

Interview with Mr. Henry Dearborn

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

HENRY DEARBORN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is April 24, 1991. This is an interview with Henry Dearborn concerning his career. The interview is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Mr. Dearborn, I wonder if you could tell me a little about your background. Where you born, where you grew up, where you were educated, what you were doing

DEARBORN: I was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1913. President Taft was president, if you can believe that. I went to Phillips-Andover to prep school and I went to Dartmouth to college and I went to Yale to graduate school.

Q: Do you remember the real New England establishment.

DEARBORN: Yeah, and the only other educational institution I ever went to was the National War College much later.

Q: Well, when you were in, at Dartmouth, and even Andover, did foreign affairs play much of a role in your education or your thinking at the time?

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DEARBORN: Maybe my first interest was in an American History course at Andover. I had a very good teacher there. But he got me interested in history in general and then I got to Dartmouth and was a History major. And the international aspects of history when I went to Yale graduate school I got a Masters in History, and then I switched to the International Relations Department. So, I was oriented that way by the time I got through school.

Q: When did you get through school?

DEARBORN: Well, graduate school, 1939.

Q: So a vintage year, World War II started.

DEARBORN: My chief claim to fame when I got my Masters was that another famous character got an honorary Masters at the same time, and that was Walt Disney [laughter].

Q: [laughter] Well, what did you do when you got out of graduate school?

DEARBORN: I came to Washington to look for a job, because I didn't know exactly what I was going to do, but I did want to have something to do with foreign affairs and I didn't know whether it would be journalism or government or what. So I just came in September of '39 job hunting and I got a job with the Foreign Policy Association, which had a, their main office is in New York, but they had a branch here in Washington. I don't know whether they still do or not.

Q: Well, what was the thrust and the atmosphere of the Foreign Policy Association? I mean, you got a job, you start in September, WWII starts in September obviously American interest in foreign affairs all of a sudden, you know, went up.

DEARBORN: Well, I was out of there before WWII, before our entry into the war. My job in the Foreign Policy Association was mainly being a leg-man around Washington for the manager of the office. He used to write a Washington news letter which covered what was

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going on, mainly in foreign affairs. After I'd been there a year or so, I began to do some writing of my own. I got to know quite a bit about the Washington offices that had to do with foreign affairs just running around to the Hill and to the government departments. So I told a fellow named Lou Clark, a fellow in the Commerce Department one day I was over there, if you ever hear of a job in government in Latin America let me know. And he said, well give me a resume and I hear of anything I'll let you know. Well, to me that was like, I'll never hear from this guy again, you know. Well I couldn't believe it. One day, this was probably about the spring of '41, I had a call from the State Department, asking if I'd be interested in being a vice consul in South America. So this Lou Clark, this was when they were scouring, they needed additional help. They'd formed what they call the Auxiliary Service. I don't know if you know about that.

Q: Yeah, no, I've heard about this.

DEARBORN: They started this Auxiliary Service to bring in some more people, and so they said come on over, and I went over and we talked about it, and they said okay we'll give you a call when you're supposed to go. Then I had another interesting development. I've always claimed that a good part of my life was determined by an ingrown toenail, because I developed one and I had to go to old Dr. Riddick here. He looked at the toe and said, I've got to operate on this! And so he cut off a big piece of one side of the toe that was infected, and I was hobbling around on crutches. And I had been classified as a 1A in the draft.

Q: This means prime meat for the draft.

DEARBORN: Yeah, so I actually got a greetings, report to Fort Meade on such and such a day. So I went around to the draft board doctor, and I said I don't know what to do about this, I'm hobbling around on crutches, and I don't know what you think. So he unwrapped the foot and said ooohh you can't go, you can't go marching around on a foot like that. So I said, what do we do? Well, we wait until it gets better. I said well I have a problem

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here because the State Department, I expect a call from the State Department to go into the Foreign Service, and who gets me, the State Department or the draft board? And he said, well it's very simple: if your toe gets better first, you'll go with us, and if they call you first you go with them. And it wasn't long after that the State Department called me. So that's why I tell my wife and children, that I wouldn't even know them if it hadn't been for my ingrown toenail. Anyway, so in August of '41 I went to Barranquilla, Columbia as vice consul.

Q: Well, before we move to that I wonder just, I don't want to sound like an FBI agent, but the Foreign Affairs Association, frankly I'm not familiar with how it worked

DEARBORN: Foreign Policy Association.

Q: Foreign Policy Association. We were still going through with a sort of intellectual side, American was really entranced with the Soviet Union and all, although there was disillusionment because there were trials and things like this, but did you get any feel about how the Foreign Policy Association looked at the Soviet Union and the people around it at that time?

DEARBORN: You know, as I look back on my couple of years with them, they were European oriented, they didn't pay too much attention to South America but they did have some things. I wasn't, what I worked on myself didn't have anything to do with the Soviet Union. They put out these monographs on various things, and I was doing one on shipping which had to with a very important, prior to the war, the build up of shipping. As a matter of fact, I left with all my notes and part of the writing done, and I bet you the one who finished that is on here. Dave Popper?

Q: David Popper, I didn't interview him, but he has been interviewed by Columbia University.

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DEARBORN: Well, at that time he worked in the New York office of this outfit, and I was interested to see later on, I think it was he, I turned all my notes and writing over to somebody, and it was finished.

Q: Well your first, you were assigned in 1941 to Barranquilla, is that right?

DEARBORN: Yes.

Q: Did you get any training before you went, or was it sort of here's a manual

DEARBORN: I didn't have the slightest idea, I didn't even know what a country desk officer was. I didn't know anything about anything, except my education, that's all I had.

Q: You had studied Spanish?

DEARBORN: Yes. But I have to say, my Spanish was college Spanish, which at least in those days you didn't learn to speak. You could read anything but you weren't talking, so it took me a little bit, took me a while in Barranquilla to get my ear tuned in

Q: Well when you went to Barranquilla, that's in Venezuela

DEARBORN: No, northern coast of Columbia.

Q: I mean the northern coast of Columbia, what was the situation there when you arrived?

DEARBORN: Normally that wouldn't be a very big office, but it had a consul and they were building it up, and they had three or four, three I guess, vice consuls and one was one of those non-career vice consuls that they used to have. And then they had others attached to it. They had a naval observer and they had an army intelligence, which was really a forerunner of CIA, you're doing the same type of thing. And I got there in August. I went down on the ship, and then in December of course we went into the war. While we were in the war there were different things happening like shipwrecked sailors and wartime

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reporting on various things. Of course we were doing the normal things. Consulates those days, we used to have, which we don't have anymore, the Bills of Health for ships, and my job was mainly working with visas and passports and registering citizens. I remember spending a Christmas Eve trying to settle a mutiny.

Q: Well, how does one settle a mutiny?

DEARBORN: There was a big disagreement between the captain and the crew and you just talk to the captain and you talk to the representatives of the crew, it smoothed out, nobody got killed [laughter]. I just remembered it was Christmas Eve and it wasn't my idea of anything wonderful. But the coast of Columbia was very quiet in those days. It isn't like now where every part of Columbia is dangerous. But we always thought in those days of the interior of Columbia being the violent part; there was very little violence on the coast.

Q: Well, what about, were you at all involved in our concern about German influence in Latin America?

DEARBORN: Yes, our embassy in Bogota certainly was because the Germans had had an airline, one of the oldest, I guess the oldest commercial airline in the Western Hemisphere which was called SCADTA. I don't know in German what it stood for, but that was expropriated by the Columbians and became whatever since has been the Columbian airline, which is Avianca. Avianca has been a very good airline, and that was the biggest expropriation but a lot of other South American countries that were on our side in the war, they expropriated German properties. I didn't actually work with the blacklist until my next post.

Q: Then you were transferred to Manta?

DEARBORN: Yes, Manta.

Q: I've never heard of, I couldn't find it. Where is Manta?

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DEARBORN: Manta is, I don't know, a couple of hundred miles north of Guayaquil. It was the second port for Ecuador but it was a far second.

Q: This would be on the Pacific side?

DEARBORN: One day a telegram arrived in Barranquilla saying I was transferred to Manta to open a post, there was no post there. And the reason they wanted to open the post was that three of the main blacklisted firms in Ecuador had their headquarters there for some reason. There was an Italian factory that made buttons. Casa Tagua produced the tagua nut, they were a big exporting firm. I guess they got the name from the tagua nuts. And then there was soap factory owned by the Germans. Casa Tagua was German.

Q: Yeah, well what did you do there? In the first place, just to get a little feel, how does one open a post in a place that probably hasn't had one since

DEARBORN: Never!

Q: Never, never had one.

DEARBORN: Well, first I went to Quito to spend a week in the embassy getting oriented, and what they wanted out of the post.

Q: So this in Ecuador?

DEARBORN: In Ecuador.

Q: In Ecuador.

DEARBORN: Yes. That was actually the first time I'd ever seen an embassy. I never saw an embassy when I was in Columbia because I was just there in the consulate. And so that was very interesting to me, to see how it was set up. I talked to the intelligence people because intelligence was the main thing they wanted out of this place. That's

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why they were opening the post, to have someone report to them on the activities of these blacklisted firms and who was doing business with them. But I was to be under the supervision of the consulate general in Guayaquil. So I went from Quito to Guayaquil, and it was very large at that time, the consulate general in Guayaquil. And I got a chance to see how that worked, and then I went up to Manta and stayed there maybe a week, maybe less, looking around for an office. And I found this very nice old Spanish gentleman who had an exporting firm near, and he was just finishing a house where he was going to have his office on the first floor, but the second floor was going to be rented. In Manta there was no place that you would want to have an office. But this was a nice place. So I said, ok when is it going to be ready? He said I think it will be ready in about three weeks. So I went back to Guayaquil and went through the files, you know whatever they knew about that area because it was their area of responsibility but quite remote from them. They didn't know anything about it. And so then finally I went up to Manta and settled in to my new quarters. My bedroom was just off my office and my dining room was just across the hall

Q: So you were still a bachelor in those days?

DEARBORN: Yes, absolutely. In fact my wife was in Ecuador and is still horrified that I ever lived in Manta [laughter]. This was a port, but it was a port without port facilities. A ship would come in and anchor out a quarter of a mile or so. Then these things they called balandras, which were sloops, they would go out to the ship. If you were loading something large, like unloading something like an automobile, they would put flat boards across the balandra. They would run the automobile off onto these flat boards. Then they would come in at high tide and wait until the tide went out and then run the automobile of onto the beach. That's the way they had to unload big things. But mainly, whatever they were loading or unloading was carried on the shoulders of stevedores to these balandras and out to the ship. Whenever there were passengers arriving, we always used to laugh because these stevedores had to be young because they would carry tremendous loads,

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they would go about shoulder high and they would all look for the young girls to carry in. Everybody arrived with wet feet of course. That was the only way to get off the ship.

I liked the post. You received everything from the Department that a much bigger post received, so a lot of it didn't really have much to do with you but then you were all functions. I had to do my own accounts, which I thank the Lord for Barranquilla because it was there that I learned to do the accounts, which I always hated. But things like this would happen. I remember the crank shaft broke in the local electric plant, and as a result they only had electricity a few hours a day, and a day did not include night, it was in the daytime for industries and things. So I remember there was a time when I had to a lot of coding from the old books -

Q: Right.

DEARBORN: By candlelight! I thought I was going to go blind.

Q: Sounds like something out of O Henry doesn't it? [laughter]

DEARBORN: [laughter] Well, this is O Henry. And I thought I was going to go blind. There was a fellow from Quito, an Ecuadorian from Quito, coming down to work on this with me, not on the codes, but on what was to go into the messages. He was sending the messages but I was putting them into the codes to Quito, because it all had to do with blacklist stuff. Anyway, I lived through it.

Q: What I'd like to ask is, I mean here is really a very small port

DEARBORN: About 10,000 people

Q: About 10,000 people

DEARBORN: And no running water

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Q: And here you are, the American vice consul, never there before, no vice consul, never there before, its sort of a one industry town isn't it? I mean, the button, the

DEARBORN: The industries, the business life of the town, were Casa Tagua, which I must say closed up just about when I got there, and the button factory was still open and the soap factory was still open.

Q: Ok, but these are, first place Ecuador was not at war with Germany at the time, was it? Or did it

DEARBORN: Yes, they were expropriating.

Q: So, in a way, what were you doing?

DEARBORN: One thing I was doing, the main reason I was sent there was to see who was dealing with these blacklisted firms, and there were two special cases. One was a reprobate sort of person called Emilio Boen. Many people hated him and they were all trying to get him put on the blacklist. They would come into my office one after another telling me the inequities of Emilio Boen, and he was sort of a Mayor Hague type.

Q: Talking about Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City who was sort of a boss

DEARBORN: But he was sort of a petty tyrant, and people were afraid of him. They accused him, they used to tell me that he murdered so and so, that he flashed lights to Japanese submarines from his house, and all these things. So one special thing I was supposed to do was report on Emilio Boen. I spent about a month. I could see that most of the problems were that these people wanted him blacklisted because they didn't like him. And I really couldn't believe some of the things they were saying. So anyway, after about a month of rather intensive investigation, I just reported that he wasn't an admirable character but there was no reason to put him on the blacklist. The other case was, an old man named Julio Arbueleta had been put on the blacklist because of reports they received

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in Quito about his dealings with these blacklisted firms. And I spent a lot of time on him and decided he'd been put on erroneously, so I got him taken off. I never got anybody put on. But I never saw anybody who deserved to be on it.

Q: Well by that time too it really wasn't a major, I mean there really weren't many ties were there?

DEARBORN: See I was there from the end of '42 until the middle of '44. But my daily consular work had to do mostly with shipping, you know invoices. I didn't know, there were no Americans within miles of me. But then there was another program I got involved in connected with the war, which was the priority program. These were priorities on imports, and I worked with Ecuadorian officials on this. I guess it was the use of foreign exchange and all that. You had to see whether it was necessary, and we spent a lot of time on that. It was one of my favorite places. I always remember Inspector Merle Cochran, did you ever know him?

Q: No I didn't.

DEARBORN: He later became manager of the Monetary Fund, but he was a Foreign Service Inspector, old time Foreign Service Officer, but he was an inspector who'd covered the world. And he had just come from Europe, Paris and so forth, and he came to Manta to inspect. You know how they don't like to stay with people from the consulate or the embassy, but when he took one look at the facilities in Manta he agreed to stay with me [laughter]. The hotel was just horrible, with bugs flying all around. Anyway, Manta had a Rotary Club by the way, but what I was going to say was, Inspector Cochran came, and he weighed about 300. He sure made an impression on that town which I'm sure anyone still living remembers because he was so heavy. They'd never seen anything like it. And he was scandalized because I didn't have a refrigerator in this tropical sea port town. And he said this is terrible, you've got to have a refrigerator! And I said well I don't really need one, the little house boy runs down to the shore early in the morning when the fishing boats

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come in and he brings in the fish and they have a slaughterhouse just up the road and we eat the meat the day, you know its still jumping up and down when you get it. Well, he said, I think you have to have a refrigerator. So he demanded that they send me a refrigerator. About the time it arrived was when the crank shaft broke, so I was only able to run it about 6 to 8 hours a day and during the night it would sort of keep the cold in. It was alright. But things were very rudimentary. As I said, there was no running water, the water was delivered by a little caravan of burros and they would take it upstairs and dump it in a little barrel and the little houseboy would pump it up to the roof in a big barrel and then I'd be in the bathroom taking my shower just like in New York City [laughter]. But things were very rudimentary.

