virtually no difference in the treatment accorded them. There is practically no red tape or bureaucratic processes to go through. Actually, the foreign investor gets a slight break. He can choose whether he wants to be taxed as if he were a Chilean national or as if he is a foreign investor. In the latter case he can defer some taxes and have a few benefits that he might not otherwise have. To all intents and purposes the Chilean government has brilliant, younger men who are the heads of the Foreign Investment Office, the Central Bank, and the Tax Service. These are all very bright people who all speak English and some German. They relate very well to foreigners. The atmosphere is very welcoming.

By the time I arrived in Santiago, there was already a large, U.S. investor community. I think that I mentioned in the case of Colombia a phenomenon that is not unique to Chile. U.S. companies, or multinationals, if you will, based in the U.S., have found that, for many reasons, it is preferable to have a non-U.S. citizen heading up some of their operations overseas. As a result, IBM in Chile was headed by a Brazilian. Some of the copper mining companies were headed by either Chileans or Argentines. The head of Chase Manhattan Bank was an Austrian.

I never asked my predecessor, ambassador Harry Barnes, why he handled some things in the way he did. Glenn Reyes, the economic counselor when I got to Santiago and now ambassador to Brunei, told me: “ambassador, I'm so glad that you're here. I've heard about what you did in Colombia. We have a real problems with the U.S. business

community here in Santiago. Ambassador Barnes refused to meet in any regular way with the heads of U.S. business firms who did not carry U.S. passports. So we don't have any real contact with people like that. Ambassador Barnes met with them individually and dealt with them that way. Separately, he would, for example, have lunch with those with U.S. passports, but that would exclude the non-Americans." Reyes continued: "That has two consequences. First, I don't think that we're serving U.S. business interests in Chile very well. On a very practical basis, let me tell you. We give a July 4 party every year. My economic officers and I have to go out to these business firms and ask for donations for the Fourth of July party to make it a success. I get the story from them, 'If I'm not good enough to be invited to your ambassador's meetings and take part with your embassy, why should I give you anything for your Fourth of July party?' You could help us a lot if you would review this policy of ambassador Barnes."

Well, I talked to the commercial officer, Richard Hayes. He confirmed that that was ambassador Barnes' approach. I said, "I've never talked to Harry Barnes about this. However, my sense is that this practice is related to the Pinochet government and its nature.

Because of the nature of the Pinochet government and the military dictatorship, Harry Barnes may have been very reluctant to open up very much to non-Americans in discussions of the business and economic scene, as well as the politics that were always part of it. I said that I think that I could understand this.

However, I saw this as an opportunity. So in January or early February, 1989, right after I presented my credentials, I had the first of several meetings with the American business community, and they all came. We eventually had a monthly breakfast of U.S. business people, but without distinction as to passports. There was a steady stream of U.S. investors coming to Chile. I guess that the fact that we were in a transition period during which things were happening meant that things were more interesting. I made sure that the members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Chile, which was very active,

with dynamic people at the head of it, most but not all of whom were American citizens, knew that my door was open to the U.S. investor community.

I'll put in a plug now, because I was just with representatives of U.S. investors this past week. The Business Council for International Understanding up in New York, the Americas Society, and the Council of the Americas were all very active and wanted their members to feel that they could help by having access to the U.S. ambassador. When I was in Chile, I gave them this access, and it worked. I think that we were very helpful to people. In the Embassy I had a top notch team on the economic side in Glenn Reyes and the people who worked for him.

My political counselor, a man named Ron Goddard, who is currently our charge d'affaires in Buenos Aires, was superb. I would always make sure that he gave a political briefing to any people who came to Chile so that they would know what they were getting into. That was terribly important during the transition itself from 1988 through 1989 and then, as the new civilian government took hold. That was a question that most people had.

Q: I suppose that you had to qualify yourself and say that yothought things would develop this way, but...

GILLESPIE: Yes. We would give them the best briefing that we could and say that this was the situation today. Here is how it looks to us, but that is basically it. It was interesting to me that investors who came in to see me and, for example, might have been talking about making a billion dollar investment in Chile, particularly in a mine, have in mind a very long time horizon. They can accept a lot in short term disruptions, including military coups d'etat. Let's not kid ourselves. What they are looking for is some degree of stability over the medium to long haul. They want to look at rules of the game that they can understand and that are relatively consistent. Frankly, they don't want to see the reverse of this. To some degree, they were concerned that a civilian government might come into office and more or less repeat the events of 1970-1973, under the Allende Government,

which socialized Chile. As my knowledge of the actors and their approach in Chile in the Concertacion Government grew, I was able to say with an increasing degree of confidence that the Chilean government was composed of serious men and women. Something had happened in Chile over the previous 17 years since the Pinochet government took over. The people in the civilian government fully understand that Chile is part of the world. Of course, Ron Goddard and the other members of the country team already had a good understanding of the situation in Chile.

I told visiting business that I had a hypothesis, which undoubtedly was subject to revision and maybe refutation, but it went like this. One of the unintended consequences of Augusto Pinochet and the military government's actions was to consolidate Chile's modernization along neo-liberal lines. The way it happened was this. Some of the military leaders felt, when they took over the government, that the best thing that they could do was literally to kill all the communists and socialists who threaten long term stability in Chile. The communists and socialists had brought the country to its knees economically and, to a degree, socially, during the three years of the Allende regime, 1970-1973. In fact, the military weren't able to kill all of the communists and socialists. They only killed some of them. That they killed any was terribly sad.

However, what these military people did was either to send, to force, or to encourage hundreds if not thousands of Chileans into exile. Many of these exiles were educated Chileans. Those exiles went to Europe, either to Western or to Eastern Europe. Those who went to Western Europe found that, even though they ended up in places like Sweden, France, and West Germany, there was no built-in, long-term social support system in those countries. Many of those exiles found that they had to work for a living. Since they were educated and couldn't engage in political life, for there was no opportunity for them to do that as foreigners, many of them became managers. Some became owners of enterprises. Those people never lost their love for Chile or desire to return. They started to come back. When they came back, they brought with them what they had learned.

If I may oversimplify it, those who went to Eastern Europe followed one of two paths. One path was to consolidate their communist or strongly social democratic ideology. The others began to look with open eyes at what they saw and said to themselves: “This system isn't working.” Remember, this was in the period from the mid-1970s through the 1980s. In many instances they observed communist style command economies. These Chilean exiles were smart people who could see below the surface, and they didn't like what they saw.

Some of the exiles came to the United States. Many of those ended up in academic environments. Some of them said to themselves: “Why does the economic system work here in the United States? Why can't this system work in Chile?” By the way, that kind of question is fairly widely asked in South America, anyway. They wondered why the U.S. didn't have the problems that Chile had and what was different.

Then there was a group that stayed in Chile but was given the opportunity to travel to foreign countries on a short-term basis and then return. They were probably the most heavily subsidized group and didn't have to do all of that much themselves. These people were supported by the Ford Foundation and other, such institutions in Chile.

The unintended consequences was that a fairly large and broadly based group of individuals came into being who had left what had been an isolationist Chile. Remember, Chile is way down at the southern end of South America. People could grow up being satisfied with what they had. One quality of Chile is smugness.

Q: It's called the Switzerland of South America.

GILLESPIE: The Switzerland of Latin America. It's a place where the clocks kind of stopped in the 1950s. When I arrived in Chile in 1989, there was behavior which I hadn't seen in the U.S. since the 1950s or early 1960s. I'm not talking about the drug taking or

pot smoking 1960s, but boys and girls holding hands, walking down the sidewalk, dancing arm in arm and cheek to cheek, and all of that kind of thing.

So one of the unintended consequences of this exile stream was to reinforce the opening up of Chile. These exiles left the country. They came back, looked around, and said: “This isn't going to do. Here is what we need to do.” I think that one of the consequences of the exile, whether self-imposed or forced by the military government, was to encourage the exiles to think that Chile should do things differently. I've had former Chilean exiles confirm this to me.

I think that that is part of the reason why Chile not only took the steps to open up the economy and society but the democrats who replaced the military government had seen so much of this change. There are people in Chile today who say: “Why do we have to wait for more trade agreements? We should unilaterally cut our tariffs again. We should open up even further.” These people are often social democrats. Carlos Ominami was the Minister of Trade in the new, democratic government. He is a young, dynamic socialist. In some respects he was more free enterprise in outlook than Milton Friedman. I thought, this is really something when Carlos Ominami stands up there and says: “The private sector is the engine of growth. We have to encourage private activity. The state cannot do everything and should not be expected to do so.” Here was a man who, almost literally, was running down the street with a machine gun in his hands.

Well, let's talk about narcotics. The way the narcotics question came up in Chile was kind of interesting. We had a very low-level program. George Franguli, who was chief of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) office in the Embassy in Bogota, had been the DEA or BNDD (Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs) representative in Chile at the time of the military coup d'etat which brought down the Allende Government in 1973. So there had been some interest in narcotics in Chile. In fact, interestingly enough, there had been a sort of Chilean narcotics cartel that had handled a lot of the financial dealings and the money from the drugs that were produced north of Chile. Some of that financial skill and

knowledge, I guess, moved up to Colombia, when the military government was established in Chile in 1973 and really tightened down on the Chilean drug business. I should add that Chile is not a drug producing area. They produce marijuana in Chile, but nothing else.

Q: Was Chile at all tied in to the Bolivian connection?

GILLESPIE: When I arrived in Chile, we had a very modest drug operation in the Embassy. We had one or maybe two people there from DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration). We had no narcotics unit from the State Department. Reporting on narcotics was handled as part of the duties of the political section. Political officers kind of followed the situation and tried to find out what was going on. The DCM (deputy chief of mission) was the narcotics coordinator, as is the case at most Foreign Service posts. He dealt with the vice-minister of the interior, first with the military government and later with the civilian government.

My recollection of the beginning of my direct concern with the narcotics situation in Chile began on a July day in 1989. The plebiscite had been held in July, 1989, I guess, and there were going to be elections in December, 1989. The transition was already under way. I received a phone call from foreign minister, Hernan Felipe Errasuritz. He said: “I wonder if you could come over to the Foreign Ministry and see me, if not this afternoon, then maybe tomorrow.” I looked at my calendar and said that I really couldn't come that afternoon. He said: “That's all right. Why don't you come over at 10:00 AM tomorrow, and we'll have a cup of coffee.” I thought that this was an interesting kind of development. This was the man with whom we had dealt on the issue of cyanide contamination of Chilean grapes and all of that. I had developed a pretty good relationship with him, given the overall state of affairs.

So on the following day I went over to see the foreign minister. In this case I went by myself because he had asked me to come over for a cup of coffee. I didn't take an officer with me to take notes and didn't really know what he was going to talk about.

The foreign minister closed the door to his office, gave me a cup of coffee, and said: “I want to talk to you about narcotics. I am really concerned.” By the way, earlier in 1989 there had been a seizure of a boat off the coast of the northern part of Chile, with a substantial quantity of narcotics on board. The Chilean Navy, which runs the Chilean Coast Guard, had seized, if I remember correctly, maybe 100 kilograms of cocaine, or something like that. It was a considerable amount. The foreign minister evidently wanted to talk about relatively recent narcotics developments.

The foreign minister said: “We have pretty good indications that there are more narcotics going through Chile, headed elsewhere, than any of us know about. And that's a problem. However, what I'm really concerned about are three things. First of all, we know that our high school children up in northern Chile, near the Bolivian and Peruvian border, are getting access to the equivalent of crack cocaine. That is the result of drug smuggling destined for other places. We think that the payoff is increasingly in narcotics to the Chilean side. Instead of giving these Chileans money, the narcotics traffickers give them some drugs. That is very bad.”

He said: “The second thing that disturbs me is that we really are an economic success. Whatever happens in the elections later this year, we're going to continue to be an economic success. I'm convinced of it. Our levels of disposable income are going up. Under those circumstances it's going to be possible for more people to buy drugs in the entertainment, recreation, and tourist areas. There will be more of an internal market in Chile and greater consumption. I am afraid that this will begin to change our society and that it will be a real problem.”

Then he said: “The other thing that bothers me is that there are beginning to appear in Santiago and in Vina del Mar, on the coast, people who are buying property and businesses, people who are putting money in our banks and who are driving big Mercedes automobiles. I'm worried about the penetration of our economy by drug money and the laundering of drug money. We want to have an open banking system and don't want to

have a lot of disclosure. However, I'm really concerned about it. Whatever happens in the elections, I'm not going to continue in office as foreign minister. However, during my last months in office and on a personal basis, I would appreciate your thinking about how you can help me and us to learn a little more about this traffic and perhaps begin to get some programs in place to deal with it."

So I thanked him, and we talked further about this matter. I went back to the Embassy and talked to David Greenlee, the DCM and also the Embassy narcotics coordinator. We talked about what might be done with both DEA, the INM (Bureau of International Narcotics Matters) in the Department of State, and others.

About four weeks later, in August, 1989, Senator Richard Lugar (Republican, Indiana) came on a scheduled visit to Chile. He met with foreign minister Errasuritz, who mentioned the conversation he had had with me on narcotics but didn't go into it in any great detail. Nevertheless, Senator Lugar was interested. Then we went to the offices of the Concertacion, the coalition of democratic parties which sought to elect a democratic government. There still wasn't a formal declaration of Patricio Aylwin's candidacy for President, but he was President of the Christian Democratic Party, the largest group in Concertacion. The assumption was that he would probably be the Concertacion candidate, but this had not yet been officially decided. I felt that it was important for Senator Lugar to meet different elements of the democratic opposition. By the way, I don't know whether I have mentioned this, but I was the first American ambassador to Chile to meet with the socialists. I made sure that there was a meeting between Senator Lugar and the head of the Socialist Party.

