

ORGANIZATION FOR AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

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ALBERTO M. PIEDRA
Staff, OAS
Washington, DC (1960-1962)

U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council, OAS
Washington, DC (1982-1984)

Alberto M. Piedra was born in Havana, Cuba and raised in Europe. After a brief stint in Fidel Castro's government, he left Cuba to finish his degree at Georgetown. Piedra worked for OAS, then was appointed Ambassador to Guatemala. Some of his other posts included special advisor to the General Assembly of the United Nations and a appointment on the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Piedra was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

PIEDRA: So, in September I left. I came back to Washington and started looking for a job. My wife did not leave because the baby was born in June and she wanted to wait a few months so she didn't leave until about December. In the meantime I got a job at the OAS, Organization of American States. That is how I began my professional career in the States. Finally my wife joined me in December and we have stayed in Washington ever since. We have lived in Washington since 1959.

Q: I take it that you were not part of the Cuban exile community that developed particularly around Miami?

PIEDRA: No, I was not. As you can well imagine I knew many of the people who afterwards left Cuba and I maintain fairly close contact with some of them in Miami. But I have never been part of that community in the sense that we have been in Washington and they have been in Miami.

Q: The reason I mention this is for someone looking at this in the future, this group, as often an emigre group does, is much concerned with Cuba, internal politics and also the emigre politics within an area.

PIEDRA: We were concerned with internal politics in Cuba because after all it was the country we were born in. But I was not directly involved in any internal politics that took place in Miami.

Q: I wonder if you would talk a little about your time on the OAS staff. You were there from 1960-62 and would return 20 years later. How did you see the OAS operating in the early 60s, the time when the Alliance of Progress was just getting started and all that? And America's role in the OAS, was there a change when you got into it later on?

PIEDRA: Well, obviously you have to realize that I was at an entirely different level when I was at the OAS the first time so therefore my approach was slightly different.

Now I think and have always maintained that the OAS has a role to play...it played it in the past and I think it can play it in the future.

When I was there the first time I think the OAS was much more involved in economic matters. It was also involved in political matters, obviously, but I think greater stress was placed on economic aspects. Maybe the reason for this was that at that time the Inter-American Development Bank was just beginning, as you know. It was in its very initial stages. As the Bank developed it took over many of the economic functions of the OAS. Therefore that particular role of the OAS has definitely declined, in my opinion. I may be wrong. That does not mean that the OAS does not have a role to play, but I don't think it is as significant as it was before.

Nevertheless, from a political point of view, on a regional basis, I think it has solved problems. I think it has solved problems, maybe of what you might call on a global level of a minor importance, but from the point of view of the area, it has played a significant role in the Honduran and Salvadoran conflict as well as other territorial conflicts. So from that point of view it did play a role, it is still playing a role and I think it can continue from our point of view to play a role.

Q: How did your appointment to be the number two person in the US Delegation to the OAS come about? You served there from 1982-84.

PIEDRA: In all honestly it is difficult to tell. I guess it came about because I had contacts in the Senate and Congress. I suppose they needed somebody in Latin American affairs and in a very special way I also knew Ambassador Middendorf.

Q: Who was the chief of the delegation.

PIEDRA: Apparently they talked to Ambassador Middendorf and they said he needed somebody who would be a specialist in Latin American affairs. He called me one day and said, "Alberto I would like you to become my second at the OAS." I thought about it and since I am very much interested in the area I said, "Yes." When I mentioned before that one of my weak spots is teaching, I have to be frank and say that diplomacy has always attracted me, not politics. One must make the distinction. Diplomacy has always attracted me. I like dealing with people. I am very socially inclined. Getting involved with persons...I have always enjoyed that.

And let me add that we did maintain through all these years very close contacts with the different Latin American embassies, so we had close contacts with ambassadors, etc.

Q This is the early Reagan Administration which had been taking a jaundiced look at the United Nations, etc. Did this carry over in its attitude towards the Organization American States?

PIEDRA: I do believe for many problems, especially in the region areas it was easier for the United States to get backing within the OAS than a global institution like the United Nations where at that time there were the Soviet bloc countries, third world blocs, etc. which would for various reasons often vote against the United States. So for us it was easier to get the results we wanted by operating within a regional organization.

Q: So it wasn't quite the same attitude as it was towards the United Nations--almost an attitude of disdain?

PIEDRA: No, no, I definitely would not say that. It is not a question of disdain. It is a question maybe of tactics if you wish, but it would be easier in many ways, I suppose, when a regional issue came up to get support within the hemisphere then it would be to go to the United Nations when you knew beforehand that you were going to get the opposition of x number of votes. Here, within our region, there was a greater possibility of us being able....

Q: You could work with the situation.

PIEDRA: I do want to clarify it doesn't mean disdain. Not at all.

Q: No, I was talking about disdain more for the United Nations.

PIEDRA: I wouldn't call it disdain, I would call it for tactical reasons it was easier for us to get the results... Let's be very frank about this. Let's put the case of Cuba. Any issue involving Cuba would be much more difficult at that time, today things have changed, to get the support of whatever members of the UN than it would be of the OAS.

Q: Were there any issues that occupied this two year periods? What were they?

PIEDRA: The Malvinas issue. The Falkland islands.

Q: Could you explain what it was and what was the American role?

PIEDRA: We were in this particular incidence divided between our allegiance towards Latin America...most Latin American countries took the side of the Argentine...and on the other hand we also had our allegiances towards Britain for obvious reasons that we don't have to go into, plus the fact that it was an invasion. It was a territorial invasion of an area of the world that was under the British flag and they used military force and power to do it.

Q: And a pretty odious government at that time in Argentina.

PIEDRA: That's right. These factors made it difficult for us in the sense we wanted to be on the side of Latin America but on the other hand we realized that in these particular circumstances it was very difficult to take a position that would please our Latin American neighbors in the South. And then we could not accept a violation of international law which in reality it was.

Q: It was pretty obvious that if we were to deal on a world basis we couldn't accept this invasion, but you have all sorts of Latin pride involved, etc. How did you deal with this in the OAS?

PIEDRA: One of the issues which was raised many, many times that concerned me particularly was the reaction that the Latin Americans would have towards the United States if we took the position of anti the Argentine. That concerned me very much because I was worried that our actions in "favor" of Britain, for example, would boomerang against us possibly in the long run because it would leave a trace of...at the time when the chips were down you didn't back us you backed them. That was the conflict that arose. I mentioned it many times. It was a difficult decision and I am sure that those at the highest levels in government were concerned about this. On the one hand we did not want to antagonize the Latin American countries, on the other hand Britain was involved and there was an invasion. So it was not an easy thing for us to do.

General Haig, Secretary of State at that time, did try by all means to work out an agreement.

Q: There was shuttle diplomacy which probably was the longest shuttle one can imagine-- between Washington, London and Buenos Aires.

PIEDRA: Yes, I remember. I was involved in that here in the Washington area. But unfortunately, Galtieri was so stubborn.

Q: He was the head of the junta in Buenos Aires.

PIEDRA: He was so stubborn that until the very last moment when he was offered all possibilities of an honorable retreat he didn't accept it. From that point of view I think he was extremely foolish and stupid. Until the very last moment I think an agreement could have been reached. We tried, I really mean it. I know this is true. We tried every which way to do so.

Q: Obviously the sympathies in the United States ran with the British, do you think within the OAS, with your work and Ambassador Middendorf's work and all that there was understanding of the complexities and problems for the United States?

PIEDRA: I think there was an understanding. I think here again the same thing we had the problem with Britain on the one hand and the invasion of the Falkland Islands on the other, they also experienced on the one hand they realized that there was something wrong here, the way it was done. I would tend to say that they would sympathize for the Falklands to be returned to the Argentine. They had a sense of loyalty towards the Argentine. But on the other hand there were two problems: First, the way it was done and secondly, they did not sympathize with Galtieri. So this was the clash that existed. However, as they demonstrated by their vote they did solidify themselves with the Argentine. I think there was the sense of loyalty in Latin America of "let's all be together," etc. And, of course, this was used by the more leftist governments in Latin America to accuse the United States of all sorts of imperialism, involvement in internal affairs of the region, etc.

Q: Was it your impression from the OAS that it wasn't a long lasting poison?

PIEDRA: No. I have to admit and I admitted openly that I think I over rated the reactions that would come in the future. I thought the reaction would stay there and on the basis of conversations that I had I honestly thought that there would be much more hard feelings. But I would agree with what you said now. It seems to be long forgotten...I don't think anyone remembers. To be honest with you, I think from that point of view that I over rated the possibility of the negative reaction in the future.

Q: Well I think that we in the diplomatic trade have to look at a worse case scenario anyway. One has to say that there is a real potential of a problem.

PIEDRA: Especially when you talk with some of the people you dealt with who were directly involved. I think the long run effect of all this, unless something comes up in the future that we are unaware of, are very mild.

JOHN A. FERCH
Staff, OAS
Washington, DC (1961-1963)

Ambassador John A. Ferch was born in Toledo, Ohio on February 6, 1936. He received his BA from Princeton University in 1958 and his MA from the University of Michigan in 1964. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, and Honduras. Ambassador Ferch was interviewed by William E. Knight on September 27, 1991.

Q: You did not go to INR at all.

FERCH: I did not go to INR at all. How it is that people listened to such naivete when I said that I didn't like that and would rather go some place else, I don't know. But they did.

I went to our mission to the OAS. So I had two assignments to ARA in a row. This leads to another conclusion which I will try to come to next.

The OAS was a good assignment. I was the very, very low man on the totem pole, but coincidentally also on the mission at the time was Bill Bowdler, who subsequently held many senior assignments-- Ambassador to South Africa, Ambassador to El Salvador and Guatemala, Assistant Secretary for ARA. That contact led to two subsequent assignments. This just shows you how the Service works.

Perhaps the two salient aspects of the OAS assignment were that it imbedded my interest in Latin America a bit more and also gave me the opportunity to do two things. First, to lobby for an assignment in economic training. But while I was in Washington, I also took advantage of the Department's programs to go to the graduate school at George Washington University for economics in the evening. I must have taken four courses in the four years.

The Department did agree to send me to the University of Michigan. By now we are at 1963-64.

Q: Six years in the Service at this point.

FERCH: Well, four years before going to Michigan. A little bit more if you add in the training program, home leave, etc. I left for Michigan in the fall of 1963. That is five years after entering the Foreign Service.

I was relatively fortunate in the courses I took at Michigan. Most of them proved to be very relevant to my subsequent work.

Q: Which did you consider particularly relevant?

FERCH: There was a professor there by the name of Leonard Smith who had been on the Council of Economic Advisers and he crafted a program called "Stabilization" in which he brought together all of the disciplines of government economic policies-- monetary, fiscal, trade--and showed how they interact and how you can use them in an interacting way to achieve stability. Stability would be defined as a steady growth course. It was fairly intellectually challenging and rewarding.

In Michigan I started looking around for jobs. Here is where, as I alluded to earlier, the regional direction of my career became fixed. I had made a minor name for myself on the mission to the OAS, also, probably in Argentina, to a degree. But I had not served anywhere else. So the only people who knew of me were the people in ARA. Here I was an economist at the very time when the Alliance of Progress was peaking. There was great need in ARA for economists because we were throwing a lot of money into Latin America. I use that phrase advisedly.

So ARA was very interested in getting me back into ARA. I suppose the Department's formal policy at that time was that I should have gone some place else regionally. But ARA offered me an assignment as an economist in Bogotá. It was doing the hard economics--the balance of

payments, the fiscal accounts. At that time we were putting into the Colombian economy through AID resources equivalent to over a third of their import bill. We were in Colombia in a big, big way and were working very closely with Colombia's economic policy and had great need for detailed reporting on the course of the Colombian economy. There I learned to do basically an IMF type economic analysis where you do a monthly report on the Colombian balance of payments, on the budget expenditures, etc.

CURTIS C. CUTTER
Special Assistant to Ambassador Sol Linowitz, OAS
Washington, DC (1967-1968)

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

Q: You left Peruvian affairs in 1967 and you were back on the international side. You went to the OAS [Organization of American States] for, what, about two years?

CUTTER: Well, it was basically a year.

Q: This is 1967 to 1968. What were you doing?

CUTTER: Well, it was kind of interesting. Bob Sayre was then Deputy Assistant Secretary for ARA. Linc Gordon was the Assistant Secretary, and they had appointed Sol Linowitz as the Ambassador to the OAS. The Bureau, I think, knew nothing about Sol Linowitz. They wanted to have somebody whom they had some confidence in, I guess, to work with him in that office. So I was made his Special Assistant. And a delightful assignment it was.

Q: Sol Linowitz kept being brought in for various, major assignments. What was his style, as you saw it, during this period of operations?

CUTTER: He'd come, of course, from the private sector and had been the chairman of the board of one of the most successful corporations in the country.

Q: That was Xerox.

CUTTER: Yes, Xerox. He'd left Xerox as an extremely wealthy man, all on the basis of his holdings in Xerox. So he came to government as a man with unbelievable mobility, independence. One of the most brilliant men that I've ever had any contact with. He was one of the fastest studies. He could literally speed read a stack of cables two inches thick in 20 minutes and remember, two months later, what he read there. He just has an incredible mind. An extremely impatient man, not a man who's comfortable with bureaucratic procedures. A lot of my job was to try and keep peace between his demands and the bureaucracy's way of operating.

Linowitz came on board feeling that what he had to do was to bring the OAS back to life. The way to do that, in his view, was to get a secretary general who would be a man of action, somebody who would take this rather sleepy organization, a kind of backwater in many ways--it had been for many years just a tool of U. S. policy--and try to make it something real, something that had goals of its own, had some spirit and spunk. And it might even stand up to the U. S. if the U. S., in fact, was wrong about some issue. So his major goal during the year I worked with him was to get Galo Plaza elected secretary general of the OAS. Galo Plaza was an Ecuadorian, had been a football player here in the United States, gone back and after a career in business had been elected president of Ecuador. He was a man of considerable presence and standing in his own right and had a rather independent turn of mind. A man who interfaced very well, I think, with the Kennedy approach. He saw the Alliance for Progress as a very useful operation, but he wasn't going to be pushed around by anybody, not by the U. S. or by anybody else.

We spent, I guess, a major part of that year getting Galo Plaza positioned. He was our candidate. There's no question about it. There were some other, second rate candidates being pushed very strongly by Latin Americans. They didn't particularly want this to become an active and aggressive organization, even though I think that it was in their long term interest to be such. We spent a good deal of our political capital that year, getting Galo Plaza elected and were successful. I think that he turned out to be a reasonably good secretary general.

Q: Did you find Linowitz a quick study in all...How did he relate to the Latin Americans? I would have...

CUTTER: Very well. Unfortunately, he didn't speak Spanish and still doesn't, although he's spent a lot of time working with Latinos and is the head, as you know, of the Inter-American Dialogue today. He has a personality which is very simpatico for Latins. He is the kind of person who likes to stand nose to nose with you and convince you. And he likes to talk about ideas. He is a very spontaneous person--all those things, I think, endeared him to the Latins. He was a very quick study. He very quickly understood what the basic problems underlying Latin American affairs were. And I think that the Latinos were very pleased with that. In negotiating situations he's a master. He's a lawyer by training. He's a person who gets a quick fix on what the essential elements in any negotiation are. He was willing to understand what the other guy's point of view was, as long as it didn't detract from our own position, and to try and work around that and try to get a meeting of the minds on that issue. He put in a sterling performance on the Panama Canal negotiations, but that came later on, down the road.

Q: How well did he integrate with the Johnson Administration?

CUTTER: Well, I can tell you one anecdote that probably illustrates that as well as anything can. One day I was in his office, and a call came from the White House. The President wanted to see him. No agenda was specified. He turned to me and Ambler Moss, who was my assistant at that time and later was our Ambassador in Panama, and said, "What do you suppose the President wants to talk about?" Well, we came up with all kinds of things related to Latin America that we thought he might want to talk about. The Ambassador [Linowitz] took off for the White House.

He came back about an hour and a half later, ashen. I'd never seen a man who was so shaken and so changed in the hour or an hour and a half he'd spent over in the White House. He sort of sat behind his desk. I'd never seen this very ebullient man so down. He said, "I want to tell you that I've been through one of the most amazing experiences of my life." He said, "I walked into the Oval Office, and the President welcomed me warmly and sat me down in front of the fireplace, sat down across--just the two of us--and said: 'Sol, you're doing a fine job on Latin America. I want you to know that, want you to know that I'm pleased with what you're doing. But you know, you're out there a lot on the university campuses, speaking, and you're doing a wonderful job. But you never talk about Vietnam. I want you to know that I know about that, and we need all the help we can get at this point. I wish you would be a little more supportive of our position out there. I want you to go out there and talk about Vietnam, about what I'm trying to accomplish, and I hope you'll be able to do that for me.'" And Linowitz said: "Mr. President, I came on board, not because I approved of your Vietnam policy, but because I thought you had a very good fix on Latin America and that I could be of great help to you in that area. I'm doing my best. I'm doing what I can, and I'm doing something that I believe in. And that's the reason I'm so effective on university campuses. Because when I go out there, I'm talking about something I really feel inside of me. It's something that I feel very comfortable with. But I don't feel very comfortable with what's going on with your Vietnam policy, and I could not be a very convincing spokesman for that." I'm paraphrasing, of course. He said: "I don't think that I'd be able to do that."

Well, he said, at this point the President went ballistic. He roared around the office, shouted, used the worst kind of Texas country language, and hill country language and barely let Linowitz get a word in edgewise. Finally, when this tirade stopped, he turned to Linowitz and said: "What are you going to do about it?" Linowitz said: "Well, sir, you'll have my resignation on your desk in the morning, if that's the way you feel about it." The President stopped, looked at him, and said: "Resignation? You're doing a fine job on Latin America. Now, if you can't do this favor for me, just get back there and do the best job you can."

Linowitz left the Oval Office and came back and said to us: "I've never been spoken to that way in my entire, adult life. What should I do about it?" We talked about it and said: "Well, you've still got a mandate. If you want to continue doing it, we think you should." That is, in fact, what happened. He continued working to the best of his ability, and the President never bothered him again about Vietnam.

Q: Well, you move from this obviously rather heady atmosphere, once again, to a quieter place which didn't turn out to be so quiet. You were off to Brazil.

HENRY E. CATTO, JR.
Deputy Representative, OAS
Washington, DC (1969-1971)

Henry E. Catto, Jr. attended Williams College before being appointed as deputy representative to OAS. He subsequently served as ambassador to El Salvador,

*Chief of Protocol, and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Europe.
Catto was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.*

Q: *What did you do after you left Williams?*

CATTO: I moved back to Texas, went into the family business and heavily into Republican politics. And over the years, when the Republicans finally won an election, I had bet on the right horse and came to Washington.

Q: *This election was Nixon's election in--*

CATTO: '68.

Q: *1968. So you came, what, 1969 to Washington?*

CATTO: That's right.

Q: *And what did you do at that point?*

CATTO: I was appointed by the President to be deputy representative to the Organization of American States.

Q: *Had you had any connection--I mean obviously you came from Texas, but had you had any other connection with Latin America?*

CATTO: Other than travel, no, not really. I had the Spanish language, and a certain amount of travel experience in Latin America, and that was it. I was not in business involved in Latin America, but interested. We, for example, had been very involved in the San Antonio World's Fair in 1968 which was called Hemisfair, which was aimed at the Latin American connection. I had been on the board of that and very much involved.

Q: *Your family business in Texas was where? In San Antonio?*

CATTO: In San Antonio.

Q: *And what was it concerned with?*

CATTO: Insurance and real estate and that kind of thing.

Q: *Did you seek the position with the OAS?*

CATTO: Not specifically. All I knew was that I wanted to get involved with Latin America one way or another.