Q: Well, for a short while you went to Guayaquil?

DEARBORN: Two months I think. Because I closed, you know I felt very sad when I had to close the office that I created.

Q: I assume no one replaced you?

DEARBORN: No, the only other person who ever served in Manta was a vice consul who was in Guayaquil when I was in Manta, and in order to give me three weeks vacation he came up. I saw his name on your list there, it was Bill Burdett.

Q: Oh yes.

DEARBORN: Bill Burdett came up for three weeks while I went off to Columbia for vacation. But the couple of months I was in Guayaquil, I was assigned to blacklist work, and nothing spectacular happened. In Guayaquil a very exciting thing happened, it was my only revolution! My only bloody revolution. It was May of '44. Arroyo del Rio was president of Ecuador. He had a four year term and served about three and half, and he gave a speech because the opposition was zeroing in on him and he felt defensive. And he gave this speech and he said, I am an elected president of Ecuador for four years and I will not

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serve one day less or one day more. And I think it was the next day, or certainly within the next week, they threw him out. This man who was president of Ecuador five times named Velasco Ibarra, came back from Argentina where he'd been in exile...but the revolution was mainly in Guayaquil, which is a very large city. The main port controlled a lot of the country and there was shooting. Especially a lot of the police and military were killed, and this gave me a lesson in contingency plans because we, all our embassies and consulates have these contingency plans that they'd worked hard on in case of something like this. It always interested me that the only person who followed the contingency plan to the letter almost got himself killed. Circumstances forced everyone else to do something different than they thought they would do. We had a consul general and two consuls and about five vice consuls. I shared an apartment with one of the vice consuls. He was a bachelor, Walter Smith. He and I had an apartment right over the apartment where the consul general lived. We were all supposed to do certain things, but what happened was you couldn't go out in the street because they were shooting up and down and crossways. I said to the consul general, I think I'm going out to see, I just have to go out and see what's going on. He said, look I forbid you to go out. He said if you want to get killed, that's your business but its going to cause an incident for me [laughter]. That was Harold Williamson.

Q: You came back to Washington where you stayed for ten years, is that right?

DEARBORN: Eleven years.

Q: Eleven. From '44 to '54.

DEARBORN: Well, really '56 because it was December of '55 when I went to Peru.

Q: Well, what did you do when you first came back?

DEARBORN: Well they called me back. A telegram came in saying, Dearborn please report to Washington immediately. One of those things. And its just like another one of those things where you drop everything, and you rush up here and they say, you're here

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already? [laughter] They said immediately, so the consul general was completely baffled and I said well what could they possibly want to know from me that they couldn't better find out from somebody else? I don't know anything. So, when I got up there they asked me if I would take the Ecuador desk. That was the big deal. So, I said what's the Ecuador desk? [laughter] I'd only been in the field, I'd never been in the Department. So I said ok, why not. Well, I was still Foreign Service Auxiliary, but Foreign Service Auxiliary couldn't work in Washington. So I switched from Foreign Service to Civil Service. And that's what I was for the next eleven years.

Q: On the Ecuador desk?

DEARBORN: No, no I was the Ecuador desk [laughter] so I married the third secretary of the Ecuadorian embassy. They switched me to Argentina. So I was three years on the Ecuador desk total, and then in '47 I went on the Argentine desk and I was on that for I think 5 years. Then they made me chief of the office which included Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. And then after that, around the beginning of 1955, all ten South American countries were under one director, and they made me Deputy Director for South America. And so then I had the whole continent to worry about.

Q: Well, back in this period, '44 to '47

DEARBORN: Ecuador.

Q: Yes, Ecuador, what was the role of a desk officer? I mean these things change all the time

DEARBORN: Well it was a glorious thing to be in those days. Anything in the government that had to do with Ecuador was centered at you and everybody looked to you to give answers. And it was in those days when they first started the country policy statements. Carlton Savage was up in the stratosphere supervising these country policy statements, and Ecuador one was one of the first. I wrote the Ecuador one. Then you'd circulate

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it to other interested parties for other things they wanted to do with it, and then it was eventually given a stamp of approval and that was it. There were many other developments in those statements, but that was the first time when they started them.

Q: What was American interest in those

DEARBORN: Well, the main thing I was concerned about in those days was we were negotiating for permanent base rights in the Galapagos Islands. Ecuador offered us, and we took, an airbase in the Galapagos Islands during the war. Our military were interested in having them permanently on an island called Seymour Island. So Ecuador, as one fellow in the Department put it, Ecuador looked on this as their rich old uncle in Ireland that was going to die and leave them millions. Ecuador wanted to get the most out of it and we wanted to give as little as we could. For a couple years we were going back and forth about this thing.

Q: Did we ever, I can't recall

DEARBORN: It was a big letdown. I forget just what year it was, probably '45 or '46, and we were bickering over EX-IM banks and special deals with Ecuador for the island, for the base. One day we got a communication from the Defense Department saying they didn't want them anymore. That long range aircraft had negated the necessity for the base, so the rich old uncle in Ireland died and didn't leave any money at all! It was very sad. But I think the Ecuadorians still have a base out there that we left.

But that was the main thing. And then the other thing was, we had a lot going on with Ecuador, they were on our side during the war. One big program we had was getting balsa wood. This didn't have too much to do with me but with Ecuador, getting balsa wood for the Mosquito aircraft of the British out of Ecuador. They're the world's biggest producer of balsa. And then, I don't know, people would always come through the desk on their way down there and get briefed. I remember the day I went into the director, Spruille Braden was the assistant secretary of Latin American, and Ellis Briggs was assistant

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secretary director. I went to one day to tell him I was going to marry the third secretary of the Ecuadorian Embassy. He took it with great aplomb. He said, well I've always found Latin Americans make very good Foreign Service wives [laughter]. Then he told his staff meeting the next day, I wasn't there but I heard about it, he said I know I've been encouraging closer relations between our desk officers and the embassy, but I didn't know anyone was going to go this far [laughter].

Q: Spruille Braden was quite a figure, and I guess you had to deal with him later on when he was in his role as ambassador in Argentina?

DEARBORN: Braden , who had been an ambassador in Argentina, hated Juan Peron with a passion. In fact Peron always said that Braden was his opposition in the election when he was elected.

Q: Yeah, I heard people say they were down there and saw signs saying "Peron, Si. Braden, No".

DEARBORN: Exactly. Ambassador Messersmith was talking to Peron, and Peron was still saying nasty things about Braden. He said, Mr. President why don't you forget about Braden. Don't carry on this feud, you know. Peron said, I don't have anything against Braden, he elected me! [laughter] Braden, when he was in Argentina, had such a sense of mission in getting this man defeated not elected, that he went beyond what an ambassador is supposed to be doing, you know. But I talked to people a year or so later when I was down in Argentina who had been in the embassy with him, especially I'm thinking of one of the political reporters. He said, we all knew that Peron was going to be elected, but Braden never saw it. We'd come back and tell him what they were saying in the hinterland, and he just insisted up till the end that whatever his name was who was running against Peron was going to win.

Then the Braden/Messersmith feud was...Harry Truman got so fed up with them. You know, _____ used to write, he never said anything...lets say anything he ever said was

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in about 12 pages, could've been put in one. But then he'd make copies, and he'd send them everywhere from the president down to the desk officer, and they would all come and file up by my desk of course. But Harry Truman, I remember I think it was in June or July of '47, Harry Truman got fed up with this and he fired both of them on the same day.

Q: Well, you then were transferred over to the Argentine desk, when?

DEARBORN: Well, probably was in the spring of '47.

Q: How did we view the situation from Washington in Argentina at that time? What were American interests?

DEARBORN: During the war there had been a lot of sympathies for the Nazis, the Axis in Argentina. Peron himself, I think he used that. He was virtually pro or anti anything except himself but he used this to keep us off balance. In addition to that, he wanted a country very proud of itself and not accepting help from anybody and as a result of that we didn't have any helpful missions. We didn't have any military missions, we didn't have any aid programs...so in that sense relationships, in the point of view of the desk officer, were rather simple. A certain degree of hostility can make relations simpler rather than complicated. As I say, Messersmith tried to make things easier but, I remember one day he went in to see Peron and Peron was being difficult. He said, you know Mr. President I have always tried to be your friend, I am your friend, I've always tried to be a friend, but you're making it awfully difficult for me to be your friend [laughter]. I remember that letter. When Eddie Miller was assistant secretary, he made a trip down there and he made a special effort to get along, to find areas of agreement or something. For a while he thought he was having some success, I'll always remember this, he sent a telegram back. Things had gotten a little better. They had had a big banquet and everything was going fine, so he sent a telegram back. Dean Acheson was Secretary of State at the time, and he said the honeymoon is still on. Not much of a honeymoon, but anyway Peron was being good at the time. So, the honeymoon is still on. So I wrote a telegram back, and when it went up

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for clearance by Dean Acheson, Dean Acheson added another sentence to the end of the telegram, which I always remembered. He said, I'm glad the honeymoon is still on but what I wanted to know is which is the bride and which is the groom? [laughter]

Q: You were there what, '47 to

DEARBORN: '47, '48, '49...I'm trying to think, I think I was on the desk five years. Probably until '52 when I went on to be office chief, which Argentina was still my main concern.

Q: The Cold War was beginning to develop then. Were we beginning to get concerns about communist influence, soviet menace in the area at that time?

DEARBORN: Yes. We were, we were sort of...let's see. We were watching for it. I remember _____ and Ken Oakley made a trip around South America visiting all the countries, looking into that very question. That was, it's hard for me to remember just what years that was, but it was probably between '50 and...the first parts of the '50s.

Q: What was the result, do you remember?

DEARBORN: Nothing, you know, nothing like about to take over, but it was something that worried us enough. Ken Oakley, who made this trip, was a rather low-level officer so it wasn't...it obviously hadn't become important enough to send a top ranking officer. He just came back, talked to embassies about what was going on in that field and came back and reported what he'd found. It was later when we became more excited about it, as Castro got going

Q: Well, Latin America had been sort of the personal bailiwick of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI during the war, and the CIA and the OAS was elsewhere. Did you still find that FBI was carrying on any intelligence role in that area?

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DEARBORN: Well, certainly when I was in Ecuador it was the FBI. Yeah, it was the FBI. What did they call themselves? They called themselves the legal attach#. That was the title they gave themselves.

Q: They still call themselves legal attach#s

DEARBORN: Well yeah

BOTH: But they do it different

DEARBORN: The legal attach# in Mexico has a tremendous office, and he spends most of his time on police type matters

Q: Yeah

DEARBORN: And tries to stay out of the way of CIA. But in Argentina, CIA had an office, because I can't really remember dates too well, when they switched from one to the other.

Q: Just sort of a feel, was there...but you weren't getting emanations out of Argentina that we should be worried about the communist menace, it was more we didn't like Peron and his way of doing things?

DEARBORN: Yeah, well Peron was taking opposite positions to us in many things. U.S. business in Argentina was having a hard time with him, and in the United Nations and so forth he was not cooperative. Our efforts were to win him over if we could, and sometimes we did it better than others, but overall it was sort of, it was difficult. And then partly because we didn't have any

Q: Aid program or anything like that.

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DEARBORN: No. We didn't have any leverage with him. But one interesting thing, anecdote...Peron had not, Argentina had not, signed the Rio Treaty. It was one of the few Latin American countries which had not signed the Rio Treaty.

Q: The Rio Treaty being the one

DEARBORN: It's the Western Hemisphere's NATO. It's a multilateral defense treaty. We were going into the Korean War in 1950, and Stanton Griffis was ambassador in Argentina. He knew one of his missions was to get Argentina to ratify the Rio Treaty. And we were especially interested in it because of the Korean War. We wanted to put up a solid front. So, one night about 7 o'clock a cable came from Stanton Griffis saying, Peron has promised me that tomorrow the Argentine congress will ratify the Rio Treaty. Well, you know in a democracy he wouldn't really know before congress acted what was going to happen. But he promised me, and then he said, please inform President Truman immediately.

So, everybody had gone home in the Department. I was there late working on something. So I thought, how am I going to inform President Truman immediately? Well, there was only way I knew of, so I picked up the phone and dialed the White House. And a man answered whose name was Hopkins, not Harry Hopkins but someone else, I guess a liaison officer in the White House. I said look, I'm all alone out here in the State Department and this came in today I'd have to write a memo and get it cleared 10 times

Q: Oh yeah

DEARBORN: I said Ambassador Griffis says tomorrow Argentina is going to ratify the Rio Treaty, the Congress, and he wants the President to know it immediately. He says, alright I'll tell him, and hung up. And next morning, Truman had an early press conference. Well, I guess it wasn't early, it probably about 11 o'clock. One of the first people said to him, do you have any comments on Argentina...did you know Argentina has ratified the

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Rio Treaty? And Truman says, oh I knew all about that last night! I thought it was sort of ironical because it gave away any of Peron's pretensions of being a democracy, you know. It was always, dictators always seemed to want to maintain some semblance of democracy.

Q: Well, in this time when you were, particularly during this time when you were on the Argentine desk, but maybe there was spillover before, McCarthyism was going at full tilt

DEARBORN: Yes.

Q: But also maybe a little bit before too, did this affect you? How did it feel being in this particular period?

DEARBORN: I don't remember being affected. I certainly wasn't affected by anything I was doing. I remember being horrified by it. I remember reading all the exploits of these two fellows, what were their names? Cohn and Schine.

Q: Cohn and Schine, yeah.

DEARBORN: And I felt it, but I don't ever remember

Q: Well also did you feel that being a Latin American specialist, this was not the focus. I mean, the focus was more on the European/Asian side too or not

DEARBORN: Maybe that was it. But I do remember when he died. I remember I was at a party at a Dutch home in Lima when McCarthy died and the news came and somebody came in and said they'd just heard it. It was a cocktail party, and I always remembered there was silence. Nobody knew what to say, and I guess there were probably some pro-McCarthy and anti-McCarthy people. There were a lot of business people around. And the head of the National City Bank in Lima at the time was a fellow by the name of Laurent Biggs, and I always remember after this deathly silence, he said in a loud voice, well I don't know about anybody else but I'm glad! [laughter] That was my last recollection

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of McCarthy. But I remember being horrified by it, and I remember the suffering, not for myself but for everybody else

Q: But you weren't seeing your working colleagues in the Latin American side dropping by the wayside in all of this-

DEARBORN: No, no because I wasn't an old China hand, or anything like poor John Service.

Q: Well then

DEARBORN: I will say...now one of the leading victims of McCarthy lived in Lima when I was there. That was John Paton Davies.

Q: Yes. He went down and sort of set up business and all that

DEARBORN: Yeah, he was living there. In fact, that's the place I knew him. I didn't know him before that.

Q: Well, then you moved to River Plate affairs, that would be what. Uruguay

DEARBORN: Paraguay

Q: Well, Paraguay, Uruguay

DEARBORN: And Argentina.