When we got to Patricio Aylwin's office and sat down with him and about three of his key lieutenants, the conversation was going along about lots of things, including the transition to democracy, relations with the Chilean military, and human rights. Senator Lugar is a broad-gauged man interested in all of these things and very knowledgeable. A man named Carlos Figueroa, who was very active in the Christian Democratic Party, was the

campaign manager of the Concertaciongroup. He was later appointeChilean ambassador to Argentina, and now is minister of the interior. During the visit with Patricio Aylwin and his associates, Figueroa said: “There is a matter, Senator Lugar, that we'd like to talk with you about, and that is narcotics.” We had no formal agenda for this meeting, but narcotics was a subject which we had not expected to have raised with us. Patricio Aylwin, who doesn't speak English particularly well, though Carlos Figueroa does speak English, said, in Spanish: “I really would like to have Carlos Figueroa set out our view on narcotics for you, Senator.”

Figueroa's presentation on narcotics was almost a tape recording of the comments made by foreign minister Errasuritz to me. He started with Chilean youth in northern Chile, increasing signs of drug consumption in the beach areas, disposable income apparently going up making it possible for people to buy drugs and thereby fueling internal drug consumption, and the threat posed by drug money to the financial system and the economy. It was a repetition, almost point by point, of what Errasuritz had said to me. Aylwin, Figueroa, and their associates said that they were going to be elected, were going to take over the Chilean government, and wanted to work very closely with the United States on narcotics problems. There had been no apparent connection between foreign minister Errasuritz and Carlos Figueroa, and I hadn't told the Christian Democratic side what the foreign minister had said.

In effect there are two police forces in Chile. There are the Carabineros, a national, uniformed police something like the French Gendarmerie Nationale. They are everywhere in the country. They don't have a plain clothes, detective squad at all. There is another force called the investigations police, a plain clothes, criminal investigative body.

On the basis of information that DEA and others had provided, my predecessor as ambassador, Harry Barnes, had tried to persuade President Pinochet to fire the head of the Investigations Police, because he was a crook. The Investigations Police were penetrated to a fare-thee-well by narcotics traffickers, prostitution rings, bootleggers, and

so forth. It was a thoroughly bad group. However, Pinochet wouldn't do anything about the matter, probably because it was ambassador Harry Barnes who asked him to do it, and Pinochet didn't like Harry.

In fact, after Patricio Aylwin was nominated candidate for President by Concertacion, I developed a pretty close relationship with him. We shared with him the information that we had about the director of the Investigations Police. Aylwin was not surprised. The man's reputation was bad, anyway. However, Aylwin was not aware of the depth and extent of the corruption in the Investigations Police. We were able to tell Aylwin that, as far as we could tell, the Carabineros, whatever else they had done, were not corrupt and had not been penetrated by the drug traffickers. He should be alert to the possibility that the Carabineros had also been penetrated by drugs traffickers, and this could happen. However, the U.S. did not have any information that this had happened to the Carabineros.

As I mentioned before, we had a very small anti-narcotics program in the Embassy, by Latin American standards. If I remember correctly, it amounted to a couple of hundred thousand dollars annually. David Greenlee, our narcotics coordinator, felt that this was hardly respectable and tried to have this anti-narcotics program budget increased. My recollection was that we had it increased a little bit. However, the fact is that the Chileans didn't want a lot of money. They wanted technical assistance. They wanted people whom they might have some confidence in. Both the Pinochet people and the democrats wanted somebody to help them figure out ways to deal with the narcotics problem.

Remember that when I was in Colombia, my objective had always been to get the Colombian government to develop an anti-narcotics strategy, a strategic approach to the narcotics problem, as opposed to merely reacting to U.S. pressure and then the occasional problem of criminality in the bombings and the rest of it. In fact, ultimately, I was able to persuade the Colombian government to begin to develop an anti-narcotics strategy, but this didn't emerge until a year after I'd left Colombia.

So we tried to persuade the Chileans to develop an anti-narcotics strategy. I think that, given the nature of the problem in Chile, we were able to encourage them to do that. We were able to provide some in-kind help. However, one of our problems was that, right away, the Chileans wanted radio systems that had to be licensed under our export control regulations. This was prohibited by the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment, and so the Chilean government couldn't buy this equipment. That's another example of how these “wonderful” prohibitions and embargoes cut several ways.

Q: Let's stop at this point, Tony. We'll resume this at our next session. We've already covered the Letelier case, the economy and business affairs, narcotics, and foreign and military relations. The only additional question that I can think of right now, and there may be others, is the visit to Chile by President Bush in 1990. I imagine that this was rather important. Then there may be other problems which you may wish to raise.

GILLESPIE: Okay.

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Q: Today is March 14, 1997. Tony, let's talk about the visit tChile by President Bush.

GILLESPIE: Before we start on the Bush visit, let's go back in time a bit and pick up something that I don't think we covered and which relates to Chile and its economy. It has become a major thrust of U.S. policy in Latin America and, increasingly, on a global basis since then. That is, the Enterprise for the Americas initiative. This was really the brainchild of George Bush following a narcotics summit in late 1989 or early 1990 held in the Andean region, involving Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and other countries, possibly including Mexico.

When President Bush flew back to Washington from that meeting on Air Force One, he said: “We need to encourage the people of these Latin American countries to do something more against narcotics. We need to reward those who are helping us and hold out some carrots for others. I'd like to see if there is something that would be of use

in that regard." Two things eventually emerged from that. The man on the airplane who really picked one of them up was David Mulford who, at that time, I recall, was the Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs. The two things that eventually came out of this conversation were the Andean Trade Preferences Act and president Bush's Enterprise for the Americas initiative.

The Enterprise for the Americas initiative attempted to recognize the great momentum that had built up following the various financial crises of the early 1980s. It had begun to pick up speed. At that particular moment in 1989-1990 there was a new government in Brazil, in which a bright, hot-shot new President was talking about reforming Brazil's...

Q: Who was that?

GILLESPIE: Fernando Collor de Mello. He was talking about changing people's thinking. I think that I previously mentioned the situation in Argentina where a very traditional and wonderful democrat, Raul Alfonsin, had not been able to manage the economy of Argentina and, in fact, left office a year before the end of his term. He was replaced by a funny - in the sense of strange - Peronista, Carlos Saul Menem, who was elected President of Argentina. Nobody seemed sure of what he was going to do. All of a sudden, it began to appear that he was going to apply some of the same, economic thinking that we had already seen in Chile since the 1980s.

In any event the Enterprise for the Americas initiative tied three things together. First, democracy was the watchword, the by-word. Democracies are what are important in Latin America. Secondly, solid, macroeconomic policies, including the reform of old institutions and the application of more capitalism. The old era of government to government transfers of resources to meet pressing needs is basically over or coming to an end, if not over. Therefore, trade and economic growth are the way that we are all going to have to go. This all coincided with changes in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union was still the Soviet Union, but it was visibly failing. The Enterprise for the Americas initiative was presented by

President Bush in June, 1990, if I remember correctly. It was received in South America and throughout the Americas with a tremendous rush of enthusiasm. The response to it was very positive. Everyone said that it was great, and “This is what we've always wanted.” I think that I mentioned that President Aylwin of Chile, who by that time had just taken office in Chile, said in his inaugural address: “We're going to give you, the people of Chile, a hand, not a handout.” This was right in line with the Enterprise for the Americas initiative. In short, this idea caught on tremendously.

There are those who argue, even in 1997, that that has been the basis, the major push point or enticement behind the kinds of economic reforms that continue even now in the Americas.

Flowing from all of that was the question: “Whom can we turn to, whom can we point to as really strong models or examples of how this concept can work?” And Chile, of course, came to mind. Among other things there was a real coincidence of interest. The U.S. was looking for the right kinds of people to help, and the Chilean civilians were looking for something to distinguish themselves from the Chilean military government. By this point, in the spring and summer of 1990, the Chilean democrats had decided that they were going to follow the basic, macroeconomic policies of their predecessors in the Chilean military government. However, they needed to have something else to call it. This kind of new trade relationship with the U.S. looked about right to them. The Bush administration felt very strongly that Chile would be a good example. Therefore, as one of our policy objectives, we ought to try to conclude some kind of trade agreement with Chile.

So I know that President Bush himself, in conversations about Chile, was interested in this. As ambassador, I had instructions to begin talking about a free trade agreement of some kind with Chile, which had largely opened up its economy. GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations, known as the Uruguay round, were going on. U.S. trade representative Carla Hills was finding it very easy to work with the new, elected Chilean government. There was obviously not 100 percent agreement with them, but there was

agreement in many areas. The Chileans were becoming an ally in the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations. So President Bush was viewed in Chile as a major, potential ally by the Chileans. He told us to go ahead and see what we could work out.

When we started talking about a Bush trip to South America, it was obvious that Chile would be on the list of countries to be visited. The plan was initially to have the trip early in August or September, 1990. However, the events in Kuwait intervened.

Q: You're talking about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and then thGulf War.

GILLESPIE: Well, first of all, the program for the protection of Saudi Arabia was called Desert Shield. There was a need to deal with that problem, so that cooled everything down, as far as a visit to Chile by President Bush was concerned. We thought that he was going to cancel the trip.

Q: Just as an aside, somebody who was in West Africa as American ambassador said: “The authorities in that country basically brought everything to a halt while they watched the Gulf War on TV.” Did you find anything comparable to that in Chile because of the global reach of television? This was the first time that such coverage was possible.

GILLESPIE: Yes, there's no doubt about that. There were the Chileans living in the capital city, Santiago, who had access to the American coverage of the war. However, anybody in the country who had enough resources to purchase a satellite dish could receive the programs. In the Embassy Residence in Santiago we had a full cable hookup. By the way, reception of the CNN programs was not pirated. It was licensed and paid for. Although some people were able to do so, for some reason we did not receive Armed Forces Radio and Television programs in Chile. However, we did receive C-Span and CNN, and the Chilean TV stations had been privatized by the outgoing, military government in Chile. So there was a lot of TV coverage. The newspapers in Chile devoted a lot of space to events in the Gulf. People may not have been watching when it all started, but they soon came to

realize that the Gulf War was a major event, involving many of the members of the United Nations.

At the UN in New York the Chileans had a Permanent Representative called Juan Somavilla. Again, in a typical way, if that is the right word for Chileans at this time of real transition, Juan Somavilla had been either a member of the Socialist Party or was an ultra-liberal Christian Democrat. However, he is a very intelligent man, a true intellectual, and a man of ideas. He had gone up to the UN position. He is very concerned with social issues and with poverty. He eventually set up the UN Summit Meeting on Poverty, which took place in about 1993 or 1994, I believe. So Somavilla was very actively reporting on the situation at the UN.

The Latin Americans have always taken UN Security Council representation seriously. They see that as a major sign, a positive indication of their seriousness and importance in the world. Every country looks for opportunities for itself. However, I think that they care a little bit about how their neighbors act when they're on the Security Council. So there was a lot of interest in UN proceedings at this time.

As Desert Shield unfolded, the relatively new President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, was dealing with a situation in which the Argentine military had really led the country down the road to disaster in the Falklands/Malvinas war. He was trying to deal with several military relationships. Very early on, Argentina was a major contributor to the Desert Shield operation. President Menem sent frigates from the Argentine Navy into the Gulf to work with the U.S. and the other members of the coalition forces.

So several Latin American countries were interested in participating in the Gulf War. Despite their physical remoteness from Desert Shield, the Chileans were actively interested in this. There is a story in this which involves me and continues to this day. We knew a major arms manufacturer and entrepreneur in Chile, named Carlos Cardoen. He was personally worth several hundred million dollars at that time and was a graduate, if

I remember correctly, of Colorado School of Mines or one of those institutions. He was a mining engineer. He had been working in Iraq, had been producing cluster bombs for the Iraqis in large numbers, and had been making lots of money. As it worked out, he had Chilean employees who were in Iraq and were being held, as many other foreign nationals were, by Saddam Hussein more or less as hostages. He was trying to get the most out of them that he could.

In any event, after consultations with Washington, I asked Cardoen if he would be able to give us any information about the Iraqi production capacity in this area. It happened that he was under investigation by our Department of Justice at the time and is under indictment today before a U.S. court for the illegal export and sale from the United States of zirconium products. Anyway, Cardoen had really cozied-up to the U.S. Embassy. I thought that I might try to see if I could get anything out of him. He said that he would only provide information if I could get the Department of Justice off his back. I told him to “fly a kite.” That wasn't the answer and that wasn't what we wanted.

The Chileans were involved in the Gulf War to some degree. There was a strong element of interest in what was going on in the Gulf. People in Chile saw this as a major, international event, because it involved oil, the Middle East, the UN, and the allied powers around it. They felt that the war might spill over and touch them. I mentioned the Argentine contribution to Desert Shield. Then, in the wrap-up after the conclusion of Desert Storm in the Gulf War, the Chilean Air Force sent, if I remember correctly, nearly all of its helicopters and their pilots, involving a contingent of just under 100 men. They were sent to Kuwait as part of UNIKOM (United Nations Interim Kuwait Observation Mission), or something like that. They provided the basic transportation element for the UNIKOM operation. Over the course of at least two or three years the Chilean Air Force rotated personnel through UNIKOM to operate these helicopters. They took United Nations observers to various points to observe the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border and things like that.