Q: *Why?*

CATTO: Interest. Fascinated, like the people, like the politics, like the area.

Q: *What did your work involve with the OAS?*

CATTO: Mostly working with the OAS Council on Education, Science and Culture, one of three OAS councils. The main one, the political one, this one and there was a third dealing with economic affairs.

Q: *And what were some of the issues that you had to deal with?*

CATTO: Oh, transfer of technology. Problems of how--everything that had to do with what can the United States do for the Latin American countries without becoming too overtly Yankee imperialistic. How can you help us and hide the fact that you are so it doesn't hurt our politicians. Part of the charm of the OAS from the Latin American standpoint was that it tended to launder American assistance and give it the imprimatur of an international organization; rather than the Yankee dollars flowing directly, passing through an international organization gave the aid a legitimacy that some Latin politicians thought direct aid didn't have.

Q: *What was the Nixon Administration attitude towards Latin America?*

CATTO: They didn't know where it was. Who was it? Maybe it was--

Q: *Kissinger said it was a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica.*

CATTO: Of Antarctica, exactly.

Q: *And I think this permeated. Had Nixon traveled much? I mean, he'd had one--ill-fated, not ill-fated.*

CATTO: Caracas.

Q: *He'd had the Caracas trip. But had he made other trips there?*

CATTO: Not that I recall. And certainly during the course of my involvement in Latin America there was nothing. I remember when I was Ambassador in El Salvador, the Salvadoran president sort of hinted to me once that, gee, it would be nice for me to get an invitation to Washington to go see President Nixon. The idea was risible, who would have dreamed of this ever happening. I also remember when President Johnson of course had gone down and met with five presidents of Central America. I remember one sort of amusing tale about that. I had gone to see Johnson before I left for the OAS post and he was regaling me with Latin American stories. One of which was that this dinner was in San Salvador and he was to meet and eat with the five Central American presidents. He was panic stricken because he didn't speak any Spanish and he thought, this is going to be one heavy duty to spend the whole evening with these guys. And he said to his military assistant, "look, if I put my hands behind my head and rear back, that's going to be a signal and you're going to come up to me and say, 'Mr. President, there's a telephone call of great urgency,' and I'm going to get out of this." Well, as it turned out, these five funny little men that

he was having dinner with turned out to be pretty interesting and the language barrier was not really a barrier and he got involved. And an animated man always, at one point he clasped his hands behind his head and the aide came charging up and said, "Mr. President, you're wanted on the telephone." And he said, "Well, who the hell is it?" The hapless aide, "Er, sir, I mean, you--." He said, "Well Goddammit, get his number and I'll call him back."

So that was atypical of American attitudes toward Latin America at the time.

Q: I might just for the record, when we're talking about the Caracas incident with Nixon, he went down there as vice president and there were major demonstrations in which the car was attacked, rocks, spat upon, and all that. In a way it was sort of, I tried it once and I never want to try it again.

How did you find your role at the OAS? How did it connect with the American Republics Bureau (ARA) in the Department of State?

CATTO: Oh, we were very much under the thumb of the ARA. Our delegation office was in the State Department, right down the hall. John Jova was my boss during that time, a distinguished career officer from whom I learned a great deal. The marching orders came pretty well from ARA, as you would expect.

Q: Again, did you suffer from--or not suffer, at least bask in benign neglect, would you say?

CATTO: Yes, pretty much. The Secretary of State would come to the annual meeting of the OAS, make a speech and flee in terror as quickly as he could get out of there. The issues were not on the front burner during those calm days.

Q: It was really Vietnam absorbing.

CATTO: Totally absorbing. All of the energy and attention of Kissinger and of the Secretary of State, who at the time was Bill Rogers.

Q: After you were there with the OAS from 1969 to '71, I take it--

CATTO: Right.

JOSEPH JOHN JOVA
Ambassador, OAS
Washington, DC (1969-1973)

Ambassador Joseph J. Jova was born in New York in 1916. He joined the Foreign Service in 1947. In addition to serving in Chile, Ambassador Jova served in Iraq, Morocco, Portugal, and was ambassador to Honduras, the Organization of

American States, and Mexico. Ambassador Jova was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: You left Honduras in 1969, and you took on another major job. You were ambassador to the OAS from 1969 to 1973.

JOVA: Correct. The new administration came in just prior to that.

Q: This would be the Nixon administration.

JOVA: And Assistant Secretary for Latin America, Charlie Meyer, who was from the business world. A wonderful person, I don't know if he had anything to do with it. He knew something about Latin America because he had worked for Sears Roebuck.

Q: Talking about the new administration, sometimes when a new administration comes in, particularly when the Reagan administration came in in 1981, particularly in Latin America--I mean, there was blood in the corridor. As a professional dealing with Latin America, what was the view of the Nixon administration to Latin America, and how it took over, and the type of people it was sending out?

JOVA: Oh, it was much milder than the Reagan administration.

Q: But there was no great issue, was there, as far as Latin America was concerned?

JOVA: When the Reagan administration came I was already retired. I retired when Carter came in, not because of that. But the Reagan administration...well, they came in with...I think he was the Assistant Secretary of State, Bill Bowdler, I think he had 24 hours to clean his desk out, and get out, or maybe it wasn't even...

Q: I think it was less than that.

JOVA: But he I know was embittered ever since. In other words there was quite a lot of vindictiveness, and that includes several ambassadors and senior officers in the field. Bob White was one. They couldn't wait to get him out. But as I recall, it was all done in a very...after all, Nixon was part of the establishment already, and certainly Secretary Rogers was very much Washington. Charlie Meyer was in this little establishment, a lot of culture and that sort of thing, but at the same time he also felt very akin to the Foreign Service.

Q: What does the job of ambassador to the OAS...it may have changed, but from '69 to '73, what essentially did the American ambassador to the OAS do?

JOVA: The ambassador has his mission, the size of a small embassy. Just like the ambassador to the United Nations on a smaller, more homogeneous scale. The council itself would meet every Wednesday, if I recall rightly, unless there was some emergency--that's a permanent council composed of the ambassadors accredited. During the rest of the week the work was carried on by committees, which the ambassador might or might not attend or participate in.

When I came, I think I was the first career person to be ambassador in many, many years. The staff had fallen into the pattern of doing the committee work themselves, except I also found out there's where the stew is cooked. Once it is prepared and presented to the permanent council, its already cooked you might say--debated and picked apart a little bit--but its much better to participate yourself in committee work. So little by little I did more and more of that in one committee or another. You can't cover them all, and you can't have the background on all of them. Some of the people were Foreign Service officers that were rotated. Some of the Foreign Service officers for one reason or another had stayed there a long time. Some were civil service. And, of course, those people who had permanence there were very, very valuable. Sometimes they were a little bit frozen in their positions, but they remembered exactly why the United States had such and such a position, and the reasons for it. It wasn't just based on whims. So they were good.

Of course, when I arrived, it was sort of a difficult thing. Remember I had just come from Honduras, the famous football games had taken place, with the difficulties between both countries had arisen.

Q: We're talking about the soccer war.

JOVA: Yes. I was there for the games. As a matter of fact the farewell party that the president of Honduras gave for us, a dinner at his house, was the same day that the return game in Salvador was taking place. During that dinner they were bringing him in notices--telephone calls, or from the police, or from the frontier guards, etc.--of what had gone on, what was going on, on the route between San Salvador and Honduras.

I know that some of our embassy servants had gone to that game, and the next morning they were still white with terror. I remember our cook and some of the others saying, "Thank God we're back home safely. It was terrible. Our buses were tumbled, cars were turned over, windows were broken in the buses by the Salvadorans." After that the Hondurans started tightening up on the legal residents of Salvador that were in Honduras, expelling some of them, taking away land they were squatting. And as a result of that, or stemming from that, there was this international tension, and then actual military hostilities. Of course, the Salvadorans claimed that Hondurans committed genocide, and violated the human rights of their people.

I spoke a little earlier about the population growth, the over population, scarcity of jobs, and of course, to the Salvadorans Honduras had been a great big escape valve. It was easy to cross the frontier and certain population had moved in. And the fact that these people were being sent back, and the perspective of this going on in major numbers, was very frightening to the Salvadoran establishment because this would be unsettling to the civil life of their country. And this is one of the things that stimulated them to take strong action, military action.

Q: In a way it is somewhat a reflection, except on a smaller scale, but its important as with Mexico which you dealt with later on.

JOVA: The same thing. This business of transfers of human elements are very emotional, but also have economic and political considerations.

I arrived there. The war had already started. I wasn't accredited yet, it took a while. I was advised not to appear in the council, perhaps I was too over judicious. And again perhaps the staff was kind of over protective, and maybe they'd as soon not have the new boss around, so I was working in the office most of the time, until they rushed me through the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. I remember it was a quick and painless approval with Senator Fulbright in the chair. True, the usual searching questions. And then my swearing in was almost like Calvin Coolidge's in the Under Secretary's office. They brought up a bible, and they swore me in, just myself and Charlie Meyer. So then I was finally accredited.

I guess I had already gone to Galo Plaza, who was then the Secretary General, and then started participating fully in the proceedings of the mediation consultation. Because, you see, as this had been a wartime situation, something which threatened the peace of the hemisphere, the permanent council was transformed, a meeting of Foreign Ministers was called. And that in turn is what started the mediation and conciliation between the two countries. And then when the Foreign Ministers left, their representatives would wear other hats for the meeting on this particular subject. There would be a meeting under the Rio Treaty, rather than just under the charter of the OAS.

John Ford--now dead, you know, died a couple of years ago--was the next senior person. The equivalent of Deputy Chief of Mission. He had done a wonderful job and of course he had an engaging personality, and boundless energy. Almost too much sometimes. He'd live on nerves for days at a time when one of these crises would start. But basically he did a wonderful job. I gradually played a greater and greater role in this because as you know we had peace missions. There was a special committee inside the OAS, under the Rio Treaty, set up to carry out the whole function of trying to bring peace about in Central America. We sent military observers from various countries of Latin America, including the United States, which provided the airlift. The first thing was to get them to retreat out of Honduran territory. And second to make sure they weren't back in, this took two years. All the time I was there, this was a part of an ongoing process, but certainly for the first two years. And actually peace didn't come about until after my five years in the OAS had finished. The actual formal peace didn't take place until after I had retired from the Service. Before that a modus vivendi had been worked out, but of course with the borders closed. And that wrecked the Common Market which had been progressing remarkably well in Central America. Instead of having the five countries with populations of 2 million to 4-5 million people, this brought all together a population of 12 million. Now I think its 20 million for Central America. And now they're laboriously trying to rebuild that Common Market--Central America Common Market. First with the borders closed, and the difficulties between El Salvador and Honduras, and then after that with the Nicaragua revolution, the Sandinistas coming in, you might say Central America was physically divided. Incredibly enough some Common Market trade continued right on through, and now, of course, its coming back.

Q: How did you see your role, both professionally as a job, but also of the United States, in dealing with this? I would think there would be a problem with the Colossus to the north. You

don't want to weigh in too heavily, yet at the same time probably as much as anybody we don't want turmoil in that area. How did you operate, both your instructions and your visceral reaction as to how to deal with this?

JOVA: The instructions were trying to maintain that low profile. Sometimes you're almost forcing the Latins to take the decisions for themselves, and then participating. Naturally sometimes that forcing was less visible, or more visible. I remember in my first days after being sworn in, going to a meeting and in the Under Secretary's office was Elliot Richardson, and some impassioned people were making cases for armed intervention. He said, "Look, that's the last thing...it seems to me that should be reserved, the last thing for the United States to intervene there militarily. Let's work, continue the strength of the OAS, work behind the scenes, but certainly not put American troops into a place where there's no airfield right there, and service, etc., in a neighborhood quarrel." Well, that was wise, and I think that calmed our more excitable people down a bit.

And we were eager to have Central American participation, and also Argentina, Ecuador. I can't remember who else but certainly the Argentine ambassador, Raul Quijano, after that he was Foreign Minister for a while in his own country, and then the United Nations. The last I heard he was ambassador to Paraguay which, of course, is very important for Argentina. But he was so judicious, and so smart, but so level headed and so calm, and he was very Nordic.

So I think that was all something that the OAS, the inter American system, can be proud of; and the fact that the Secretary General, Galo Plaza, was a person who enjoyed full respect here in Washington.

Q: In this particular type of negotiation, you're looking at an international organization under pressure, rather than dealing with the normal course of events. What was your evaluation of how some of the countries acted? Which were the most helpful, and were there some that played a kind of spoiler's role; that maybe didn't have much responsibility, but liked to mess in, and weren't too basically helpful in this particular thing. Would you come away with any impressions?

JOVA: Mexico frequently played that role.

Q: I was fishing for that.

JOVA: On this particular issue, Mexico was on the same commission and the then ambassador to the OAS was sort of the wiseman of the organization, the oldest, most senior member, and very judicious, and basically pro-American, etc., and at that time their president was relatively pro-American. Then even the attitude of this wonderful Mexican ambassador started to change slightly. But they played a useful role also. This was something the whole hemisphere was united on. Then, of course, the fact that we were not thrusting ourselves forward too much. We really played it more routinely. Who knows? You can examine some careers, and say, what did they do? What big accomplishment did they do in the world affairs and international diplomacy. But others deserve even more commendation, those that have managed to smooth over conflicts, and helped solve conflicts quietly, deserve almost more credit. I think I played a good role in helping resolve that, and various other conflicts. It was a period though of intense anti-Americanism in

the hemisphere. Remember the Alliance for Progress was dying down. The north-south tensions were stronger.

Q: Why were these north-south tensions stronger?

JOVA: Well, the division between developed and non-developed countries were exploited for many years to oblige the developed countries, to give to the underdeveloped. This was one of our main objectives in all this negotiation, to oppose that. What is ours is ours to give, and this can't be required of us--the economic rights and obligations of states. (I was already in Mexico at that time.) They tried to make that a doctrine that would have universal backing, and we had very big backing from third world countries, the first world countries didn't want to find themselves burdened with an obligation to give aid, even though we were giving it. The U.S., in any case, was giving rather generously at that time.

But the OAS served as a useful escape valve because the annual meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the General Assembly, the Foreign Ministers. Every Foreign Minister practically had to get up and make his established diatribe about the injustices of the world; the rich and the poor; and the United States and the others; trying to live off the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. A problem, I think, that was worldwide, but here it was naturally more against the U.S. rather than against...we were the ones that had. And that, of course, would make some people in the Department very mad. It was different with Secretary Rogers anyway. He didn't understand Latins. He felt there was too much hot air, and then to listen to all this anti-Americanism. I remember, I used to say, "Remember what Don Quixote said once, what Santos said too, when they were attacked by dogs, or unfriendly villages, or something of that sort of thing," and Don Quixote said, "Shall we mount Santos?" and then rode off quietly without even replying. And, of course, the Arabs have the saying that the dogs bark when the caravan marches on. So some of these things you have to realize were just part of the game.

Q: Did you find it in a way easier to make, within our own administration, the political people understand more than say the professional diplomats? I'm just wondering because politicians are used to this duality. You get up on the hustings and you say these things and yet you go out and have dinner together afterwards.

JOVA: People would usually understand. In March it worked pretty well, and there was involvement by all parties. It wasn't the situation later on, long afterwards, that we had the other Central American crises. You know, why did the OAS pay attention, and mix in with Salvador civil war? Of course, in Nicaragua the OAS took an enormous step forward and abandoned its almost immemorial stance of not intervening in domestic disputes.

Q: I wonder, how did you treat this almost endemic, but more heated anti-Americanism of this time? What did you do behind the scenes about these almost pro forma anti-American speeches? These things just don't take place in a vacuum.

JOVA: No, but mind you, the press pays little attention to what goes on in the OAS, most of the time anyway. Sure, we had all kinds of conversations on these approaches. We'd ask them, our ambassadors, sometimes we'd blame it on our respective ambassadors to the OAS. Then they'd

complain to the ambassador to the White House because after all his department is to do what he could do, and that's why they have separate commissions. Or they'd ask the Foreign Minister to take it up with our ambassador in Argentina, for instance, to take it up with one of the ministers, and they'd say nice things. But, of course, the Foreign Ministers themselves would say such things. I know it would disturb Secretary Rogers, and it would disturb everybody. But some of it you lived with. After it was over with, it all depended upon what collaboration, cooperation, there was.

Incidentally, this seems to have gotten better by the way. Despite the problems with the debts and all that sort of thing the last few years apparently there's much...I don't say it's perfect, but there's more maturity in this regard right now on the part of the Latin American nations. Because there has always been that love-hate relationship. So many things in the United States to admire, and they recognize that they need us, and we need them to a certain extent. Although here was one of the problems. Kissinger anyway, "I can't be bothered with them. What difference does it make?"

Q: *...National Security Adviser.*

JOVA: Exactly, had other things on his mind. It was difficult to get him to focus, and he would apt to be rather flippant on this. I remember him saying, "What is Chile?" "Well, we're having trouble with Chile, as the result of the Allende election." "Chile is a dagger point right at the heart of Antarctica."

Q: *I used to use this when I was with the Board of Examiners, and taking new candidates. I used to quote this, but using not Chile but Latin America, and say, "What does this reflect?" and let people develop that one.*

JOVA: He became somewhat more interested when he became Secretary of State. But he had something blow up on him when he said, "What we want is the Latin Americans to get together and establish unified positions and then we can negotiate with them." So that happened, unfortunately, and he found that even more difficult. But at least the Central American thing was, in a way, good because it involved everybody, ourselves included, in a common purpose; at least on that subject.

There were other things that divided us, such as the fishing rights. You know, some things the Latins had been fighting for, we were adamant on...three mile limit, no fishing rights beyond that, control of another 12 mile limit. When the Latins started...because the Latins are really addicted to doctrines. I think that was one of their inventions, whether it was 100 miles or the continental shelf, I can't recall right now, but by golly that has become accepted now. And that was a source of great quarrels and battles, and we were actually accused by Ecuador in this case of all sorts of violations, and brought up, I think, under the Rio Treaty. Accusations of violating their sovereign rights because of the tuna boats, and of course our tuna boat lobby in Los Angeles, or in San Diego, is very important. But strangely enough, we've come to recognize that, and now we push it.

Q: You were mentioning Kissinger who I guess during this entire time was the National Security Adviser, was not paying much attention to National Security Council. Did you have any feeling during this particular time, and reflections from Nixon about Latin America?

JOVA: Yes, and they were apt to be wise, and involved, and perceptive. I attended an occasional meeting between him and some inter-American officials. I remember being struck by that; that he certainly was perceptive; and judicious; putting the onus back and sometimes redefining. Mind you, Kissinger became more and more interested in this, when he was Secretary of State. By the time he became Secretary of State, or shortly thereafter, I was named to Mexico and he was the Secretary of State while I was in Mexico. There was no question that Nixon had a good grasp. Of course, he had suffered in Latin America too, you will recall.

Q: Caracas when he was Vice President.

JOVA: ...played around with the Rockefeller Mission at the beginning of the Nixon administration. The Rockefeller Mission started out that way with increasing disturbances, etc., and he had to cancel his visit to some countries, I think Peru, and became less useful. He visited us in Honduras shortly before that and I was already named Ambassador to the OAS when he came. I'm not sure if we covered that visit.

Q: This is Nelson Rockefeller.

JOVA: When I was ambassador to Honduras, and the Nixon administration had just begun. One of the first things that President Nixon did was to ask Governor Rockefeller to carry out this mission through Latin America. They started in Mexico, and then I guess he went to Guatemala, Salvador, and then he came to us in Honduras. There would be disputes about the role of the ambassadors. Some ambassadors said it was impossible that he call on the president without me. "I am the representative of the President of the United States." Some of these ambassadors were still there from the previous administration, all of us really.

Q: The Johnson administration.