Q: Argentina.

DEARBORN: But what happened there was, you know, I'd spend about 90% of my time on Argentina still.

Q: Were you bumping up against the Argentine desk or -?

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DEARBORN: No, no, no the Argentine desk, I picked him so I didn't have any problems with him. No, relationships in the bureau were great. I don't ever remember in all of my 11 years...there was a lot of interesting things about them, but I don't remember

Q: You didn't find, you know, identifying yourself with one area and up against people of other areas. I suppose part of this was we weren't handing out lots of projects and money down in that particular area, were we or-?

DEARBORN: Our bureau, I was talking about within the bureau. I guess the bureau, at times they would have differences, like with the economic areas, trying to convince them to do this or that, trying to get them to not put countervailing duties [Spanish name] from Uruguay or [Spanish name] from Paraguay. I remember another Christmas Eve spending with, oh what was his name...in the White House...Eisenhower's right hand man, White House

Q: Governor of Massachusetts?

DEARBORN: No not him. But anyway, over a question of countervailing duties of railway ties from Uruguay and it was a deadline for some reason and we had to, we were trying to persuade...we, and I think agriculture, and I don't know who else met with him, I think it was Christmas Eve. Trying to persuade him to side with us

Q: If I recall, I think I ran across this in another interview, there was a Senator in Mississippi or something who was very much involved because of the lumber industry there. I can't remember what it was, but it became a political within the United States

DEARBORN: Uhm-Hmm. I have a hard time remembering...yeah

Q: I think Robert Woodward was talking about this as a, as one of his big problems because of

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DEARBORN: When he was assistant secretary?

Q: Yeah, either that or ambassador down there for a little while.

DEARBORN: He was in Costa Rica, oh Uruguay, that's right! Yeah, he'd remember better.

Q: Well, how did you feel about, while you were in ARA during this time both under Truman and the early Eisenhower period. I mean this was a period of great growth and concerns, Europe particularly and then the Korean War. Did you feel that Latin America was sort of off to one side, that you weren't getting the attention that it deserved?

DEARBORN: Well, I didn't feel that because...it's true that we were sort of off to the side, but I don't think we always knew that [laughter]. And under Eddie Miller for example, he was very close to Dean Acheson. I think we had an advantage over some of the other departments because of Eddie Miller and Dean Acheson's personal relationship helped us a lot. He wouldn't go through under secretaries and things, he'd go right to the secretary. I remember once he walked out of a staff meeting of all the under secretaries because he thought they were slighting Latin America in their comments. He said, I'm not going to sit around and listen to this, and he walked out. But no, I don't think we felt neglected. See, these were days when we needed Latin America. I think it's been worse since because we haven't needed them all that much. But in wartime we needed them. Well this was after the war, to be sure.

I don't want to hop around too much, but one thing with Peron that I might mention, he was very anxious to have international recognition at the highest levels and be an important player on the world stage. So he announced that he was developing a nuclear facility at Bariloche, in the western part of Argentina. And that he had this German scientist who was developing it. He timed the announcement to coincide with the meeting of all the foreign ministers of Latin American in Washington at the time in order to give him a special [laughter]. Tricks like that he would play, you know.

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Q: Were you at all concerned at the time about Nazi war criminals in Argentina?

DEARBORN: Yes, not only Nazis but I think we were more concerned about the pro-Nazi Argentineans. We blamed them for a lot of our difficulties because they were in the cabinet, and they were in position to, you know, to influence. The minister of, I forget what they call it, government or interior or something, he was a particular thorn in our flesh. But it was very hard, with Mexico too, it was hard to tell whether somebody was anti-U.S. or just strong nationalists. That might have been true to some extent in Argentina. Argentina's always had a strong feeling of nationalism, especially in connection with its relations with the U.S. They have not wanted to be dominated by us. Personality wise, before I ever came on the stage during international meetings we'd had trouble with Argentina. From our point of view, just being obnoxious, but it hasn't always been smooth sailing. In fact, I think it's better now than it has been.

Q: Well now, you then came back into the Foreign Service in, what, 1955, 1956?

DEARBORN: Right.

Q: Was this part of the Wriston Program?

DEARBORN: Yes.

Q: And you were assigned then to

DEARBORN: To Lima.

Q: To Lima, where you then served for about three years?

DEARBORN: Two.

Q: Two years. What were you doing in Lima?

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DEARBORN: I was chief of the political section in the embassy.

Q: The ambassador was Theodore

DEARBORN: [laughter] That's another story. Ellis Briggs was ambassador and he was up here, he had just been assigned to Lima. He came up here and he said, Henry I want you and Marie Rosa (Marie Rosa is my wife's name) I want you and Marie Rosa to come up here and have lunch with me at the Metropolitan Club. We were good friends of his so this wasn't strange. So I said to my wife, that's very nice of him but I wonder what's on his mind because he particularly wanted you to be there. So what it turned out was the relationship between Ecuador and Peru is very poor. They're natural enemies

Q: Boundary disputes

DEARBORN: Right.

Q: Which the United States got involved in

DEARBORN: Right.

Q: In the '30s.

DEARBORN: We still are. So he said, you know what I would like? I would like Henry to come to Lima as chief of my political section, but what I really need to know is if you, Marie Rosa, could stand to live among the Peruvians [laughter]. That was what he wanted to know. So she said, I like the Peruvians, my grandfather was a Peruvian, I don't have a problem. She said, I know they want to swallow us up and all that, but personally they are very nice people. So that relieved his mind, and off we went to Lima.

Q: Well what was the situation in there in the two years that you were there?

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DEARBORN: One of the main things that happened...There was a very large embassy, it was really my first experience working at the embassy. Especially the aid program. AID has changed their name so many times I forget what they call themselves.

Q: Why don't we just call them AID, and let someone else sort it out.

DEARBORN: The worst name they had was Foreign Economic Administration, because in Latin America that spells "ugly". But then we had all the military missions, the military attaches, and our staff meetings were very large. And you might remember, in the old days we has that thing called the WEEKA and I remember

Q: It was a weekly report covering political, economic, cultural affairs

DEARBORN: I wrote those for two years. I remember coming home from some party at 11 o'clock and staying up until 4 o'clock doing the darn WEEKA for the next day. But they were good things. I was sorry when they stopped them because they were week by week a good summary of what was going on.

Politically it was interesting because the [Spanish name] party was, I don't know what you know about the [Spanish name]

Q: No, I don't.

DEARBORN: Well a man named [Spanish name], was a great liberal, one of several liberals in Latin America who stood out. One was Betancourt in Venezuela, [Spanish name] in Peru and Figueres in Costa Rica, were sort of a triumvirate of high level politicians who carried the ball for the liberals. [Spanish name] had been in exile, I think he'd been exile for five years, in the Columbian Embassy in Lima. Finally, he was allowed to leave and he went to Europe. Well, one of the big political events when I was chief of the political section was they let [Spanish name] come back. And that was a world shaking event. The upper crust of Peru had always tried to prevent [Spanish name] from gaining

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power. They had used all kinds of tricks to prevent this, including strong arm methods. They just wouldn't let them get power, although they were quite strong. So when [Spanish name] came back, a lot of people thought the world was coming to an end. A lot of the business people especially. One of the main newspapers called El Comercio. A family owned it, it was a leading family, the family was assassinated and blamed the [Spanish name]. They were determined that the [Spanish name] never get in.

Then we had an attempt at revolution. President Odria, Manuel Odria was president when I got to Peru, and there was a coup attempt against him. That caused a little excitement. It didn't succeed, but it caused a little excitement in the political section. Then there was an election where Odria assumed that he would see to it that the election came out the way he wanted it to. And his candidate was a man named Lavalle, and about two months before election Odria fell and broke his hip. Which kept him semi invalided. But I think it also kept him from doing too much about the election, that's always been a theory of mine. So when the election actually came off, his candidate only got 12% of the vote.

Q: My God.

DEARBORN: So, it was a fair election. And [Spanish name] who had been in exile in France for a long long time came back and ran for president and was elected. One thing that caused some commotion in social circles was that he brought his mistress with him, with whom he'd been living in Paris, although he was also married and had children and grandchildren. But what happened there, eventually, was interesting because after I left, he applied to the Vatican for an annulment of his original marriage, the woman he'd been married to for 25 years or so. He pulled this off, the Vatican annulled the marriage, and he married [Spanish name] his mistress. She came from a rather good family in Peru. So anyway, that shocked society in Peru.

Then there was a fellow named [Spanish name] who became president later on. Everyone knew he had presidential ambitions, he got into an argument, I think it was in the congress,

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with another representative whose name I can't remember. The other fellow challenged him to a duel! And they got their pistols, or sabers or whatever they were and went out a 4 o'clock in the morning out into the desert somewhere and I guess fired shots in the air, enough to satisfy themselves. But the point there, the political point there was that dueling is an excommunicable offense in the Catholic Church. I thought that that would be enough to ruin his chances of ever becoming president, which was one of my incorrect prognostications because he was later elected president. I didn't think that would be possible.

Q: How did...Ellis Briggs was ambassador for most of the time you were there

DEARBORN: Not most of the time, because having gotten me there he deserted me after a few months and went off to Brazil, he was named ambassador to Brazil.

Q: So Theodore Achilles came. How was he as ambassador?

DEARBORN: Wonderful, wonderful.

Q: What was his style of operation, that sort of thing?

DEARBORN: There was only one thing in his style of operations to which I had any vigorous dissent. He was a wonderful man, I just think the world of Ted Achilles, but he developed the thought at performance report time, that everyone should write their own efficiency report.

Q: Oh God.

DEARBORN: [laughter] Well the reason I objected to that was well I thought, whoa that's great but what about personalities? Here's one guy who toots his own horn and loves to do it, and here's another guy who's reasonably modest and not used to doing that and that guy that toots his own horn and hides his faults is going to come out better. Well, of course it was going to be reviewed. The guy who toots his own horn couldn't smother his

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faults too much because it was going to be reviewed by his supervisor. If you write honest reports, you're going to tell what you think is wrong with you as well as what you think is right with you, and I don't think that's fair. I think its up to other people to find out what's wrong with you! [laughter] I may have things wrong with me that nobody knows! So, except for that one thing, he was a really great guy to work for.

Q: What were American interests in Peru at that time?

DEARBORN: Well, we had mining companies, and there was a lot of ruckus over an oil company. There was an oil company that was one of our main interests and they were fighting expropriation and things like that. [Spanish name] I think was the name of the mining company. And then there were all these business type things going on, and then there was always the good old Ecuador-Peru boundary which was always flaring up in my section of the embassy.

Q: How did we deal with this? I think I have one interview with somebody was told... Sumner Welles, he was a desk officer, someone called him one day and said I want you to settle that boundary problem, and he ended up, you know, sort of aghast

DEARBORN: This sounds like Bob Woodward talking [laughter].

Q: [laughter] But saying that they got it into, we ended up being the guarantor of a boundary. What do we do

DEARBORN: Well there are four guarantors: the United States, Argentina, Brazil and Chile, I think is the other one. And what happened was, I guess Bob probably told you about this, this was before my time. When we were going into WWII we wanted peace and tranquility in the hemisphere and there was a meeting in Rio. In fact, I guess it's the time when they drew up the Rio Defense Treaty. And Sumner Welles was the main representative for the United States at Rio at that time and he didn't want any problems. There's no doubt about the fact that they used very high pressure tactics on Ecuador to

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accept a certain line. The Ecuadorian representative, the foreign minister at the time who's been cursed ever since by the Ecuadorians, agreed to this line. Now the Ecuadorians have always felt it was not a fair line because it gave Peru things they had won by conquest and had no right to for a lot of historical reasons. But anyway, because of the high pressure from the United States Ecuador succumbed and they never felt right about it. But the guarantors, if there's a problem, whenever there's a problem they're supposed to step in and support the line that was drawn at the time. And you know, Ecuador is a tiny little country, they aren't in any position to resist the pressures of the four biggest countries around, the three biggest in South America.

Q: How did

DEARBORN: They got a fellow named George McBride as our representative on the boundary commission. He was supposed to go down there on the ground and demarcate, it was called the demarcation commission. When I was on the Ecuador desk George McBride used to come around and talk to me. He spent I don't know how many years of his life working on this demarcation. Then he wrote a big report of course. Its been rather quiet lately but two or three years ago....no maybe more like four or five there was a real flurry in Ecuador because there was a rumor that Peru was going to attack them. This sounds ludicrous, but the fact is people in Guayaquil tell me that there was actual panic in the streets. It never happened, I don't know it may have been total rumor but they are very touchy on this.

Q: Well did you find yourself in a sort of spinning contest with the political section in Quito on taking sides on this boundary or was it more or less both of you trying to calm everybody down

DEARBORN: No no, the latter. I remember once when a lot of people were away in the department when I was working there, and I suddenly found myself in charge of relations with Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia all at one time for a few days. I always remember, the

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Ecuadorians came in, since I was having Ecuador and Peru at the same time, and said don't you tell them any of our secrets! Things like that. But no, between embassies, no.

Q: Well then you came back for really a rather short interregnum or something

DEARBORN: The War College

Q: And went to the War College from '50

DEARBORN: '58 to '59.

Q: And then you were assigned to Ciudad Trujillo in the Dominican Republic where you served from '59 to '61. How did your assignment to the Dominican Republic come about and what were you doing?

DEARBORN: I suppose from the spectacular point of view it was probably the most, because relations were fast deteriorating with the Trujillo dictatorship with which we had been playing along for about 30 years. Things had more or less suddenly started to go into a tail spin. I was sent there as Deputy Chief of Mission. The Ambassador had had my predecessor recalled.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

DEARBORN: Joseph Farland. He didn't get along with his DCM so he had him recalled. That was just about the time I was coming out of the War College and they sent me there. I always remember Bill Snow was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America and he called me over to tell me where I was going when I came out of the War College. He told me about this difficulty that had largely been caused by my predecessor talking out of turn and saying things outside the Embassy that the Ambassador didn't approve of. Bill said they had picked me for several reasons, and one was that I "didn't talk much". I always thought that was very funny.

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Q: I am right now reading a book by a man who came a little after you, Martin, called "Overtaken By Events." I never focused much on the Dominican Republic, but apparently the Trujillo regime was about as odious a regime as you can have, and yet we were unhappy with a person like Peron who was practically snow white when compared to Trujillo.

DEARBORN: Peron was in exile in the Dominican Republic, but he left just before I got there.

Q: Could you explain our relationship at the time you were there in 1959, and what the situation was there?

DEARBORN: The situation over many years had been that the United States didn't exactly approve of him, but he kept law and order, cleaned the place up, made it sanitary, built public works and he didn't bother the United States. So that was fine with us. About the time I got there his iniquities had gotten so bad that there was a lot of pressure from various political groups, civil rights groups and others, not only in the US but throughout the hemisphere, that something just had to be done about this man. He had his torture chambers, he had his political assassinations and he forced people to do things they didn't want to do. He would take a business leader and say, "I want you to give a speech praising me on such and such an occasion." He would see a successful business and demand a big cut out of it.