In any event, the visit of President Bush to Chile was postponed but not canceled. He eventually visited Chile in December, 1990. He made a five-nation tour of South America. If I remember correctly, he visited Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and I can't think of the other country right now.

As far as presidents and foreign affairs are concerned, every one is different. However, President Bush was really able to enter into all aspects of the visit. Obviously, he was comfortable in the international setting. He had no hesitation or sense that he didn't enjoy what he was doing. In fact, quite the opposite. He seemed to enjoy the visit very much. I had been very lucky because I met him first in very close-up terms in 1983, prior to the Grenada operation during Bush's visit to Jamaica which we talked about before. I met him, Barbara Bush, and his staff. So I knew those people fairly well. Bush wanted the Chilean and, indeed, the whole South American trip to be serious. He wanted the visit to reflect his interest in the area.

During his visit to Chile in 1990 President Bush really wanted to celebrate the return of democracy to Chile and the continuing, normalization of relations with this country with which we had been on the outs for so many years. He wanted the visit to go very well. Meantime, during the visit, he continued to be very concerned about what was going on in the Middle East. As a result, neither secretary of state Jim Baker nor Brent Scowcroft, Bush's National Security Adviser, came on the trip. They were both represented by their deputies, Larry Eagleburger, the Deputy secretary of state, and Bob Gates, the deputy national security adviser, in addition to Nick Brady, the Secretary of the Treasury. They were the principal officials accompanying President Bush. It was something to watch the Chileans prepare for this visit. I think that I have mentioned that the Chilean government had named as foreign minister Enrique Silva Cimma, a man in his 70s and an administrative law expert. He had a competent and very substantive deputy, Humberto Vargas, whom I have mentioned. Vargas really managed us through the resolution of the

windup of the Letelier-Moffitt case. He made the particularly brilliant suggestion that Chile might make an ex gratia payment to the Letelier and Moffitt families.

I appointed David Greenlee, the DCM, as the Embassy coordinator for the Bush visit. David chose the political counselor and the Administrative Counselor to be his two deputies and worked on various aspects of the Chilean segment of the Bush visit to South America with Chilean foreign minister Silva Cimma. It became immediately apparent that that wasn't going to work. It was evident that the Chilean Foreign Ministry just was not up to handling the necessary arrangements. This issue first showed itself in the matter of hotel accommodations. We learned from the “pre-advance” visit of the executive secretary of the National Security Council, Bill Sittmann, who came to Santiago with about 40 people, including Secret Service, communications, and medical people. I don't know how much you want to go into all of this.

Q: No, let's hear it.

GILLESPIE: Bill Sittmann came to Santiago on a U.S. Air Force Special Missions aircraft. Bill is a delightful guy, very business-like and straightforward. He likes to use check lists and things like that. He established very good relations with David Greenlee, the DCM and presidential visit coordinator; with me; and with David's deputies. It soon became apparent that we were going to have an official party of about 437 American officials and administrative staff! Then there would also be the press contingent and others on top of that. There could easily be about 600-800 people coming to Santiago for this visit in December, 1990, by the time you included the foreign press which otherwise would not be there.

So we had to deal with the questions of where they were going to stay, how they were going to be taken care of, and all the rest of it. The Foreign Ministry just did not know how to deal with it. I remember that David Greenlee came to me and said: “Look, ambassador, this just isn't working.” President Aylwin had an excellent, young, foreign affairs specialist

on his staff. Aylwin really didn't have a national security adviser, as they didn't use that structure. However, this man on Aylwin's staff was supposed to be very well tuned in on what was going on in international affairs. I called this member of Aylwin's staff. He suggested that maybe we ought to meet with the Chilean minister of the interior, Enrique Krause, who was the chief political minister for the government. He was also the man who controlled the police, the administrative authorities, licensing questions, and things like that for hotels and transportation. Aylwin's staff representative also suggested that we have Edgardo Boeninger, the Secretary General of the Presidency in Chile.

He suggested that Edgardo sit in on making the various arrangements because of his closeness to President Aylwin and his ability to appreciate where sensitive points might be. So I got together with Enrique Krause, Edgardo Boeninger, and David Greenlee. Krause is a very quick study. He saw the situation clearly, as did Boeninger. They said: “All right. We'll take care of this.” We arranged it so that David Greenlee would be in contact with the vice-minister of the interior. In effect, the Chilean Presidency took the trip planning away from the Foreign Ministry. They kept the Foreign Ministry clearly involved on matters of substance and other matters. However, on all of the other arrangements they just said that this visit was too big for the Foreign Ministry and that they would handle it. Quite frankly, that's how we worked it out.

Eventually, the White House assigned as its on scene, advance chief a gentleman whose name I can't think of but who came basically as a volunteer. He was not part of the White House staff. That's the way most White House staffs handle these visits, as you may know. This man had worked with George Bush since at least as early as when Bush was the chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing. He had known Bush through the UN and CIA years. He is a super golfer and very energetic, delightful, and a very reasonable, if tough operator. We found him to be superb. He managed the White House and the presidential advance parties in a way that I had never previously seen in my career. He simply would not brook any nonsense from anybody. He knew how to work with us and to call on me, as ambassador, when he needed to. However, 99.9 percent of the time he worked with the

DCM, David Greenlee and the Chilean government in a very congenial way. Of course, there was no reason why this would not be a very positive trip.

Q: But sometimes there are problems with presidential visits. The White House staff and the Secret Service can “run wild” and make demands that they would never get away with elsewhere. That does not help the atmosphere for a high-level visit of this kind.

GILLESPIE: That's right. This man, by virtue of his experience with President Bush and the kind of person that he is, was extremely aware of that and didn't let any of it happen. He kept everyone well informed and was quick to call me personally and say: “Such and such a problem has come up. I'm going to recommend this. Do you have a problem with that? Is that okay with you? How do you think this will be received by the Chileans?” When he needed to meet a senior Chilean official, he would always ask DCM David Greenlee to ask me if I thought that was okay. Even though he developed some direct lines of communication with the Chileans, he was always very careful to observe the forms very well. That made the arrangements go off very smoothly.

You may have had this from the experience of other people in other places. However, the way the advance system works is that, from the very beginning, you probably have as many as 20 to 40 individuals who are responsible for different aspects, components, or facets of the trip. These include the motorcade. Certainly, the Secret Service is in charge of all of the security aspects. However, there are specific moves, you have site officers and event officers. You have people in charge of everything. It's usually not one person but two people involved in a single event, because there is a White House person and often an Embassy or State Department person who is twinned with that White House person.

There is a very functional way in which advance parties often work. It takes a lot of time but seems to work best. The advance party sets up a meeting, usually every evening, of everyone involved. People go over in detail the exact state of play of the item for which they are responsible. If there is going to be a meeting, as there was in Santiago, with the

American Chamber of Commerce in Chile, then the event officer and his or her site officers would make a presentation every evening as to where things stood. Of course, as you go along, you're managing by exception. You've established a base, and everyone knows what it is. The place is set, the room is set, and the subject matter is set. From then on, every day when this subject is brought up, you don't have to repeat everything that is okay. You just say that you're having a problem with this or that aspect, or the room has just been changed. It's really quite a system.

This fellow who had worked with President Bush for many years managed things well. He invited me to attend any of these evening meetings that I wished to attend. He urged me to attend the first few such meetings. However, after that he said: “Well, David Greenlee is going to be at all of these evening meetings, so if you want to attend, you are welcome and we'll be glad to have you. However, you don't have to come if you have other things to do.” He kept me in his hip pocket, as did David Greenlee, so if they needed to deal either with the U.S. or the Chilean side, then the ambassador was available. It was all done very smoothly.

The Chilean tradition is that there is no Chilean White House. There is no presidential residence. The Chilean presidents live in their own homes. Patricio Aylwin and his wife had, and continued to occupy, even after his election and inauguration as President of Chile, a very modest home in a very nice, urban, Santiago residential area. By the way, Mrs. Bush did not come on this trip. President Bush was accompanied by his daughter, Doro Bush. President and Mrs. Aylwin said: “We would like to have President Bush for lunch at our house on the day of his arrival in Chile.” Well, the people from the advance party went out and looked at the Aylwin home and said: “This isn't a presidential residence. This is an ordinary house, and not everybody will fit into it.” Mrs. Aylwin had shown them the dining room which, by squeezing people in, could barely accommodate eight people, although there were ultimately 10 people there for the lunch. Since Mrs. Bush wasn't coming, it was obvious that no wives would be included. So when we put this issue back

to Washington to President Bush, he said: “Absolutely, I would like to have lunch with President Aylwin in his home.”

This luncheon turned out to be the event which set the tone for the whole trip. It was a very intimate sort of visit. The living room is probably about 18' x 14'. It's not very big. Ten people made the room pretty full. It had overstuffed furniture and was very cosy. Of course, Mrs. Aylwin was there and greeted President Bush. Then 10 of us moved into the diningroom. It was a bit of a squeeze. There were President Bush, Secretary of the Treasury Brady, Deputy secretary of state Eagleburger, deputy national security adviser Gates, and myself. Then there were President Aylwin of Chile, his minister of the interior, the Minister of the Presidency, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Marlon Fitzwater, the White House press spokesman, was there with his funny hat to cover his head, because Marlon is bald. He has a very real concern about sunburn and skin cancer. He was moving around outside in the little garden. The Aylwin's children and grandchildren were all there to greet President Bush. They were out in the small patio and garden in back of the house. It was all so warm, friendly, and cosy that it set the tone for the whole visit. In substantive terms the main discussion was on the Gulf War and the international scene. However, a tremendous amount of time was spent on trade and the possibility of negotiating a trade agreement between the United States and Chile. There were two note- takers at the lunch. There were Bob Gates and myself for the United States. I kept a small pad of paper balanced on my thigh below the table. I kept jotting down notes, and Bob was doing the same thing across the table from me. Then we later went back to the Embassy. I reconstructed my memorandum of conversation. We did a verbatim memorandum of conversation. In other words, we tried to get almost exactly the words that President Bush used. The same thing applied to the Chileans.

As far as interpretation was concerned, Stephanie Van Riegersburg and Barbara Phillips were the two U.S. State Department interpreters. They are two of the very best interpreters in the world. Stephanie interprets into English and vice versa all of the

Romance languages, but Spanish and Portuguese are her special strength. Barbara does Spanish to English interpretation and vice versa. She happens to be from Chile. They did a wonderful job. Then they checked my notes to make sure that it jibed with what they could remember. I sent all of that off to Bob Gates in the White House party for him to produce the final memorandum of conversation.

It was an excellent trip. All of it was very positive. By the way, I don't think that I mentioned that Vice President Quayle had come to Chile for the inauguration of President Aylwin in 1990.

Q: I don't think that you did.

GILLESPIE: I don't think that I did or that I went into that in any particular detail. However, Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn, took back to Washington very positive reports about Chile and everything that they had seen. Vice President Quayle actually called on the outgoing President as part of the inaugural festivities. Maybe I'll go back and try to put that in as part of this interview.

It was interesting that Vice President Quayle was the last and the most senior U.S. Government official, to my knowledge, ever to meet with now former, but then still President Pinochet. He called on President Pinochet on the day that the Chilean presidential mandate was passed from Pinochet to President Aylwin.

I would say that the bilateral agenda for the visit was pretty much devoted to matters on which there was already an agreement. I had worked like crazy to make sure that there was virtually nothing about the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment and that its provisions would be lifted by the time of the Bush visit. Secretary of state Jim Baker signed the papers effectively lifting the provisions of the amendment as far as Chile was concerned, at least a week or 10 days before President Bush got on the plane to come down to Chile. So we completed action on that with lots of time to spare.

What President Bush wanted to hear was some of the Chilean views about the Gulf War, about the rest of Latin America, and about economic reform. It is a feature of the Chilean government that its senior officials spend a lot of time and with great introspection, talking about themselves. They really are interested in and well informed about other matters. I'm not trying to sing their praises unduly. However, they wanted to talk to President Bush about what else was going on in the world. They wanted to know about the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative approach and what really could be done to sustain economic reform, both in the Americas and elsewhere. What would be the prospects for an eventual trade area of the Americas? At the lunch and at all of the subsequent contacts, these were the matters that the Chileans were particularly interested in.

I know, because he told me so, that President George Bush was really gratified by this interest. Obviously, he loved to talk to somebody who didn't have his hand out, trying to reach into his pocket, as it were. They weren't trying to tell him how to do things, and particularly how he should deal with Chile. Rather, they wanted to talk about other matters.

On a personal note, I might mention that the airport in Santiago is perhaps 15-20 miles from the downtown area. I was pleased to be invited to ride in the car with President Bush into Santiago, after his arrival at the airport. My wife rode into town with President Bush's daughter in the car behind. That's when I saw an aspect of Bush that I hadn't really seen before. We were driving along. Bush was very friendly and said: “What am I going to do here? What am I going to run into?” He asked questions like that. As we approached Santiago, we could see that there were people on the street corners and on the sides of the street. It was a pretty good turnout. There were some signs that said: “Yanqui, Go Home.” Others said: “Welcome, George Bush” and “Welcome, USA,” as you might expect.

There were mixed feelings expressed by the Chileans at the side of the road and streets. Remember that not all Chileans were particularly enamored of our policies from 1973 on. President Bush looked at me and said: “You know, I kind of like to play a little game on these rides in from airports. It never hurts. I try and find the most negative looking person

I can see out the window of the car, lock my eyes onto that person, and see if I can't get him or her to smile." We were going along at 25-30 miles an hour, not exactly creeping. He said: "Let's give it a try." He looked down the road, on the right hand side of the car, and said: "Look at that guy with the sign, 'Yanqui, Go Home.' Now, watch me. I'm going to lock on to this guy." He locked onto him and waved his hand at this fellow, pointing right at him and smiling. Darned if the guy didn't see him make eye contact. Then he smiled and looked very sheepish. And Bush said: "Gotcha! Gotcha!"