JOVA: Yes. Maybe they had one or two in place. They may have rushed down there. I remember when he was first named, and I sensed this. I sent a cable saying, "Look, I'm a resident of New York state," I still was at that time, "and I'm a graduate of Dartmouth, so I can assure you... I know you're an admirer because of all your interest in Latin America." Which of course his interest had been long, right from Dartmouth on. Then, of course, the role that he and his brothers had in Central America relations in New York. "You can count on my cooperation, and discretion in any way."

So this is the way it was. First the advance party came, and then he came, and we got along beautifully--the whole group. It was stressful, as all these things are. First of all lodging them. Their doctrine was not to stay at the embassy so they could be independent of the ambassador. Well, we lined up what we had downtown, the "New Hotel," and the other hotel was still a dream, it hadn't been built.

I told the advance party, "This is up to the Governor. He can stay where he likes, and this is what we have reserved." Mind you, the cathedral bells marked the hour from 4:00 a.m. mass onwards. "I know that he wants to be independent, but we also have this, and there's room," and showed them the guest part of the embassy residence. "There's room here for meetings, and for being separate, and I assure you that he need involve me as the ambassador only to the extent that he wants." And I'm thinking it over, and exchanging communications with Washington, and he opted to stay in the embassy, and the rest of the mission stayed downtown complaining about the facilities. And, of course, there were demonstrations coming in, whipped up in no time at all.

Q: *This was, I assume, by the left.*

JOVA: Oh, yes, the communist movement of some sort, but obviously organized. It went on with ever increasing crescendo in Mexico, but you know they can control things pretty well there. And in Honduras, I remember there being masses, crowds all the way in from the airport, and you were doubly glad to be staying up on the hill in the embassy. And in one meeting early on, the first or second day, the troops controlling the people in the main square, fired, and were foolish enough...they weren't really trained to control, and they killed a young man, which was unfortunate. It needn't have happened, and certainly we had nothing to do with it at all.

Q: *What was Rockefeller trying to do? Was this just a sounding for the Nixon administration?*

JOVA: This was a sounding for the Nixon administration, and it made very reasonable recommendations. At the end they sent telegrams to each country. They were very careful, I noticed, for his staff to send telegrams also...separate telegrams, one to the State Department for the President, another one to Kissinger.

Q: *I'm not sure how much we treated on this, but was this much different from when Johnson came down? He came down in 1968 to Honduras, didn't he?*

JOVA: Yes, he did.

Q: *...as President, July 8th. How did that visit go?*

JOVA: The real substance of that visit took place in Salvador, where he met and had joint meetings with all the Central American countries. He wanted, incidentally, to bring the Mexican president also. I remember I was up in the Department on consultation while this was being hatched, presiding over a promotion board. I remember being asked that question, is this a good idea, or not? Because, of course, Johnson had a special relationship with Mexico. I remember saying I recommended against it. "Central America gets little enough attention from the United States government, and specifically the White House. This is their moment in the sun. We're already casting a shadow, if you will, by sending them all to Salvador to kill five birds with one stone. Bring the Mexican president and I think you're going to have a two-star opera there at the top, and all the poor Central American presidents as spear carriers." I said, "Let's do it separately," although the idea was to involve Mexico more in Central American affairs so it would take its responsibility. That became very troublesome later on, but that was the theory behind that. And they desisted from that. So those meetings took place there and the five

ambassadors went to Salvador, were there for the two nights. They went very well with the usual speeches, etc., and the individual meetings with each president.

What sticks in my mind then is that Lady Bird took the microphone, and she spoke better than anybody. She's the only one who came through, I thought, like a normal, likeable, warm-hearted human being. I was so impressed by that, the impromptu address that she gave. Did I mention the gifts?

Q: *No.*

JOVA: Well, then he said, "All right, we're going to take you all home. I'll deposit you in Air Force 1 in each of your capitals, it was like a milk run, they spent half an hour or so and had a little ceremony. I flew back to Tegucigalpa to get all those things ready because the next day he was arriving. And, of course, the airport in Tegucigalpa was not really very safe...very unsafe actually for a big plane, so they landed in San Pedro la Sula, the second city which has, as it's flat land, and still has, a much better airport. So the question of setting up a boutique gift shop, handicrafts, protocol ceremony and all that, went off very well.

By the way, our message was, "The President collects cuff links. He's on a cuff link spree, particularly if they have coins but are not representative of the country. Get cuff links as a gift and the slush fund will take care of it." Well, in other places you might be able to find things like that, but in Honduras you wouldn't. The only thing they had was something rather good, and these were in gold nuggets. So I hesitated to spend that much money. It doesn't sound like very much today, whatever it was, but I got them and showed them to whoever was in ARA/EX who was traveling with him. "It was a lot more than we were planning." In other words, it was instead of being \$50, it was \$125 or something, "but here's your money." Well, at that ceremony, on the way out to the plane, came the President, greeted him, etc., and they were all given a chance to go to the gift shop. And on the way out to the plane I said, "Mr. President, I have a little remembrance here. I understand that you collect cuff links." I remember he didn't even look at me, and this great enormous paw of a hand reached out and I put it in his hand, he put it in his pocket, and he kept right on walking down to the plane, we all saluted and he left. Today the cuff links would be worth much more. That enormous hand and not even looking at it, just snuck it in his pocket.

Q: *Then back to the OAS.*

JOVA: The Rockefeller mission was a different thing altogether. The Johnson visit was more protocol-wise in Salvador, and protocol-wise in each of the stops. Naturally he was a very outgoing person, and Lady Bird was a very warm person. The Rockefeller mission was stopping in Honduras itself, and there were conversations between staff, particularly myself, but I mean my senior colleagues with the mission, with the Governor. They had talks with the ministers, with the president.

On the following day, let's say, the Rockefeller staff said, "It's so confusing downtown with the bells, and mobs, do you think it would be possible to have our meetings here at the residence? And the best thing would be a breakfast meeting." I think Pamela rose to the occasion beautifully.

Pamela and the cook went down and they brought out oranges, and cartons of eggs and breakfast for 40-odd people was ready--fresh pressed orange juice, scrambled eggs, the whole thing.

I was already named to the OAS. And when I arrived at the office of the OAS, there was an enormous box all wrapped in white tissue paper. It was from Governor Rockefeller, addressed to Pamela and me--Pamela specifically--thanking both of us. The present, by the way, was the present he was unable to give to the president of Peru, a Steuben plate with the birth sign of each president.

Q: Well, back to the OAS when you were there. How valuable did you find it having an embassy? Or was it a nuisance to be the chief of a mission in Washington?

JOVA: It was good, and it was bad. Naturally if we were abroad the American representative to the OAS would have had all sorts of privileges, such as a car, a driver, etc. It was a different thing. Even if we had had our offices separate from the State Department, it might have been somewhat different. The offices of the mission were in the State Department, a beautiful suite, with a big sign over the door saying what it was. It was like a little embassy, if you wish, a chancery. And, of course, that did have the advantage that we were right there with our fingers on the pulse of what was going on in the State Department, participating in the Secretary's weekly meeting, and also the Assistant Secretary's daily staff meeting.

Q: Assistant Secretary for Latin America.

JOVA: Exactly, so that you were in touch with what was going on, and not waiting for a telegram to come in instructing you to do something that was perhaps unreal, as frequently those instructions that you get are. And naturally we would have meetings there with other ambassadors, invite them in and convert the office to a little reception room before a lousy lunch, but still a lunch in the State Department. It had all those advantages.

You were also frequently given other duties in the State Department, something to do with Latin America, to sit on another board. And that distracted you from your main job. But at the same time it was also an advantage because it kept you in touch with everything, and gave you certain stature and credibility with your colleagues. There was always a little bit of jealousy down the hall between the Assistant Secretary position and his staff, and the mission staff. You know, who are we under, etc. Of course, we had to play that carefully, but we were a mission. We had had our own automobile and driver, and that sort of thing, but the minute my predecessor left, he was a political appointee, Sol Linowitz--when you have a politico in, they get everything, but the day he left they took the car away, etc. But I had access to the pool, which is not the same thing but still could use a car. I guess they cut the representation funds, but we had our own funds, which would make sometimes the ARA itself a little bit jealous and uneasy. I think those we got through IO, not through ARA.

Q: IO being International Organizations Bureau.

JOVA: Some of my successors thought it was subordinating themselves to go to the Assistant Secretary for ARA staff meetings.

Q: Cut themselves out from a very valuable source of information.

JOVA: That's what I thought. I thought it was much better to go, and be part of a team. And, of course, you're a little bit subservient, you have to be, but more of a collaborator. Two institutions, like an AID mission in an embassy, there's always a little bit of friction. John Ford was so good at that too, at working together with the top part of the bureau, and we didn't get enough money to make them that jealous.

One of the things we did, and we did it jointly, but we instituted it. They were celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first Latin American accredited to Washington.

Q: Probably 1822 was when we started recognizing Latin American countries, so that would have been the 150th.

JOVA: This guy lived and died in Philadelphia. He was accredited there, he had a home, I can't remember exactly the particular events. So we decided to invite all the Latin American ambassadors to go to Philadelphia for a meeting in Independence Hall, which dates right from that period, and have a meeting of the Permanent Council in Philadelphia. At that time it was the first time the Permanent Council had ever met outside of its seat in Washington, except when they have gone to a foreign nation. But in those cases they were meeting as a General Assembly of the Foreign Ministers. And ARA got a little bit jealous, so we did that jointly. We had a private railway car attached to a regular train, AMTRAK was just starting, a wonderful car. And we packed a champagne breakfast, I suppose, on board. The Secretary of State came--for a long time there was a debate whether he'd come or not. He came and he stayed for the morning session. Secretary Rogers spoke very well. The reply was given by a representative of the Latins, the ambassador of Venezuela was a great orator. Mind you, Latin American oratory is quite different from our oratory of today. In other words, this was like going back to the old days. I think the Secretary or someone who hadn't been exposed to Latin America might be a little bit shocked. But the end result was great.

I was also chairman of the Council for that period, so I opened the session. Our gift to the city of Philadelphia was a transcript of the Civil War diary of a great great uncle of mine who was born in Cuba but raised and came as a child, and was an officer in the Union Army. And Philadelphia gave the traditional ceramic punch bowl with the views of Independence Hall.

So, in other words, the morning was an U.S. mission organized event, then lunch time and the afternoon was ARA, and again more exchanges and speeches with the mayor and that sort of thing. And then a visit to St. Mary's church where the guy was buried. Again, a Catholic church--the oldest Catholic church in Philadelphia, and then there were more speeches there, again from Charlie Meyer, who was the Assistant Secretary, and the Latins returning.

Q: I think you're pointing out the fact that when Foreign Service officers, or anybody dealing with foreign affairs in our business, is called upon to exercise diplomacy, you're greatest real efforts in diplomacy are within your own organization, within the Department of State. If you want to get things done there, it is much more important because in some ways diplomacy is cut

and dried with other countries. I mean, they have their things, you know what they have to do, but to really get things done within an organization, you have to exercise real diplomacy.

JOVA: That is true. And that has been my experience...with many others, more experienced diplomats than myself, is that the role of an American ambassador usually turns out to be a dual role. If you're the American ambassador to Honduras, not only are you representing your country there, etc., and trying to solve problems and getting across the U.S. point of view, but your role also is to try to get the Honduran point of view back to Washington. Because they usually haven't left more inadequate representation up here, and the president is much more apt to pay attention to the American ambassador, than to his representative up in Washington. Certainly we can get the message back to the State Department better and more clearly enunciated, and put into perspective, than the foreign ambassador who naturally is making an emotional plea for his own country. But putting these things in a perspective; showing the problems that an American position would create down there; within the context of reasonable objectives to the extent possible; but also saying what is reasonable; what isn't reasonable; what kind of problems it would create. How can those problems be, if not solved, at least ameliorated. That's why I think an American ambassador is doubly useful in playing this double role.

And, of course, this was true in the OAS too where you had to reflect the point of view of the hemisphere, if you will, and to put into perspective the problems, but also the constructive parts of it. The fact that it was a wonderful way to be in touch with the thought, the feelings of the entire hemisphere...you know, a lot of people wanted to abolish our mission to the OAS, and at this time it was purely a Latin thing. But on the other hand, it gives us a chance to reply on the same level because this is one of the organizations where we're all sitting around the table at the same level. One of the things that we can all joke about over coffee, or have serious conversations at their level, rather than the United States being patronizing, or more authoritarian from the heights talking down to them. We could have dialogues, both formal and informal, on all sorts of subjects. We also can note, hopefully, what is going on in all the hemisphere much better than...in a different aspect, of course...but the State Department doesn't depend only on what the embassies tell them, but here we're hearing it every day.

I remember having an argument with Charlie Meyer. He always said that if the OAS didn't exist, we'd have to invent it. His successor was all against the OAS. He just magnified these differences. "We should get out of it." It was Bill Rogers--the other Bill Rogers, the younger one. Not William P. Rogers, the Secretary of State, but William D. Rogers, a lawyer from here, who after that was Under Secretary for Economic Affairs when Kissinger became Secretary of State. I remember saying, "Look, at all the problems we have here with civil rights, and things like that, why does everybody get so mad...the Jews and blacks want to be a member of one of these clubs, and we are criticized for excluding them. Because it cuts out the possibility of their dealing with people on equal terms, or perhaps doing favorable business. Do we want to purposely deal ourselves out of this opportunity, of being a charter member in fact of this Inter-American club?" He couldn't answer that, but he always resented the fact that I said that.

So we stayed in. I think I said I was the first professional Foreign Service officer to be ambassador to the OAS, and, of course, we did have the famous one for a very short time.

Q: Ellsworth Bunker.

JOVA: Ellsworth Bunker who had been ambassador to the OAS when he played a key role in the Dominican crisis. I used to, frequently, go to him for advice. He was always very helpful to me. And he did speak Spanish, by the way. Well, the same thing happened after I left. My predecessor, Sol Linowitz didn't speak Spanish. My successors didn't speak a word of Spanish, didn't know anything about it. Well, I'm sure they knew something about it because the first one had been the chairman of the House Committee on Latin America. His successor, when the Democrats came in, was Ambassador Gale McGee who didn't speak Spanish, but at least had a background as a historian, and had been chairman at least of the subcommittee on Latin America. So he knew Latins.

Q: He was tied down to the Panama Canal anyway. He was sort of the point man running around making speeches, if I recall.

JOVA: Exactly, both of them, and they had an American political background which was used for that. He was the point man, and sometimes would be sent jointly to missions of the Republicans and the Democrats. McCormack came next, who again was an economist, but he was a Jesse Helms ideologue. We became very good friends, so I see lots of the good things that he did, but he also had a lot to his detriment, beginning with the fact that he didn't really understand Latins, or speak Spanish, and also didn't have the confidence of the Department of State itself. He was always felt to be a Helms' man.

Q: Jesse Helms being a senator from North Carolina--putting this in historical context--who is extremely right wing conservative, who had almost his own policy towards Latin America, as opposed to Republican or Democratic administrations.

JOVA: That's true. Mind you, Ambassador McCormack had also gone to college and school in Europe and Switzerland, and had a Ph.D. He had a lot more breadth than people gave him credit for; but he did have his ideological hangups; and there was discomfort in this regard I'd say, even in the Republican part of the Department of State. But then more recently the Bush administration named Ambassador Einaudi to be ambassador to the OAS, and here is somebody who knew Latin America thoroughly, who really had sort of a Latin background. The first time I met him was in Peru where he was sent down to lecture to the Peruvian military. Later on he came into the Department, and he was in Policy Planning for the Latin American Bureau. I think it was one of the best choices that could have been made.

Q: Did the problem about funding from the United States to the OAS come up while you were there? Or did that come up later? Now we haven't been paying our dues.

JOVA: Yes, but we've begun paying back some of our dues. It was terrible for a long time. In my case, it was always a tussle to get the funding, particularly on the voluntary funds, and anything to do with cultural programs, which, of course, is one of the most useful areas to collaborate in really, and it cost so little. I'm a little bit prejudice because years later, after I retired from the Service, I was elected to be a member of the Inter-American Committee on Culture which is one of the permanent programs in that field. And I was then reelected two years later, and I was

chairman of it for the year. It was a nice way to be back in touch, or participating in the Inter-American system. I was president in the Meridian House after all, and that was an international culture institution.

Q: This, and its reflection elsewhere in the Latin American scene, but from your vantage point in the OAS, so often culture becomes the province of the intellectuals. The intellectuals, at least in the era we're talking about, tend to be leftists, and anti-American. Was this a problem when you were there, the cultural anti-American left?

JOVA: Oh, yes, we were very worried about cultural imperialism in the United States. But there again, this was a way you could collaborate with those people on a wonderful ground, and where we finally could persuade U.S. government to give something. Those funds came from AID. And to give something to culture on the justification that it had something to do with development. Whether it was developing tourism, for instance, or developing archival records, etc. So we started to get little contributions from the voluntary fund for culture. This is while I was still there as ambassador. And actually my deputy, one of my two deputies, Henry Catto, covered that area, education and cultural, which had its own council, and did a very good job. And its interesting that years later--after that he was ambassador to Salvador; and then he was Chief of Protocol; then, of course, the Democrats came in and he was nothing; then he came back in with the Reagan administration. But this administration made him ambassador to the United Kingdom, so he always said that he learned a lot from me which was his first job. And I got him the title of ambassador over great opposition. And now, as you know, he's been appointed...

Q: ...head of USIA.

JOVA: So there again this experience for him was a very useful one. He learned more about Latin America, and he learned more about political maneuvering; but the fact that he was dealing with the educational and cultural aspect of it in the OAS in those days; well, obviously, that gives him a background for what he is doing today. There is always the problem of getting money, but we got it. Later the U.S. became tighter, and meaner, and used money because the OAS wasn't doing what it wanted. It was a time of budget cutting after all. So we became way, way in arrears. Well, with a delegation that pays 66% of the whole thing; for us going into arrears and not paying dues to which we were committed; really skewed the process terribly and made them much poorer; and it created a lot of animosity.

Q: Today is March 27, 1992. This is a continuing series of interviews with Ambassador Jova.

We're still at your time when you were ambassador to the OAS, Organization of American States from 1979 to '83, and we talked about some issues, our last being the funding problem. Bringing up some of the outside other issues, what was the role of Cuba? I mean the Cuban issue while you were there.

JOVA: Cuba had been out for a long time. Actually, legally it was still a member. There was one group of countries, and it varied...what their individual governments became, if they were democratic, military, or whatever. Some were adamant about keeping Cuba out, and some were increasingly eager to bring it in. We, of course, didn't want it in. Brazilians were even more

adamant, they didn't even want to discuss our position openly. The Bolivians, which had a strong government at that time, were like the Brazilians. However, they did not have the necessary two-thirds vote to overthrow a previously taken decision. You can take a decision by a majority, and of course it was much more than a majority by a lot. Long before my time, I don't remember that. I remember the Haiti vote was crucial, and we gave them an airfield and the port was sort of a direct result of their favorable vote for us to exclude Cuba.

Q: Did you ever feel within our delegation thinking about having a debate whether Cuba should be in or out? I'm not talking about the official policy, but if you could get them in, its better, to use a diplomatic term, have them pissing outside the tent rather than being inside. Was this a subject of debate, or were you pretty well all agreed? and in your own personal self?

JOVA: You know, you get carried away, and you can't help being part of the course you're living in, and living in that culture. You could see an open debate on the subject, and possibly having different views, which of course was quite different from the Nixon White House. And one couldn't help but take the case of Yugoslavia that had become so much more civilized. The fact they wanted tourism, trade, which had begun there, which had opened it up. And even I, as you know, I'm partly Cuban in origin, by instinct and family tradition I was strongly against that. Whether into the system or not, at least changing the relationship so there would be travel, tourism, more openness, etc., it would make it more difficult for Castro to stay in power-- freedom of information, freedom to travel. Plus the fact it would remove the bogey bear of our blockade. He could blame everything on our blockade. So its easy to get, I guess what people at the White House would call woolly-headed about something like that. And the opinion there is very much what it is now, keep the blockade up. Sooner or later he will fall, and the harder he falls, the better for everybody. Now, bringing him into the OAS, that was more debatable, and our colleagues said everything is going to be confrontational. We're going to get a lot less done. I'm not sure we were getting that much done at that time, but probably it was true. In any case, that's purely speculation. We changed our policy later to a certain extent. After all, even then we had a Cuban Interest Section, or did we?