All these things were mounting up and opposition to him was growing. There had been a few attempts to assassinate him in the past, but they hadn't been successful, obviously. There were three main props that held Trujillo in power: one was the US, because we were semi-friendly and didn't do anything to get him out; one was the Catholic church which took the long view and all he had to do was build a few churches and be nice to the Church and they were willing to tolerate him; and the other was the business community

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because he had always kept law and order and cleaned up the country when it was previously a mess.

But just before I got there, when Joe Farland got there, the business community was fed up with the way they were treated. The Catholic Church felt that they couldn't go along with this pariah any longer because it was giving them a bad name. And the United States was feeling all this pressure from various sectors at home and abroad to do something about the monster.

His personal relations with the US became worse. He sent his son, Ramfis, up to Leavenworth to the Army Staff College and he didn't take it too seriously. He spent a good deal of his time off the West Coast with his yacht dating Kim Novak and other actresses, etc. So when it came time for graduation they refused to give him any kind of recognition. Ramfis had never been told no in his whole life and was furious. Trujillo was furious and considered it a slight.

Some of our ambassadors felt they had to get along with Trujillo. Joe Farland took a different view. He started reporting all his iniquities—the torture chamber, who had been killed and under what circumstances. Trujillo would take a perfectly honorable person and write anonymous letters to the press questioning his or her character. I remember one case of a lady doctor who he said was a lesbian. Things like that...just mean. People were disappearing. People were afraid to talk anywhere where people could listen to them. I remember one reporter for US News and World Report came to town. He had been there a few days and had a few unsavory experiences. He said to me one day, “You know, I spent two years in Moscow, but I never really felt afraid 'til I got here.” He was sitting in his hotel room one night with the door locked. The door opened and a great monstrous man came in, stood there and looked at him and then without saying a word turned around and walked out. They were trying to scare him into not saying anything against the government.

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Trujillo also had a few angels in the United States. There were southern Senators who thought he was great. Some public figures went down there...

Q: Who were some of these?

DEARBORN: Senator Eastland was one.

Q: Oh, yes from Mississippi.

DEARBORN: He wasn't the only one. Not only Senators, but also business people who he wanted to butter up. They would come back after being given the red carpet treatment and say good things.

Q: How did we act at the Embassy? When these people came and received the red carpet treatment, would we try to give them an accurate picture of what was happening?

DEARBORN: Sometimes they bypassed the Embassy and sometimes the favors done for them were in the United States.

Q: Did you have the feeling when you were there that the Embassy was turning around and really trying to tell it the way it was?

DEARBORN: Yes, by the time I got there yes. Not while I was there, but just before I got there. Farland was doing it.

Q: How did Farland and Trujillo get along?

DEARBORN: They got along progressively worse the longer he stayed there. I have forgotten when Farland arrived, but he had been there over a year, certainly, when I got there. Trujillo had already begun to sense that Farland was talking to the opposition, which, of course, was a no, no. There wasn't supposed to be any opposition, but every

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once in awhile you could be caught talking to somebody he didn't want you to talk to and you would hear about it. So relations were not too good.

I arrived there the first of July, 1959, and that Fourth of July party...(Trujillo had always been invited and when he came, for security reasons, he would always require a separate room with one special person waiting on him and him alone)...was the last time he was ever in the Embassy.

The reporting to the Department became more and more oriented towards saying what was wrong with things.

Q: Were you given any feedback from the Department saying Senator Eastland doesn't like this or something like that?

DEARBORN: No, we didn't have any pressure to moderate our reporting. But the pressures from human rights and other groups on the Department and our government had been such that the US government attitude was turning around by that time. While Farland was still Ambassador there was a plan drawn up for cooperation with the opposition and letting them know that if they succeeded in overthrowing Trujillo, we would favor them. We called them the pro-US opposition. Some of the opposition was living outside the country, the exiles. Some of these were quite leftist and led by Juan Bosch and the Department wasn't too happy about them taking power. This was a plan drawn up and approved back in Washington.

Farland was there until May 1960 when I became Charg#. In August we severed diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic as a result of a meeting of Foreign Ministers in San Jose, Costa Rica. All the American Republics voted to sever diplomatic relations with Trujillo because of the pressure put on them by Venezuela because Trujillo was caught red-handed trying to assassinate President Betancourt of Venezuela. It was indisputable. His agents were caught. The Venezuelans insisted that solidarity be shown

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on this. We were not averse to that because we were pretty much put out by him ourselves by that time.

Then, I think it was August 21, when diplomatic relations were broken, we continued consular relations. So I switched to being Consul General. Three weeks before the break I didn't even have an exequatur, but obtained one just in time.

Q: Which is the permission to perform consular duties in a country.

DEARBORN: Knowing that we were going to break, but they didn't know, I sent over asking for an exequatur for myself and the chief of the political section of the Embassy and maybe one or two others. Once we broke there wouldn't have been anybody to run the office. I wouldn't be there, the chief of the political section wouldn't be there, the agencies would be gone. In two or three weeks I received the exequaturs and within a couple of weeks we broke relations.

I always said this was the only time that I chose my own ambassador. There weren't many left once all the Republics of the hemisphere broke relations. But there were the British, Canadian, Chinese, Japanese, French, Italians—I think only about ten embassies left. I recommended to the Department that they ask London if the British Ambassador could represent us. He was one of the no-nonsense about it types. My judgment at that time was proved correct because he was great. The day...I told him we were going to break relations on such and such a day...and on the day of the break he came over to the office, brought a stack of British stationery and said, "All you have to do is write notes to the Foreign Office just as you always do and send them over to me. I will sign them." He said, "Of course, you are going to have to learn to write in English."

We didn't have many communications with the Foreign Office, but I did have a few times when I needed to get something across, problems we had, etc. So he proved to be great.

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A couple of weeks later a CIA message came from Washington (the CIA types had to leave with all the rest) asking me if I would be willing to carry on the CIA station chief job. Ambassador Farland had had contacts with the opposition and had brought me in on them. Even the station chief did not deal with them. I was the only one who could really carry on with them, because they were very skittish having had bad experiences with American Embassy people in the past. Things had gotten back to Trujillo, so they really didn't trust anybody. But they had gotten to trust Farland and me. So I carried on the contacts with the opposition reporting to CIA. We were using all these weird means of communication because we didn't want to be seen with each other. Things like notes in the bottom of the grocery bag, rolled up in cigars, etc.

Q: What were you doing with the opposition?

DEARBORN: They were asking us for advice at times. They were asking us for help at times. We didn't always give them what they wanted, but they knew that if they got into power that we would be supporting them. They also kept being hopeful that we might help them in more ways than we might be willing to. For instance, they told us that they wanted to do this by themselves, but they wanted our help.

As time went on and Trujillo didn't collapse, they began to have more violent ideas as to what they might do to him. Eventually they developed an assassination plot which because of my close relationship with them I was fully aware of. He was assassinated on May 30, 1961. I knew they were planning to do it, I knew how they were planning to do it, I knew, more or less, who was involved. Although I was always able to say that I personally did not know any of the assassins, I knew those who were pulling the strings. I knew everything except when. The only reason I didn't know when was because they didn't know either. There had to be a certain set of circumstances when they could put their plan into action. The last few days were rather hairy because I had told the Department via CIA communications (I had a different typewriter on which I typed out my messages to the opposition so that it wouldn't be traced to Embassy typewriters) all about the plan. I recall a

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frantic message from the Department, I guess signed off on by President Kennedy, saying, in effect, "Look, we have all this trouble with Castro; we don't want any more trouble in the Caribbean. Tell these people to knock it off." So I communicated to the opposition people that Washington was very much against any attempt at assassination. The answer I got back from them was, "Just tell Washington it is none of their business. This is our business. We have planned it and we are going to do it and there is nothing you can do about it." I relayed this to Washington. I am sure there were some in Washington who were skeptical; that there was an alarmist down there in the consulate.

The night of May 30, 1961, the Chinese Ambassador was giving some kind of a money raising thing at the country club for charity to which I went. We started back around 11:00 and ran into a roadblock along the ocean highway. They were stopping all cars and making everybody get out. They looked in trunks, pulled up rugs, etc. I had a CIA fellow in the car (along about January the CIA had sent a couple of people in to the consulate) and I said, "Bob, this is it. I am sure this is it." They wouldn't let us continue on that road, they sent us back along another road into town. We got to the Embassy, where I had been living for about a year, and the telephone rang and one of my main contacts of the opposition said, "It is over, he is dead." I knew immediately what happened and went down to the office and sent off a message to Washington.

A little later, maybe an hour or so, I had gone to bed, the phone rang and it was a call from a girls school there run by American nuns. An American bishop (there were six bishops in the Dominican Republic and one was an American), had gotten in trouble with Trujillo who had threatened him in his bishopric up in San Juan de la Haguana and for safety sake he was living in the girls school for a time. Well the nuns called and said, "You know, Bishop Reilly has been kidnaped from the school and we don't know where he is. We want you to come over right away." So I called the British Ambassador. I couldn't get through to him but got his number two man, Bill Harding, and said, "Bill, will you please meet me over at the school for girls."

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I got over to the girls school and it was a mess. The nuns wore white cassocks and there were little blood specks on them. I said, "What happen?" They said, "About 15 of these thugs came in and started firing guns. We didn't get hit but little specks of brick came off the wall and nicked our faces." Then they took us to the Bishop's room where the pet dog that the invaders had killed was lying across the threshold. They had kidnaped the Bishop and taken him off to who knows where.

Then Bill Harding arrived and shortly after him British Ambassador McVittie. Then one of the Dominican generals came. I described what had happened and explained we didn't know where the Bishop was and we were concerned for his safety since he was an American citizen. The General said he would go back and talk to the President. We decided to look for further assistance.

There wasn't a Papal Nuncio at the time, but there was a charg# d'affaires. I said, "Let's go over to the Nuncioatura. Bishop Reilly is an American citizen, but the Vatican should have an interest in this." We roused the charg# Monsenor del Guidici. He was no help. He was obviously scared. He was afraid of doing anything that might get him in wrong with his bosses. The British Ambassador wanted him to go over with him to the Foreign Minister— get him out of bed and raise a ruckus. But Monsenor del Guidici said, "I don't think they will hurt the Bishop, do you?" I said, "I think they would hurt the Bishop. They threw rocks at him and threw him out of his rectory. It was just luck that one of those rocks didn't kill him. I don't agree with you." The British Ambassador rose to the occasion and said , "If you don't want to go I will go by myself."

He went off to see the Foreign Minister. Bill Harding and I, probably about 4:00 by now, went back to the girls school and who should be sitting on the sofa in the front hall but Bishop Reilly. He was the first one to tell me, after I had gotten my initial message, that Trujillo had been assassinated. What had happened to him was that his captors took him to the air force base outside the city, San Isidro. Somehow President Balaguer, who was Trujillo's figurehead president, heard about it and sent word out to the base to bring

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the Bishop to see him. When he arrived, Balaguer said, "I'm terribly sorry about what happened to you but you know the Generalissimo has been assassinated tonight and these fellows through an excess of zeal thought that you might be involved in it because the relations between you had been bad." So I sent out a message about Bishop Reilly. It was a wild night.

It wasn't for another day or two that the general public knew that Trujillo had been assassinated. They didn't give out the information right away.

Q: Well the aftermath of the thing was terribly disorganized wasn't it? In other words the opposition group didn't take advantage of this.

DEARBORN: What happened was; Ramfis was in Europe. The minute he heard about it he chartered a plane and flew back to the Dominican Republic. Balaguer was the civil leader, but Ramfis was still head of the air force. The family was definitely a group to be reckoned with. Balaguer wasn't completely independent even now that Trujillo was dead.

The assassins picked the time they did it because the circumstances were right. They knew on some nights he went to visit his mother and after visiting her he would get into a nondescript car and drive along the coastal highway to see his mistress. He would do that completely unscheduled and didn't worry too much about it because nobody knew in advance. But the opposition had a spy in the garage who reported to them that this was the night. So they had two cars mobilized. One got in front of his car and one got in back and they forced him off the road. He had a gun but they overpowered him and killed him. That is how it happened.

Then they didn't know if at the time of the funeral whether the family or the opposition might cause some problems. So I didn't dare go to the funeral because I was afraid I would have to call in the Navy which was just over the horizon—the biggest naval force since World War II was sitting just over the horizon— and didn't want to go away from

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my communications. I sent the number two man to the funeral. So there were all sorts of speculation as to why I hadn't gone to the funeral.

About a week later, I received a phone call one morning at 7:00 a.m. from Ted Achilles who was with the Task Force in the Department. He said, "Henry, we want you, your wife, and the children out of there on the noon plane. We think you are in danger," the concern being that Ramfis and his group had killed all the assassins except for two and was unpredictable. So I said, "There is no noon plane but there is a plane to Puerto Rico at 2:00 and I could get on that, I guess." We were living in the Embassy and our pictures were on the wall and our clothes were in the closets and drawers. I said to my wife, "Look, you take the house and I will take the office and we will do the best we can." So my wife went through the house with another wife who was still at the post. She went from room to room and put everything that belonged to us in the middle of the floor. I went to the office where we were pretty streamlined by that time. We even had our secret files in a burn barrel ready to burn up because we didn't know what was going to happen. About a month before that we had gone through everything and shipped back to Washington everything that we didn't absolutely need, because we just didn't know what might happen—we didn't have diplomatic immunity anymore. Trujillo was good at staging things and could have staged a raid on the Consulate General and disclaimed any knowledge of it.

I called the British Ambassador and said, "You know I wouldn't ask you to do this unless it was extremely urgent, but could you come over to the house." He came over and I told him everything that was happening and that I was leaving at 2:00.

The Admin officer, who was still there was going...(we had already loose packed most of our furniture when we moved into the Embassy because we didn't need it and stored it in the garage)...to pack up the other things lying in the middle of the floors and send them to Bogota, our next post. It was the best move we ever had. We didn't miss a single thing. The only mistake was that I got an Embassy lamp.

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A funny incident, Evelyn Cotterman who was the Admin. Officer's wife, was helping us around the bedrooms. I had my shirt, tie, shoes and socks on but couldn't find my pants. I said, "Evelyn where are my pants?" She said, "Oh, my god, I packed them." They had to go back down to the car outside and unpack my pants so that I could leave the country with dignity.

Q: When Ramfis took over...?

DEARBORN: He didn't really take over. Let me clear up the relationship there. The day before I got this phone call to leave, I went over to the Palace to talk with President Balaguer on instructions from the Department. I said, "I am sure you know, because of your air force observers, that we have a very large naval force just over the horizon and we want you to know that if you feel you need help we will give it to you." His answer, in effect was, "I have had a talk with Ramfis and he has agreed to respect the civilian authority and as long as I don't have any reason to think he won't, I don't think I ought to do anything like you are suggesting." I also took the occasion to tell him that the way that some respectable citizens of his Dominican Republic were being treated was not making a very good impression abroad and was hurting his government. That was the last time that I saw him.

Q: While you were there Ramfis ran wild didn't he?

DEARBORN: That is true but I never saw anything of Ramfis. He was a playboy. He was out of the country a lot.

Q: I am talking about after his father's death, but you weren't there very long were you?

DEARBORN: A week. Trujillo was killed the 30th of May and I left the 5th of June.