When the presidential car arrived in Santiago itself, President Bush was talking about trade in the Americas, the Gulf War, and what was going on in Washington. Suddenly, he said: "I've got another one! Let's get this woman up there with the baby, Tony! Let's get her and make her smile." He said: "Barbara and I love to do this. We do it all the time in these motorcades, because otherwise they're just as boring as sin." I could see the chief of the Secret Service detail, in the right front seat, kind of smiling at this. I forget his name. The President said to him: "Did you see me get that one?" The Secret Service man said: "Yes, Mr. President, I saw you get him."

Another aside concerned the situation in 1989 when we had had this problem with Chilean grapes imported into the U.S., some of which turned out to have been poisoned with cyanide. At that particular moment one of the six wealthiest men in Chile, Ricardo Claro, had been on the Board of Directors of the Americas Society. He had welcomed me to Chile with open arms and had been very friendly. He was an ultra-conservative, almost reactionary, political figure. He was not a violent man in any way but was just ideologically very far over to the Right. Ambassador Harry Barnes had tried to co-opt him and had been reasonably successful. When the matter of the poisoning of the grapes happened, however, he immediately turned on me and accused me of having orchestrated the ensuing interruption of trade in grapes between Chile and the United States. He later accused me of lying. It turned into a very nasty, personal kind of vendetta. I literally refused to speak to him. He tried to goad me. He had a TV station, wrote a newspaper column, and had a radio station, on which he broadcast. He insulted me and he insulted

the United States. In fact, he insulted President Bush. He said that the grape embargo was a Bush plan and that the President of the United States had been involved in it.

Well, it turned out that our DCM, David Greenlee, came back from one of the planning sessions in connection with the Bush visit. The Chileans weren't arranging a typical state dinner for Bush. They don't host black tie events anyway, as a general rule. Remember that December is summertime in Chile. They were hosting a very lovely, al fresco dinner in the courtyard of La Moneda Palace, the office of the President of Chile. This was called L'Orangerie, the orange tree garden. As David Greenlee was looking down the list of invitees, he found the name of Ricardo Claro. He told me about it. I said: “That will never do. Do you want to handle this or do you want me to handle it?” He said: “Let me take care of it.”

So he went to the person who was handling the guest list. This person said: “Well, the invitations have already been sent out. Claro has already been invited and has accepted.” So David called me and said: “The Chileans have already invited this guy. He has already received the invitation and has accepted it.” I said: “This is not acceptable. It won't work.” I said: “This is a man who has insulted the President of the United States on the radio, on TV, and in print.” We had all of the transcripts of these insults available. I said: “I just won't stand for this. If you want, I'll take care of this.” David said: “Well, let me push a little harder.” So he pushed and then told me: “I don't think that you need to take any initiative now. I think that I have this under control. However, the next time you see Boeninger,” the Secretary General of the Presidency, “make sure that you mention it to him so that the people down below him know that they have his support.” I thought that this was a very wise way to handle this. That's exactly what I did, but that was the first time that I had to bounce anybody from a major event like this.

Even to this day Ricardo Claro is still terribly insulting toward President Bush, me, and Harry Barnes, my predecessor. He asserts that the whole issue of the poisoned grapes was a conscious plot to undermine the Chilean economy. There's no logic to this. It's just

like all of these conspiracy theories. If you analyze them, there's nothing in it for the U.S. to do that sort of thing, unless you assume that the U.S. likes to do mean, spiteful, and nasty things, as well as hurt our own economy, which that incident did.

In any event, the Bush visit to Chile went off like clockwork. The whole thing took place smoothly and was a success. When President Bush left Chile, the Chileans believed that the next thing around the corner would be a bilateral, free trade agreement between Chile and the United States. There was no NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association) then. At that point I don't think that NAFTA had even received that name. The talks with Mexico and Canada which led to NAFTA began some time in 1990. I had another year of trying to explain to the Chileans why we could not get started on the bilateral free trade treaty.

President George Bush had declared that the achievement of economic reform, the extension of democracy, and all of those things in Latin America were a matter of national interest to the United States. His cabinet and staff had come up with ways of doing that. This concept ran into opposition from a man for whom I have the greatest possible respect in the trade area, Jules Katz, who was the Deputy U.S. trade representative, the deputy to Carla Hills.

Q: I might add that I had a long interview with Jules Katz.

GILLESPIE: Jules Katz saw nothing wrong with market opening in Latin America. He saw the value of doing this and fully understood why President Bush thought that it was important to single out Chile. However, he was absolutely opposed to starting off a process of bilateral trade arrangements, because that would be extremely difficult to accomplish and would require tremendous energy and resources, for a return which probably would be marginal, in the global sweep of things. He felt that such an arrangement would be important but not vital to the United States. So, in effect, Jules Katz

became, in my mind, a major obstacle to a free trade agreement between Chile and the United States.

This was an interesting development in U.S. diplomacy. I felt, believed, and knew that President Bush had made certain decisions and outlined certain designs and strategies to reach this objective. He didn't want to see it delayed unduly. I thought that my marching orders, as U.S. ambassador to Chile, were very clear. President Bush had communicated these views to the rest of the U.S. Government, including the U.S. trade representative, and I had some of the loudest and most vociferous arguments on this issue that I've ever had in my career with my friend, Jules Katz, in his offices in the Office of the U.S. trade representative. We really yelled at each other. I learned later from his and my seconds who were present for these arguments that they just simply couldn't believe it. However, I think that Jules and I have remained good friends through all of this.

Now that we're out of that aspect of the diplomatic business, we can laugh about it. To Jules Katz there were very good reasons not to go too fast down this road of free trade with Chile. I considered that for extremely good reasons we should move ahead. I could agree on adjusting the velocity a little bit, but I felt that we needed to go down this road. The fact is that, at the time, President George Bush made what the press, other governments, and everybody believed were really firm commitments. You couldn't have asked for stronger, oral expressions of these commitments, also spelled out in letters and follow-up communications. Even as late as two and one-half years later, in 1992, these kinds of things were being said to Eduardo Frei, the successor of Patricio Aylwin as President of Chile. However, nothing has happened. There is no trade agreement with Chile. Jules Katz was one of the reasons, but only one, that nothing happened right away. I agreed with Jules Katz's position that trying to negotiate, say, 30, or even 15 trade agreements with the various Latin American countries in this Hemisphere, would consume whatever resources the offices of the President and of the United States trade representative had, for a return that was only as big as the potential market opening of this

area. While this is substantial, it isn't anything like the potential of opening up the global market.

President Bush had defined the issue, it had appeared in presidential documents, and yet we couldn't get the darned thing to move. The Chileans were used to operating on a much more direct basis. That is, if we're going to do it, let's do it. If we're not going to do it, let's not do it. If we're going to postpone it, let's just push it under the table and watch it go away. They could not quite understand why things weren't happening. Of course, they had made, what one now might say, regrettably, was a mistake. They had gone out to the press and public and said that the U.S. and Chile were going to have a free trade agreement, because President Bush said so. Now it is the beginning of 1997, and there still is no trade agreement, and the prospects for concluding one in the immediate term are virtually nil.

Q: However, Chile is the first country to appear to be on the road to acceding to the NAFTA agreement. Chile is always mentioned as the most obvious country to follow Mexico and Canada into this kind of trade arrangement with the U.S.

GILLESPIE: Chile felt that it was going to be first. Even at the time of the Bush visit to Chile, NAFTA was not yet in the eyes of anyone. That came later. I think that the Chileans, to some degree, have not been happy that NAFTA got in the way of a free trade agreement with the U.S. Now, however, as a point of contemporary information, it appears, as of March, 1997, that, because of our own internal, domestic problems, particularly within the Democratic Party, as well as the succession to President William Clinton, expanding NAFTA to take on a fourth member, as President Clinton committed us to do on December 11, 1994, in Miami, just isn't going to happen. That cannot be realized.

Q: It's the trade unions, mainly, isn't it?

GILLESPIE: It's a combination of the opposition of the trade unions and of a very strong body of people who, for a lot of reasons, are opposed to the whole trend of

relations between Mexico and the U.S. It's hard to define it any more tightly than that. It now appears, as I see it, that nothing is going to happen in the near future. You have Congressman Richard A. Gephardt, the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, and Vice President Al Gore as two likely contenders for the Democratic nomination for President in the elections of 2000. Both of them are looking to AFL/CIO union support in that campaign. Therefore, neither of them is willing to support the idea of reopening or expanding NAFTA for any reason.

I think that the plan now for the administration is to go back and do what Jules Katz didn't want to do, which is to conclude a bilateral Free Trade Agreement with Chile. Chilean accession to NAFTA would have been much more in line with Katz's approach, which would be to bring them into something that already exists. Don't set up a whole, separate set of negotiations.

Anyway, during the Bush visit we went down to Valparaiso, on the Pacific Ocean, by helicopter. There he addressed a joint session of the Chilean National Congress. Unlike what happens here, of course, every member of the entire Congress and his wife turned out. We only have a turnout like that if someone of the caliber of Winston Churchill addresses Congress.

During the Bush visit to Chile President Bush and his daughter, Doral Bush, stayed at the ambassador's residence. We had three very nice guest rooms. President Bush was in one of the guest rooms, Doral was in another, and Dr. Burton Lee, President Bush's physician, and one other person shared the third guest room. The President met in the garden of the Residence with the staff and families of the U.S. Embassy, including both the American citizen staff and Foreign Service Nationals and as many of their families as we could squeeze in. The Embassy has a pretty good sized garden. We had this meeting outdoors and were able to handle the crowd that way. The setting could not have been more congenial.

One point worth noting. I think that these things are worth knowing, though you don't have to dwell on them. President Bush has some muscular problems in the back of his neck and his back. So one of the tasks that we had, in preparing for the visit, was to get him a masseur to massage his neck and back. My wife had a masseuse, a woman, who was very good. However, the chief of the advance party said that it would be better to have a masseur. Remember all of the President Lyndon Johnson stories. I remember the discussion when I was in Brussels, which President Johnson had visited before I got there. The story was still going around that some big, buxom, blonde women had been brought in to give President Johnson massages. The press had gotten hold of this story and speculated about it, along lines that you can imagine. In any event, for the Bush visit we found a masseur, who was actually an athletic trainer and was quite a guy. He came to the Residence. President Bush wanted to work out. Vivian, my wife, had and still has a stationary Schwinn exercise bicycle. The advance party said, “Fine. If you don't mind, we'll just put it in the President's room.” He liked to ride on the stationary bike for 20 minutes or so a day. We had hoped that we would be able to get him out for tennis, as there is a very nice tennis court at the club next door. Or even some golf. There wasn't time for either, as it turned out.

Anyway, during the visit we would go to bed at the end of event filled days. President Bush seemed to enjoy coming into the livingroom, sitting down, putting his feet up on a footstool, and talking for a few minutes about how the day had gone and what we were going to do the next day. Of course, Bob Gates, the deputy national security adviser, and others were bringing him reports on the rest of the world's problems. The CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was providing him with briefing material on a daily basis, or more often if the circumstances demanded. Bob Gates would say to me, “Let's tell the President what's going on and find out what's on his mind.” I sat in on those briefings and discussions, which covered the whole world. This was all done very quickly. Here was a President who knew what the issues were and was being updated on those. President Bush would hand me papers and say, “Look at this. You'll find this interesting.” I found President Bush to be

very open in that regard. Anybody in the room was very much included in what was going on, whether it was my wife, my DCM, Dave Greenlee, or other people from his staff. He would say to Dr. Burton Lee, “Hey, Burton, look at this. See what these guys are doing in China.” He was very relaxed and easygoing. The assumption was that you wouldn't be there if you weren't interested in what was happening in the world, and therefore you were part of it. I found that to be quite an interesting approach.

Sometimes, the President had phone conversations with Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser, back in Washington, with secretary of state Baker, and with others. Then he went into his room, had his massage, and went to bed. He got up in the morning and came out to the lovely terrace we had. My wife Vivian had arranged a breakfast buffet for everybody who was in the house. So people just dropped in.

President Bush enjoyed the visit. It went well as far as the President was concerned and as far as Larry Eagleburger, the Deputy secretary of state, was concerned. Quite frankly, Larry Eagleburger was the guy I was most anxious to please. President Bush always wanted to make sure that the secretary of state was being taken care of, and that was the role that Larry Eagleburger was filling. I had known Bob Gates for a number of years. He was very pleased with the way things had gone. The same thing was true of Nick Brady, the Secretary of the Treasury. So it was a very good trip from almost every aspect.

There was one other visit during my time in Chile which I will mention. I think that it's worth mentioning, because it wasn't as positive as the Bush visit. We had a visit from the Secretary of Commerce, Robert Mosbacher. There was a lot of talk in 1995 and 1996 about Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown and his trips overseas. Well, Mosbacher brought a trade and investment mission down to Chile. I have to check the dates. I can't recall whether it was before or after the Bush visit. I don't think that I've ever seen a visit go more wrong than that one.