Q: I think it came a little later.

JOVA: That came in Carter's time, which is certainly very interesting. Then we did a lot of things people were recommending we do, but it didn't really change the situation. We established a Cuban Interest Section, we had more dialogue. The Cubans invited me to go down, and we were going to go. This was well after I retired, and Pamela came down with one of those terrible viruses the night before we were to leave. I think the officers expected afterwards that must have been a scheme on my part to say yes, and then at the last minute to say no. But fortunately some members of the Cuban embassy had that virus also, so some of them understood.

Q: What was the attitude of the Brazilians, and the Bolivians, and some of the other more hardline ones? Argentina? What was their objection to letting Castro in? Did they have different reasons than we did?

JOVA: The Argentines, the Brazilians, and the Bolivians, all those had had military coups. They had military governments in power, and rightist military governments. Peru, by the way, had a

military government but they were sort of liberal and leftist. The Argentines, for instance, even the word pluralistic society was enough to send them up the wall. In other words, they didn't want any society in which the extreme leftist participated.

Q: Did you ever say the obvious? "Well, if you fellows, in each of your countries, would get your countries in better shape, you could probably do a lot better. So if we have an obligation, first you have to meet your obligation as a government to do better within your own country." Did you ever use that?

JOVA: Oh, yes. It was always trotted out. But then don't forget they throw back in our face, "But those are just your friends. Its fine for you to talk that way here, but don't forget the ones that are more pro-U.S.A. in our respective countries, Panama, for instance, are those upper classes that vote right, and live well."

Q: Did you feel (in our Latin policy, not including Cuba), were there people in the White House, or friends of the White House--I'm thinking of Bebe Roboso, and others who were friends of Nixon, but other groups that played a fairly major role when there was a problem. All of a sudden they would weigh in from the White House. Sort of special interests, or something like that.

JOVA: The "against Cuba" thing was a national policy. And I'd say most Americans probably favored it. Sure the liberals didn't, some of the newspaper people didn't, that sort of thing.

Q: This is a letter which Ambassador Jova is giving to me dated June 20, 1972, the White House Washington.

*"Dear Mr. Ambassador:
You and your staff did a superb job during a recent
OAS debate on Cuba. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely, Richard Nixon"*

Did we have any policy at the time in the OAS; a problem with the fact that a significant number of the major governments in Latin America in the OAS, were military dictatorships? Or was this not either a political or an economic, or any other kind of a particular problem for us?

JOVA: Oh, yes. Human rights were invented in the Carter period. A national preoccupation of that existed long before, and certainly our preoccupation with Brazil was very deep in that regard. All these things were coming out, about the tortures, etc., that the Brazilian opposition people had been subjected to, particularly the extreme leftists, including Catholic leftists. Now that wasn't something that we were campaigning against in the OAS forum. After all, those were internal factors so one had to be presumably more respectful. But in fact we would invoke that sometimes when they'd ask us about something that was going on in the United States. I remember raising my hand, and saying, "Wait a minute. That is an internal problem. It is true that those share croppers are very sad and our government is working on it, but that's our problem, and none of your business." Well, I learned that from them, because it was not something that would be discussed there. Keep in mind that in other respects Brazil was very

important to us. Kissinger felt that Brazil was really the big giant, and that was really the only thing we were worrying about in Latin America. So we had to be careful.

Q: What about the role of Mexico? Obviously we're going to get to Mexico in a little while, but was Mexico sort of the burr under the saddle every time you had to deal with anything?

JOVA: Yes, and no. That changed. Mexico naturally has its own policy. It was always very anti-imperialist, anti-intervention in the affairs of others. They were really the guardians of those principles against the U.S.A. because they were the ones who had suffered most. On the other hand, on many things, if it was a debate, and we could be on Mexico's side, if we could be together, one could feel good in one's conscience, usually, in those days. Plus the fact that the Mexican ambassador was sort of the dean. He was one of the veterans of the Mexican foreign service, and a lot of his career had been spent in U.S.A., in border posts in his youth. And then he had also been ambassador to Japan, ambassador to the United Nations; the White House actually; and now he was the ambassador to the OAS; or permanent delegate. And, mind you, the vice dean of the OAS, the Nicaraguan, had been there longer, but the Mexican ambassador was the next in rank in seniority, and he was also much wiser, and more judicious, and had the universal respect of everybody, and affection also.

Q: I think an important thing about this relationship in the OAS, I don't want to over-characterize it and please correct me, the United States obviously had its policy because of our size, and might, but was Mexico as a major country the leader of the other side in most cases where we weren't all together?

JOVA: Yes, except that the Chilean delegation...Allende was still in. That would be the leader on some of the leftist ideas, and if Mexico were to join in with the judiciousness of the Mexican ambassador, and the judiciousness on many things of Mexican state policy, well then that became very formidable. Now if the Mexican, and people like that didn't join the Chilean, why then, as Don Quixote said, "The dogs bark when the caravan is leaving." You know it doesn't matter too much. It might mean something but people would do their telegrams, I suppose, and there wasn't that much sympathy when he had gotten into an extreme mood.

Q: Were there any votes that the United States lost that caused some problems for you, and for your delegation, on issues?

JOVA: There were some things we couldn't win. Some things were unrealistic, to try to get the kind of vote there. Sometimes it was better to stop. But mostly we were able to block Cuba to the end. We were able to get support for several things, not necessarily extra-territoriality. I mean we won support and understanding on our China policy. They would not go along with the two-China policy. When the big reversal came...very interesting, the top officials came to make the presentations there, exposing what the motives for our change in policy, and our decision to move to recognize the Beijing Government, while at the same time maintaining a relationship with Taiwan. And for a while the implication was that there was going to be two Chinas. That went contrary to the principles that most of these delegations felt were the principles of international law. There ought to be one government representing one country. They made a big

point about that. And mind you, many of those Latin American countries have continued to recognize Taiwan as China. Mexico, for instance.

Q: *Were you there when Allende was overthrown?*

JOVA: Yes, I was.

Q: *How did that play in the OAS? It was a very controversial thing. Even today the role of the United States is a matter of great debate.*

JOVA: Yes. There again there were legalistic positions. It was a change in government, therefore an internal matter. Chile promptly named an elderly, respected person as the Chargé d' Affaires to their mission to the OAS.

Q: *Before we leave the OAS, what about Canada? Canada is part of the American hemispheres, but its not a member of the OAS, but the subject keeps coming up, why isn't it?*

JOVA: It now is a member. They had a permanent observer. They and Spain were the first two to have that status, and 100% of their time, people devoted to that. The others little by little named permanent observers, but there were some who would go occasionally. Now several of them have permanent observers. And the Canadians played a prominent role in some of the other technical aspects of the Inter-American system where they were members of CIAP, ECA, the agricultural system, etc., and in my day that is what it was. They were observers and everybody was hoping they would join, and we urged them to join. But it didn't happen in those days. It has happened, I'd say two years ago.

Q: *Where was the objection? Was this Canadian objection in not joining it? This was not the OAS, or the United States.*

JOVA: Oh, no. And if you went into the Council chamber, big, opposing carved arm chairs for each member left over from the old days, the Pan American Union, that included one chair with the Canadian coat of arms, a vacant chair was ready for them. No, it was purely a Canadian reluctance that said that they wanted the best of two worlds. They were giving quite a lot of assistance particularly in the English speaking Caribbean, and Haiti also, and in general, both government and Canadian religious groups. Mind you, they are now members and as far as I know they contribute and it has helped the budget an awful lot. The atmosphere, perhaps that's what decided them to enjoy the atmosphere of the OAS which is considerably more realistic, and lower keyed in that way in regard to anti-American rhetoric than it was in my days.

Q: *Were there any major events that maybe we didn't touch on?*

JOVA: Fisheries, and the territorial waters was a very important thing and we were accused by Ecuador, and we found ourselves in a little banco, there is a name for it too in English where the accused person sits.

Q: *The defendants chair, I suppose.*

JOVA: And that was taken up first in a General Assembly, or perhaps it started in the Permanent Council and then had to be finished in the General Assembly. So it was uncomfortable, and I must say looking back, I think I handled that rather well. We gave a little bit, I can't remember what it was, papered it over, and the Ecuadorans after several weeks or months removed that charge against us.

Q: What was the main issue?

JOVA: We claimed a three mile limit, which we had then extended for our own purpose to a 12 mile limit. The three mile was territorial, 12 mile for control over the area. Well, the Latins took the lead in claiming the territorial shelf to determine the fishing rights; that they should be up to 100 miles, or whatever under the territorial shelf; plus such and such. That was heresy to us, and of course to our tuna fishing fleets in San Diego. They were politically very powerful. It was more than heresy. They first worked out this little sort of, "get us out of this jam," and then I can't tell you what happened afterwards. But now this has become accepted all over, what we thought so ridiculous. The three mile was basically how far a cannon could be shot.

Q: It's one of those policies which seem to be cast in iron, but it turned out that the iron melted after a while.

JOVA: Like Catholics and eating fish on Friday, or eating meat on Friday.

JAMES L. MORAD
Public Affairs Advisor, OAS
Washington, DC (1970-1971)

James L. Morad was born in California in 1934. He received his BA from the University of Southern California and his MS from Columbia University. His foreign assignments include Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, Fortaleza, San Salvador, Madrid, Brussels and Paris. He was interviewed on June 9, 1994 by Allen C. Hansen.

MORAD: The Latin American Area Office created an experimental position, Public Affairs Advisor to the OAS.

Q: That was the United States Mission to the Organization of American States. You were the first one in that position.

MORAD: I think that I was the only one. Not officially. Up to that time, the job was handled basically between the PAO office of the Bureau of American Republics Affairs of the State Department. The Public Affairs Advisor in the bureau also handled the OAS.

Q: But now we have a USIA officer for the first time.

MORAD: The idea for that, as I recall, came from Bob Amerson, who was the Area Director for Latin America at the time, but it might have originated with John Hova, the United States Representative to the OAS. Anyway, between the two of them, they saw the need for the PAO exclusively to the mission and Bob Amerson asked me if I was interested in doing that.

Q: And he knew of you from your work in El Salvador.

DAVID LAZAR
Executive Officer of the Development Secretariat, OAS
Washington, DC (1973)

David Lazar was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Northwestern University, De Paul University and Georgetown University. He joined the International Cooperation Administration, later known as AID in 1958. His posts included Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Vietnam, and Washington, DC. He also had assignments with OAS, the National Security Council, and as the US Representative to DAC. Lazar was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1997.

Q: Where did you move to next?

LAZAR: I was seconded to a job in the Organization of the American States (OAS), which was interesting. They do have and did have a large number of development programs as you know. It is not one of the more efficient international organizations or at least it was not, and I have some reason to suppose that it hasn't changed.

International organization work, even the best of it, the World Bank, is a world where countries are concerned about having adequate numbers of their nationals in jobs, where programs for various countries or at least relative amounts of money to be spent in various countries, are negotiated at the political levels between representatives of those countries and the secretary general of the organization and then it is up to the development people to try to make sense of what you do with that amount of money. The political determinants of development programming are very, very heavy, both directly in that negotiation sense and in placement of personnel--who will head which program. This is also a subject of political negotiation. It was quite a fascinating thing to see. It was the first insight I had into international organizations.

Q: What was your job?

LAZAR: I was the Executive Officer of the Development Secretariat. We would call it the deputy to the director of that office, which covered the whole range of development programs.

Q: What was the mandate of that office in terms of development? What was the focus?

LAZAR: They didn't really go about it that way.

You had the various divisions, the education program, the tourism program, the tax program, the health program and several others that I don't remember right now. They were all busily engaged in negotiating at the country level and trying to develop interest in programs that they had to offer which then would come up through their country representative, who would say that that division needs more money because we want them to start a program in our country. It was about the employment of development technicians for one thing.

Q: People from the Latin American countries?

LAZAR: Yes, but not necessarily from the countries requesting these programs. You wanted your division to have lots of requests so that you could get lots of budget, and then you hired a lot of people and you had a big program.

Q: Were they good programs?

LAZAR: A number of them were. One important program which was popular and which was very well done was a regional planning program, run by an American, Curt Rogers. They did in the first instance a lot of excellent mapping. Regional could mean a regional program within a country or a regional program which embraced several countries. They would do the underlying studies which would then support requests for infrastructure to the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank. So, they were doing really the feasibility bases and very, very well done.

The tourism program was good. It had a lot of impact in a lot of countries. I have always been rather skeptical about tourism on a couple of grounds. One of them is economic. For years in Spain, for example, as I recall, the foreign exchange cost of importing the sorts of stuff that was necessary to attract tourists, everything from foreign liquor to various other sorts of commodities, was more than the tourists were bringing in, and, of course, tourism is usually considered a great foreign exchange builder. But, anyway, the OAS tourist program was good. They did the initial work, I think, on Cancun, working along with the Mexican planners. Cancun had been one of the more successful tourist developments, developed for tourists rather than a place like Acapulco which was there and simply got more and more popular so they built more and more hotels. Acapulco wasn't planned in my recollection, but Cancun was. It was a great impact in the Caribbean, which doesn't have much else going for it.

Q: Were they any projects, apart from those, that stood out in your mind that were particularly effective?

LAZAR: Yes, some of the tax work was pretty good. AID had had a tax program which was run jointly with the IRS, which ran into two sets of difficulties. The first was that many people in the IRS just weren't culturally sensitive. They had a sort of one size fits all approach and whenever there was resistance to some of their ideas they assumed the way to get those ideas through was to have the ambassador pound on the president. That didn't help with the second problem they ran into in Latin America which was that these were all gringos telling local people what to do and that is a tough one. The OAS programs didn't suffer from either of those two basic problems.

These were, if not countrymen, and they usually weren't, they were at least Latin Americans and they understood the climate they were working in. I think very few of the people working on that program were as good technically as the IRS, but they were pretty good and in my experience you don't always have to be state of the art to help bring a program along in 20 years rather than 40 years. They did a lot of that. I don't remember any specific country programs that I can point to in that sense that worked. The OAS program is way down now. I don't remember any amounts.

Q: Did it generate any policy discussions with the country?

LAZAR: Yes, I was just thinking the other thing that it did, which was very helpful and we really started this, was that every member country's economic program was reviewed every year by a committee which was chaired by the head of this development secretariat. The head of the development secretariat had been an American position for years, and years and years. We finally agreed to turn it over to the Latin Americans. The deputy position then became a permanent American position. I can't remember the name of the guy who used to do these reviews. If I did you would know him. A very high powered development economist. For years this was a very potent way of backing the play of the people in-country who knew where they thought the country ought to go but didn't have the political clout themselves to do it.

This leads me to another diversion, on the issue of conditionality. If properly done, you don't just walk in and tell a country you have to do such and such. You work with the people in-country and I have never seen a country in which they didn't exist - a Minister of Finance or a Minister of Planning, who do see where the country needs to go, and steps that need to be taken. These are frequently unpopular measures, like lay off 25 percent of the people on government payroll. They are not there because anyone thinks they are carrying out needed functions, they are there because of political favoritism, etc. When as a condition of assistance - and this is true of the World Bank and the IMF, and was true of AID when we were talking macro economics - you have an outside assistance provider saying this is really what needs to be done and if it isn't done nothing we can do is going to help. It is up to you, but these are the choices. There are no other options. Then the minister gets his support and the political powers to be in the country have the cover of saying: "we are not doing this because we want to, we are doing it because it is being forced on us and we don't have any choice." So, you give them that political cover. It doesn't necessarily make people love the United States, except the people who are there and know what is going on. The population at large isn't happy, but the people who know what is going on appreciate it and understand it.

Q: Was there a particular policy that the OAS group was focusing on?

LAZAR: Yes, overall development policies.

Q: Mostly macro economics?

LAZAR: Yes, macro economics, but also project quality.

Q: Much like the banks and the Funds?

LAZAR: Yes. And without the resources. The OAS, to my knowledge, never had macro economic programs. They never put in assistance at that level or in those amounts, but this was done under the rubric of technical assistance.

Q: Helping the countries develop their own views as to what their position should be with the IMF, mostly?

LAZAR: Yes. Or, what kind of measures were necessary, what made sense for them to do.

Q: How long were you at the OAS?

LAZAR: Two years.

Q: Did you have much collaboration with AID in this process or work?

LAZAR: Not too much. There were some projects in particular countries where they did some joint work, but mostly it was pretty much stand alone.

Q: Did it get into any of the areas of common interest today in terms of public administration?

LAZAR: Just the tax work, as I recall. Nothing of what AID used to do in public administration.

Q: They weren't involved in elections and democratic processes, etc.?

LAZAR: Oh, good heavens no. At that point had anybody tried that that would have been considered highly intrusive.

Q: Even by their own organization?

LAZAR: Sure. Their own organization would never have voted for it, or allowed it.

Q: Well, then, let's move on. You were then transferred to where?

WADE MATTHEWS
Deputy Director of the US Mission to the OAS
Washington, DC (1976-1977)

Wade Matthews was born and raised in North Carolina. He attended the University of North Carolina and served in the US Army between 1955 and 1956. He then entered the Foreign Service in 1957 and held positions in Munich, Salvador, Lorenzo Marques, Trinidad and Tobago, Lima, Guyana, Ecuador, and Chile. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

MATTHEWS: I went back to be a position which no longer exists in the U.S. mission at the OAS called Deputy Director of the U.S. mission to the OAS, the Organization of American States in Washington.

Q: And you have that from when to when?

MATTHEWS: I was there only because I was offered a job that was more interesting to me. I was there only from the Fall, September of '76 until the beginning of May, '77 when I went over to be the director of the Office of Central American Affairs. Now Deputy Director of the OAS was not the number two job at the OAS. It was the number three job. There was the Ambassador to the OAS, there was the Deputy Chief of Mission it was called at the time to the OAS, and Deputy Director was number three.

Q: We'll pick it up the next time and talk about the OAS and then move on to other things.

Today is the second of October 1997, and I've got Wade Matthews up from Florida again. Wade, we are going to the OAS, '76-'77. Could you explain the role of the OAS at this particular time as perceived by a Foreign Service officer assigned to it and also who was the Ambassador.

MATTHEWS: The Organization of American States was certainly not the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy. In fact, some people would say it is irrelevant. It wasn't irrelevant but once again it was not the centerpiece certainly. The Ambassador to the OAS when I arrived was Bill Bayard, a former Congressman. This was toward the end of the Ford Administration. The deputy there was Bob White who I think went on to be Ambassador to Uruguay. Then, as I say, I was number three. We had a political officer, Mark Beon, very capable fellow who reported directly to me although obviously took many of his instructions from my boss and his boss. We had an economic officer who represented the economic elements of the OAS, and an administrative officer and then the administrative staff, a sort of office manager, not an office manager but administrative chief. Then we had a long time civil servant. I forget precisely what he represented us on but he had certain specialized organs of the OAS, and then one other officer, so it was an office in the ARA bureau which was basically the way we operated. Now what did we do Well, there are a number of organizations from the permanent council to the specialized organs. I would normally not be the principal representative there, but at times for example when we were between ambassadors Bayard left not too terribly long after I arrived. Maybe this was the time that the administrations changed. I think it was '77 when the Carter Administration came in. I think at that time Dale McGee came in, a former Senator from Wyoming.