Q: Were you replaced by the next ranking officer?

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DEARBORN: No, they took a fellow out of the War College, named John Calvin Hill, and sent him down as Consul General, until Ambassador Martin came. I think they didn't get along too well, and Hill went as DCM to Venezuela. Hill had a very interesting time of it before Martin arrived.

Q: How did you and the Embassy and later on you and the Consulate General view Castro? He was just coming to power at this time and this was sort of a cataclysmic event and it was your next door neighbor. If we were getting nervous, what was happening in the Dominican Republic?

DEARBORN: Trujillo used this. He was getting angry with us and in order to bother us and maybe change our minds about him, he was threatening to be chummy with the communists, which was ridiculous. But he sort of waved this in our faces—if you don't like me I will go over to Castro. Of course Castro had no desire to get in with Trujillo, so from that side there wasn't anything. But Trujillo was making all these motions to join hostile forces against us with anyone he could find. And with some success. It did bother Washington. It also added fuel to the degeneration of relations.

Q: Kennedy came in in January, 1961. Joseph Kennedy had connections everywhere, did you have the feeling that he had connections with the Trujillo government?

DEARBORN: No, I didn't. Joseph Kennedy's name didn't crop up in the Embassy. The one that did crop up was a fellow who had been a trouble shooting ambassador of ours—I think he had been with the Flying Tigers—William Pawley. He was a nuisance. He had a brother who was in charge of their family interests in the Dominican Republic and they had been cozy with Trujillo. One thing that happened was that I had a message (Feb, '61) that Senator Smathers (Florida) was coming to the Dominican Republic and wanted to talk with Generalissimo Trujillo about our relationship, etc. He wanted me to go with him to see Trujillo—the last thing I had any desire to do.

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Anyway, he came and just as he came Bill Pawley arrived. Of course, Bill had every interest in seeing that things went well with Trujillo. Smathers took me aside and said, "You know, Bill Pawley is arriving too, but when I see Trujillo I do not want him with us." So then Bill Pawley joined the group and said, calling Smathers by his first name, "Now, when you go to see Trujillo I want to go with you." Smathers couldn't get out of it by that time. He didn't want to say no to Pawley I guess because Pawley had influence in Florida.

In addition, Pawley had Bebe Rebozo, a friend of Nixon's in Florida, with him. So Senator Smathers, Bill Pawley and Beebe Rebozo and I all went to see Trujillo. Smathers gave him this talk. He said, "Generalissimo you have the opportunity to be a great hero in this hemisphere. You have the opportunity to be one of the few dictators, one of the only dictators, who was ever able to turn his country into a democracy during his lifetime. If you would do that you would really be a hero to your people and to the hemisphere." I sat there thinking, "Oh lord, you don't know who you are talking to." Trujillo said just what I could have written as his script, "Senator, I don't know what you are talking about. I am just a citizen in this country. I don't have any public office. We have a president, an executive, a legislature, a supreme court just like your country. I really don't know what you are talking about." So Smathers didn't get anywhere with it. That was one of my more interesting moments. Hector Trujillo, a brother, was figurehead President and was present at the interview.

Then Trujillo did a funny thing. He had a custom that every once in a while he would have a mass baptism. He was about to have one and he wanted the Senator to come and see it. Trujillo would be godfather to all these little kids. So we went into the Palace chapel. Of course, pictures were everything. What Trujillo wanted was a picture of himself and the babies and Senator Smathers. I was standing next to the Senator and just when he was to snap the picture I would step back and get behind the Senator so I wouldn't get myself in it. The Senator would pull my arm and say, "Come on, get in the picture." So I would step back next to him and just as the picture was to be taken again I would step

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back behind the Senator again. When the picture came out, I think it was in the New York Times or local paper, I was not in evidence. Thirty years later I saw that one of the pictures not earlier published did have a piece of my head.

Q: One last thing about the Dominican Republic, you were mentioning about the Bishop and the Papal Nuncio and about some papers?

DEARBORN: Yes, that was very important. Before I moved into the Embassy and Ambassador Farland was still there, a new Papal Nuncio arrived. He was a commanding figure. He was regal— tall, a man about 50 years old. The previous Nuncio had been a little old, nondescript man who never caused any problems. This Nuncio got off on the wrong foot. He hadn't been there long and they were about to inaugurate a new international airport. So the Foreign Office sent a message over to the Nuncio that they would like to have him give an address at the inauguration. He said, "I don't think that is exactly the proper job for a Papal Nuncio." However they put some pressure on him and he said, "Well, all right I will say something." They said, "Well, please submit what you are going to say before you do it." Well he didn't like that very much either, but finally he did. They came back saying they wanted him to put in something about the glories of the Generalissimo, etc. The Nuncio refused saying that was not his role. So he didn't get off on the right foot.

As time went on the bishops (I really don't know how much the Papal Nuncio inspired it and how much the horrors of the Generalissimo's activities alone inspired it), a critical pastoral letter which they all signed. Not the Nuncio but the six bishops. Trujillo blamed the Nuncio whether he was at fault or not. One of the bishops, as I said, was an American, and one was a Spaniard; the other four were Dominicans. This was anathema to Trujillo. No one had ever done this before. The pastoral letter was criticizing him and was read in churches all over the country. He was livid. This was another indication that relations with the Church were on the decline.

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I became very friendly with the Papal Nuncio and I used to stop on the way to the office after lunch and visit him almost every day. We would swap information. He was a great source of information and I guess, for him, I was also. This was noticed by Trujillo's all seeing secret service and radio news programs noted that the Consul General and the Nuncio were becoming very friendly and that this was a suspicious development.

To show you what little tricks Trujillo used to do—I guess he wanted to scare the Nuncio out of the country, or something. One day I received an invitation to a reception at the Papal Nunciatura at noon on such and such a day. It was the day Ambassador Farland was leaving, so I hadn't quite taken over. I was surprised because I had seen the Nuncio the day before and he hadn't said anything to me about a reception so I sent John Barfield over to find out what it was all about. He came back and said, "There isn't any reception. These are fakes. The Nuncio has never seen these invitations."

At the appointed hour the Generalissimo appeared at the Nunciatura gate and told the gate person that he had come to the Nuncio's reception. The boy went back in and told the Nuncio that the Generalissimo and several cabinet members were at the gate and had come to the reception. The Nuncio said, "You go back and tell the Generalissimo that if he wants to come in by himself I will be very glad to talk to him but there is no reception here." So the boy went back to the gate and there was nobody there. This was the Generalissimo's way of harassing the Nuncio.

Q: This regime was obviously an odious one. How about the officers, you were DCM and responsible for running the Embassy and later on the Consulate General, was it difficult working with your officers? Were some of them taken in by the Trujillo largess?

DEARBORN: By the time I was there the Ambassador had set the tone for the relationship. There was one officer who had been there five years and he was on quite good terms, which was good in a way because he was the Consul. Harry Lofton was his

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name. Harry had a good working relationship with the police. Harry was far right in his thinking and I would suppose Jesse Helms would be a hero for him.

Q: We are talking about what we would call today a right wing conservative, a law and order person.

DEARBORN: Yes, that would have been Harry. On the whole he didn't cause problems, but in the last days of the regime he did. He was making it difficult in staff meetings. So when we were changing from Embassy to Consulate General I sent an eyes only message to the Department recommending that in the shuffle, Harry, having been there five years and not being in accord with the polices that were being followed, should be moved to another post. Harry never forgave me for that, but I thought five years was long enough.

Q: That is a long time, particularly in a situation where one can get too close, because this can also reflect...

DEARBORN: We had a very good group. John Barfield was chief of the political section and he was excellent. Then we had Charlie Hodge as economic counselor and he had a couple under him. Then we had a naval mission that was very good. Then we had an attach# who represented the Defense Department, Ed Simmons, a Marine Colonel who later became a General and is now in charge of the Marine Library here in Washington. A very nice fellow. We had a very small AID program. I think there was only one person, maybe two. There was an American school. We had, of course, USIA. One of our USIA officers was declared persona non grata because they said he was going around saying things against the Generalissimo. In fact, I, myself, almost got caught because I was talking at the hotel to a newspaperman whose name you would recognize if I could say it, who came through...

Q: Was it Tad Schultz by any chance?

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DEARBORN: No, he was more in the ownership class. Tad Schultz is another story. I kept him out of jail. (The man was Roy Howard, now I remember.)

Anyway, they saw me talking to this newspaperman in the hotel and then they said I had been telling him bad things about the Dominican Republic. I could see what was coming and went right to the British Ambassador. I said, "Look this is what they are saying and I don't know what game they are playing, but I absolutely deny the whole thing. It is not true. It is true that I was talking with him, but I didn't say anything to cause the Dominicans any embarrassment." The Ambassador picked up the ball right away and went over to the Foreign Office and told them this. With the British Ambassador having taken this position they decided not to follow through on it. I think by that time maybe they thought they would like to get rid of me and were looking for a way to do it. I don't know.

I would like to mention one more thing on the Dominican Republic. One day a student came into my office scared to death. He said they were after him, they were going to kill him, they were going to torture him. A great big fellow who belonged to one of the best families. He was just scared out of his wits. I knew what was going to happen. There was a secret movement among the students and Trujillo was dying to get the names of all these people. If he could catch one of them he could torture him and make him give the names of the others.

So when I heard this, what I saw happening was this kid being taken out to the torture chambers, being abused and maybe even killed and a whole bunch of kids having the same thing happening to them. All I could think of was that this just cannot happen. So I said, "Well, you can stay here." I had a little bathroom off the office and stuck him in there. It was terribly cramped and it was a hot box; there was no air conditioning in the whole Embassy at that time. I said, "You just stay in there until I think of what to do." I think he was in there two days. Nobody in the rest of the Embassy knew this, except John Barfield whose office was on the other side of the bathroom from mine.

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For a couple of days I kept the boy in there, I brought him food down from the house, still trying to think of what to do. Finally a fellow came in, Dan Kirtley, who was the pilot of the naval mission plane. He was the last person of what had been the Embassy to leave the country. He came in to say goodbye. I suddenly had a bright thought and said, "Dan, would you be willing to undertake a little skullduggery for your old friend here?" He said, "What would you want?" Dan was always a man of action. I told him I had this fellow and described the whole situation to him. I said, "He is either going to get tortured or killed and a lot of other people too, and I just wonder if you on your last takeoff from the Dominican Republic would take him with you." He said, "You have him at my plane at 2:00 and I will take him."

Well, there were nearly insurmountable obstacles between the office and the airport: how to get him out of the office, for example. First I had to get him up to the Residence. The office and the Residence were in the same block and there was a long lawn and swimming pool between them. John Barfield said, "I can back up the car to your office door and we can put him in the trunk." I said, "That is too obvious. Let's just walk up to the Embassy as though nothing is wrong and maybe nobody will notice. If anyone does notice I will say it is Bill Raft." Bill was a Marine Guard who was the most like the young man in physical appearance. So we did that.

The garage of the Embassy was in the back. We took him out to the garage and then I drove the car out. We got halfway down the driveway to the street and I said to the boy, "I am going to open the trunk and you crawl in." I was just opening the trunk when the servants in the Embassy came out of the kitchen and saw us.

So I said, "No, don't get in the trunk," and I pulled down the lid. I said, "You get in the front seat between John and me. Just sit there." Of course I didn't want them seeing me putting someone in the trunk. I said, "If they say anything later I will tell them that we had a bet on to see if you could fit in the trunk, or something."

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At the end of the driveway there was the street and up on a hill looking over all this was the national police station. Of course they weren't all up there looking at us, but it was just another thing to think about it. So we got in and started for the airport and this fellow grabbed a newspaper trying to hide behind it. I told him to put it down and act natural. So we drove through town, took the airport highway and about three quarters of the way to the airport on a stretch where we could see both ways and nobody was coming I said, "Now you get in the trunk." So I put him in the trunk and we drove the rest of the way to the airport.

We drove over to where Dan Kirtley's plane was, which was apart from the other planes. Dan said, "Is he there?" And I said, "Yes, he is in the trunk." There was a very low entrance to the plane so he said, "You back the car up to the door." Just as I was doing this, a Dominican who was hanging around the airport and used to help Dan out with things appeared. I said, "Now what do we do?" Dan began looking around the car and said to the Dominican, "Hey go back there and get a pump, the Consul's car has a low tire and he can't drive around like that." So, with the Dominican sent back for a pump, I backed the car up to the plane and the fellow crawled into the plane.

There was a tower with air controllers there and I didn't know what they were seeing or what they weren't seeing. But fortunately something happened that hardly ever happened: three international flights, I think one taking off and two coming in, were active all at the same time; and it started to rain. It was just plain luck. I nervously watched while Dan took off for Puerto Rico with his passenger.

I went back to the office and sent off a message through my CIA channel which started something like: I have probably broken every rule in the book, but...one thing I knew was that I couldn't let them catch this fellow. I often wonder where he is now.

Q: Well, thank you, we will continue starting with you going to Bogota.

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Q: This is the second interview with Henry Dearborn. Today is May 8, 1991. You were mentioning that there were a couple of things that happened concerning your time in the Dominican Republic that we might add on now before we move on.

DEARBORN: Yes, one thing that occurred to me was when President Kennedy sent his own emissary down to talk to Trujillo to try to persuade him to leave his dictatorship, whether to leave the country or just leave power I am not sure. Of course, I was in close contact with what we called the pro-US opposition and they were very good sources for me. One day I had a message from them outraged because they said they understood that Ambassador Robert Murphy had appeared in the Dominican Republic secretly and had talked to Trujillo. How could it be that I did not inform them of this? I went back and said that I very much doubted that. I didn't believe that Robert Murphy had come officially without my knowing it. They came back and said, "You are absolutely wrong, our sources tell us that he is indeed here."

Of course, Robert Murphy was a retired Foreign Service officer of great distinction. I was very indignant and sent off a pretty strong message to the Department, the burden of which was that I couldn't doubt much longer that this was true. A sort of "How could you do this to me?" message and "How could I be expected to retain the confidence of these people, if I didn't let them in on something of that sort." I never heard boo from the Department on my message. I thought at least I should have been castigated for being obstreperous. The next time I went back to the State Department I was on consultation and was talking to the head of intelligence for the Department, I think his name was Hughes at the time. I told him that I had been very curious about the telegram having never heard from the Department. He said, "Well, no wonder, you know when that telegram came into the State Department it was the first time that anybody in the State Department, myself, the Secretary or anyone else, had ever heard of it. It was something that Kennedy did on his own with Murphy." I might say with equal lack of results as

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Senator Smathers which I have referred to earlier. But I thought that was interesting with Kennedy acting on his own and not confiding in the Department.