I had a senior commercial officer assigned to the Embassy who was really imaginative and entrepreneurial, but not at all well-organized. I didn't realize how far out of hand the situation was getting, nor did DCM Dave Greenlee, until the visit actually took place. In many respects it went quite well, but there was a major faux pas, involving the poisoned grapes issue. None of us had really appreciated the impact of this issue among the business community in Chile. The problem was not with the Chilean government but with the Chilean business community. I suppose that we all share some of the responsibility for what happened because we had not taken it seriously enough. However, this experience convinced Secretary Mosbacher and those around him how important the grapes issue was. Mosbacher hadn't taken it seriously enough to satisfy the Chileans.

The Chilean business community was absolutely insulting to Secretary Mosbacher. They invited him to lunch at the Confederation of Industry and Commerce, which is like a combination of our U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers. It includes the big hitters in the Chilean economy. The President of the Confederation of Industry and Commerce got up to speak and, in effect, lectured the United States and Secretary Mosbacher in a very unfriendly way. We had no idea that he was going to do that. However, Secretary Mosbacher didn't respond particularly well to that. Everything just went downhill from that point. Mosbacher eventually fired the man who was his chief of staff, whom he had sent on ahead.

I had known Mosbacher before he was appointed Secretary of Commerce. I have had more to do with Mosbacher since then. Mosbacher has told me that, while it was an unfortunate development, he blamed his former chief of staff for not having passed on, with sufficient vigor and sensitivity this whole problem of the poisoned grapes. However, this incident soured trading relationships quite a bit.

That is part of the poisoned grapes story. By the way, I may have mentioned previously that Eduardo Frei, the current President of Chile, visited the United States in February, 1997. I am still on the Chilean side of the poisoned grapes case. Presidents Bush and

Aylwin had a very private meeting, just the two of them, before the dinner at Moneda Palace in Santiago. There were no note takers present. At that meeting, as President Bush explained it to us later, President Aylwin raised the poisoned grapes issue. President Bush said: “Look, there is no way in terms of policy or executive action that I can do anything about this situation. I'm saying this very honestly, Mr. President. The best course that you can take is to pursue this matter in the courts and let the courts decide it.” That was an honest and straight approach, but it was slightly disingenuous or colored, if that's the right word, because President Bush knew that the U.S. Government would try to defend itself by claiming sovereign immunity for its actions. That is, the prohibition on the importation of Chilean grapes was an exercise of U.S. sovereignty. In any case, that was the answer he gave to President Aylwin.

The Chileans have indeed pursued this case in the U.S. courts. The U.S. courts have, indeed, ruled in favor of the U.S. Government and stated that the U.S. is not responsible for what happened. As I think I mentioned before, the Chileans still haven't accepted this outcome. The prohibition on grape imports from Chile cost Chilean producers $370-400 million, which are the damages that they are claiming. So this case continues. Nevertheless, President Bush handled that very well. He left Chile on the rest of his trip with very positive feelings about Chile, the people he met, and the state of the relations between the two countries. We in the Embassy were delighted. President Bush was pleased with the support which we had given him, and that was very evident.

Q: Tony, one of the main considerations during your time as ambassador to Chile was the sex appeal of the Chilean economy. When you think about Chile, this is the main consideration. There was so much focus on it. Did you or your economic counselor have any inhibitions about reporting on the dark side of the Chilean economy? Every economy has a dark side, and yet this was the big thing going for you. When you report to Washington, negative aspects tend to receive more attention than positive aspects.

GILLESPIE: First, I would like to make a general observation. During the early 1980s under the Reagan administration I had worked on Central American affairs and saw how information was leaked to the press. That was my first real exposure to leaking. I talked about this process to some extent with embassy officers in Grenada, a lot about it in Colombia, and even more in Chile. A lot of this was in the course of normal conversation with them. I talked about how leaks of information might affect our reporting and whether, in fact, we or others were guilty of leaking information. We would see cables coming in from other posts in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. We would wonder aloud over coffee or on other occasions whether those reports were written in a particular way because the drafting officers thought that they might be leaked or become public knowledge.

I had taken very much to heart something that my colleague, Craig Johnstone, had mentioned to me when we served together in ARA (Bureau of American Republic Affairs) under Assistant Secretaries Enders and Motley. We had been talking about dealing with the press. Craig said: “Tony, I always talk to the press as if I am talking 'on the record.' I simply don't believe in talking 'on background' because it may come back to haunt you. So if you can't say something for the record, maybe it's better not to say it.” My response was: “Okay, I understand that, Craig, but what do we do about reporting, when we are talking, not to the press, not to the public, but supposedly to each other, considering that somebody else might take what we said and pass it on to the press as if talking for the record?” Craig Johnstone and I never came to a complete conclusion on that, but I said that that's what bothered me.

My view in Grenada, where we had a lot of things happening, and in Colombia was to take the Johnstone approach pretty much. Speak to anybody as if they are going to remember what you say, but don't hold back. If a development might really be harmful to U.S. interests or to our relations with the country concerned, which is one of our U.S. interests, you have to be very careful about how you handle the matter. Then, in the

reporting channel to the Department of State, you try to keep the information as protected as possible. I have the feeling that that sense covers everyone.

Now, regarding Chile and its economy, one of the beauties of the Chilean economy was that it was becoming increasingly transparent and visible. As I think I've mentioned, I was absolutely blessed with two, superb Economic Counselors in the Embassy in Santiago, Glenn Reyes and later Rich Barrington. They felt that it was very important that Washington and their audience there have the straight story all of the time. Their basic inclination was not to classify their reports or to put the most modest controls on the dissemination of their cables. They didn't think that the approach that the Chileans were planning to take, for example, on limiting the flow of short term, portfolio investments was a matter affecting the national security of the United States. Sometimes, because their reports contained information not always available to the public in Chile which they had obtained from someone in the Chilean government working on the issue, they felt that they needed to protect their source. The information itself could either affect markets or might be proprietary, and so might need to be protected. However, other than that, their basic feeling was that we were in Chile to talk about an economy that was increasingly open in every respect, including to outside investment, trade, and to public view.

In short, I never ran into the issue of holding back on economic reporting because of the possibility of leaks. Occasionally, I ran into that consideration on the political side, in reporting on some aspects of the Letelier-Moffitt case and other matters where there was some sensitivity to both the information itself and the source from which it was obtained. However, in terms of telling it like it is with regard to the Chilean economy, being able to do that was an asset, a plus. Being able to report that there was a debate going on within the Chilean government about whether to raise this or that kind of tax, or spend money on this or that kind of thing in the Chilean budget was not a major problem. Now, we reported some Chilean views critical of the United States and of our policies. We were careful not to

provide too much protection to reports on such matters. I felt that it was too bad if we were misunderstood.

One of the problems in diplomatic reporting has come with the information explosion. There is so much reporting going on, and there are two or three ways of calling attention to what you want to say. I think that a very despicable way is by over-classifying and restricting dissemination of Embassy reporting. In other words, you send in a TOP SECRET, NO DISTRIBUTION cable, just to make sure that it is considered at the highest levels of the Department of State. That simply debases the currency. It's a real problem, but it happens. If you make a practice of doing this, it seems to me that it's really a pretty bad thing.

Quite honestly, my view on this matter, and I hope that it does not reflect my own ego too much, was that I did not write very many, first person cables. When I worked as Executive Assistant, Chief of Staff, and later Deputy assistant secretary for Operations under the late assistant secretary for ARA, Tom Enders, I had seen so many good friends and good officers put their feet awfully close to nasty stuff by sending in first person cables. For example, they would report, “I spoke to the President,” “I said this,” and “I did this,” and “He said to me.” I decided that that was an arrow in my quiver which was very special. I would be well advised not to use it too often, or it, too, would become very cheap.

I can recall, when the Chilean foreign minister was going to Washington after the poisoned grapes issue had emerged, I sent a cable to secretary of state Baker because I found out by phone that Baker was going to see him and was interested in this matter. So I sent a cable “For the secretary, from the ambassador,” saying that Chilean foreign minister Hernan Felipe Errasuritz was coming to see Secretary Baker. Here is what he wants, here is what he is going to lean most heavily on, and so on. I suggested that we should adopt the following positions, and so forth. I got a call back from Secretary Baker later, saying: “Thank you very much. That's exactly what I wanted.” When people were going to the U.S. or U.S. visitors were coming to Chile, I would occasionally do that kind of a cable.

Occasionally, the political counselor or the DCM would suggest that we do a first person cable. I would generally say: “No, this isn't a first person cable kind of thing. Let's just send in a very carefully drafted cable.”

Another challenge on reporting, and it's with us all the time, is the tendency to wait until a report is “perfect” and “right.” That is often the worst thing you can do and may make your reporting nearly worthless. Sometimes my DCM or I would say to an officer: “Get something out NOW. If you wait until tomorrow, Washington isn't going to care. So go with what we've got.” I guess that that is part of the diplomatic profession as well. However, in terms of being able to lay it on the line or lay it out there, the least problematic area was the economic side of our reporting, because the economic area was so open. One of the many beauties of Chile was that this was a society which was opening up. We didn't have to worry too much about sensitive subjects. What we looked for were the arguments which would convince those in Washington who, we knew, would be reading our cables or taking our information and passing it on elsewhere in the U.S. Government on the importance of certain things in the Chilean view. That is really where an Embassy can play an important role. It's a kind o“I told you so” sort of thing. The least useful comment is to say: “If you'd asked me, I would have told you.” I always tried to impress on our officers that the main function of most Embassy reporting was to make sure that Washington had as good an understanding of the situation as we could provide on any of the various subjects of importance.

Have we discussed consular matters?

Q: No, I was going to ask you about that. First, though, I was just going to ask another question on another matter. Just before we started this session, you mentioned that you never felt that you received very good “talking points” from the Department. Would you comment on what you meant by that?

GILLESPIE: I guess that this is something that one learns as a more junior or desk officer. You are called on to distill a set of issues and come up with a way of explaining the matter to someone, telling somebody what the U.S. view of an issue is, and what we wanted people to do. Usually, this involves breaking the matter down into talking points for someone other than the drafting officer to deliver. As I saw it, the people who are putting talking points together know much more about the issue than the post receiving the instructions from the Department. For example, when the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is getting ready to have its annual meeting, or whatever the subject is, we get a message from the U.S. Mission to the UN or from somebody in the Department of State, saying: “Please go in to the government of blank and tell them that as far as the Non Aligned Movement is concerned, we want these things and we don't want those things. Make the following points.” Then you get a list of points, usually one or two sentences long. You're expected to present those points to the person you are speaking to, pretty much as they are written. That is, a foreign minister, an office director, or a desk officer in the other government.

It often struck me that the talking points we received were poorly prepared. I don't have any in front of me, so it's difficult to come up with a specific example. We talked earlier, for example, about the fact that in many diplomatic services around the world, particularly of countries longer established or older than ours, diplomats are generally expected to be schooled in international law and the history of diplomacy. If you listen to their talking points and see their aides memoires, they tend to leave behind with you what is called a “non-paper,” regardless of the merits of the argument. These points are laid out in a way that they believe will be persuasive. These documents often follow a highly structured pattern. You start from one point and go on to another.

Q: You're talking about “pieces of paper” or syntheses. You statthe problem, make the argument, and then conclude.

GILLESPIE: A lot of the talking points that we would receive from the State Department would be gibberish, or garbage, quite frankly. I wish that I could be more specific about this, but I know that I would have my political counselor or the DCM walk into my office and say: “Here are the talking points, but you can't possibly leave this as a 'piece of paper' with the government. They'll laugh us out of town.” This happened in Washington, where assistant secretary Enders or Tony Motley would see talking points of this kind going out. One of my jobs, when I was in Washington, would be to send these draft talking points back to the drafting officer with instructions to start over, because they would never convince anyone. I guess that this goes back to the point that led us into this business earlier. I mean the discussion on how our people are trained to conduct diplomacy and how we actually conduct diplomacy.

As a junior officer I have seen serious and very skilled U.S. diplomats, both ambassadors and other people senior to me, take a lousy set of talking points, go into the Foreign Ministry, and go selectively through them. They would embroider them. Many times that is the way you do it. I did a lot of that in Chile. I would take some of these talking points with me but would never consider leaving a set of them behind for my opposite number. I would work with them. I would leave some of them out and I would add some others. I would think: “Well, this or that point will make no impact on these people.” That was my judgment. That was what I was being paid to do. I guess that's what I wanted to say about that.

Q: I can't help repeating a story told by Ed Peck. He was charge d'affaires in Iraq at one point. He would receive talking points on UN General Assembly agenda items. These would be conveyed in instructions to all diplomatic posts, which were instructed to go to their respective Foreign Ministries and seek to enlist their aid in obtaining strong support for Israel. In the Middle East this would be simply laughable.

GILLESPIE: We had that in Chile. We would be instructed to urge the Chilean government to provide strong support for civilian governments at a time when General Pinochet was

in power in Chile. The Department, of course, would not make an exception for Chile. I would have to figure out how I would make that particular point and I did. I just had to use appropriate verbiage to deal with it.

Q: You mentioned consular affairs. Were there any consular cases oparticular significance during your time in Chile?

GILLESPIE: There were several interesting cases but, I guess, the most important one, in a sense, and certainly one which took up a lot of our energy, was an airplane crash, which occurred in southern Chile. I believe that this may have happened early in 1991. A American cruise ship operator had specialized in handling “Discovery and Nature” tours. He had two or three cruise ships. They were not huge boats and were certainly not the Love Boat type of cruise ships. These were not entertainment cruises. This American cruise ship operator ran, and continues to run, cruises to Antarctica. The point where the passengers change from aircraft to ship or vice-versa was often an airport in Ushuaia, in Argentina, on the Beagle Channel near the southern tip of South America. Ushuaia is right across the channel from Chilean territory. On this occasion I think that a group of tourists left their ship and went aboard a Boeing 737 aircraft belonging to LAN-Chile (Chilean National Airline). The aircraft took off and almost immediately crashed in 25- 30 feet of water. The water in the Beagle Channel is extremely cold, as you can imagine, given the fact that it is located near the very southern tip of South America. I believe that a great many of the tourists from this cruise did not survive this crash, although I don't remember whether all of them died.