Q: While you were there it has become a centerpiece of the first year of the Carter Administration, the Panama Canal which obviously had OAS repercussions. Was the Panama Canal at all an issue at this particular time?

MATTHEWS: Yes it was. I would say my principal nemesis in the OAS at those times when I was the representative at various committee meetings and one or two meetings of the permanent council where I represented us was Nelson Piki, the acerbic, at times eloquent, always loquacious representative of Panama. He had political credentials in Panama as radical anti U.S. I don't think he was a radical leftist in that sense although he was rather leftist in the sort of

nationalistic Latin American vein. He was constantly as we would say now, on our case. He would constantly anything he could use to attack the United States in the debates and dealings that we had, he did, and of course, he was pushing the Panamanian position on the canal. "We need the canal back. You guys have been there long enough."

Q: I take it at this time, the tail end of the Ford Administration, there wasn't much stirring within the Ford Administration on the Panama Canal.

MATTHEWS: No. Not too long after I got there, the elections took place, of course, and everybody was waiting until basically after that for the Carter Administration to take over. We know later what happened during the Carter Administration. Most of that the negotiations were underway, the political maneuvering was underway, but most of what took place regarding the Panama Canal and negotiating the agreement took place after I had moved over to Central American Affairs.

Q: What about, again we are sticking strictly to the OAS side, Nicaragua and Somoza because he was out by the time you got there.

MATTHEWS: Oh, no. He was very much in power. During the time I was at the OAS he had considerable military success against the Sandinistas who had started their insurgency mostly in northern Nicaragua. He had great military success, in fact they were fairly quiescent in the OAS. Nicaragua was not a big issue in the OAS or in the American body politic at that time.

Q: How about the Malvinas/Falklands issue with Britain and Argentina?

MATTHEWS: I'm trying to place this by time. I don't remember that being an issue while I was there. I believe the Malvinas/Falklands issue really brewed up, certainly the war and the Argentine invasion sometime after I left.

Q: It was '81 or something. Well, were there any issues during the time you were there of particular concern?

MATTHEWS: I'm trying to put my thoughts back to that particular period of time. Major issues that still stick with me, none in particular. The Latin American countries were still on more of a nationalistic bent then than they are at the present time. Panama was probably the leader of the let's get more control over our economy and political life element at that time than any other nation that comes to mind. Argentina was in that camp as I recall. Brazil was sort of a moderate force at that particular time. Chile of course had the military regime. Just thinking back I'm afraid I'm a little hazy on many of those things. Economics, assistance, the obligation of the developed world particularly the United States to increase its assistance to Latin America, the idea that Latin America should have a greater say in exactly how the assistance should be distributed and the conditions on it. Those were issues that came up time and again. The Cuba issue came up several times in several different ways while I was there. Cuba, of course was not a participating member in the OAS at that time. There were occasional alarms that Cuba would like to get back in; there were moves toward inviting Cuba back in, that it would come in. That was one of the favorite topics of Nelson Piti and the Panamanians. They wanted Cuba to

participate because they thought Cuba would lend weight to their position on the Panama Canal. Let's see. There were one or two of the smaller Caribbean nations who came in while I was there. I think it was Grenada or one of the others. That was an issue to the extent should the small Caribbean nations come in with full voting rights which they did eventually come in as or should there be some sort of special requirements for them somewhat more limited than the others. I think Grenada was admitted. There was considerable disdain for Eric Gary.

Q: Yes he was seeing flying saucers, things of this nature, new jewel movement.

MATTHEWS: Yes. I remember when Eric Gary, I think I was the acting representative of the U.S. on the permanent council when Eric Gary came in largely because I think my two bosses were away. There was a conference somewhere and maybe the other was on vacation or something. I remember sitting in the U.S. chair at the time. I had met Gary years before in the Caribbean when I had been assigned to Trinidad. He at the time was a labor leader and I was a labor-political officer. I had a passing acquaintance with him, not at all a good acquaintance because he was not within my area of responsibility. He was such a pariah when he came to the OAS. I believe I had lunch with him because nobody who was up there in the mission. And of course there was a more formal luncheon, after that he was sort of ignored. My recollection is after that we had lunch together.. There was nobody better to have lunch with at the time.

Q: Was there at this time in the OAS a feeling that the Caribbean was something, I mean these are so little pip-squeaks and the 21 original nations of Latin America, were they considered to be one thing and the Caribbean countries to be lesser nature? Was that there do you think?

MATTHEWS: It was there to a limited extent; however, it was applied more to the little nations like Grenada. These are second class citizens in effect was the feeling on the part of many of the Latin American nations. It wasn't applied against countries like Jamaica for example, but the smaller ones they were certainly regarded as second class citizens, and they normally only had only one representative to the OAS. Most of those nations' principal representative also wore the other had as Ambassador to the United States. I would say at the time, about half of the nations had a separate Ambassador to the United States, I mean to the OAS, and the other half had it as another hat that their Ambassador to Washington wore. Almost all of them except for the very small Caribbean nations had an officer whose principal responsibility in the Embassy was OAS matters in their Embassy to Washington. They did not all have a separate mission or separate ambassador to the OAS.

Q: Did the OAS, was there a Cuban connection to the OAS. Sometimes you can have a, it might not be represented. We've done this in plenty of cases where you have somebody that keeps track. Was there sort of a floating Cuban representative for the OAS?

MATTHEWS: Cuba, I don't believe they even had an interest section Washington at the time. I don't think they did, and of course, Cuba carried out their international activities regarding the hemisphere and the United Nations certainly exclusively to the OAS. They carried on no real activities in the OAS, In fact there was in this debate as to whether Cuba should be allowed back into the OAS that some of the Latin American nations were pushing, never a majority, but some were definitely pushing it. Well, perhaps later a majority but not right at that time. The question

that was asked frequently sometimes by us was even assuming that they were allowed back in, would Cuba even come back in because they would be clearly pretty well outnumbered by those that were there. In any event Cuba and some of the other Latin American nations pushed their prime, their prime focus was the United Nations, not the OAS.

Q: What were relations with the ARA, the Latin American bureau?

MATTHEWS: OAS was treated more or less like another country directory. Organizationally, they were a little apart, but a representative of the OAS attended the staff meetings for example, the weekly staff meetings. That's where we took our policy guidance from the ARA bureau. Occasionally, the ambassador would do an end run if he particularly didn't like it around. He did have access above the ARA bureau, but the ARA bureau was what we operated under which was logical. I personally had no problem with it. The ambassador to the OAS, and frequently both Paul Bayard and Dale McGee, would attend occasionally the ARA staff meeting. They didn't normally attend the ARA staff meeting. This is the weekly meeting of office directors. Bob White would be the normal attendee at that meeting, in other words my immediate boss. I would often, in fact I would usually attend sitting in the second row back from the table. When Bob was tied up doing something OAS or out of the country I would attend the staff meeting and represent USOAS.

Q: You left there when after the inauguration, which was January 20, 1977, the Carter crew. When did you leave OAS?

MATTHEWS: Well let me elaborate a little on that. When I first got to OAS, the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs was Harry Schlauer. When the administration changed, Terry Todman came in as Assistant Secretary for the inter American affairs, and I mentioned earlier that Dale McGee came in as Ambassador to OAS about the same time, I don't remember. Policy papers were prepared under Schlauer's regime if you will in the inter-American bureau on various subjects. The major policy paper from ARA was our policy toward Latin America, what the elements of it should be and giving alternatives and options of course for the incoming Carter team. This paper came by us, by USOAS for clearance and input and we did our input as to the OAS and what we should do in it and the relative importance of it and so on. Anybody who wanted to had an opportunity to make an input into the overall inter-American policy. Now the draft, I think this was a later draft; I think this already had Carter administration team input. In any event it took a look at Central America. Now I was not an expert on Central America. I had been to Central America, but I had never served there; I never had any responsibility for Central America. It essentially said, and here I am oversimplifying, Central America is a throwaway region. Here I am excluding Panama. Panama was not considered part of the Central America region. The rest of it is an area in which we have almost no interest, very little interest from the traditional U.S. interest standpoint; therefore, Central America with its human rights problems particularly in Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, and to a somewhat lesser extent Honduras, would be a good place as a testing ground for the success, presumed success or failure of the Carter human rights policy. Carter in the campaign and the team were strongly committed to making this an almost central element of U.S. foreign policy. The idea was you couldn't make it the central basis of our foreign policy with countries like Brazil or Argentina or Mexico or really Panama or a number of the other countries, Venezuela because of the oil and so on. In

Central America you could and therefore ignore the other elements of U.S. national interests such as defense, such as the cold war related to defense, the economy of the United States, economic advantage all that sort of thing and put human rights as number one.

GALE MCGEE
Ambassador, OAS
Washington, DC (1977-1981)

Gale McGee started his career in foreign affairs at the Institute of Foreign Affairs at the University of Wyoming. He then entered the Senate in 1958, serving on various committees including the Foreign Relations Committee and the Appropriations Committee. He also served as ambassador to OAS. McGee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.

Q: How did you become appointed to be ambassador to the OAS? This was in 1977.

MCGEE: I'll tell you how it happened precisely. Number one, Dean Rusk remained not only my constant contact, but confrère, whenever we got together back in the idealistic days of Kennedy and Johnson. So he instituted it with Jimmy Carter, and carried all the responsibility of it even then. I had met Carter before. I had spoken in Georgia when he was governor, at his invitation, lecturing on foreign policy, so we were already acquainted. But Rusk carried the ball on it and raised this trial balloon to see if I'd be interested. I assured him that I would. That was kind of a natural in many ways because I had some acquaintance with the hemisphere. So there was no objection from President Carter.

As soon as the election results were finalized, I had a call from Carter himself, who called to say that he was considering this, and he was coming up to Washington "to get his feet wet a little bit." This would have been a bit earlier, I think in late November of 1976. So I had a meeting with him on that occasion. Soon thereafter, they announced the appointment.

Q: How did President Carter view the Organization of American States at that time, before he came into office?

MCGEE: I'm not sure I could tell you in depth on that. All I can say is that he was a little uncertain about its dimensions or its capabilities, but that he was convinced by his closest counselor at that time in international affairs, who was Rusk, that this was not always meaningful as an organization, but must be, and had a great chance to be, and was irreplaceable in the hemisphere. Rusk was rather strong on that. So it was in that way that I think they approached me, in that context. We decided that that would square with my western hemisphere Subcommittee on Foreign Relations and the Appropriations Committee responsibilities as well, not to mention my academic background in Latin American Affairs.

By that time I had already covered every country in the hemisphere at least twice, doing other things. So I looked forward to it. It was a little disconcerting at first in getting used to it, in the

sense that I was directly on the firing line rather than pontificating as a senator, which was quite different. You could go like this, but you had to move a few dominoes around here and there in order to make sure that you didn't create a worse problem. But I had good people with me to assist in keeping American hemisphere policy on the high road.

Q: What sort of support did you get when you got there? Did they tell you how to operate?

MCGEE: I lucked out by having fortunate chiefs of staff. I had three chiefs of staff. Bob White was the first, and he was probably the most brilliant of the three that I had.

Q: Later an ambassador.

MCGEE: Later an ambassador. In fact, he was quite an ambitious fellow and was ready to move, but he was with me about two years, and certainly was very familiar with Central America, was very helpful and very much respected. He was succeeded by the most active and the most personable of my chiefs, Irving Tragen. Tragen is still at the OAS and handling a lot of their intelligence work.

Q: Concerning narcotics.

MCGEE: That's right. Because of the narcotics traffic.

Then the third chief was Herb Thompson, who also was very good, but he had a shorter stint at it before I was going out. But they were all invaluable to me because they had the contacts within the Department, like the intelligence section or all of the Latin American specialists at the opposite end of the hall from my office, just down the hall, that I could run in on, and did so without appointments. We kept that going, and the reverse was true of the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs from time to time. So it was a good relationship and very helpful to me in terms of education.

I took two of my own staffers with me, because they understood my methods. One was the secretary that I just talked to. The other one was a gal that was a student of mine in Nebraska Wesleyan University way back when McKinley was President. She handled a lot of the legislative work, only because she had been familiar with it in my office in the Senate. So I had those two benchmarks. *(Elizabeth Strannigan, my secretary, and the other was Betty Cooper, a former student.)

Q: You felt, then, you had a solid staff.

MCGEE: I felt that State gave me good people.

Q: State was not trying to shortchange you.

MCGEE: In other words, they didn't use it as a place to shove somebody. We had one little incident with them, and I'll not mention the names, in which they did obviously stick somebody

in there because they couldn't find a place for them, and we rejected it. Because I was advised by one of my three trusted advisors to do so.

Q: This is one reason for having good intelligence and good relations with people within the Service.

MCGEE: That's right, absolutely. They're the only ones that detected it. Don Stewart is another one that was on my staff, and he was extremely skillful. He's still down there.

Q: What were the major problems that you felt faced you when you came on board in early 1977 to the OAS?

MCGEE: It seemed like there were lots of problems, more than I had anticipated. Lots of things became problems. I think one of the significant ones was rationalizing this disproportionate U.S. contribution to the OAS budget, and trying to rationalize it for the other end of the hill in terms of the kind of responsibility it meant for us and the opportunities it created for us.

Q: I think the United States, at least at that time, paid two-thirds.

MCGEE: Two-thirds. And they still do.

Q: Why?

MCGEE: It was adjusted to 60%, I think, finally at one time. They tried that.

Q: Why do we pay that much when you have something like 22 involved?

MCGEE: I think the reason was obvious: to get it off the ground in the beginning, back in the 1950s when it began. It took that to get it going, and it was sold in part, I'm told, back in those primitive days right after World War II, as the way that we could more successfully influence policy. There were those that used that argument. We were dominating, anyway, in lots of ways, but it was always abrasive, and that this would provide a chamber for knocking heads together, including ours. This turned out to be a security area, as they reminded us of then, that people had forgotten about since.

In World War II, Hitler sank a greater total of tonnage at the entrance to the Caribbean than in all of the North Atlantic added together. I don't remember that coming out of World War II, because I wasn't paying attention in those days. But that's the fact of life, and that demonstrated how vital it was and still is. Good relations wherever they could be achieved related to the security factor as well--I mean the strategic factor in our location. You couldn't begin to take care of these problems, for example, certainly not by planes or trains coast to coast, because we had the two great ocean basins that were strategically significant in the world, simultaneously.

So that leads me to the second big thing that was there, not only this opportunity, but it was there that we put together the tactics and the strategy on the Panama Canal Treaty. I was in charge of that because of the OAS. I think that was the biggest single thing we did in those days.

Q: Why don't we first talk about the money angle. This raised a tremendous storm of protest at the time. I think President Carter said that the United States should make it more equitable so we wouldn't play such a dominant role, that we should pay 25%.

MCGEE: Yes.

Q: How did you deal with this? What was the reaction?

MCGEE: The way I dealt with it, I got together with Dean Rusk.

Q: Dean Rusk, by that time, was professor at University of Georgia.

MCGEE: One of the Georgian institutions. He was perhaps the closest confidant to Carter in Carter's pre-period. He had been quite close. I give him the credit for having brought Carter into the modern world. I would think that's not an exaggeration. Of course, we had had good contacts, Rusk and I. So that brought this all together quite naturally, but it wouldn't have happened without Dean Rusk and one other man. They cleared it with a fellow from New York by the name of Cyrus Vance, because they already had him picked. Carter had the biggest hand in picking Cy Vance as Secretary of State.

Cy Vance and I had traveled the world together already before, and got along very well. I met Cy first at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City, back in the primitive days, and that carried forward when he moved to Washington. So he moved quickly on this OAS business once he got in the State Department.

Q: The decision to pay 25%, had you been part of making the decision?

MCGEE: I was a key part in keeping the high proportion. I made no effort to cut it. It became a very controversial thing. Alan Ellender was one of those that was leading the effort to cut it back in the Senate in those dark ages. Way back. He tried to cut it clear back as early as 1956.

Q: I think Carter, in 1977, in addressing the OAS, raised this. But where did the initiative come from for paying the 25%, for cutting it?

MCGEE: That initiative, I think, was the political pressure within the Senate, not within the hemisphere. There was nobody in the hemisphere that resented the dominance that the 2/3 formula tended to give us, because it was nickels and dimes, which always made a difference. (Laughs) They could swallow a lot of pride over that. So it was actually budgeting pressure, particularly in the House and the Senate, but more in the Senate largely because they always thought they had priorities in foreign policy.

Q: I'm trying to get a feel for how these things work. This was a controversy. You were the ambassador. Were you basically handed a piece of paper saying, "This is what we're going to go for"? Or had you been part of the consultation?

MCGEE: In the first place, I'd been involved with it as a senator. It was already brewing at that time, and I went for it as a senator, the full two-thirds, or sixty percent, whichever was to be decided upon. But secondly, because of the strategic significance in terms of our own security concepts. That wasn't always quickly recognized, because these were penny ante governments that could be bought. Nicaragua was a great case in point. That was the kind of crises we had there.

Q: Carter made a speech in which he called the 25% responding to political pressure. As the ambassador there, did you salute and make the proper noises?

MCGEE: All I remember saying--now, I don't know what the record will show--my recollection on that was, "We ought to go slow on that. I think there is good reason because of how much it means to us that we ought not to play penny ante on this business just for show and tell purposes, that what we're playing with is our own security which is now irrevocably linked coast to coast and by a little ditch that's called the Panama Canal." I had some strong feelings on all that just because I followed it historically. I had done some writing on it, also. So it was real conviction. I guess maybe a little of it was elitism, in the sense that I thought that was a pretty sophisticated policy, that we had come quite a ways in reaching that position. We still had a lot of illiterates and bungleheads that had to be brought into the real world.

Q: How was the issue resolved?

MCGEE: The issue was resolved simply with the help of the ambassador from Mexico, who was the master craftsman in the OAS in those days, Ambassador De La Colina, who still is alive, I think. He's 92 or 93. He was Mexico's ambassador, and I would say he was the giant elder statesman in the OAS as a whole, and respected by everybody. He had that magic touch. He had the gift of a sharp mind that kept up with his tongue. Whenever there was an impasse like this, we always turned to him first, the U.S. did. He invariably could do it. And they would wait very often. "Well, what does De La Colina say?" He was deeply respected.

Q: How did this work out? Was there a vote taken? Did we feel we could not make it unilateral?

MCGEE: We didn't bring it to a vote. We convinced our people. Of course, by that time Vance was convinced, too, that we were better off to keep this heavier part of it, because it did guarantee stability in terms of otherwise uncertain aspects hemisphere-wise. Secondly, it was becoming increasingly clear to a lot of other people, thanks to the efforts of international lobbying groups and information groups, how greatly important and enhanced was the Caribbean from our own security point of view in terms of the facts of trade, communication with vast tonnages, and of course our national security. There was no substitute for that.

Q: That issue, then, was resolved internally within the United States administration.

MCGEE: That's right.

Q: Moving to an extremely important issue of President Carter's time was the Panama Canal. Could you describe what the issue was?

MCGEE: The Panama Canal, in terms of an issue, was probably the most important single issue, at least from my perspective, in that whole period because of the sort of grandeur of power, isolationist view, whatever you want to call it. This was ours. We seized it, then we built it, and then it became obvious how strategically important it was. It was the old Teddy Roosevelt approach; he deserves the credit for having set the stage for this. It was completed in room 1156 in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. That's where the whole deal was made.

Nonetheless, it was a very substantive thing by this time when you took the tonnage, the changing strategies, because of our new Pacific basin role as a result of World War II, you had the two-ocean concept and the focus that, thanks to Hitler, had placed on it in a realistic sense. So I think that those were the obvious things that made the canal issue so important. And how to keep it open was what we had the toughest time selling. Not how to own it, but how to keep it open.