My last connection with President Kennedy with regard to the Dominican Republic occurred on June 7, 1961. When Trujillo was killed, the President was in Paris. My nighttime message (May 31AM) reporting the event was promptly relayed to him—so promptly that there were hostile allegations that he knew about the assassination before it happened. Absolute nonsense, of course. I left the country on June 5. On June 7 I attended a meeting in the White House with the President and the main subject was the DR. This was as high level a meeting as one could assemble—certainly the most imposing that I ever attended. In addition to the President there were Vice President Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, CIA Director Allen Dulles, J.C. King (also of CIA), and Acting Assistant Secretary of State of Inter-American Affairs Wymberley Coerr. The President asked to be informed on what was transpiring in the DR and then he asked for suggestions as to what was likely to happen next and what our position should be. His questions were directed to Dean Rusk, but Rusk deferred to me for response. I have no record of this meeting unfortunately, but there must be one in the Kennedy files. I reported on my meeting with President Balaguer of June 4 in which he said that he did not require our assistance for the time being as Ramfis had agreed to respect the civilian authority. As I recall, I said that I did not believe there would be a bloodbath though there might be isolated vengeance killings. I also said I thought that we should continue to support the pro-US dissidents since as long as the Trujillo family was in the DR they would try to control the country and the reprehensible conduct for which they were noted would be perpetuated. I remember Kennedy saying that he wanted to be sure that whatever replaced the present government was acceptable to us. He did not want the government overthrown until he knew what would replace it.

One enlightening part of the discussion occurred when I interrupted and said: “I think that.....” The President interrupted me and said, “We already know what you think.” That

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showed clearly enough that he had been reading my cables. After the discussion on the DR, the President went on to talk about situations in Angola and other places and about getting some businessmen into the AID program. The latter subject was mostly between him and Secretary McNamara. When the meeting broke up, he shook hands with me and said, "You did a good job down there, but I don't suppose you should go back, do you?" I told him that I would rather have heard him say that than any one and that I agreed it was best not to go back. I told him that I had already been assigned to Bogota and was very happy with that assignment. I did not see him again until he came on a state visit to Colombia. This conversation with the President I remember practically verbatim—I guess because it was personal.

The other thing I thought I should mention is that some years later, 1975, so that is a long time later, I was called to testify, if that is the right word, at least talk to a committee that Nelson Rockefeller set up to investigate CIA activities, especially in relation to assassinations. I went and talked to them on April 22, 1975.

Q: Let me put into the record right now that Mr. Dearborn has given me a tape which he taped in April, 1975 regarding his talk with the Rockefeller commission concerning US actions against Trujillo in the 1960-61 period. We will put this in this transcript at this point.

Taped by Henry Dearborn in April 1975.

My relationship to CIA, June 1960 - May 30, 1961

I arrived in the Dominican Republic as DCM in July 1959. Ambassador Farland departed permanently in May, 1960 and I became Chargé d'Affaires a.i. On June 16, 1960 I was requested by CIA to be its link with certain opposition leadership. This request had the approval of the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. My written understanding with CIA was that the US was not prepared to undertake any overt action against Trujillo while he was in control of the Dominican Republic. That CIA was prepared to assist the opposition clandestinely to develop effective force to accomplish Trujillo's overthrow and

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that prior to such time as dissident groups had established a provisional government which would control a substantial sector of the Dominican Republic, CIA assistance would be channeled covertly. (I would say that it was not long afterward that the US did take overt action against Trujillo in several ways.)

I was authorized to convey this understanding to my Dominican contact from June 1960. For the duration of my time in the Dominican Republic I was in continuous touch on a clandestine basis with a limited number of pro-US dissidents. They gave me information about Trujillo's activities, both national and international and about their own aspirations and plans. On my side I communicated to them such information and advice as I was requested to communicate by the CIA.

The US broke diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic on August 28, 1960, but we continued consular relations. I stayed on as Consul General. Almost all non-State Department personnel departed, including the CIA station chief. There were two exceptions. One was the secretary in the CIA office and the other was the Air Force Colonel in charge of the missile tracking station at Samana Bay.

After the departure of Station Chief Reed I was in effect the station chief until the arrival of a CIA chief, I think in January, 1961. Even after his arrival I continued to be the principal contact with my dissident sources. My dual role presented problems for me as I had to remember when I was acting with my CIA hat and when with my State Department hat. My CIA messages went through those channels and the CIA secretary would deliver incoming messages to me. The CIA station chief, who had arrived in January left immediately following the assassination of Trujillo. I left about a week afterwards, also.

I believe that the reasoning in Washington was that I should depart promptly since the Trujillo family continued to be powerful and since I was known to have been in touch with the dissidents there was no knowing what conclusion the Trujillo intelligence apparatus might come to.

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There were three officers in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in the State Department who knew about my CIA work. The Assistant Secretary, his deputy and his special assistant. Last named was the Bureau's liaison with CIA.

That is the end of my memo on my relationship with CIA during my time in the Dominican Republic.

Now a memorandum on the United States and the Overthrow of Trujillo.

In 1959 there were two attempts from outside the Dominican Republic to overthrow Trujillo and there was growing dissatisfaction with him inside the country, especially among certain military, professional and business people and clergy. By January, 1960, our assessment was that Trujillo was likely to be overthrown and we were concerned lest a power vacuum would result into which communist elements supported by Castro would rush. By that time we had drawn up contingency plans as to what action we would take in such an eventuality.

By July 1960, our dissident contacts were telling us that they had drawn up a list of seven possible ways by which Trujillo might be ousted. All ways except the seventh they believed to be beyond their capabilities. The seventh was assassination. It appeared, however, at that time they had no specific plot and that they were talking in generalities. Neither then nor later did they seek to involve us in an assassination. What they wanted from the US was moral support and, later, material and token weapon support.

The following are some of the ways in which we gave moral support to the dissidents:

1. We established our clandestine contact with them.
2. We made several attempts through prestigious persons to persuade Trujillo to give up his dictatorship, preferably by leaving the country. One attempt was made through General Mark Clark. Another through Senator Smathers, another through Ambassador Robert

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Murphy. Clark was acting for President Eisenhower and Murphy for President Kennedy. None of these approaches shook the Generalissimo's resolve to remain in power. These were all secret missions when they were undertaken. I was with Senator Smathers when he made his pitch.

3. We issued official public statements critical of Trujillo, and

4. In August, 1960 we broke diplomatic relations.

After the break in relations we took steps to offer material support to Trujillo's opposition.

1. We levied economic sanctions against the Dominican Republic, and

2. In January, 1961 I was authorized to tell the dissident contacts that we would make certain military items available to them.

The memo following this one will deal with the arms question.

After August, 1960 we developed more detailed plans for dealing with a provisional government in case Trujillo fell from power. We knew who of our contacts wished to head such a government, but we did not know whether these elements would be capable of gaining a foothold. The situation was going from bad to worse. As the result of the economic sanctions imposed by the US and the OAS, Trujillo was threatening US businesses resident in the country and was also threatening the pro-US Dominicans. His media were carrying on a steady press and radio war against the US

In this atmosphere by the spring of 1961, those who favored assassination in concept began to develop concrete plans. Considering the opposition of the business community, the clergy, the US, and the OAS it was believed that those who assassinated Trujillo would be regarded by heroes both at home and abroad. Also since no pressure that had been tried, i.e., persuasion, sanctions, diplomatic ruptures, statements of censor, had induced

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Trujillo to give up, these dissenters saw assassination as their only hope of ridding the Dominican Republic of the dictatorship.

It is my firmly held view that those who killed Trujillo and those who backed them up would have acted if there had never been a CIA. They were only waiting for as favorable domestic and international atmosphere to give them the required courage. The concept and details of the plot were theirs, and theirs alone. It is true that the US helped create this atmosphere more through public than covert action. Being convinced that Trujillo was on the skids it was our purpose to cultivate the pro-US dissidents so that the future government of the Dominican Republic would be pro-US rather than anti. Such help as we gave them was to help them come out on top of any rival groups. We never favored assassination, in fact, we opposed it to no avail.

When in April, or May, 1961, I received detailed assassination plans from my contacts, I advised Washington that what had been a possibility now had become a probability. I was convinced of this because of the detailed nature of the plans and the electric tension in the Dominican air. This information caused consternation and I was instructed to urge that any such plot be abandoned immediately. My contacts responded that this was a Dominican affair and there was nothing we could do to stop it. This message I transmitted to Washington.

Not long afterward the plot was carried out.

This next memorandum is on the question of arms.

I do not recall exactly when the pro-US dissidents first urged us to supply them with certain military equipment. However, I know for certain that in January, 1961, I was instructed to tell them that delivery of such equipment outside of the Dominican Republic had been authorized. I do not know what, if anything, was delivered to them. Perhaps nothing, because my contacts continued pressure on us to offer at least a token. They argued that there were members of their group, especially younger ones, who were demanding that

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the US show our support in this tangible way. My contact said that it was important to them not to lose the support of this younger element as there were many able people among them.

Perhaps CIA records will show, I do not remember just when I was authorized in a CIA memo to turnover to the CIA station chief several, I think four, perhaps two, rifles that were left with the Consulate General on the departure of the Naval Attach# in 1960. This must have been in April or May, 1961. I turned over the rifles and I do not know to whom they were ultimately delivered. So, I do not know whether any of them were used to kill Trujillo. Since a number of high military personnel were in on the plot, the obtaining of a small number of arms sufficient to kill a man did not seem to be a problem for the plotters. Consequently the dissident request for arms from us seemed symbolic rather than anything else—a move to help our pro dissident contacts to hold doubting Thomases among them.

I discovered after returning to the United States that no one in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in State had known of the CIA message authorizing me to turnover the rifles. This came as a shock to me as there had always been a very close and harmonious relationship in the Office of the Assistant Secretary and CIA regarding my activities and instructions that were sent to me. This was the only lack of coordination that I recall. Since the authorization was rather an important one I have always wondered if it may have been cleared in the White House as there were officers there who were closely following Dominican developments.

This is the end of the three memoranda on the Dominican Republic.

Tomorrow, April 22, 1975, I am going to appear before Vice President Rockefeller's committee which is investigating CIA activities abroad. In this case they want to talk to me, I suppose, about CIA involvement, if such there was, in the assassination of Trujillo.

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This is Tuesday, April 22, and at 9:30 this morning I went to 712 Jackson Place and called on Mr. Monty Grey of the Rockefeller Commission. I spent two hours and a half discussing with him CIA activities in the Dominican Republic, particularly from January 1, 1960 up through the assassination. He was, of course, particularly interested in any arms that the CIA might have brought into the Dominican Republic or might have authorized to be delivered.

Mr. Grey had done a great deal of research in both State and CIA files prior to my arrival and he had many pages of notes on the basis of which he asked questions of me.

This was a fascinating exercise for me because I had, of course, forgotten quite a number of communications and actions to which he had reference. Particularly, and to my surprise, I had forgotten that I had delivered a revolver to a Dominican doctor. The reason that I had done this was not in the CIA files and so I was able to recall after having my memory jogged that this doctor had asked me if I could obtain a revolver for him in as much as he greatly feared some sort of attack on his family by one of Trujillo's agents and he, the doctor, had no means of defending himself or his family. I thereupon asked the CIA station chief if he could obtain a revolver for me for the doctor, inasmuch as the doctor was a principal source of information for us. The station chief, thereupon did obtain the revolver and I gave it to the doctor.

I made it clear to Mr. Grey that the doctor's request for this revolver had no revolutionary purpose whatever, but was entirely for his personal use.

DEARBORN: In the same year, the Senate set up what was called the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities. It was to study alleged assassination plots involving foreign leaders. The reference is 94th Congress, First Session, Report 94-465, issued November 20, 1975.

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I spent about six hours talking to this committee's lawyers under heavy questioning. They told me that they didn't think the Senators would want to talk to me, but four days later I had a telephone call telling me that Senator Church and his group did want to talk to me. So I went up and spent several hours alone with about six of the Senators—the ones I remember are Senators Church, Mathias, Tower, and Hart. Hart was a hero to me. The questions became quite detailed. Each Senator had a lawyer sitting next to him reminding him of different things. One of the lawyers, a woman probably in her mid '30s, spoke up and said, "Wasn't this one of the most dramatic assignments of your career?" I said, "Yes, of course it was." She said, "Well, doesn't it seem strange to you that you don't remember more of the details?" I said, "I hope there is someone in this room who is over 65 years old who finds it difficult to remember who said what to whom 15 or 20 years after it has happened." Senator Hart spoke up and said, "I certainly can testify to that. It happens to me all the time." He was the only Senator there who was over 65.

The main questioning was by Senator Church and the lawyer who sat next to him. It went on for a very long time. That whole testimony appears in this Senate Report.

Q: Good and it has been published...

DEARBORN: Yes, anyone can get it from the library. There is a lot in it on the Trujillo assassination and various other assassinations.

Q: Okay, we will move on. You were assigned for a fairly long stretch to Bogota?

DEARBORN: Almost six years.

Q: From 1961-67.

DEARBORN: September, 1961 to April, 1967.

Q: I wonder if you could tell me how that assignment came about?

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DEARBORN: Fulton Freeman was Minister Counselor in our Embassy in Belgium and was assigned to Bogota as Ambassador. He was in the Department and was looking for a DCM. He talked to the people in Inter-American Affairs and my name came up. He looked over my record and talked to people who knew me and said "Well, that is the one I want." And that is how I happened to go. I had never seen him before.

Q: Fulton Freeman had at one time been a Far Eastern expert hadn't he?

DEARBORN: He still had his Chinese language. He took great delight in talking Chinese with the Chinese Ambassadors.

Q: He was sort of moved out of the line of fire after the McCarthy time.

DEARBORN: He came out on the Gripsholm when everybody was coming out of China, and he never went back.

Q: How did he operate, because you served twice with him didn't you?

DEARBORN: To my way of thinking he was a masterful leader in the sense of how to run an Embassy. He knew how to get the best out of his people. He wasn't one of these ambassadors who I always thought made a mistake when they would surround themselves with two or three people and operate with them and let the rest of the Embassy sort of float. He was a great team player and he expected input from everybody. Everybody seemed to like him and the way he operated. He had staff meetings every morning with the top officers and then he had a large staff meeting once a week with all the officers. He would tell them what was going on, what he was doing, what was going on between our country and that country. This gave everybody the feeling of being in on a team effort. Everybody could ask questions. So it made for a very good operation.

Q: What was the situation in Colombia when you got there in 1961?

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DEARBORN: I would say one of the main problems that Colombia had when I got there was with the violence in the countryside which was ruthless and savage. It wasn't as bad as it had been, it was tapering off somewhat. There was a time when you couldn't travel in the interior without expecting a problem. This was violence between political parties. It had a long tradition, between the Liberals and the Conservatives. There was an old party leader called Laureano Gomez who was President and the hero of the Conservatives. Then there was a short period of dictatorship under General Rojas Pinilla, but he was thrown out eventually.

The man who was most responsible for bringing the government back into constitutionality was Alberto Lleras Camargo who had been director of the Pan-American Union previously. A very able statesman. He worked out a system where they would have alternate Presidencies between the parties—four years of Conservative, four years of Liberal.

When I arrived he was President. The violence continued in certain parts of the country and some of it was between the parties, but also there was some growing violence among leftists who wanted to overthrow the government and put in a leftist system, Marxist system. That was another type of violence. This didn't happen too much on the coast, it was mostly in the interior.

The other main problem, I guess, while I was there was the dollar crunch. They were having a difficult time getting dollars. As a result, AID and the Monetary Fund were involved in trying to help Colombia adjust their system to alleviate this problem. Some very sticky balance of payment loans were conducted and caused quite a bit of resentment on the part of the Colombians because ...