The crash took place in an area very remote from the Embassy in Santiago, roughly 1,000 miles almost due South of us, where communications facilities, roads, and undertakers were limited or very few in number. About 20-30 out of the 30 or 40 tourists in this group were American citizens. They were all relatively well-to-do people from families having means in the United States. That really presented the Embassy with a major management challenge. We did what one is supposed to do under the circumstances. We set up a task

force in Santiago and eventually got people from the embassy down to the scene of the crash. We worked with the Chilean authorities.

This was one of the very first times that the Bureau of Consular Affairs in the Department sent out a rapid response team to the Embassy to help in the work involved in a disaster of this kind. This team, composed of two or three officers, did a superb job. They flew to Santiago that same day, and one of more of them flew down to the scene of the disaster, arriving at the scene of the crash some 24 hours after it had happened.

It almost goes without saying that this accident shows how traumatic these things are and how much they shock the human system. Obviously, they don't occur where and when people are ready for them. No one is ready for something like this, and I suspect that it is not possible to be very ready. Maybe a crash of this kind can be handled in an almost routine way at a major, international airport. However, in this case it happened at a remote site. The airline was quickly on the defensive to make sure that it was not going to be held liable for what had happened. The executives of the airline with whom we dealt were friendly and cooperative, but they were very guarded in manner. We could see this element of crisis management. I've always been concerned about how you manage a crisis. Here was a clam up as opposed to telling people what was going on, so that was a problem. However, we eventually recover, in this case it happened at a remote site. The airline was quickly on-

From the management point of view, handling this matter required the whole country team. We had the defense attache involved, because the Chilean civil aviation authorities were a combination of military and civilian personnel who had to be contacted in connection with this kind of accident. Also involved were the air attache, the consul, public affairs and information people, the political section, and many others, one way or another. We had to be fully informed on what had happened, what we were doing, and why things weren't moving faster.

One aspect of handling this situation involved the Chilean legal system. You mentioned the Code Napoleon before. We ran into procedures and processes which are just different from those that we have. We encountered official mentalities, if that's the right word, and thought processes that are not in our problem solving tradition. They are in the habit of following an established procedure and have been trained to believe that if they follow this procedure, they have done everything that they need to do. The fact that the established procedure didn't help them identify a body or release a piece of ladies' jewelry to a surviving, family member is irrelevant. In the Embassy we found ourselves in the middle between surviving family members and the Chilean authorities on some of these matters. Some of the family members would say: “I don't give a damn about Chilean procedures. I want this or that.” On the side of the Chilean authorities they would say: “Look, we're following our procedures. Don't tell us how to do our business.” Our officers have to learn how to deal with problems of this kind. If they're good at what they do, they know how to bring both sides as closely together as possible.

So the Letelier-Moffitt issue needed to be brought to an end to some degree, both on the criminal end and on the civil side. If this was not done, it would not be easy to have decent relations, even with a new, civilian government in Chile, no matter what it was or how it was composed. That was also part of my continuing instructions and was part of the real backdrop to U.S. relations with Chile in 1989-1990.

The Chilean military government absolutely refused to deal with this issue in any way. So nothing was going to happen until 1990, when the civilian government took over. However, it was already evident that our relations with the civilian government of Chile would be dramatically affected by how the people in it dealt with this problem in their context.

We know that what is called in Spanish the “intellectual authors” of the crime of killing Letelier and Moffitt (that is, who ordered the murders) were General Manuel Contreras and Brigadier Jose Espinosa. They were the chief and deputy chief of DINA (National Intelligence Directorate of Chile), respectively, at the time of the murders. Then there

was a civil suit, in which a U.S. Court has handed down a judgment of “wrongful death” and “deprivation of rights” in favor of the survivors, the families of the two men who were killed. We had to figure out how to deal with this situation. I think that it was a diplomatic “success” for those of us who had to work with this problem. We and the Chileans in the civilian government were able to get this resolved.

Q: Let me put this comment at the end here. When we finished up this segment, you were describing the “Letelier case” and how, when the civilian, Chilean government came into office in 1990, the case was worked out. Also, we will want to talk about your impressions of the civilian, Chilean government as it entered office, the change in relationships, and how that went. Then we want to talk about the Chilean economy throughout your whole time in Chile.

GILLESPIE: We talked about this in terms of Colombia. We can discusU.S. business in Chile and the rest of it.

Q: Yes, U.S. business in Chile and relationships between the “intellectual” economists in Chile. One thinks of the “Chicago school” economists in Chile. We will want to discuss what that really meant during the time you were in Chile. Then we might discuss some other issues. For example, were there any problems in relations of Chile with its neighbors, such as Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. Was the “Shining Path” guerrilla movement in Peru a problem in Chile? Was there any “spillover” of these Indian type movements into Chile? We will also want to discuss the narcotics problem. Was Cuba “fooling around” in Chile? We'll go into these issues next time.

Tony, unless there's something else, where did you go when you lefChile?

GILLESPIE: When I left Chile in December, 1991, I returned to Washington. Harry Shlaudeman had been our ambassador to Nicaragua. He decided that he would leave that position earlier than would normally have been the case. In the spring of 1991 I had a phone call from Larry Eagleburger, who was then Deputy Secretary of State. He said that

the Secretary, he, and the Department would like me to go to Managua as ambassador to replace Harry Shlaudeman. Well, any time you were asked to replace Harry Shlaudeman, that was an honor, because he was one of our top diplomatic operators in the Western Hemisphere. Nonetheless, I had made a firm commitment to my wife that after serving in two Embassies and spending six years out of Washington, we would go back to the United States. I had decided that having been, in effect, Chief of Mission in three places, I was approaching the point of not going out as ambassador again.

Larry's call had been a surprise, and I told him that I wanted to check with my wife. My wife said: “I'm really serious. We lived in Managua 15 years ago. I wouldn't terribly mind returning there but I simply have other things that I'd like to do. If you really want to go, maybe we can work out a way where you can go, and I won't.” I might add that our kids were grown up by that time. I said: “No, I don't really like that idea.” She said: “I don't like it either.” So I called Larry back and told him that my wife and I really didn't want another assignment overseas at this point. He said: “I understand. You'll hear no more about it. I have other people in mind anyway.” Then he called later and said that he thought that it was time to have some new blood on the NSC (National Security Council) staff over in the White House. He mentioned that assistant secretary Bernie Aronson, who was not a career foreign service officer, was handling Latin American affairs. He said that he had talked to Brent Scowcroft (National Security Adviser), adding that I knew him and he knew me. He said: “I think that I'd really like to have you come back to Washington and take on Latin American affairs on the NSC staff.” I said that that would be fine.

Well, that is basically what I came back for. I left Santiago on December 11, 1991, took a little leave over Christmas, and returned to Washington early in 1992. Then there was a delay of about three months in getting over to the NSC. Finally, I took over as senior director for Latin American affairs at the National Security Council, working for Brent Scowcroft and John Howe, who was deputy national security adviser. I replaced Bill Price, who went off to be ambassador to Honduras.

Q: Then the next time we'll talk about your time on the NSC staff.We're talking about early 1992.

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Today is March 21, 1997. Tony, in January, 1992, how did you see throle of the NSC under the Bush administration?

GILLESPIE: I came into the organization at the tail end of President Bush's term of office. So I moved into a pretty well-established and set system. I inherited a good staff which I had not been involved in selecting. I also inherited a set of issues. One of the reasons that I went to the NSC staff, which I mentioned earlier, was my acquaintanceship with Larry Eagleburger, then the Deputy secretary of state. Larry and Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser at this time, had been professional colleagues and close, personal friends for many years. They knew each other much earlier on in Yugoslavia when Brent was an attache and Larry was a serving foreign service officer. They worked together in the administration of President Ford and were part of Henry Kissinger's NSC staff. So there was a lot of connection there. Eagleburger was very straight with me. He said that they were very anxious to have someone on the NSC staff who could both work with and help support the assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs in the Department of State. That is, Bernie Aronson.

There was a similar situation in the Defense Department, in the Office of International Security Affairs (ISA). Larry had talked to Brent Scowcroft about this matter. He was concerned about coordination on Latin American affairs with ISA from the point of view of the State Department. There was a lot going on in connection with narcotics, a lot was happening more broadly in connection with law enforcement, and there were other issues outstanding. We had already intervened unilaterally in Panama by the time I went to the NSC staff, and there was that operation to follow up on. Of course, there was an

assumption that, more than likely, there would be a second term for President Bush. The idea was to make sure that there was a degree of continuity on the NSC staff.

When I got to the NSC, I was interviewed by Brent Scowcroft. This was perfunctory and almost pro forma. I took over an organization which had two officers. One of them was a foreign service officer, Robert Morley, who had long experience as an Economic Officer. He had been the Country Director for Mexican Affairs and had worked in the Office of Cuban Affairs. He had had a number of assignments in the Department and overseas. He had been a DCM in the Embassy in Quito, Ecuador. Then there was John McMahon, a CIA Officer from the Directorate of Intelligence. This directorate handles intelligence analysis and not clandestine operations. John was a Latin America scholar and knew the intelligence side of the business well. We also had a couple of secretaries.

As the NSC was organized under Brent Scowcroft, it had its own secretariat. Connected with that secretariat and with the Operations Center was a group of intelligence analysts, including an Army major whose name I can't think of right now. His job was to support us. I also inherited an ongoing set of issues. I soon learned that, under Brent Scowcroft, the function of the NSC staff was, as you've so often said, either solve problems or keep problems from arising. Secondly, its task was to make sure that the President was as well informed and prepared as he could possibly be to deal with whatever was coming down the pike.

It was an interesting position. I had been advised by some of my peers and mentors to be careful. I was told that, once you got into the White House complex or into the NSC staff, your Foreign Service and State Department affiliation began to blur, and you were viewed as the enemy by the State Department, as you might be viewed as the enemy by other agencies of the U.S. Government. With them you never lost your State Department affiliation. So you got it from both directions. Well, I guess that there was some of that, although I think that the fact that I was a senior foreign service officer made it possible to carry with me some residue of the regard I had from other State Department officers

developed over the years that I had spent in the Department, working in and around the sixth and seventh floors with a lot of people from a lot of bureaus in the Department. I never sensed much resentment or concern about my position. What I more often received was a lot of cooperation and information which was very helpful, more often than not.

I did have to make sure that I was covered and was getting what I needed in contacts with agencies other than the State Department. That is, with the CIA, with the Defense, Justice, Agriculture, and Treasury Departments, as well as with a whole range of other U.S. Government agencies.

The NSC was organized into geographical Directorates, plus a couple of functional Directorates. One of these was the International Economics Directorate, which was very important. If I remember correctly, there were about four professional officers assigned to it, plus three staff members. Then we had the “drugs and bugs” Directorate. I can't think of a better word for it. This covered intelligence, narcotics, political-military affairs, law enforcement affairs, UN Affairs, and a whole bunch of assorted matters. Today it goes by the name of the Global Affairs Directorate. It is the same basic office in the same basic place covering many, but not all of the same issues. This directorate was headed by a very capable senior director for intelligence from the CIA. He was a DO (Directorate of Operations) kind of person and was very good. There was a legislative liaison office, a press office, and a legal counsel's office. The legal counsel's office turned out to be very important. I found that at the NSC a very early stop on every issue should be the office of the General Counsel, and everybody followed this procedure. The idea was to let the General Counsel know what we were working on and find out if there was anything in this connection that might get us in trouble with the law.

There are rules in the NSC about what is the President's business, what is White House business, and what is the business of one of the U.S. Government agencies. There are some distinctions between these functions which really count in law. For example, certain documents are presidential Documents. No matter what their classification is, they are

considered to be the property of the President. There are other documents which are considered Agency Documents which are not the property of the President.

The deputy national security adviser operated from a room which, with any luck, was 10' x 12' and may have been smaller than that. Between the offices of the National Security Adviser and his deputy was space for four personal assistants, all of whom were high level, executive secretaries. In effect, they work together. I think that one of them is designated for the deputy national security adviser. The others are designated for the National Security Adviser. That's the front office of the NSC.

Downstairs, in the basement of the west wing of the White House, are the executive secretariat, the operations center, and the situation room for the White House, dealing with international affairs. The NSC has no structure in law or regulation. The National Security Act of 1947 created the NSC and stated that the President, the secretary of state, and a few other persons are members of it. However, other than that, the National Security Act doesn't say much, except that it states that there will be an executive secretary of the NSC. That is the only position in the NSC staff which has a specific, legal basis. The assistant to the president for national security affairs (now called the national security adviser) is not mentioned anywhere in the NationalSecurity Act. He or she doesn't really exist in law, does not have authority to sign anything, and cannot officially transmit documents. As you may know, presidential decisions, whether executive orders, policy statements, or national security decision memoranda, need the President's signature to give them authority.