In other words, it's such a vulnerable several miles there to illegal or illicit trafficking, taking a briefcase with a bomb and planting it in the weeds right alongside the locks, or whatever else. It is mind-boggling to think of absolute security. Our argument was that the best way to keep it secure is to keep it on as broad a base as possible. That's when we took in all of the Central American governments and Torrijos, the dictator of Panama.

We moved the whole question of the canal to Washington, and we had this debate on the canal and its role in our national interests.

Q: This is within the OAS?

MCGEE: Within the OAS, with all the ambassadors there. We had Carter and Cy Vance there, because they were likewise involved. We had this all out around the table. Mexico was willing to shift their position and back us for a reduction, but De La Colina's advice to us was, "You'll have all hell to pay for it if you succeed in reducing the formula." I took that seriously. By that time, Rusk was telling Carter this, that the spinoffs, the waves that would be made if we prevailed in cutting the Canal cost estimates would probably weaken the OAS because of redistributing the burden for those votes. In hindsight, for whatever it was worth, I think that reasoning turned out to be right on target.

The disproportionate value to us because of all of our stakes is obvious, but it was a psychological one of budget and playing with the numbers--two-thirds of the total of 60% of the total. Once you got around that, World War II, I think, helped us probably on that in the sense of creating an awareness that there were two oceans. So it probably made it easier.

Q: On the Panama Canal decision, were you part of the decision-making apparatus?

MCGEE: I was a key part of it. That was the first official public debate on the Panama Canal in the United States - launched in a public debate at the Mayflower Hotel.

Q: *This is the McGee-Dole debate, referring to Senator Robert Dole, on the Panama Canal Treaties on November 29, 1977.*

MCGEE: Right. That was sponsored by one of our four major policy groups around the town.

Q: *Was there a real method in Carter appointing you to the OAS? Obviously the Panama Canal was a major project. He said, "All right, if I have somebody who comes from the Senate establishment to go back and talk on this and to represent it, it's much better than having an unconnected Foreign Service officer or somebody who can't speak."*

MCGEE: I think you're leaving out one step. That was Dean Rusk who did that and pulled it off with Carter, his neighbor in Georgia.

Q: *Saying, "You need somebody from the Senate establishment"?*

MCGEE: No, he said, "You need Gale McGee."

Q: *Not just somebody, but Gale McGee.*

MCGEE: Yes, because I had been defeated for a Senate fourth term in 1976. In other words, I was available. If I'd still been in the Senate, they might not have done it, or I might not have taken it. I probably wouldn't have. With another term in the Senate coming up, I would have gotten great seniority. But given the fact that there I was with the shocks of the campaign of '76, a real shocker among the predictors, this was the best opening that they had in terms of where I would be the most useful. That was Rusk's calculation.

Q: *There was a real calculation behind this rather than, "We've got to do something for Gale McGee."*

MCGEE: There are many things they could have done. This was the other way around.

Q: *"We've got a real cat and dog fight on the Panama Canal. Let's have the right man in the right place for this."*

MCGEE: This was the one, even though I had no great language faculty. The issue was the handling of the Senate.

Q: *The battle was fought in the Senate on this.*

MCGEE: To get the necessary votes in the Senate. But the issues were many. That was the opening debate at the Mayflower [Hotel]. From that day until we passed the Panama issue, passed it into reality, I was sent to 58 major public debates, often times my opponent was a general. The general that popped up the most is still alive, slightly older than I am. I'm trying to think of his name. [Daniel Graham] At any rate, he was a gifted speaker. I met him first at the University of Arkansas, then we debated on a big CBS show in New York, out at the University of California, at the University of Colorado, and even in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Q: *He was taking the line that our security . . .*

MCGEE: We can't give it up. This is ours. The audiences, to start with, were a little cool, but they warmed up very rapidly as more and more information came out on this. They got a lot of people into the field, finally, making speeches, but no one got anywhere near my exhaustion.

Q: *Why did the Senate vote to support turning the canal essentially over to the sovereignty of Panama? After all, this is giving up something that we built.*

MCGEE: Sure.

Q: *What do you think?*

MCGEE: I think what got them by that time was the reality. The question was, less important, "Who owns it?" If you owned it and it was closed, it wasn't very valuable real estate. How do you keep the canal open? It's our greatest strategic linkage. And they bought that--finally.

Q: *The practicalities of this, that we couldn't keep it open without the cooperation of the Panamanians.*

MCGEE: Anybody could close the canal with a little care or preparation.

Q: *Was this the argument you used?*

MCGEE: This was the argument we used. Right. The vulnerability.

Q: *Ambassador, where was your greatest difficulty in dealing with the Senate on the Panama Canal Treaty? Were there particular people who were obstacles?*

MCGEE: The majority were obstacles to start with, of course, because they thought, "We had paid for it, it's ours, and the rest of them have no particular vested interest in it. They're just trying to grab a piece of our pie."

Q: *You mean the Panamanians?*

MCGEE: These are the selfish ones. "We're America first. We did it, and the canal is ours, as Teddy Roosevelt said." They always quote him: "When we saw that it was available, the Senate dawdled and diddled and daddled and procrastinated and delayed, and so I moved and took the canal." That was T.R.'s brag. Of course, he was applauded for it.

Q: *Within the Senate, was there an organized opposition that you had to deal with?*

MCGEE: Yes, there was an organized opposition and it was the more conservative senators. Dole epitomized that. He was the new youngster in the Senate, but leaning to the right, Bob Dole, senator from Kansas. But he agreed to take that post because the conservative Republicans didn't

want to get caught on that in the sense that there would be a lot of flak. They knew that. As a matter of fact, a couple of them whom I'll not name told them that they were going to support the treaty right away. They were telling me that, but said, "Don't break the confidence." And I haven't broken a confidence. But they were two very strong Republicans. So Dole was kind of caught betwixt and between.

When we finished the debate that night, the one that we've alluded to in the Mayflower Hotel, Robert Dole introduced me to a very lovely lady whom I had known before. He didn't know. It turned out to be his wife, Elizabeth Dole. She said, "Just tell Senator McGee what I just told you."

He said, "Why don't you tell him?"

She said, "No, you tell him."

So Dole said, "She just told me, 'Robert, dear, when are you going to wake up? You follow Gale McGee and you'll stay out of trouble.'" This is what she told him right there. We've often laughed about that since.

In any case, I had first known Elizabeth Dole when she was in the Nixon Administration and had been the staff chief for Virginia Knauer in Consumer Affairs. But it was Elizabeth Dole that was her right and left arm, that managed things for her and understood the politics of the Senate. I told Bob then, "Whenever you get in deep trouble, you want to fall back on your gal, because she understands this body probably as well as anybody that we know in this town. She's very astute and very quick, very sharp."

Q: The real battle, as we said before, was in the Senate on this. In the OAS, did you have a tactic? For example, telling the Latin American representatives, "Cool it on this issue. Keep quiet. Don't say anything, because anything you say might be used against this?"

MCGEE: Yes. We used it for some of the Latins, the ones that were more respected. A few of them were just inclined to pop off, anyway, and they didn't receive a great deal of attention.

For example, the Latin American that was the most helpful to us, as usual, was De La Colina of Mexico, because he was the senior in the OAS among all of the ambassadors in those days, and thus, deeply respected. He had a great sense of history. So even on the issues where he would vote against us, he would give us excellent counsel on how better to do something we were trying to get done.

Q: Did you find that for the most part, the representatives in the OAS understood this was almost an internal battle in the United States and they were advising their governments to stay out and let it play out?

MCGEE: There were some that were playing old-fashioned political games with it because it made good news at home to brow-beat the US. That was a standard thing. Whenever you ran out of something to do or whenever you were in an embarrassing bind, you could raise an issue here,

hit the U.S. over the head on some other unrelated thing. It was the best way to soft-pedal your difficulty at home.

Q: This is not unknown in the United States. (Laughs)

MCGEE: Not unknown at all at that time. I'm sure that's where they all learned it to begin with.

Q: What countries did you find particularly difficult to deal with in the OAS on the Panama Treaty?

MCGEE: On the Panama Treaty, probably one of the more difficult ones at that time was Nicaragua, and to some extent, Salvador. Costa Rica was a great friend. Of course, they're always loyal friends on all the great issues. They sometimes stood alone in that part of the hemisphere.

Of course, the government of Panama was split rather seriously in the sense that they wanted security, and they thought these radicals in Panama that were willing to surrender, just give it away, were anti-national interest. So it was a two-sided thing in that way. But Torrijos turned out to be a rather magical force, and I think he was set that way from the beginning, but he was advised carefully not to rush in too fast, but to edge his way in, so I was told. Anyway, that's the way it went.

The showdown meeting was when we had Torrijos up here at OAS, and he sat down in the Council Chamber, with everybody around the table. He made a very candid statement on not only the canal, but the role of statesmanship that would be required to continue the sense of responsibility in the operating of the canal.

In hindsight, my office and I thought that that began to tilt it significantly, when he himself said that there in the OAS, in that mass meeting where we had of all the observers and the members present.

Q: How about your personal dealings with one of the most intractable groups that I can think of, the canal zoners, the Americans who had jobs and lived in the canal area?

MCGEE: It's all at the University of Wyoming Library now, but I got a lot of hot letters and other hate mail.

Q: I would imagine you did.

MCGEE: And some of them almost obscene in terms of the brutality of their language. "How can you give this away? We earned it. It's a part of our legacy from history, from the truly great Americans like Teddy Roosevelt." Most of them would hide behind Teddy Roosevelt.

Q: In many ways, they represented part of the whole trouble, didn't they?

MCGEE: Really a part of the trouble. That's right.

Q: As the world changed, they were the wrong type to have down in that area.

MCGEE: That's right. They also found some comfort in the ranks of what we used to call in the old days the "America firsters," because they were the isolationists, even as World War I came on. They were from that group mostly. There were a few of them that were dedicated and sincere devotees of the Caribbean area, but who had come up through the processes of change here, and still were wanting to just bounce the Americans out.

Q: How about your dealings with the U.S. military during this time?

MCGEE: We dealt with them. As a matter of fact, the fellow that I debated more places in the 58 appearances that I made on the canal, it almost always was a debate rather than a speech. In other words, I would have, let's say, the local commander of the VFW or the American Legion would be the debater. But the one that was the most constant was a very distinguished general, Daniel Graham. Graham debated me in many significant places and another debate here in town after the Dole debate. He took me on here in town, speaking for the military.

Q: He was retired at the time?

MCGEE: He was retired. Then he followed me. We scheduled a debate in Massachusetts. He went up there and made a couple of speeches first, and then we were going to debate at Boston College. We had a blizzard down here, and so I was stranded in Washington; he was up there, so the Department of State set up a telephone communication. We debated by telephone for over an hour in order to keep from disappointing the audience up there. Then he debated me out in Fulbright's hometown in Arkansas. Then he followed me to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where he debated me in my territory. Then at Berkeley and at three or four other places scattered around, one in Montana at the university. I must say, he was a gifted speaker. Again, we had our lines drawn. I don't know whether he's died recently, but until about two years ago, he was still around town and in one of these active organizations, international organizations. I'm not sure which one it is, but he's still active in it. So we had a good laugh about the great old days.

Q: On the Panama Canal debate, you played quite a different role from a traditional ambassador. Rather than a behind-the-scenes working with other people, you were really the President's man with the Senate and with the American public on this.

There were two other major issues. One was the Somoza crisis in Nicaragua, and the other was human rights. Why don't we take the Nicaraguan one first. When you came on board, what was the situation in Nicaragua and how was the OAS involved in it?

MCGEE: The situation in Nicaragua, basically in those days was that this was an internal American commitment with the Somozas. It had gone way back. Thus, we were kind of buddies. It was a kind of buddy arrangement. This was our embarrassment, to be sure, the way it emerged in Nicaragua. But nonetheless, we had looked with favor on his accession to the top there. Of course, this went back for quite a number of years.

Then by the time I was around the OAS, the embers of discontent and even revolution were beginning to glow. So we were coming to the point where we had either to put up or shut up. After some consultation with the Carter people and with great help from Cy Vance, and with the guidance of Dean Rusk from the outside in, we agreed that if we were going to save the canal, in other words, if we were interested in keeping it open, that required certain risks and sacrifices that "who owns it?" would gloss over, because who owns it, you could still keep it open by some arrangement.

Q: Was the canal related to the Nicaraguan situation?

MCGEE: The Nicaragua thing, because this was beginning to sharpen all these edges because of Nicaragua's geography. For example, in regard to the transit of the canal, this tended, in my view in those days, to accentuate the timing of the Somoza thing in terms of whether we had to make a choice of priorities here for the time being, to avoid jeopardizing. It was so interwoven with the Panama issue that it complicated what to do about Somoza.

Q: Could you explain how we saw Somoza? We're talking about 1977. He eventually fell in '79. When you came on board, how did we view the regime?

MCGEE: We viewed Nicaragua as being one of those areas that was, in the first place, geographically located in a significant situation. Thus, the longer we could keep the politics inside the country quiet, the better it was for the canal. In other words, this was one of the "stability areas" along the canal. Then when the riots began in Nicaragua, when the protests, however feeble at the very beginning, we had a mounting nervousness, not "What are we going to do?" because we continued to think that what we were going to do would have to be to stick by Somoza, stick by the Nicaraguans and let them clean up their own house. But it reached the point there where obviously it was going to explode. Then that was a complication that we thought was worth trying to circumvent, if possible.

Q: What was the specific role that the United States' delegation to the OAS played in the Somoza crisis which went from 1977 until the fall of 1979?

MCGEE: My recollection is that we started out by accepting the inevitability of Nicaragua and Somoza because of the importance we attached to the canal, and that if there was any major convulsion there, it might acquire dimensions that could close the canal, blow it up, whatever, as I took over the OAS. But things were beginning to move very rapidly, particularly there, and not too long thereafter, in Salvador. Of course, a war was already going on between Salvador and Honduras. That was a long technical conflict, but it surrounded the canal. That was our first priority, but it became obvious, because of the violence inside Nicaragua, that this was far more serious than we had anticipated.

We made a basic decision through State that we'd have to find some way to move Somoza out of the picture. We always made jokes about how the easiest way was to send somebody down there with a rifle and make all this kind of junky stuff, but that was just for the cloakroom whispers.

In any case, it might have been early 1978, I just don't remember the years right now. You'll remember better from your records that you have. We made a basic decision to try to get the OAS institutionally to censure Somoza, and we'd been encouraged by some of these very small [countries] like Costa Rica. I think by that time--maybe I've forgotten the years now--Grenada was quite new. One of the little tiny countries on the northern coast there near Venezuela. At any rate, we had some help there for behind-the-scenes working. We decided that the time might be coming rather sooner than later, where we could mobilize OAS sentiment.

When it was tested--I think it would have been 1978, but I'd have to look it up to be precise--where we decided that it was time to call the Nicaraguan cards in. Once more, the ambassador from Mexico was a tremendous help to us on this one, just tremendous, twisting arms and cracking them just a little bit, particularly in Nicaragua, next door to them, and getting Salvador and Honduras on the same side in this sort of thing, which was not easy.

The upshot of it was that when we had that showdown afternoon, along in August, I think, late summer at any rate, we'd been hassling and wrestling over it, we called in the vote to take a chance. We really thought that we'd probably have to have another vote later on.

Q: You weren't really sure about the censure.

MCGEE: We weren't sure, but we had to make a decision in terms of timing, and we decided it was worth the risk because we'd have a fall-back line to try another one at that moment, at least, before everything else blew up. So we tried it and it worked the first time. I think it was in August. In any case, we encouraged the petition. There were several of the smaller governments that also put it together, but we encouraged it, and we would try to follow through on it. We sat around that big table there, and when they called roll, there were enough votes that shifted over, particularly in the small Caribbean states that didn't want to take any decision at all, to do it, and pulled it off. It might even have been that first week in September, but very late in that part of the summer. They ousted him--I mean, they voted him out in that context.

Q: The OAS.

MCGEE: The OAS as an organization voted him out. I am told that a couple of our people encouraged him, to say that he ought to look for a haven, and we'd try to be helpful and get him out. I don't know whose brilliance it was to arrange with [Alfredo] Stroessner to find a nice, quiet spot for him, but Paraguay took him in. Of course, I accused my fellow who was down in Paraguay as ambassador soon thereafter, they had that all set. They had a cannon ready. (Laughs) But anyway, they disposed of him not too long after he was down there.

Q: On the timing here, Somoza left, I think, in 1979.

MCGEE: That's correct.

Q: Somoza falls in July of '79, and he went to Paraguay. Shortly thereafter he was killed. Somebody hit his car with a rocket.

MCGEE: Yes. That's why I said I'm not sure who was lining up that as we encouraged him to go down there. I'm sure we didn't. All I was saying is that this followed very quickly. Stroessner was the best climate.

Q: But during this time, as we were dealing and wrestling with the Somoza business and trying to back away, when the other Latin American states were coming to you, were they divided as far as how they looked at the situation?

MCGEE: They weren't divided in terms of what we were doing. The difference between some of them was that some of them were publicly demonstrating that they wanted us to go ahead, but others were saying, "If you just do it, we'll back you quietly."

Q: This is often the case, I think.

MCGEE: That's right.

Q: Many countries want us to do something. It's nice to condemn us publicly and all.

MCGEE: If it didn't work, they could say they didn't know anything about it, you see.

Q: But at the same time, they know what should be done and they expect us to do it.

MCGEE: Yes. And if it worked, then they would say, "That was great! We're with you all the way."

Q: I was asked to ask you about the role of Zbigniew Brzezinski in dealing with Somoza. Somebody in the Foreign Service said he didn't play a very helpful role and put you up to calling for a vote where you were defeated 21 to 1. Do you remember what that was? Something about an international police force.

MCGEE: Yes. We had a strained interval there for a little while with Brzezinski.

Q: He was national security advisor to President Carter.

MCGEE: Right. Not only that, but he knew more than almost anybody else. At least he admitted that! In other words, he was abrasive that way, but he did know a great deal, and he had a lot of that to back up a decision that he made. But he also liked to talk about it or brag about it. That was the difference between Brzezinski and Rusk, in terms of handling diplomacy. They had two different spots they were in, but nonetheless, the difference in the way they handled themselves. Zbig would run out of patience much sooner, or would rush in deliberately much more quickly. At any rate, he was often a problem because he was trying to be "Henry Kissinger". That seemed to be a great obsession in his life. He wanted to be another Henry Kissinger, and he wasn't quite that much put together. That's just my personal judgment in hindsight.

Q: Fair enough. Did the National Security Council, under Mr. Brzezinski, have a policy or a thrust that was essentially different from the way you saw approaching it?

MCGEE: I'm not sure it was the whole National Security Council. We often felt that it was Zbig in the image of Henry Kissinger. A little more impetuous, a little more confident. This was another Kissinger, I mean. Kissinger was a unique person in his own right and stands alone to this day in terms of comparative individuals in that role. I suspect that that was Zbig's dream and frustration.

Q: So often the American political process seems to fall down when it has to deal with Latin America because there really never has been much interest in it.

MCGEE: That's a historical fact of life, yes.

Q: From the present side and all accounts, it's been a dismal failure of the Reagan Administration in dealing with Nicaragua over the last eight years. But much of it is because there doesn't seem to be much real knowledge. There's a lot of ideology, but not solid knowledge. Is this still true?

MCGEE: I think it's still true to some degree, the reason being that our whole history was Europe. World War II was Japan and Europe. But that's been the flow, our history related to the Western European community, and we were totally interlaced. The Monroe Doctrine was produced by that sort of thing, although I did a special monograph on the Monroe Doctrine that I think turned out to be a substantive contribution to the interpretation of the doctrine. The conclusion was that John Quincy Adams had negotiated with Lord Castlereagh (the British), and the British and the U.S. were to be equals in the declaration (the Monroe Doctrine). That was why we were so courageous about it. At the last minute, Castlereagh and the British government came unraveled a bit, and they backed out. So Quincy Adams was left being the only person, as it were, rather than a joint statement. Then that explains why for so long we never heard a word about a Monroe Doctrine historically, because it just became stuck on record there. They'd gone that far, and then the British dropped their end of it.