Q: You were saying that there was a monetary problem.

DEARBORN: The US AID and Monetary Fund people who were interested in monetary adjustments were putting too much pressure on them. More than they could stand

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politically. In fact, I was noticing the other day something I had forgotten. While leafing through an old Colombian file I found a performance report on myself in which one of the favorable comments the ambassador made was that I had assisted considerably in setting the proper perspective in these type of negotiations by emphasizing the political aspects and that certain things were just not possible if we didn't want to overthrow the government.

Q: Just to spell this out a little more. There often is this clash within a country—the United States telling a country what it should do, etc. But sometimes these things can have tremendous impact on the political situation which can blow it all up. Were you arguing with the financial wizards that deal with this in the State Department?

DEARBORN: We would have discussions in staff meetings. Once I got into a difficult position because President Lleras Restrepo one day called me over to the Presidency, I was Charg# at the time, and talked about this very question. He realized that I understood his political problem and said that he really appreciated my sympathetic attitude. We let up on the pressure as a result of my going back and telling what had happened. It was something you did have to put the brakes on.

Q: What were American interests in Colombia?

DEARBORN: Well, we had oil interests. There were various smaller American businesses. Colombia was a great exporter of flowers. I had one friend who left an oil company and went into exporting flowers. It still is an important export to the US

We had rather an active American-Colombian Chamber of Commerce. The presidency was supposed to alternate between a Colombian and an American. Once we got into the situation where an Argentine was president because he represented Braniff Airways. We had airlines coming in there. There were several small businesses. Petroleum was the biggest.

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Q: How heavy did you find the hand of the American business side on the Embassy and all?

DEARBORN: Not very. One thing that Ambassador Freeman did, both in Colombia and later in Mexico, that was very helpful for us to keep tabs on American businessmen, was to have a meeting once a month with certain selected members of the American business community. It was a good source for us and he would tell them what we were up to that wasn't secret.

The petroleum companies were of course very important and I suppose in their own relations with the government they probably exercised an influence. But I would not say that American business was driving our relationships with Colombia. Our relations with Colombia must have been among the better relations of all countries. I remember with our CIA operations. We had a big CIA operation in Colombia. Sometimes they wanted to do rather extreme things and I had to remind them that Colombia was a friendly country and they didn't have to bug offices. They voted with us in the UN practically all the time; they were very cooperative. The only sticky problem we had were these aid negotiations and that was a matter of political consideration.

Q: Did you feel that this was just a matter that the CIA was there and as long as they were there they had to keep active?

DEARBORN: Well, you know, we were trying to keep tabs on what Castro was doing. There was a strong leftist movement in Colombia off in the mountains trying to do what Castro did—and still is. But they went into decline after the Bay of Pigs. When it became evident that Castro had tried to build up a nuclear capacity...

Q: You mean after the Cuban missile crisis?

DEARBORN: That is what I mean.

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Q: This was October 6, 1962.

DEARBORN: I know the exact day it was because I was in New Hampshire. My father died on October 20 and I called the Department to ask for permission to fly up to New Hampshire. I would turn things over to the counselor for political affairs, be gone a week and then come back. I had a phone call back from ARA saying, "Look, we have your message and we are thinking about it. We will look into it." I thought that was pretty strange. I thought granting my request would be automatic. I was Charg# which was the problem. The Ambassador was on home leave in the States. Finally they called back and said, "We have finally arranged things so that you can do it. But you leave on Saturday. The Ambassador will arrive a few hours after you leave and will be there all the time that you are in the States. You go back next Sunday and the Ambassador will return to the States to complete his home leave." I wondered what was going on here, the Ambassador interrupting his home leave to come back? Well, what had happened was that the White House had already issued instructions that all ambassadors were to be at their posts and they knew what was coming up. So I was in New Hampshire for a week and came back passing the Ambassador in a plane.

Q: When you came back, what was the reaction that you were getting from your Colombian contacts to the whole Cuban missile crisis?

DEARBORN: I suspect it was the same in most of Latin America, but in Colombia they did a double take. They thought more carefully about the dangers of Cuba. The question of quarantine came up. I have forgotten the date now, but Averell Harriman was sent on a special mission around Latin America to tell the Presidents about actions against Cuba. I wish I could remember better about this... Covey Oliver was Ambassador at that time, so it must have been quite a bit later. The Harriman thing had to do with Cuba I am sure, but I can't remember exactly in what way.

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Q: Well, we were tightening the screws on Cuba all the time. This was probably a bolt in the OAS to keep Cuba out or something of this nature.

DEARBORN: I wish I could remember more to put it in perspective. One incident in connection with that Harriman visit was interesting. Valencia was President and he used to become ill with some frequency. Some people said he drank too much and other people said that it was a health problem. Harriman had a prearranged appointment to call on Valencia at a certain time. I went with him and Ambassador Oliver to the Palace, got out of the car and the Secretary General of the Presidency came to the Palace door and said, "You know, I am terribly sorry but President Valencia is not going to be able to receive Mr. Harriman, he is very ill."

Of course, the first thing that went through my mind was, "Was he really ill or what?" Then he continued to say, "If the President is feeling better by evening he will come out to the Embassy to see Mr. Harriman." Sure enough about 8:00 at night the President drove out to the Embassy and we sat there and discussed hemisphere security matters. I can't remember the details.

About two days later I had a call from the Secretary General of the Presidency saying, "Look, when you came over with Mr. Harriman didn't you have a member of your USIA people taking pictures?" I said, "Yes, as a matter of fact we did. We had a picture of the Secretary General, Harriman, the Ambassador and myself talking at the front door of the Palace." He said, "Well, I want a copy of that." The reason was that Alfonso Lopez, the leader of the opposition party, had come out in public and said that it was absolutely undignified and unfitting that the President of Colombia had gone to the American Embassy instead of having Mr. Harriman come to see him. So with this picture they could prove that we had gone to the Palace first.

Q: I take it it was fairly easy for you and members of the Embassy to deal with the Colombian government.

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DEARBORN: Yes, they were cooperative on substance and friendly personally. Not only that they were a very democratic country. You didn't have to worry who you talked to. You didn't have to fear being seen talking to someone. Anybody would talk to us. It was a great place for political reporting.

Q: Well, what is it with this sort of openness of the society? What causes this reputation and the one of violence. Even today Colombians are considered to be a pretty dangerous group who immigrated to the States.

DEARBORN: It is rooted in history and I don't know how to say it. I do remember the local newspaper, Es Espectador, which was the second largest paper, actually conducted an inquiry among the readers. This wasn't on violence but was related. The question was "Why are Colombians so irritable?" Over a two week period people called and wrote in and then the paper reported on the replies. There wasn't one single person who wrote or called in who denied that they were irritable. But there were all kinds of explanations. Some said the altitude; some said the racial mixture. They all had some notion as to what the problem was.

But it is related because irritations caused the violence. The organized violence, as I say, goes back in history between parties. But then the savageness of the violence...shooting a bus load of people who happened to go into the wrong zone, or giving somebody the necktie cut as they called it where they cut your throat and pull your tongue through the opening, cut off your head and stick it in your stomach...all this absolutely outrageous behavior. I don't know.

When I was in Colombia (Barranquilla) the first time back in the early '40s, the coast was very pacific. Nothing like this would ever happen. We all talked about the violence in the interior.

Q: How about the drug problem, which now, of course, dominates?

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DEARBORN: We had no drug problem. I never heard the word narcotics while I was in Colombia.

Q: What was the role of our military attach# then?

DEARBORN: The attach#s were doing what they do everywhere. But the military missions were the ones that exercised the influence. We had an Army mission, a Naval mission, an Air Force mission in addition to the respective attach#s.

Q: There you were running the Embassy from time to time or at least supervising its general management, did you find that the military missions sort of went off on their own?

DEARBORN: No, we had good relations with the military missions. I can't really remember any problems with them. Of course, the attach#s were engaged in intelligence work. They were all good people. They tended to be officers who were at the end of their career. The missions, of course, were under General O'Mara in Panama—the Cinc...

Q: Southern Command it was called, or something like that, wasn't it?

DEARBORN: Yes. In fact, my relations with him were great. He invited me up to Panama to go through his whole operation. He took me into the leaded room.... And he came to Bogota on occasion. He was rather “an enfant terrible” as far as the missions were concerned. They were all scared to death of him. But he was very nice to me. That was a time when I was the Charg#.

Q: I can't remember the dates, but you must have been there during the time we had to send troops into the Dominican Republic? Johnson sent troops in there.

DEARBORN: Yes, I was.

Q: How did that play in Colombia?

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DEARBORN: Oh, nobody liked it. We had a Foreign Minister called Caicedo Castillo who used to drive Tony Freeman crazy because he was so slow about doing anything. I remember Tony asked me once to go over and talk to Caicedo about the Dominican Republic. I suppose it was that time.

There was nobody in Latin America who liked that. We had a solid international commitment on nonintervention. I am sure Bob Woodward, when you talked to him, probably told you about his experience with Dean Rusk. Bob, I think was the Assistant Secretary at the time and thought that he should remind somebody about the commitment. He went up and tried to tell Dean Rusk about these commitments. Rusk listened and then pulled out his maps and said something like, "Now where would be the best place to land?" As far as Lyndon Johnson was concerned, he apparently gave very little notice to this commitment.

Q: This is not unknown. We messed around in Nicaragua during the late 1980s and wouldn't pay any attention to the International Court over what we were doing there.

DEARBORN: Yes. Georgie Ann Geyer has just written a book on Castro. She is an old time journalist. She was in the Dominican Republic interviewing people at the time of this. In her book she is absolutely outraged that we did this. She said it was unnecessary. It was just that Johnson was afraid it was going to become another Castro's Cuba.

Q: Well, you had two other ambassadors after Freeman left. Covey Oliver came. He was not a career officer. Reynold Carlson followed. He also was non-career. How did this work out?

DEARBORN: Great. They were wonderful, especially Covey. I wasn't with Carlson very long. Tony Freeman had gone to Mexico and he wanted me to go to join him, but the Department said I would have to stay a few months with Carlson who had never worked

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for the government, as far as I know. So I didn't know him as well as I knew Covey. I was with Covey Oliver his entire two year tour as Ambassador.

Covey was great. He was well prepared. He had been dean of the law school, international law, at the University of Pennsylvania and he was well acquainted in international circles. As far as the Embassy was concerned, he just let me run it. I laughed because when he first came in our first talk he said, "You know I look forward to these evenings after the day is over, we can sit and have long talks about things." That was the last time we ever did it. He had the idea he would only work on things that he was interested in. He had no idea how demanding the job would be. However, he immediately became extremely busy. I still keep up with him. He lives down on the Eastern Shore at St. Michaels. He also has a house in Marine County, California. But he was a very good, conscientious ambassador. We continued to operate the Freeman system.

Q: How about our various aid programs, particularly the Alliance for Progress, how did this work out?

DEARBORN: I think very well, except for the negotiations on finances which got sticky everything was very smooth. You had people in so many branches of things, agricultural, education, housing, etc. When I got there they had these agricultural services. Agriculture, of course, is the big thing in Colombia and, of course coffee exports to the US were an important aspect of our relations. All the people who were working with the Colombians in the AID mission seemed to be delighted with the Colombians and with their work. I really can't think of any real difficulties, except in balance of payments negotiations.

Q: I was told that at one point the Colombians sort of surprised everybody in the AID mission by saying, "Okay, we think we can do it alone now, we don't need your experts anymore."

DEARBORN: That was a fraud. I know exactly who that was. It was Sanz de Santa Maria. During these negotiations he got mad and blew up one day and said in so many words,

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“The hell with you, we will go it on our own.” But he didn't mean that. He was a very dramatic fellow and you have to take that into account. Was it Sam Eaton who told you that?

Q: No, it was a man who is trying to work up an oral history account from the Latin American side of the Alliance for Progress. I want to say Messner, or something like that.

DEARBORN: Was he in Colombia?

Q: I don't know, but he was telling me about it. He said to ask this question.

DEARBORN: I guess it is the same thing. He might have run across some memo or telegram, but Sanz de Santa Maria in my opinion was just putting the pressure on us by purposely throwing a fit.

Q: But this was drama and no real change in the situation?

DEARBORN: None at all.

Q: Was there anything else you wanted to say about your time in Colombia?

DEARBORN: We had a very large Peace Corps. Colombia was one of the first countries to receive the Peace Corps.

Q: I was going to say that I really think it was the first.

DEARBORN: The Peace Corps and I arrived in Colombia the same month, September, 1961. It got to be over a thousand. I remember the Ambassador had a staff meeting the focus of which was to study how big we should let this get. It might get to be counterproductive if it got too large. It was mostly in community development. But it also got into educational television. In fact, I just ran across the other day, I don't know if you have ever heard of Tedson Myers who is a lawyer and came down to negotiate an

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agreement with the Colombians on educational television. Now he is President of the Cosmos Club and we ran across him the other day. I hadn't seen him for years and he reminded me of this. I think he was also on the DC Council.

But then they also got into nursing. Mainly it was community development out in the boondocks.

Q: Was there concern about them getting mixed up with the violence?

DEARBORN: They never did. We thought about it, but they never did. We left them completely alone. We never sought them out, they didn't want to be connected with the Embassy. We always kept our connection with the head of the Peace Corps. Aside from that, unless some of the boys and girls came looking for us, we didn't bother them. But I used to go off at least once a year inspecting our consulates in Colombia and would see some of them then. They would take me out to see their projects. President Lleras Camargo was delighted with the Peace Corps. He said it was wonderful.

I am trying to think of the things that stand out most during my stay in Colombia. One was the Kennedy visit to Colombia and I was the officer in charge of the visit. It was a tremendous success. They all felt that they knew him personally and when he died the whole country went into mourning. It was a tremendously impressive thing.

Once I went out with the only person who could have done it, to visit some Indians called the Mutilonis who live in a hunting, fishing stage of civilization. Nobody could go into the area because they had bows and arrows and would shoot strangers. They did this at the time a pipeline was being built across Colombia to the coast. The builders had a running war with these Indians because the pipeline went through their territory. The Mutilonis shot a number of the oil workers. They had arrows with reverse notches which you couldn't pull out. You had to take them out in the direction they were going. But this fellow I knew,

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Bruce Olson, had lived with them for some time and he asked me if I would like to visit them, and I did. It was something never to be forgotten.

Traveling to places like Leticia, down on the Amazon in the southern most corner of Colombia was a great experience. It is another world buried in the Amazon jungle. You can practically walk to Brazil from Leticia. There were more big cities in Colombia than in most Latin countries. Most Latin countries have one or two big cities whereas Colombia has 8 or 10. But the cities weren't always the most interesting as the hinterland was often fascinating and the roads for seeing it was fairly good.

Q: All right, you then went to Mexico City as DCM in 1967. Did you go directly from Colombia? How long did you serve there?

DEARBORN: Yes I went directly to Mexico City. I was there from April, 1967 to September, 1969. I went there because Tony Freeman asked for me. He left Colombia in 1964 to go to Mexico. His DCM was Clarence Boonstra who was being assigned as Ambassador to Costa Rica. So Tony Freeman asked for me and the Department said I could go but would have to stay a few months with newly arrived Reynold Carlson. So as soon as those few months were up, I went to Mexico.