The executive secretary of the NSC does exist. When I was on the NSC staff the executive secretary was Bill Sittmann. From time to time the executive secretary has been a career foreign service officer or a political appointee. Bill was a political appointee. Apparently by law, the executive secretary must be a civilian. He cannot be a military person. Under Brent Scowcroft the executive secretary was sort of the staff director of the NSC. His office managed all personnel actions. When I was assigned to the NSC staff, I was

detailed to the NSC Staff in the White House, by the Department oState, in response to a memorandum signed by the executive secretary of the NSC, asking that I be so detailed. Under the policy at that time, which I think is still the case and because of legislation, whose details I am not very sure of, such a detail can only be for a year at a time. I believe that there is supposed to be a two year maximum on these details. These are non-reimbursable details. That is, they don't cost the White House budget any money. The agency handling the detail pays the salary. Congress, which was concerned at one point about an inflation in the size of the NSC staff, set it up this way.

That is what I dealt with. By the time I was detailed to the NSC staff, Brent Scowcroft ran a very stylized operation. When I arrived at the NSC staff, Scowcroft's deputy was Admiral John Howe. He was a four-star admiral from the U.S. Navy. As a two-star admiral he had previously been the director of political-military affairs at the State Department in the early 1980s. I had known John then. He had taken on the job of deputy national security adviser. There had recently been a change in the position of deputy national security adviser. Robert Gates, Admiral Howe's predecessor in this job, had left the NSC staff to become the director of the CIA.

It was pretty easy to meet with either Brent Scowcroft or Admiral John Howe personally, depending on their availability. It was certainly a matter of whether one or both of them was in the office. One of them always traveled with the President on a foreign trip. If the President were going on a domestic trip, usually one of them would go with him. It would depend on the nature of what was happening in the world as to whether it was Brent Scowcroft who was available or John Howe. More often than not, Brent Scowcroft was available. Scowcroft had and still has a very close relationship with George Bush. Scowcroft spent a lot of time with President Bush, who would come out of his working office in the oval office area and drop in on Scowcroft. Our offices were across West Executive Drive in the Executive Office Building.

We had pretty decent offices in the old Executive Office Building. It was easy to see Scowcroft. I could call over to his office. One of his secretaries would put me through to either Scowcroft or Howe, whichever one I wanted to talk to. Or they would find whomever I was looking for on a plane. We had all of the benefits of an excellent communications system.

Basically, the idea was to stay on top of issues. Under BrenScowcroft the NSC, by Brent's direction and desire, did not try to set itself up as a little foreign affairs agency, although many foreign officials and senior ministers of foreign governments wanted to meet with the President or with Brent Scowcroft. Brent's inclination was: “Yes, if it makes any sense, and if it doesn't run counter to what the State Department is doing. That's the State Department's job.” Brent had personal relations with a couple of people in Latin America, including the Mexican president's chief of staff. They had gotten to know each other in the past. I knew that same person. Whenever he would come to Washington, for whatever reason, he would often call me and would also call Brent Scowcroft's office directly. Then I would get a call from one of the secretaries in Scowcroft's office, who would say: “Mr. Cordoba is coming to Washington. He will be meeting with General Scowcroft.” We would get Scowcroft's schedule of appointments well in advance, but often I would get a phone call in which the secretary would say: “The General would like you to sit in on this meeting.” So I would go and sit in on the meeting. Brent was very good about that.

If there was a meeting scheduled with the President, Brent would make sure that the senior director concerned was in on the meeting. We didn't have to fight hard at all to be included in those kinds of things. If Brent knew that I thought that someone from the State Department ought to be in on one of these meetings, that was okay, and they should not be excluded. More often than not, with a lot of people at the ministerial level, if Brent Scowcroft weren't available for some reason, I would meet with the person. We didn't usually try to make appointments for the deputy national security adviser to see such visitors. However, I would be sure to tell the assistant secretary of ARA (Bureau of

Inter American Affairs) that this meeting is coming up. I would say, “If you want to send somebody, please do.” You get used to the system. I would just pick up the phone and call the assistant secretary and say: “I'm going to meet with so and so.”

Q: When you were describing your particular staff, it seemed as if there had been almost a cleansing of the Augean stables in ARA and the NSC, as far as ideologues were concerned, left over from the Reagan administration. This is before your time. From talking to you in dealing with the problems earlier on, there were people in the NSC who were virtually carrying on their own policies with regard to Latin America, at one or two rungs below your position.

GILLESPIE: That happened during the Reagan administration.

Q: I meant that this happened during the Reagan administration. It sounds as if there was a deliberate process of making sure that you didn't have some of the ideologues coming out of Senator Helms' (Republican, North Carolina) camp, or something like that. Did you have this feeling?

GILLESPIE: Yes, there was no doubt about that. Remember that Brent Scowcroft had been a member of the Tower commission, which had looked at the NSC as a result of the Iran-Contra, Oliver North affair, and all of that. As a result of that Brent Scowcroft was extremely sensitive. As a result of that there was the Carlucci and Powell and then the Powell regime at the National Security Council. Then Brent Scowcroft came in after that.

Interestingly enough, Brent's first senior director for Latin America and the Caribbean was ambassador Ted Briggs. Ted was and is a very firm conservative. He was a career foreign service officer, and the son of Ellis Briggs, also a career foreign service officer. Ellis Briggs at one time held the record for the most embassies he served in as ambassador. Ted Briggs himself was very much a man of the right, ideologically. He was a superb diplomat and a very conscientious servant of any President or administration in power. There was no doubt about that. He had very strongly-held views. I wasn't there when this

happened, because it predated my return from Chile. I think that Ted was eased out of the Scowcroft NSC by a combination of Secretary of State Jim Baker, Brent Scowcroft, and Larry Eagleburger. However much they might have agreed with Ted Briggs' views, if in fact they did - and I have no reason to think that they didn't - in general, they felt that Briggs was a little bit too much of a lightning rod. Of course, none of those people is a man of the left. So he was assigned as ambassador to Portugal. The man who had been Briggs' DCM (deputy chief of mission) in Panama, and whom he personally selected to help him in the NSC staff, was William Price. When Briggs was appointed ambassador to Portugal, his job at the NSC devolved onto William Price, who then became the senior director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Bill Price is the very antithesis of an ideologue. He really is a classic diplomat and U.S. foreign service officer type, in the sense that, whatever his ideology, you really have to dig pretty deep to find out what it was. He is a get the job done kind of guy who doesn't worry too much about ideology.

When I arrived on the NSC staff, ideology was no longer an issue. As we have been talking, I have been thinking that Brent Scowcroft's NSC staff consisted of men and women who were really experts in the areas in which they operated. They were experts by virtue of a full-time and life-long career involvement in an official way. That is, they were U.S. civil servants or were from the Foreign Service or military services. Or they had a life-time involvement in what you might call the foreign affairs establishment, either through a combination of experience in academia and government or public institutions of various kinds. So those were the people who characterized Brent Scowcroft's senior NSC staff. I'm trying to remember how many senior directors there were on the NSC staff. We all gathered with Brent every Monday for a senior directors' meeting.

By the way, just as a point of process and detail, a senior director, that is, a person who ran an office on the NSC staff, was given a presidential commission, a big sheepskin which had lots of pretty writing on it, a large waifer seal, and various signatures.

These documents, which were literally commissions, were prepared over at the State Department. If you were not already a commissioned officer in the U.S. Government, this document gave you commissioned officer status. Such status had two major benefits, in addition to any psychic benefits. With that commission you got to be a member of the White House mess, if you made a down payment of $50 in advance. That money stayed on deposit. Secondly, you had the privilege of personally requesting a car from the White House motor pool. No one else, other than commissioned officers, had those two privileges. So whether or not you were a presidential special assistant, you couldn't get either of these benefits if you didn't have a presidential commission. (Laughter)

Q: We're talking about “big deals” here.

GILLESPIE: Well, it got to the point where every White House official and every NSC staff member was concerned about economies. Access to the White House motor pool was definitely a plus. If I requested a car, and my secretary could exercise my privilege, she could request a car for me and one of my deputies. However, if they saw that happening very often, the drivers in the White House motor pool would report it, and I would catch holy hell from the executive secretary of the NSC. He would call me up and say: “No, cut that out. You're letting Bob Morley use the car more often than you should. Don't do that.”

The other advantage was that if you were a senior director in the NSC, you were automatically a special assistant to the president. There is a very clear, hierarchical, protocol rank or structure in the White House. That's what it revolves around. First of all, are you commissioned or not. Special assistant is the lowest of the commissioned ranks. Above that is deputy assistant to the president, assistant to the president, and then counselor to the president. Interestingly enough, the White House chief of staff is now a counselor to the president. Most of the others are assistants to the president, and that's what Brent Scowcroft was. His deputy, Admiral John Howe, was a deputy assistant to the president. They held the two, top jobs on the NSC staff. Then the rest of us were all special assistants to the president, including the executive secretary of the NSC.

Bob Gates was given a singular distinction in that, at a certain point in his tenure as Brent Scowcroft's Deputy, Brent and the President made him an assistant to the President. That position also carried certain benefits. If you were a special assistant to the president, you had access to the two “perks” that I mentioned. There was one other perk which I didn't have access to. That was access to the White House gymnasium or physical fitness room, which was in the basement of the old Executive Office Building. This was really pretty grungy and not very big. That's why they restricted access to it to those who were at least deputy assistants to the president. As a special assistant to the president, secretaries, and all kinds of other staff members, could belong to the White House Gym, which was really spiffy, really super, and quite cheap. This was across Pennsylvania Avenue in the New Executive Office Building. It was really well set up and quite a bit nicer than the White House physical fitness room. The other gym, in the basement of the old Executive Office building had more cachet. It was like old money and didn't have very good food, whereas the people in the more modern facility got the good stuff.

You mentioned the ideologues. Brent Scowcroft had basically washed these professional ideologues out of the NSC staff. Everybody had strong views on what the policy should be. However, we all knew that we were basically serving President George Herbert Walker Bush. He was our boss, and Brent Scowcroft translated us to him and him to us, where that was necessary. We didn't get into the ideology stuff.

Q: The Latin American area tends to be the focus where “Right Wing” people come from. I was thinking of the Miami Cubans, Senator Jesse Helms' supporters, and so forth. Were there fire walls built between you and this right wing kind of political fire?

GILLESPIE: In the NSC under Brent Scowcroft my clear instructions were, first of all, that I could have direct contact, for example, with the press. There was no barrier to that. But God help me if I didn't tell the press office of the NSC when a contact with the press was about to happen or immediately after that. That was a general rule. If a reporter called me on the phone, I could deal with that reporter. More often than not, I had my secretary refer

the reporter to the press office first. Then the press office might say: “Yes, Gillespie is the person you probably ought to talk to about this.” Then the press office would call me and say: “Why don't you talk to George Gedda from AP” or whoever it was. Sometimes the press office would call me and tell me: “Gedda from AP called, but we didn't think that it would help anything to put you on the spot. We dealt with it.” That would be fine with me. Or the press office would consult with me and ask: “Do you think it's better if we talked to him, or should you talk to him?” The answer would depend on what we wanted to do at the time.

On the Congressional side there was a congressional liaison office run by Virginia (”Jennie”) Lampley, who had been a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force for 10 or 12 years. I think that she was a major or lieutenant colonel when she left the Air Force for personal reasons. During much of her career in the Air Force she did one of two things. She was in Air Force intelligence or in legislative liaison. She knew Capitol Hill up one side and down the other and knew a lot of people. Whenever I would get a call from a member of congress, our job was basically to be as responsive as we could. Often, we could be most responsive by saying, “We'll put you in touch with the desk at the State Department,” or, “We'll put you in touch with the people in the Justice Department,” or whatever, “Because they have the direct answer to your question. We just don't have that.” Again, we kept Jennie informed, or Jennie would call me. She would say, “Tony, we have a query from Congressman Bereuter. Do you know him?” I might say: “Yes, I know Congressman Bereuter.” Then Jennie would say: “Would you call him, talk to him, and explain what's going on?” on whatever matter he was asking about.

As a general rule members of the NSC staff did not go up to the hill, representing the NSC or the White House in any way. We were never to testify. We were not supposed to get out in front of the policy officials of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government. We were not considered to be policy officials, no matter how much influence we might have or how we might have coordinated action on a given matter. Going up to the Hill was just not our job.

For example, we could get into a specific case a little bit later which is somewhat apart from your question. Beginning in 1991, we began to receive strong intelligence of a possible coup d'etat in Venezuela, where there had been real problems. Early in 1992 there had been a shoot up down in the presidential palace. In August or September, 1992, we had gotten intelligence that a group of Venezuelan business and military people were getting ready, and they were reportedly going to overthrow the president of Venezuela. The then deputy assistant secretary for South American Affairs, Bob Gelbard and I got on a plane and flew down together to Venezuela. We met with the president of Venezuela and with the business people we had identified as reportedly planning a coup. They didn't know that we knew what they were preparing. We talked to the foreign minister and people from the Foreign Ministry. We talked to some of the military people. However, I was just as careful as I could be to keep Bob Gelbard out in front. I was just along on the trip. The fact that I knew some of these people and that I engaged in the discussion with them and made the various points to them, when we talked to the public and the press in Venezuela, I shoved Gelbard out in front. He didn't take much shoving in any case. He was out in front, and we knew that that was where he was supposed to be.

The situation was similar with contacts with the hill.