Q: We had nothing with which to enforce it anyway.

MCGEE: No. There was nothing that we could wave the flag about or shake our fists over and live up to it. Fortunately, it wasn't really ever invoked until much later on in history, as we know, and then it was out of ignorance of the history of it. It became a convenient phrase. Teddy Roosevelt, of course, glorified it.

Q: In the upper level of the ranks of the State Department or the NSC, was there much attention focused on Latin America, except for when the President was concerned about the Panama Canal? Or did you feel interest was elsewhere?

MCGEE: Obviously the interest was elsewhere, but I think it was emerging after World War II, from there on, in our internationalism, which Eisenhower, in my view, though he wasn't the greatest of our Presidents, he did lend authenticity or acceptability to this changing posture of the United States. He gave it dignity. The Democrats had been somewhat equivocal, even under Harry Truman, though they came close to it, Truman distinguished himself, in my view, as a

President, to everybody's surprise because he was finally Roosevelt's desperation person just to fill the ticket, and when he was there, after Roosevelt departed, that was the big surprise. Harry Truman was bigger than the Democrat from Missouri. So you had had this testing period, but it was still controversial because it was HST. In history, he still ranks as one of our few "near-greats."

Eisenhower, in my interpretation of that near-decade, was responsible for bringing all the loose ends together and making them dignified, again thanks to the Dulleses. I have mentioned them already. They had this deep concept, and Eisenhower bought it or was told to buy it, because he usually wasn't that aggressive.

Q: The focus on Latin American always has seemed to be to focus on whatever happens to be the problem, rather than looking at Latin American as a whole. Did you have this feeling when you were at OAS?

MCGEE: Yes. I mean, we always felt that we started from behind wherever it was, that this was secondary or even tertiary, particularly in the wake of World War II, where even though one might have expected it to sweep up the whole hemispheric concept along with it, it tended to be separated into the Pacific basin and the North Atlantic basin, rather than the south, in my judgment.

Q: Carter was often focused elsewhere, too, wasn't he?

MCGEE: Oh, yes. Sure. And that's understandable. Of course, the only experience he'd really had was as governor. In the international sense, if he hadn't believed in and had his right and left arm living nearby down there, Dean Rusk, I think he would have had even more trouble.

Carter, when I talked to him three or four years ago, we were having an informal chat. He told me that he should have moved more expeditiously on international questions than he felt he did. He thought he could have moved a little better, a little more quickly. But he did have Rusk always to fall back on. That was sort of his father confessor, which was his basic steadying force.

Q: What role did Secretary of State Cyrus Vance play while you were with the OAS?

MCGEE: His role was a strong one. By that I mean he not only knew what the score was and knew what had to be done, but was aware of these valleys and peaks, the ups and downs in what had led us up to that time, not only with the Eisenhower years, but with the Democratic years, and Nixon with his difficulty. Because Cy Vance had a sense of history--and still does, in my judgment--and because Dean Rusk was the father of a lot of history of that time, I think those were the steadying balance wheels in that context.

Q: As it pertained to the role of the United States representative to the Organization of American States, did Vance more or less say, "This is your baby. You go ahead. You know what our policy is. Go ahead with it"? Or were you getting other explicit instructions?

MCGEE: Until it came time for the OAS annual meeting, we were given a lot of leeway, but we orchestrated that leeway through the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs.

Q: *Who was it at that time?*

MCGEE: We had a couple of them. Pete Vaky was the foremost. Anyway, they were good ones.

Q: *Vaky.*

MCGEE: Pete Vaky was one, and we had another one that was fairly steady. They were very useful in steadying it before it went to the White House.

Q: *Did they feel that the OAS was an important . . .*

MCGEE: I'm not sure they did when it started, but I think they did as it moved along because it got more and more involved in the Central American area or the Caribbean, in general. I think because of that, it acquired, by force of having to make some decisions, more attention than probably they would have given it in terms of their earlier convictions or what their expectations were in being in that post. I think the times had a great deal to do with that. But it came at a good time in that sense, and it certainly was very helpful to be at the end of the line there, at the ambassador's office, to begin to get some responses like that. It could have been extremely embarrassing. But it was all timed pretty well, and I give Carter, through Vance and always Rusk, because I don't think Dean was ever very far away in those days, I think he always had an input. So to that extent, that's where I come out.

Q: *I'd like to bring up the third last theme that I think was particularly important during the Carter years, especially in Latin American, and that's human rights. Was this sort of a new departure, the idea of the United States going to take both an active and a public role in pointing a finger and promoting what we called human rights, or making sure that people were not tortured and imprisoned and unjustly treated by other countries?*

MCGEE: No, that was a very real one. Of course, the reason it was selected out was that we had already been through the Péron interval of history in Argentina, as a case in point, which turned out to be a rather dramatic and, I guess you'd say, effective education to the total dominance from the top down, rather than from the bottom up.

In Brazil, Bill Maullard and I were sent down there to make a quick investigation because of the Carter linkage. Bill had been in the House and had been ambassador to the OAS, and I was the new ambassador. We were picked as a team to go to the northeast of Brazil and work down to Brasilia after we had gone through two or three of the larger population states along the eastern band of Brazil.

Q: *This was at a time when Brazil was under military rule.*

MCGEE: That's correct. They had been used to military rule and it was very convenient, very quiet mostly. For example, he and I experienced an incident in Recife, where we started. The experience was that we had a dinner given us by the ranking officer in our foreign station.

Q: Probably the consul general there.

MCGEE: Consul general, whatever it was. He turned out to be an erratic source, and we gave him a very bad report card when we got home. I'm trying to think of what made that thing explode. It's a curious incident because it centers in Recife. It was when the government of Brazil was still shooting a few people, but they had had an election. I'd have to look up in my notes who was the chief by that time. This would have been probably just the first year that I was in the ambassador role.

They had a big dinner there, the ambassador did, with a lot of the big stately people, and Bill and I had told him when we came into town, "Look, we don't want any dinners. We're here to work. We want to get out where the drought is, where the problem is. That's why we're here. We don't want these affairs of state on this occasion." Well, the fellow went ahead and held the big dinner, and we didn't show up. We refused to go. It produced a rash of cables to Washington, what we had done to him down there and how embarrassing it was. But State backed us up on that. We filled them in on exactly what the situation had been. They had tried to call our bluff. Meanwhile, we made a strong report in favor of help to this less populous part of Brazil, because that's where the big drought was. It, likewise, was a part of the balance of what happened down in Rio. So it turned out all right, but it looked kind of hazy at first.

There was a little footnote on that trip, just for footnote purposes. It has no other relevance. We came down the Amazon from about halfway up, above where the Black River flows into it. It suddenly turns very black. We were above there, up at Manaus. We came down the Amazon by boat for many miles, to the point where you pass from the clear water into the black water, the dirty-looking water, where we put ashore at a place many miles below Manaus, where they said, "We can get you into where all the primitives are and you can see how poorly developed Brazil is. Here you just can't get there from here." They arranged all of that and set it up.

We got over there and got out of a launch into a birch bark canoe, but it was just a hollowed-out log. They got us up in there probably 15, 20 miles inland. It was an all-day trip, at any rate, poling. This is about as remote as you'll see it. They said, "Let's stop and we'll show you. Here's a little grass hut, and you can see there are two people, three people working around there. Let's get out and see what we can learn there."

We got out there. What we saw, they said, "Do you want to look inside this hut?" Inside of the hut on the wall was a picture of Danny Inouye from the Sunday supplement of one of the Chicago newspapers pinned on the wall. One of the couples that lived in this little establishment were Japanese, and so they had that picture there. Then they had a Christmas tree in back of the hut with the lights on!

Q: Inouye's Japanese American who is a senator from Hawaii.

MCGEE: Sure. They were moving heavily into that part of Brazil in those days, but this was a remote area. Danny's familiar with this. He said, "Well, it still makes it remote if I'm involved." But it's a true story, and it was one of those things that shows, of course, that there is no place to hide anymore, however remote!

Q: In the Carter Administration and you, in your role as ambassador to the OAS, how did raising the subject of human rights play in the OAS? At that time, the majority of the OAS consisted of countries that were under military rule of one form or another, some rather repressive, particularly down in the southern cone. That was Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay.

MCGEE: Still there. (Laughs)

Q: How did this play in the OAS?

MCGEE: It started slowly. In other words, generally the understanding was, "You keep your hands off Argentina and Chile." But the smaller governments, even if it didn't have much prospect of improving much, these were expendable. They could take the rocking without making the big waves for what they looked upon as the stability anchors--Chile, on the one side, and Argentina on the other, even with Pinochet and Péron.

Q: At that point we felt that both Argentina and Chile, their role for being stable, for whatever reason, was more important than what kind of government they had.

MCGEE: Yes. I think a lot of the Latins did. I'll give you another actual incident that occurred. About the second February that I was at the OAS, maybe 1978, CBS did a show of the worst dictators in the world. They didn't use the word "worst"; it was the equivalent of "worst" in a more sophisticated form. So they showed on a two-hour TV program the background and the consequences of these "worst" guys. It started with Idi Amin in East Africa, Uganda. Then it jumped to Marcos in the Philippines. Then finally it went to Pinochet in Chile.

The next morning, several OAS ambassadors, one of them from Central America, two of them from Caribbean states, altogether three of them came into my office at State and said, "What are you going to do about that CBS movie last night? Did you see it?"

I said, "Yeah, I saw it. It was really very interesting."

"What are you going to do about it?"

I said, "What do you mean, what are we going to do about it? We're not going to do anything about it. It's an interesting cross-section of different parts of the world."

"They had no business putting Pinochet in with those cut-throats. He's in a completely different world." And these Latin were truly mad as hell.

We said, "Well, the effect is still the same."

"No way! No way! You ought to protest to CBS for lack of a sense of history." That's the way one of them dignified it. They were mad because this was one of "theirs," you see. That says something in terms of this hemispheric mutual identity and co-op approach.

Q: I don't want to put words in your mouth, but did you feel that there were times when you were the ambassador from one of the 20-odd states at the OAS, but often it was them versus you?

MCGEE: Versus us. Sure! Particularly when it was a big sweeping thing like that CBS show. That's something we could do something about, and we had no business allowing that to happen. In other words, you could screen this stuff. You could tell them that's out of order. But they were sensitive because this was one of them. Of course, Pinochet's still there (1987).

Q: What were you, in your capacity as ambassador to the OAS, doing about human rights within Latin American?

MCGEE: In the first place, we were encouraging it, but we had an uneven policy in the sense that it was a different policy toward Costa Rica, for obvious reasons. But we used that as a benchmark in order to call in some ideas about its neighbors. A little later on, I thought it was a serious mistake, for example, when we mined the harbor in Nicaragua, but I thought that sounded like something one of the generals might have done, instead of one of the admirals.

Q: We're speaking about in the Reagan Administration.

MCGEE: That's right, very early on.

Q: There was a clandestine mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

MCGEE: And it backfired.

Q: It came out of the NSC.

MCGEE: Yes. That's what it was.

Q: We were damned internationally.

MCGEE: Right.

Q: As the ambassador to the OAS, were you constantly hammering away at some of the countries for human rights breaches? Did you talk to the Argentinians and Paraguayan and Chilean ambassadors?

MCGEE: We did to all of them. Of course, Chile had been smart enough to send a temptress up here as their ambassador, Maria S_____ from Chile. She was a charming gal and smart. Chile could have obliterated half the population of Chile, and she could have still sold it as a humanitarian exercise. She was very effective. Therefore, Chile was put a little further back than the Péron government managed, because even with Eva, it began to sink in a little faster than

Chile did. Of course, that's automatic because more flows this way than over the ridge of mountains down the other side, at that time in history at least. Péron was a real factor, and a dramatic one, particularly because of his wife, etc., in those days.

Ellsworth Bunker was down there the second time I was in Argentina. He was our ambassador there. I always thought he had a pretty even keel on all these things, a real gifted diplomat.

Q: This is going way back. But we're talking about the Carter time now.

MCGEE: I keep thinking about the whole picture here.

Q: Let's concentrate on your role as ambassador to OAS. We had a President, Jimmy Carter, who came in and really instituted a policy which has remained, and probably never will go away, and that is respect for human rights.

MCGEE: Right.

Q: Which was very controversial then and still is, but it has become part of the diplomatic landscape in the world today. I give him full credit for that. As the initial person to bring up this very unwelcome subject in Latin American for the first time, I mean, with real attention, how did you handle this?

MCGEE: I have to think a little bit, because I've been overlapping here. I think about everything that was going on.

Q: Let's talk about 1977 to 1981.

MCGEE: Yes, whenever it was we had the takeover there. I think that human rights-wise, we found a crutch in Brazil, strangely enough, at this time. This was when I was at the State Department. It was a little bit of a surprise that we took credit for it, partly because of one of the pioneering trips we had made earlier on, where we did not rock any boats down there. We listened. Who would the president have been in Brasilia in those days?

At any rate, we felt that we'd had impact because we'd been up the river. Where are those 13 waterfalls just before you cross over into Paraguay in Brazil? We'd had a meeting up there with a group of parliamentarians from Brazil, because they had nice quarters where you could stay and look at the falls. Iguassu Falls, is where it was. We had a meeting with parliamentarians, and that was very useful in the sense that we interchanged as equals in a parliamentary government situation, even though Brazil was still coming out from under some of their old authoritarian areas. It was uneven as between the States, but when you got down near Rio, and even by the new capital, Brasilia, there were evidences of this. But the further you got into the interior, the less you saw of it, and you saw some of the old domineering political personalities.

So I guess we'd say that we thought that was favorable, in that they were nicking away at this in Brazil. We thought it was more dramatic in Argentina only because it was more visible once Péron had finally lost most of the control. The last time we were there, of course, the present

President was there in Argentina. We thought that they had made reasonably great strides outside of Buenos Aires.

Q: *So you saw progress.*

MCGEE: A difference.

Q: *So you weren't up against intractable people saying, "We have no problem in our country," and all that?*

MCGEE: Only Stroessner. There was nothing to see or to change there. That was it--fixed. We gave him at that time maybe six or eight more years. (Laughs) And here he is, a generation later, still going (now Stroessner is out). And we thought the same thing would happen to our friend in Chile, Pinochet.

Q: *Who also is still going, although it looks like he may be eased from the scene.*

MCGEE: Of course, they've made some adjustments in Chile, too, more so than in Paraguay, as I understand it now. It's been a few years since I was last there. Look who's president in Bolivia, up in high altitude--President Paz! President Paz was the first president that they had, and I saw him. Now, after several years, he's back as president again.

Q: *As far as human rights go, during the time you were there, things were moving in a positive way?*

MCGEE: Yes. Very uneven, but positive on balance.

Q: *How did the other ambassadors deal with you? Did they sort of sigh when you came in with complaints or pointing the finger?*

MCGEE: We tried to avoid that. We usually tried to work through somebody, and almost always it was De La Colina from Mexico. Even if it was decided we should do it, we never did it until he agreed that that would be better if we did it than if we picked somebody else. He was a very strong reed that we leaned on.

Q: *You were trying to make some effect, rather than to indulge in a public relations?*

MCGEE: Rather than get an image credit of some sort. We were trying to achieve new breakthroughs.

Q: *The pressure on you was not to posture, but to try to get something done.*

MCGEE: But at least they let us get by with it. We didn't get bounced out. There was a division in the State Department on it, and Cy Vance took quite a little flak there at one time in some of that. But he would take it successfully.

Q: How about Brzezinski? Did he have much interest in human rights in Latin American?

MCGEE: I don't recall that he did. I recall that back here in Washington he was always very friendly, would invite himself over and say, "What did you learn on your trip?" or, "How does it look? What's going on in Europe right now?" We'd have an exchange, because he was right upstairs, right overhead above the International Club, of which I was on the board in those days. So we sometimes got together. So we kept in touch in that way.

Q: Sometimes there's someone saying, "Let's bring Canada into the OAS." Does this make any sense?

MCGEE: Oh, we worked hard on that. We really worked hard on it.

Q: Does it make any sense, though?

MCGEE: The Canadians said, "You show us how it would make sense, and we might consider it." In other words, they always kept us on the defensive on that one.

Q: Why were we trying to get Canada in?

MCGEE: We felt it was the only missing link in the hemisphere, and that in the mechanism, as well as in the budget, on the basis of the formula for arriving at the budget, it would be an enriching or a strengthening of the organization. The Canadian answer was always the same: "We keep thinking about it, but we are not ready." But what it really meant was they got all the benefits from the OAS without the dollar commitment, because they were an observer, they were always present at all the debates, and they were the most useful, very often, for carrying water for us quietly. So they were extremely helpful in that regard.

Of course, the sensitivity of the elections in Canada always interposed problems at the time those had come due, but nonetheless, there was an honest difference among us. I was right in the middle on that. I would have favored it. I wished that they had come in, but nonetheless, it wasn't that serious if they didn't because they were so cooperative. They were there all the time and they were working for us behind the scenes. So that's a tough nut to crack in many ways, I guess you'd say, because you still got the best of it. I still think that it would be better to have her in where it would be open, but there's no serious penalty for her not being in except for the money factor, which may be their bottom line consideration.

Q: Looking back on your time in the OAS, what did you feel was your best contribution to it? Any particular field?

MCGEE: Not any particular one issue. I think our best contribution was told, likewise, by Dean Rusk at a later time, that we seem to have brought our relationship onto a closer basis of inter-relationships than it had usually enjoyed. In other words, it made a difference. We spent a lot of time, even with the tiniest of the republics, or with the big guys. We spent a lot of time doing that.

This just popped into my mind. We had one little embarrassing thing that you will get a little chuckle out of, if worth nothing else. One of the things we did was to go to the various bits of entertainment around our capital city Washington, and usually with one of the other ambassadors, and it would rotate around. So we had set up an evening that we were looking forward to with a show going on at the old National Theater. It was kind of a racy show. It was like a bunch of naked ladies.

Q: *Was it like "O Calcutta!" or something like that?*

MCGEE: It was like "O Calcutta!" At any rate, I set up a reservation and put in my request upstairs to the Secretary of State's office for the four of us to go to the National Theater. They deliberated on it, and pretty soon it came back and said, "We can't approve your having a limousine for that occasion. Not for that show." They had censured it. We were big enough boys and girls to see it, whatever it was. But we were taking the ambassador and his wife from a little island in the southern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago. We were taking the ambassador and his wife to that. But State vetoed it.

OWEN B. LEE
Alternative Representative, OAS
Washington, DC (1978-1995)

Owen B. Lee served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He graduated from Harvard University in 1949 and studied in Paris, France at Institut d'Etudes Politiques. His Foreign Service career included positions in Germany, Bolivia, Romania, and Spain. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on December 4, 1996.

Q: *This is Tom Dunnigan and the date is January 29, 1997. I am resuming the Oral History interview of Owen Lee. Owen, in 1976, you left USIA and moved over to the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (USOAS). How did this assignment come about?*

LEE: Actually it was 1976 when I returned to Washington from Spain and went to CU, the Cultural Affairs Bureau in the Department, for one year. Then I worked one year with USIA when CU was shifted to USIA in 1977.

Q: *So, it was 1978 when you went to USOAS.*

LEE: The summer of 1978. I moved there at the suggestion of a man I had known in personnel years before who told me about an opening in USOAS. I went to see Irv Tragen and former Senator Gale McGee, our Ambassador to the OAS, about the position.

Q: *McGee was the head of our delegation?*

LEE: Yes, both the Permanent Representative and the ambassador. They took me on and I ended up staying 16 years in USOAS.

Q: Did you leave the Foreign Service and become a civil servant, or how did that work?