Q: What was the situation in Mexico? The Mexican-American relationship is always a difficult one. Did you find yourself really in a different world?

DEARBORN: Well, the thing that surprised me the most was that they were so friendly. I had never been in Mexico. Back in Yale Graduate School I had written a history of Mexico from the Aztecs to Cardenas in 75 pages. So that was what I knew about Mexico. Considering our history I was astonished at how friendly they were and how helpful they were. What they were saying behind my back I have no idea. But they certainly put up a good front.

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It was a completely different relationship with the government. In Colombia the Ambassador or I, if I was Chargé, could see the President anytime we wanted to. But that didn't happen in Mexico. You just didn't see the President. You went through the Foreign Minister. I think that was quite a shock to Tony Freeman when he got to Mexico. He wasn't used to that and he had to get used to it because that was the way they operated.

I was fortunate in a way. As you say, the relations have difficulties, but looking over a long period, our relations with Mexico during the Freeman years were about as good as they have ever been. We had an excellent relationship with the Foreign Minister, Antonio Carillo Flores, who had been ambassador in Washington. He was an exceptional person for any position. He would have been a great Secretary General at the UN. In fact the Chileans approached him and asked if he would be receptive to that position. I went over and I asked him if it were true that he had been approached. He said, "Yes, they did ask me, but I gave them General Sherman's answer." You could tell how much he knew about the United States. I don't think there was another Foreign Minister in the world who could have said that.

Q: Yes, "If nominated I will not run, if elected I will not serve."

DEARBORN: I remember sending a telegram back to the Department reporting exactly that. Later I found out that they thought that was my interpretation of what he had said. I said, "Not at all, that was what he said." He was excellent and the reason in large part of our good relations at that time.

Q: I have never served in Mexico but have heard that traditionally as they slice things up within the ruling party, the Foreign Minister is sort of thrown to whatever serves as the left there and is often more anti-American. At least there are so many close relations on the military side, on the security side and all with the United States, so the Foreign Ministry is left to be the playground of those who come out of the universities who are kind of anti-American and all that.

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DEARBORN: Carillo Flores was the Foreign Minister during my whole period and that was my good luck because he was pro-US. His right-hand man was also pro-US. Now there were elements in the Foreign Office that were extremely nationalistic and they took positions in the UN against the United States. The man in charge of their relations with international organizations, Garcia Robles, was always taking positions in the UN against us. It irritated the Department no end and they thought he was a communist, which he never was. In fact, we became quite friendly with him. The Counselor of Political Affairs was friendly with him. It didn't change his mind any, however. He was a strongly nationalistic Mexican.

I was fascinated by the fact that the CIA station chief, who had been in Mexico for many years, Win Scott, knew him well. He knew everybody by that time. In fact, he knew the President. He was one man who could go in to see the President whenever he wanted to because in the past when the President was Secretary of Government, Win Scott had a close relationship with him. So Win's relationship with the President was special. When he retired, just before I did, I said, "Look, I know you don't want a big party, but let me take you and Janet out to dinner." I said, "I will take you out to dinner and invite any other couple whom you might want and we'll have a nice evening." I couldn't believe it when the man that he wanted was Garcia Robles who was the bete noire of the US in the Foreign Office. But it wasn't communism, it was Mexicanism.

We had our problems. All the Latin American countries broke relations with Cuba, but Mexico didn't. The Cuban Ambassador was present in Mexico. In fact it got to be embarrassing at one point because he had been there so long that when the dean of the corps was transferred, the deanship fell on the Cuban. In order to avoid embarrassment to the Mexicans the Cuban just went home.

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The CIA had a big operation and their main concern was watching the Russians. It was the first place I had been where there was a Russian Embassy. They had a large establishment.

Q: Were we concerned about the Soviet influence in Mexico?

DEARBORN: The main job of the Soviet embassy in Mexico was to watch the United States. So we were watching them watch us. In fact, when in 1968 the Olympics were held in Mexico, we had an Olympics attach# and an assistant Olympics attach# sent down. The latter was a CIA agent. I guess they were hoping that he could get some information, or defectors, etc. I think I have to mention that that fellow was Philip Agee. As far as I knew he was a very nice fellow. I got along well with him. He wrote up excellent reports on the Olympics. But after I left Mexico, he defected and wrote a book exposing a lot of CIA activities which caused a terrible situation.

Q: He was responsible for fingering CIA operators overseas, including the killing of Robert Welsh in Athens in 1974, because he continued a series of books about the CIA.

DEARBORN: He wrote this book called "Inside the Company, CIA Diary". I never knew what was wrong with Phil, but I know his personal life was messed up. We had a telegram come in addressed to the Ambassador from a Washington lawyer saying, "I want you to tell Phil Agee to send his children back to the United States immediately." So the Ambassador said, "I don't know what this is about. Call Phil in and find out." I asked Phil and he said, "Well, what happened is that my wife lives in the Washington area with our two little boys. We are divorced. She has custody of the children. I went up to see them and I saw how she was treating those little boys [they were about 3 or 4 years old, let's say]. She keeps them locked up in the apartment and won't let them go out to play. They are going to grow up to be misfits. I couldn't stand it. I told her I wanted to take them to the zoo. Instead of taking them to the zoo I took them to the airport and brought them to Mexico. I am not going to return them." So CIA told him that he had to return his children

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or he was fired. He opted to be fired. If you asked Phil if he were fired, he would say, "No, I quit". If you ask CIA, they would say he was fired. Anyway all of this was going on in his life and I always thought he might have had some resentment against the company. How much a part that played in his defection, I don't know.

Q: I would have thought that being DCM in Mexico would be a very complicated job because we have such a huge mission there.

DEARBORN: We had 675 people there.

Q: And then there are all these ties of people both in Washington and Mexico City who call each other by their first names—from the Agricultural service, the Parks service, etc.—who bypass the Embassy. Was this a problem?

DEARBORN: I think one place where it caused us headaches was in the protection business, because being on the border with people going back and forth they would sometimes get into trouble. Sometimes they would get murdered, sometimes they would murder. As a result of this, often a congressman would get involved, because the family would write to their congressman and he would demand action. The guy would be in jail and we would be pressed to get him out. Things like that. There were a few cases like that.

Another problem we had was with LBJ's brother. We assigned an immigration officer to go down to Acapulco and latch on to LBJ's brother and try to keep him out of trouble, because he was always getting in trouble.

I was just noting that in spite of the fact that we didn't have any military missions, and only a one-man AID office in the field of education, it was still a very large Embassy. We didn't have any of those normal adjuncts that we generally have in Latin America, but we had activities that we didn't have anywhere else just because it was a border country. The FBI had a large office because of fugitives, stolen cars, etc. Customs had an office there, Narcotics had an office there. The only interagency spats that I can remember were

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between Customs and Narcotics. And that only reflected what was going on back home. We had a Public Health officer, we had a US Travel Service officer, we had a man from the Weather Bureau, the Immigration Service and then we had nine consulates. We had a supervising consul general and five consuls in the Embassy. So it was a very big thing. If we had had the AID and military missions besides it would have been colossal. It was like being mayor of a city to be DCM.

Q: Was there any problems with the consulates in Mexico?

DEARBORN: No, we had very good people in those consulates. I don't remember any problems.

I remember one funny thing. The Consul General in Hermosillo was leaving. He left quite suddenly and we needed a Consul General immediately. I happened to think of a fellow by the name of John Barfield, who was taking a leave of absence at his own expense and going to LSU for a year. He was the right grade and had had experience in that field. I had just gotten a letter from him a little while earlier saying that he was now interested in the big picture. He wanted to get into policy matters and out of the consular field. But I immediately thought of him and telephoned him. I said, "John, I have your letter here about what you are interested in in the future, but there is an opening for a Consul General in Hermosillo, would you be interested." He said, "Give me five minutes to readjust my thinking and I will be there." Within a couple of weeks he dropped everything and he became Consul General. He had been in Italy and he wanted to brush up on his Spanish so he started attending Spanish classes with the teacher who was giving lessons in the office. The first lesson he took he fell desperately in love with her. They were married and now he is retired and they are living happily in Tucson, Arizona. A happy ending.

Q: You were there during the Olympics. It was sort of a messy business with students...

DEARBORN: Well, just before the Olympics there was a blowup. There were some students that were trying to embarrass the government before the Olympics. The

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government was determined not to have any disruptions during the Olympics. They came down very hard on those students and there were no disruptions. They managed to keep the law enforcement people pretty well out of sight. They were behind buildings ready to pounce, however, and this was generally realized.

The Olympics were a tremendous success in Mexico. They had an interesting aspect to them. I don't know whose idea it was, but they had a sort of cultural fair along with the Olympics. All of the participating countries sent cultural contributions— paintings, dramatic productions, etc. We sent down the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, among other things. They came to the Embassy and played for us.

Q: A New Orleans jazz.

DEARBORN: It was a great success. All along the main avenue they had these posters painted by children of various countries—from Africa and Asia, etc. It was very impressive.

Q: What was the Embassy attitude towards the PRI, the party that has been in power ever since 1910, or something?

DEARBORN: The PRI was a fact of life. The Mexican power rests on a tripod of business, agriculture and labor. The government has to keep those three elements satisfied. Agriculture and labor tend to be on the left side and business on the right side. They do a balancing act, if you do something for one you have to find something to do for the others. They always say that the President of Mexico is so powerful, but the fact is that he is powerful because he keeps his finger on the pulse. In an election time, the candidate of the PRI goes out and stumps the country as if his life depended on it. There is a reason for this. He has to keep in touch. He doesn't sit up there and order people to do this and that. He knows what he can do and get away with. But the Mexican stance in general has to be leftist. Anyone in the State Department and US government has to know this. And they

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have to have the image of standing up to the United States. This is an essential part of a Mexican government retaining its support. But within that we get along pretty well.

And then we have tools that help us. We have these inter-parliamentary meetings with Mexico. One year our delegation from congress meets with their congressional delegation congress down there and the next year, up here. They pick different places to make it more interesting. Once they met in Hawaii, I think. These meetings help the legislators of each country understand their respective problems. But you are right about there being so many non-governmental connections—even more than when I was there.

When I was there Mexican policy on foreign investment would not allow a business dominated by foreign investment. Now you can. This is a big change.

Q: Did illegal immigration play a major role?

DEARBORN: It was something that was always listed among our problems. In the inter-parliamentary meetings, for example, it was always a concern. The Mexicans were interested in how the United States treated Mexicans who came up here. We had had an agreement called the Bracero Agreement where a certain number of seasonal workers were allowed to come up, but that wasn't functioning when I was there—it was before.

There was tremendous tourism, of course. Wherever you get a lot of tourists, protection becomes a major problem. There were a couple of dramatic cases. There was one up in Monterrey. There was a man in jail for murdering some tourists. He was an American. His people appealed to US Congressmen and we got all this pressure to do something about him. Finally he escaped and the last I heard of him was that he escaped to Texas and not too long afterwards was murdered in a barroom brawl.

There was a dramatic rescue of somebody whose name I forget. It was written up and I think they made a movie out of it. He was a man who was in prison and was rescued by helicopter—he was flown right out of the prison yard.

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Q: What happened? There must have been quite a lot of pressure on the Embassy to do something to get the guy back.

DEARBORN: I don't remember that. I think both sides were glad to be rid of him. In fact, the fellow who escaped up in Monterrey, we always thought the Mexicans looked the other way, being tired of him and the problems he was causing.

Q: How about corruption? Was this a problem?

DEARBORN: From our point of view, corruption was a way of life in Mexico. For them it was a way of doing business. The mordida, as they call it, is the way of supplementing a salary. Yes, from our point of view, nearly everyone was on the take. To get a contract you had to throw in a little extra. If the police stop you, you can give them a little something and get off. It is a way of life. I don't know. When it is so deeply rooted how you can get rid of it. That is the scary part. In any country, if it digs in how do you get it out?

Q: Did you retire from this post?

DEARBORN: Tony Freeman left in January, 1967. I was Charg# for over six months. Along about February or March, I had a message from the Department saying that I had been out 15 years and had to come home. It took me until the next morning to send off a letter handing in my resignation. My thought was that I was 57 and had 3 more years to go to retirement and I didn't want to work my last three years in the Department. I had had 11 straight years in the Department, but that was a long time ago. After they got my letter I had a phone call saying, "Look, would you be willing to stay until we find a new ambassador?" I said, "I am willing to stay here for 10 years; it is the Department where I don't want to work." So they said, "Great, we haven't found an ambassador yet so agree that you should stay on until we do and then stay a couple of months with the new ambassador."

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Month after month went by and no ambassador. About July Bob McBride was named Ambassador. When he arrived I stayed with him until September and then I came home. Then I waited for financial reasons until February to retire.

In September, the very month I came home relations with Mexico went into a tailspin because Nixon, recently in the Presidency, and his cohorts did something that we never would have done under LBJ. He suddenly, overnight, closed the border because of the narcotics problem. He didn't tell the Mexicans in advance even though he had just met a few days previously with the Mexican President. Well, Diac Ordaz was furious. He said a wall of suspicion had arisen between our two countries. This was pretty strong language considering how good our relations had been. So the last thing I really remember doing before retirement was writing a memo and sending it to everybody I could think of saying that this was not the way to handle relations with Mexico. We had been very successful with talking things over; being open and frank. But this secretiveness and drastic action was not the way to do things.

Q: Do you recall what caused this sudden border closing? Was this a reaction within the White House?

DEARBORN: I think what happened was that the Justice Department, and especially a man named Kleindienst grabbed the narcotics thing and ran with it. They overpowered everybody else who tried to stop them. I remember saying in my memo that I didn't blame the Justice Department and Mr. Kleindienst for what they did because after all they are policemen and they did what they were supposed to do. But I said I couldn't understand why they weren't politically overridden. I know Kleindienst got a copy of this memo and he didn't like me very much.

Q: He later went to jail didn't he?

DEARBORN: He did.

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Along about June, after I had retired, Charlie Meyer who was Assistant Secretary for Latin America called me on the phone and said, "Look we want you to come back to work." I said, "Well, I retired to retire not to go back to work at the Department." He said, "Well, what happened is that we don't have a director for Mexican affairs and we have a Presidential visit coming up and we need somebody in there who is familiar recently with everything. Ambassador McBride told us that he thinks you are the one. It will just be for a month or two." So I agreed and went back for a month or two—it got to be three months, four months, five months. Finally I wrote a desperate memo repeating that I had retired to retire not to work in the Department. Finally they let me loose again.

Q: Well looking back on your career, what gave you the greatest satisfaction would you say?

DEARBORN: I think that along the way to feel that I was doing something of importance. I can't think of anything else that I would have done that I would have been better at. I ended up with a happy feeling. I didn't feel unhappy when I retired. I just figured that those last few years before compulsory retirement didn't matter and I didn't want to spend them in the Department. I was quite happy that I was retiring on my own initiative instead of being told that I should retire.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much. I really appreciated this.

DEARBORN: I didn't know quite what to expect. This job must be very interesting to you.

End of interview