Now, getting to your main point about dealing with ideologues, there was hot stuff on Cuba and hot stuff on Haiti. This was particularly the case because we were beginning to see the Haitian-Cuban refugee situation develop. We had regular phone calls from people about this. We knew that there were problems, as I recall, with Cubans and Cuban-Americans, but mainly just Cubans who were resident aliens in Miami who would try to go back to Cuba and do things. How would we deal with those things? If I recall correctly, a Cuban hijacked an airplane in Cuba and brought it out to the U.S. Boy, did the phones ring! Our official policy position was that that was hijacking. The policy was that we didn't care who he was or what he was running away from. We could not condone hijacking, and so we got into that. The phones would be ringing off the hook, and I would often have

to take those calls and refer people to the State Department and to the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) and explain what this call was about. I would also make the points myself.We had the issue of the implementation of the embargo on trade with Cuba. That is handled by the Treasury Department. Rick Newcomb ran the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the Treasury Department, or the OFAC. He had been doing that for years. That is where the politics of the Cuban trade embargo would sometimes come in. We would hear from somebody in the entertainment world, media, or even business, who would call. We would tell them that they just couldn't go down to Cuba when they wanted to go there. Or they wanted to arrange donations from charitable groups to Cuban groups. And they found that they were running into the foreign assets control, or embargo, regulations. They would call over to the White House to complain to the President. I would end up getting those calls. Usually, I would just deal with them and say: “Here is the situation and here are the rules. This is the law,” and so on and so forth. Most people would take it. If they didn't, they might complain, and I would take it and let them complain for a while.

We would get calls from members of the clergy, who were concerned about this, that, or the other thing, related to matters of human rights.

We got into a very real point with Senator Helms which didn't have much to do with Cuba but had a lot to do with Nicaragua. Remember, one of assistant secretary Aronson's real strong points, and a major accomplishment during his tenure as assistant secretary was basically ending the war in Central America. He had become assistant secretary in early 1989. He was assistant secretary because he was having success and doing a superb job. However, there was still a situation in Nicaragua involving property owned by both native-born, United States citizens and citizens of Nicaragua who had fled the country at the end of the Somoza regime. They had come to the U.S. and not only were legally resident aliens, but some of them had become naturalized, U.S. citizens. This property had been expropriated by the Sandinistas, without compensation. These people were putting in claims, and Senator Helms was very much on top of this.

We cannot legally support loan applications before international financial institutions by countries which have nationalized the property of U.S. citizens and legally resident aliens in the U.S., without compensation. I think that the operative legislation in this connection is known as the Gonzalez amendment. We had cases of that nature in both Nicaragua and in Costa Rica. We had a lot of interest from Senator Helms' staff because they very actively supported this amendment.

I remember that one of the major areas of concern was Costa Rica, because the Costa Ricans were trying to get an IMF (International Monetary Fund) bridge loan or some other kind of economic support. We were about to veto the extension of economic support to Costa Rica because certain claimants in Costa Rica asserted that the Government of Costa Rica had either lied to them or not acted in good faith. This was going to be a real problem for everyone concerned. The Helms' staff and others were trying to push the Gonzalez amendment. I recall that I was on the phone for two or three days and nights with the President of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Foreign Affairs and Finance Ministers of Costa Rica.

In other words, although we weren't supposed to be diplomatic operators, in some instances it was just faster and easier to do that. I was always extremely careful to call over to the State Department and let them know that I was going to do this, if I were going to initiate a call. If I received a call, I made sure that I called the State Department and said: “Look, I've just had the following conversation. These were the main points in it.” I think that that handling it this way was truly important, because I'd seen this from the State Department side. Actions had taken place, but the information had been slow to reach the State Department. The State Department person is kind of left in the dark, when a person outside the U.S. Government calls up and says: “Well, I've just talked to the White House,” and so forth. I was very sensitive to that situation. I tried to make sure that the State Department was kept informed, and my staff did, also. We never got so far out in front on policy issues that any agency was left hanging.It didn't always work both ways. The State

Department was usually pretty good about letting us know what they did. The Department of Justice was horrible about matters of this kind. One of the major problems that we had with Mexico during this time was the case of Dr. Alvarez Machain. He was a gynecologist from Guadalajara. It was alleged, and I think that this was probably accurately asserted, that he was involved in keeping Enrique Camarena, an American citizen and a DEA agent serving in Mexico, alive and conscious during his interrogation by drug traffickers who had captured him. The object of the drug traffickers was to make sure that Camarena felt as much pain as possible during the time that he was being tortured by them. They eventually killed him. The drug traffickers were trying to find out whom Camarena dealt with, who his sources were, and all of that. Dr. Alvarez Machain was eventually snatched and taken to the U.S. in a way which was not coordinated formally with the Mexican Government. Eventually, he was put on trial in a U.S. court and acquitted. As of now, early in 1997, a U.S. Federal Appeals Court has ruled that he may now sue the United States authorities for improper arrest, wrongful prosecution, and a number of other things. So we haven't heard the end of this.

It turned out that Dr. Alvarez Machain's seizure in Mexico was, indeed, a kind of rogue operation, but it had support pretty well all the way up to the top of our Justice Department, reflecting how independent some of our agencies can be. No one in the Justice Department had ever told anyone in the White House, from the President on down, that they were considering and planning this snatch of Dr. Alvarez Machain in Mexico. In fact, the Justice Department had been warned not to do things like this, but they went ahead and did it anyway. This was extremely embarrassing to President Bush. I guess that President Bush had invited President Salinas de Gotari of Mexico to join him on the border. I think that they were supposed to go to a San Diego Padres baseball game together, just at the time Alvarez Machain was being picked up, or at least something was happening in this connection. It put the two Presidents in a very difficult and unpleasant situation on both a personal as well as an official level. Attorney General Barr, of the Justice Department, was not particularly helpful. People who worked below him were also

not particularly helpful. I remember trying to be really tough with these Justice Department people. Sometimes it's like punching a rubber ball or paper bag full of an unmentionable substance. We had a really rough time, corralling our government people when some of its elements want to do things they shouldn't do.

The ideological part of work on the NSC staff really didn't come into play all of that much. By the end of 1991 and at the beginning of 1992 I think that the ideologues on Capitol Hill had a pretty clear picture of where President Bush stood and what he would and would not support. He was not an ideological President. Nevertheless, the ideologues kept trying to make their points.

It is worth noting that when I was preparing to go onto the NSC staff, Gerry Bremer, a colleague and a former foreign service officer, had retired from the Service and was working for Kissinger Associates. He was still very interested in foreign affairs. We had lunch together one day. At this point Jerry had just left the State Department, after having served as executive secretary of the Department. He said: “You know, nobody is really looking seriously at what the U.S. position ought to be if and when there is any kind of change in Cuba. Tony, you really ought to take that question on, because you are not ideological but are professional. You ought to do this in secret and start some contingency planning.”

Well, we had talked about that during the Reagan administration. We realized that we couldn't undertake such planning then. I told Bremer that I doubted that I could do it, but I would look into it. After I had been on the NSC staff after a few weeks, I said to Brent Scowcroft: “What do you think of this idea?” He laughed and said: “Tony, that's not a bad idea, but there is no way in today's climate that you could possibly carry out such contingency planning or even study such a matter from within our government, and not have it leak to The Washington Times, The National Review, or to somebody on The Washington Post, within a very short period of time. It would raise holy hell and would just

complicate our lives. Please don't do that." I said: "Fine, Brent, I won't do that. I don't want to buy any more trouble than is necessary."

Q: However, this does show one of the problems that face us. All of us should be looking at various problems, but there are certain things that are "no no's." You really can't look at what happens if Canada breaks up. You also have to be very careful about a complete collapse in Mexico, with all of their problems. The same thing applies to Cuba. You can talk about Indonesia, and who cares? But in the case of our close neighbors, and the ones I just mentioned in particular, considering various contingencies is more trouble than it's worth. You have to wait until one of these things happen and then you try to deal with it.

GILLESPIE: It is a bad state of affairs, but it shows what the limits are. I think that we talked once before about whether, in our various Embassies, we qualified our reporting or commentaries on the basis of what we perceived the public reaction would be. This is exactly the case here. Indeed, it is even more sensitive. As you know, during the last couple of weeks we had exactly that kind of contingency in the case of Canada. I guess that a departing foreign service officer made some observation and was immediately disavowed by the spokesman of the State Department. What he had said was in no way particularly offensive to anyone.

You're absolutely right. It's true, but I would say that the sensitivity of a given country probably has something to do with proximity to the U.S. or to the hot issue of the moment. I think right now that if you tried in a serious way, within the government, really to talk about what will happen after President Yeltsin leaves the scene in Russia, you would have to keep any such consideration highly secret. Obviously, what that does is that, if it happens, it is done very quietly and probably by people who have less, rather than more, knowledge of the facts and what the possible consequences would be. So this situation really hampers our own process of decision making and does not make the best use of our own analytical capabilities. However, that's the way we operate.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the situation in Haiti. During the time that you were on the NSC staff, Haiti was imploding, I guess that you can say. The political situation stank. The country was run by a military oligarchy, I guess. The economy was in terrible shape. Haitians were leaving the country for the United States in leaky boats, and many of them probably were drowned at sea.

GILLESPIE: Haiti has been and continues to be about the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. That is the result of years and years of misrule. Briefly, Jean Bertrand Aristide had been elected President in December of 1990. He was forced out of office by the Haitian military in October, 1991. I should check these dates. He was in exile. First he went to Venezuela and eventually came to the U.S. I think that he went to Canada for a time. He was in and out of various places.

The U.S. had acted very quickly to freeze Haitian assets in the United States. The same Rick Newcomb, to whom I referred earlier at the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the Treasury Department, was handling the purse strings on Haitian funds frozen in the U.S. We, as a government, were permitting President Aristide and his government in exile to operate, using those funds. Rick would arrange for Aristide to draw funds to cover their expenses. We never withdrew recognition from Aristide as President.

Meantime, by 1992 Haiti had the second or maybe even the third, military officer to have taken control of the government in Haiti. The Haitian economy had gone to hell in a hand basket. There is no doubt about that. The country was in terrible shape. The number of refugees, Haitians who were fleeing Haiti, had been growing steadily. There was a debate within the U.S. Government as to whether these people were political or economic refugees. This question turned on why they were leaving Haiti. There was no doubt that there was some serious repressive action by the Haitian authorities directed at the common people and, perhaps especially, people who expressed any kind of opposition to the military government or support for President Aristide. However, there also was strong

evidence that a lot of Haitians were leaving their country simply because they couldn't get enough to eat. They were not political people, one way or another.

So there were literally thousands of Haitians leaving their country. They would build and get into pretty small boats and set off from Haiti, through the Bahamas, and so on to the United States. I think that there's an area there called the Great Bahama Bank. They would head off from Haiti and pass by Cuba. If they stopped in the Bahamas, the Bahamian Government didn't know quite what to do with them, but they didn't want these Haitians. So many of them would continue on to the shores of Florida. These boat people would come ashore. We would have to take them and put them in detention facilities for the most part. We had no way of taking care of them. We saw this problem grow bigger and bigger.

The decision was made to set up a blockade around Haiti and turn these boat people back to Haiti. Many people considered this to be inhuman and bad. However, the answer was that we didn't know what to do with them. There was no way that they could be absorbed into the United States. Any time that there was any indication that they could get ashore in Florida, you could predict that, by the time word got back to Haiti that some Haitians had made it to Florida, you would then find a new wave of Haitians setting out for the United States in the same way.

We had actually begun a process of picking these boat people up at sea before they got to Florida and then taking them to Florida. However, there was no place to put them. We tried to get other governments to take them but couldn't persuade other authorities to take many of them, although the Bahamians, the Venezuelans, and, I think, the Hondurans were willing to take a few refugees. We also learned that, once the Haitians got to these countries, they weren't happy there. They wanted to go to the United States, because the United States was where the jobs were. That's where the whole question of whether these people who had exiled themselves were economic or political refugees. There was a tremendous controversy about that, as you may recall.

As it later turned out, President Bush was not reelected, and his administration came to an end in January, 1991. One of the legacies which President Bush left to the Clinton administration was this policy of returning Haitians picked up or rescued at sea to Haiti, by agreement with the then Haitian military government. They were put back ashore in Haiti. An element in the Clinton campaign was that: “We'll stop that right away.” Well, of course, the Clinton administration entered office and found out right away that they couldn't stop the flow of Haitians to the United States. So they had to find a way to continue that policy, which they applied for some time to come.

Q: I would like to come back to the presidential campaign and what you did. However, first, let's pick up a few of the other subjects. How did the situation in Venezuela turn out during this time?

GILLESPIE: We had had the case in Guatemala of President Jorge Serrano and then we had the case of President Alberto Fujimori in Peru. Here were two instances where a President had decided to dissolve the elected legislature and assume full power. Serrano tried this in Guatemala. The U.S. and other countries really put the pressure on him. Serrano was told: “If you do this, we'll make sure that you don't get a dime of direct, foreign investment. We're all going to work on this.” It was very much a multilateral course of action. I think that in June, 1991, the OAS (Organization of American States) had held its annual general assembly in Santiago, Chile, while I was U.S. ambassador there. I think that we mentioned that. At this assembly the member countries of the OAS passed the Santiago Declaration, which provided that the OAS would no longer stand idly by if they saw a democratic government threatened. The OAS countries would take every step in their power to set things right, without intervening directly in Haiti.

That declaration seemed to have great force, and President Serrano's efforts were turned back, because the threat was really credible. The declaration said, in effect: “You're not going to get any investment. People are going to start disinvesting.” Some of the same things happened with President Fujimori in Peru. In that case he quickly came to the OAS

and said that he would have a new, constitutional convention elected and set things right. In the case of Venezuela there hadn't been a military takeover. What had happened was that there was a threatened military takeover. So basically the message that Gelbard and I delivered, when we went to Venezuela in 1992, was: “You saw what happened in Guatemala and Peru. We have to tell you that this is the new name of the game.”

Q: Let me just stop here.

End of interview