LEE: I did not leave the Foreign Service then. I left the Foreign Service two years later in 1980. At that time it was a good move for me having more or less just returned and having some personal problems. I had a daughter who came down with Hodgkin's disease in 1977, here in Washington. So, I was anxious to stay here for her treatment and all. And then in the Foreign Service I didn't get a promotion to FSO-2. I was told I could not be reassigned overseas, so I thought I had a position here in Washington in which I could shift and stay on. When I looked at the comparative advantages of civil service versus Foreign Service, it was a wash. So, that was very helpful to me.

As I soon discovered, I was not leaving the Foreign Service even though I had transferred to the Civil Service. How could that be? Assignment to the U.S. Mission to the OAS (USOAS), amounted to a posting overseas in every respect except being overseas. USOAS was organized like an embassy, independent of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (ARA) and the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO), and responsible for over \$100 million in U.S. contributions to inter-American organizations. USOAS officers had diplomatic titles, mine was Alternate Representative to the OAS (i.e. I could stand in for the Ambassador), and were listed in the OAS Diplomatic List. No less than one-third of my time was spent outside the Department of State at meetings, negotiations, and functions held at the OAS, possibly more than most officers spend away from their embassies overseas. In effect, I had a Foreign Service assignment in Washington where I used Spanish and French, as well as English, in my daily work.

This leads me to one observation: assignment to the OAS is a first-class training ground in Foreign Service and, equally important, in multilateral diplomacy. I am not the first to make this observation. Testimony thereof lies in the practice of all, yes all, the Latin American and Caribbean countries to send their very best representatives training for a long diplomatic career to their OAS missions.

Q: What was your first position at USOAS?

LEE: Well, I had only one position during the entire time I was there. The position was classified officially International Organizations Officer. The title I had in terms of the Mission and its accreditation with the OAS was Alternative Representative, which is the diplomatic title. Now, the actual functions were budget and oversight of U.S. contributions to the inter-American system, not just the OAS but other inter-American organizations as well. In New York, at the UN Mission, the same position is classified Resources Management Officer. It is not an administrative function, an important distinction, because I had nothing to do with the administration of the Mission. I had all to do with the contributions, which amounted to a little over \$100 million, which were made annually to inter-American organizations.

Q: Speaking of that, when did we start withholding our contributions to the OAS, which has caused us so much trouble in recent years?

LEE: We started to withhold part of our contribution in 1981. The withholding had to do with a major issue (similar to what occurred just recently at the United Nations and the change of Secretary Generals and the appointment of Ambassador Albright as our new Secretary of State). It is the issue of what is the right level of contribution of the United States to these organizations, a permanent issue of the United States with international organizations. We had been paying two thirds or 66 percent in the OAS since 1949 and Congress felt, with the end of the post World War, developments in Latin America, and the fact that one country, Venezuela, was a rich country and started OPEC, it was time the Latin American countries contributed a little more.

It is a very difficult issue because, at the time the pressure was put on to reduce our share in 1978, we were on the verge of having to witness many of the Latin American countries go into a recession, a deep recession during the 1980s. So, as we were putting the heat on to have them increase their share, they were undergoing economic problems. It came at the wrong time, but that was something that had more to do with circumstances, rather than policy. But the policy, from the standpoint of the Congress, as it was discussed with the Administration, had nothing to do with party politics. Both Republican and Democrat Administrations had the same idea to reduce the U.S. share down from 66 percent. At the behest of Congress, Secretary Kissinger first urged a new formula of "burden-sharing" of the OAS in 1976 in Santiago, Chile.

Failure to make any headway on this issue led in 1981 to our unilaterally reducing our payments by one percent each year to signal to the OAS that we were serious. This had, of course, also the effect of giving us a good show of seriousness or earnest in talking with our Congress, that we were trying to push this issue. That withholding built up cumulatively until the end of a decade, at which point the OAS in 1989 faced a financial crisis. This, coupled with the admission of Canada to the OAS, led to a solution of the "Quota Issue" in 1990.

Q: Well, you worked at the OAS during some of the more important events of recent years in our relations with Latin America. About the time you went to the OAS we were involved in rearranging our relations with Panama and the Panama Canal Treaty. Did that have much effect in what you were doing in the OAS?

LEE: I was not involved in the political side of our Mission, but I was there during the effort to oust Noriega, not for the treaty negotiations. That took place before I joined the mission. But, the whole problem of elections, democracy, and the problem with Noriega overall, came to a head while I was there and in a way it was one of the major tests, if you will, of the OAS in terms of what the United States wanted. With respect to Noriega, the OAS was looked at as a failure because it did not take action to support what the United States sought, and that is to have him diplomatically isolated. We had sought that in the summer of 1989 or 1990. That summer we had made a concerted effort in the area to try to isolate Panama, but we could not get the support. And, I might add, that one of our more serious opponents was very effective in demolishing our efforts, the representative of Nicaragua. They were even more effective than the Panamanian delegation in defending the Panamanian position.

Q: Was this the Sandinistas?

LEE: Yes. The OAS did let us down in the case of Panama. When it came to a dictator, Latin Americans didn't want to intervene. This position was changing. The first time the OAS ever took any political action of intervention, in other words breaking their attachment to the political principle of non-intervention, took place in 1979 when the OAS succeeded in voting a resolution to diplomatically isolate Somoza, the dictator of Nicaragua. It was this action that brought about his fall eventually. The interesting part of it, which was not followed up, was that the resolution also included language which prescribed that the Sandinistas, the people who were in Washington at the time (1979) urging us to oust Somoza, assumed the obligation to create a genuine democratic system. We had in that resolution the means whereby we could have, had we followed through, done the job properly in Nicaragua. We did not follow up through the OAS. Unfortunately, the Latin Americans were not inclined to follow up. Subsequently we unilaterally took action against the Sandinista regime, such as, to be quite honest, the stupid mining of the harbor. By actions like that we wiped out any possible hope of having other Latin American countries support us on Nicaragua. Had we based our policy on the agreed resolution, we would have had the leverage to possibly bring in the Latin Americans.

Q: Why didn't we follow up? Were there any indications or inclination in the Department to do this?

LEE: Well, the simple and best answer to your question is that people were not familiar enough in the Department to understand the advantages of multilateral diplomacy. It takes a lot more skill because you have to mobilize a lot of countries which takes time, perseverance, and all kinds of deals with different countries, etc. The gold-plated example is what President Bush and Secretary of State Baker did in New York to mobilize the whole world against Saddam Hussein in 1990-91. That provided us with the legitimacy for the American people and on a global basis to intervene in Iraq. It was a great diplomatic success which was much more important, in some ways, than the military success. It was more unusual. But, this was the possibility that we had to do the same thing in terms of the revolution in 1979 in Nicaragua.

Q: What role did the OAS play in the civil war in El Salvador that began in about 1979?

LEE: I can't say too much on that, I wasn't that familiar with it. The OAS didn't get too involved directly with El Salvador. The negotiations took place outside the OAS. I can't recall any involvement there, as such, at all.

Nicaragua was where the OAS succeeded later in dealing with the elections in 1989 and in the period after the elections in May, 1990. That was, I would say, one of the best moments for the OAS. The organization redeemed itself, at least in our eyes, from the failure in Panama several years earlier. The OAS fielded over 300 election observers and managed the whole operation, providing the actual infrastructure for UN participation and other participation. And, of course, we know the outcome which was to help guarantee free elections in which the Sandinistas were defeated. That was a tremendous effort and I might add that even as we talk the OAS is still involved in Nicaragua. They obtained from that initial success in the elections a recognition by all parties in Nicaragua that they had become the only neutral, non-partisan presence in the country who could solve problems. So, the OAS has what is called an International Verification and Support Commission (CIAV) which contains a number of OAS officials. They are there to

see that human rights are observed and that agreements reached by the Sandinistas and the new government several years ago are carried out. And, this is still going on.

Q: Another major event that occurred during your period at the OAS was the Falkland crisis. Could you say a few words about that and the effect it had on the organization and the world?

LEE: The Falkland was brought by Argentina to the OAS immediately. It was very difficult for the United States because it involved a country that was very skilled diplomatically, Argentina. They sent a team here to Washington which was first class in terms of presenting their case. They had another advantage in the OAS and that is the Secretary General was Alejandro Orfila, an Argentine. He tried his best, but I cannot say he was entirely unbiased. He was a man, after all, who had political ambitions himself, some people say he wanted to return to Argentina and run for president, so he was in a difficult position. The Argentines skillfully portrayed the United States as a unfaithful ally, as they interpreted our obligations under the Rio Pact.

Of course, the difficulty for us was that the Argentine action against Great Britain was against a country that had nothing to do with the inter-American system and our ally in NATO. They were not in the inter-American system. And, furthermore, we had complications with countries like Guatemala and Venezuela who had historical problems with the UK over Guyana in one case and Belize in the other. All of these issues complicated the situation for the United States. So, it didn't take long for the Argentines to mobilize diplomatic support and they had very active support from Venezuela who helped lead the charge finally. They criticized the United States and, when it was learned that the United States had helped the British, and a few other things, it made it extremely difficult for us. And this was another low point, 1982, for us at the OAS.

The outcome was that the Argentines were humiliated by the British. I might add that afterwards was a terrible period for Argentina in international organizations. After their failure in the Falklands, their defeat and a change of government, which we welcomed, the Argentines in effect pulled themselves back and were less active. Argentina has very capable people, people whom we could normally work with, but they were just no longer active. The country economically had not advanced with the rest of Latin America, especially Brazil.

The upshot of this, was a very sad thing I am going to mention. We eventually settled the problem we talked about earlier, the "quota problem" which took place in Asuncion, Paraguay in 1990 thanks to the fact that Canada joined the OAS. We did get a satisfactory resolution, but during the negotiations, in the middle of the night, I sat in a room with a number of ambassadors (the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela and Canada), but not the Argentine. The Argentine Ambassador would not come to the meeting but sent two of his assistants. Why didn't he come? He didn't come because he knew Argentina had instructions to seek a lower quota. Now, what does that say? Other countries were also bargaining to have a lower quota. They all wanted to have their quota reduced along with the U.S. to take advantage of the Canadian entry. But, in the case of the Argentines, they wanted more. They wanted more because economically they couldn't pay any more and the ambassador was ashamed. When we were in our final minutes of a deal the two Argentines who had been sent said, "We cannot accept this, you have to give us more." They were not too happy to watch the Mexican Ambassador, the U.S. Ambassador, the Canadian Ambassador and the Brazilian Ambassador and the Venezuelan Ambassador dicker for

a few hundredths of a percent of a quota to share together in another reduction for Argentina. There was a quick agreement among the major powers and the two Argentines broke down in tears. I will never forget it in my life, they were so ashamed. To me it was the proof of what had happened to Argentina over so many years: the economy had not kept up with the economy of the rest of Latin America and North America.

Q: You mentioned Secretary General Orfila, the Argentine. What happened to him?

LEE: He was elected to a second term in 1979 and his second term would have expired, I believe, in June, 1984. Orfila was given an offer by a businessman (Gray) here in Washington, with a \$200,000 a year salary, and he thought he would leave at the beginning of the New Year, 1984, thinking there would be no problem leaving six months early. Well, he mentioned this to other countries and it was something that made them quite upset because it meant that we would have a deputy in charge for six months until an election could be held at the next General Assembly in June, 1984. He ended up leaving early without completing his term and then accepting outside work as a consultant with Glay Consultants.

At the same time there had been other accusations of things that he did that were not altogether on the up and up. I can't remember exactly what he had done, but I know in the end he left humiliated and under a cloud. It was a difficult time for the OAS. Orfila was a colorful man in some ways. He was certainly talented as a speaker, but there was an element of lack of seriousness, if you will, and lack of commitment to the OAS. He had done something that people could never forgive him for and I have to mention that. It was something that went back actually four years to the General Assembly in 1979, when he was reelected, and took place in La Paz, Bolivia.

He was reelected in the evening of the last day of the General Assembly and everyone was more or less happy with the whole thing and everyone joined in to close the assembly. It was late in the evening, and I guess some people had parties and others went off to bed. A little after midnight there was a revolt in Bolivia and we were awoken early in the morning and realized that we were prisoners in the hotel. The government was still in power but a colonel had started a revolt and an hour or so later there were planes coming up the valley shooting wildly and a few things like that. When we tried to find out what was happening, the government told us we had better stay in the hotel because it could not guarantee our safety or that we could not get to the airport and get a plane. We asked some other questions. "What is the secretary general going to do?" "Oh, the secretary general left on an early plane this morning with his press agent for Argentina, a private plane." People never forgave him for leaving the way he did after all of this had started. However, it made the reputation of a man who was assistant secretary general from Guatemala, at the time, who handled the situation very well. We all managed to get out safely and negotiated safe passage to the airport later in the day and evacuation by air to Lima. But, people never forgave Orfila that incident.

Q: Can you say anything about the small crisis over Grenada in 1983?

LEE: The OAS was immediately called to hear Grenada's presentation of its case. In the end I know that we had a lot of problems explaining what we did there but I believe, and I could be

mistaken, in the end we got some sort of resolution that didn't do us any damage. But, something took place that was very damaging to us and the OAS. I will have to describe it so that one can judge.

When this crisis took place, the Ambassador of Grenada was not in Washington. The ambassador at the time happened to be a very, very attractive young woman who had been skillful in getting some money from the OAS for what had been a "high wind" that had knocked down some houses in Grenada and cost the OAS some money. No one dared to vote against it and she succeeded. She was not present when the invasion took place. Where was she? She was in Cuba. What happened behind the scenes we, the U.S. delegation, did not know about until it was too late. When we met in the Permanent Council our Ambassador had to sit there with the other Ambassadors and be told by the acting secretary general, who at this time was Mr. McComie of Barbados, that the Ambassador of Grenada was not there to make a statement, but that he had been in communication with her and she had taped a statement which the secretariat would play.

This procedure was something new, radically new. Never before had a government's statement by a representative been made on tape and played at a meeting. It was not appreciated by anybody, although the other delegations did not object as much as the United States. But, the statement was read. It was one of those examples in multilateral diplomacy where our people have to be very skilled in working with secretariats to foresee, prevent and be involved with anything that takes place in preparations for meetings. Unlike bilateral diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy has a lot of different features with which we are not familiar in the Foreign Service but with which we have to become familiar if we are to prepare the terrain for any effective public discussion. It has to be done behind the scenes, oftentimes involving people of different nationalities and secretariats whose officials you have to be able to work with. This incident, in effect, should have been prevented, but it was clearly done in secret and it wasn't meant for us to find out in advance of the council's meeting. All the more reason why we should always be on the alert in these situations to things that happen such as that. And that is why I mentioned this case. It was not a good procedure by the secretariat and I think it probably had a lot to do with some of subsequent American antipathy to the assistant secretary general.

Q: Who we did not support when he wanted to become secretary general?

LEE: Exactly.

Q: The problem with Haiti has been with us for generations and in recent years it has come to a climax. What was the OAS involvement there?

LEE: OAS involvement began very early, I think within weeks, after Baby Doc Duvalier was removed in 1986. The OAS moved very quickly to support a democratic evolution in Haiti. Some people talked about "reestablishing" democracy, but that is not the case. Haiti never had democracy. So it was a matter of establishing some kind of democratic system. And in the OAS at the time, and this was unprecedented, we managed to get the countries to agree to a reduction in the amount of money that was available to them for development purposes under the various OAS aid programs. A total of one million dollars was collected by these reductions for a fund for

the development of democracy in Haiti. We came up with \$100,000 and \$900,000 was made up by the voluntary reductions of other countries.

Unfortunately, with what took place in subsequent years, with various changes of government in Haiti, it didn't evolve into what we were all seeking. There were various colonels, etc. who took over and the situation deteriorated until the late 80s and early 90s, with the refugees coming from Haiti to the United States. Haiti became both a domestic and international problem. We tried, through the OAS, with various delegations sent down there to negotiate with the military leader to have a transfer of government to democratic forces, but it failed. The United States government eventually turned to the UN, in addition to the OAS, to try to do something. That failed and therefore we ended up, as you know, negotiating militarily with the general in charge for his removal.

Now, what came afterwards was very important because, on the basis of its recent experience in Nicaragua (since 1989), the OAS set up in Haiti a unit to work with the elected officials and judicial officials to try to promote human rights. They did not have much success in the beginning because of an uncooperative government. Once the latter was changed, the OAS went in on a very large scale, together with the UN. This time the UN was much larger in the operation than the OAS, but the OAS played a very important role and I believe to this day continues to in terms of trying to promote human rights, hopefully an electoral system that works, registering voters and other efforts to promote democratic conditions. It was a very difficult time for our OAS mission because it involved, as well, not only trying to get the OAS involved, but also trying to get the OAS to work effectively with the UN in New York. So, there were meetings with UN officials and unfortunately, although understandably, even between the UN and OAS officials there were issues of jurisdiction and operation. Each organization wanted to retain its way of doing things.

I must underscore one important point here that we repeatedly made within the Department and it had some helpful impact. The cost of the OAS in Haiti was between one half and two thirds the cost of the UN for the same number of people doing the same type of work. The UN overhead and administration were enormous. This was brought home to us because both operations were funded by reprogrammed money from AID. Of course the OAS was in a much better position to argue for its funding because, as had been seen already in Nicaragua on a cost benefit ratio, the OAS operation was very cost-effective. Moreover, the OAS, in contrast to the UN, was willing to present periodic financial reports.

Q: More effective than the UN?

LEE: Yes, more cost-effective than the UN. UN salaries were much higher and there were higher administrative costs. The UN had relatively large public relations costs whereas the OAS, unfortunately in another sense, had none. A different kind of approach.

Q: During this period there was a dispute between Argentina and Chile over their southern boundary. Did that ever arrive in the OAS, or was it kept out?

LEE: That was kept out, although it came up from time to time. In the end, as you know, that was basically resolved with the intervention of the Pope, I believe. So, it was not brought up as an issue in the OAS.

Another dispute that was brought up, however, was the border dispute between Ecuador and Peru. That flared up several times. There are four countries that are involved in carrying out the treaty of the early 1940s between Peru and Ecuador--Brazil, United States, Argentina and Chile--the four guarantors of this treaty. They tried to keep it out of the OAS as well, but, as always with these disputes, one country wants to bring it to the OAS thinking it will get support, whereas its adversary wants to keep it out. In this case it was Ecuador that constantly tried to bring this into the OAS with Peru seeking to keep it out. In general it was kept out and incidentally is another issue that is still unresolved.

A third border issue I should mention is the controversy over Bolivian access to the sea.

Q: A very old issue, I believe.

LEE: That's right. And where the U.S. made a terrible political mistake which has haunted our relations with Bolivia, if not Chile. President Carter came to the OAS in 1980 to open the General Assembly, which at that time took place in November. He came just after the election, which he had lost. He had been briefed by an advisor at the White House, not the State Department, that one of the nice things he could put into his speech was to mention Bolivian access to the sea. I remember distinctly being in the room when President Carter, in a very good speech, suddenly said that the issue of Bolivian access to the sea should be examined. I, and about half the room nearly fell off our chairs. We have heard about this issue ever since because the U.S. president once mentioned the issue of Bolivian access to the sea and every year the Bolivians have constantly brought this up as a special agenda item for the annual General Assembly. It will not go away.

Q: And the Chileans and Peruvians don't bring it up.

LEE: That's right. Nor, have we mentioned the issue ourselves at any major function. It was a mistake and an example of speeches of our leaders who are asked to say things that no one in the Department has cleared on. This clearly had not been mentioned to the State Department in advance of the President's speech.

Q: How were the relations between the Spanish-speaking members and the English-speaking members? I was surprised when I was at the USOAS to find out how many of the countries are English-speaking members. We generally think of the OAS as a Spanish or Portuguese-speaking assembly.

LEE: We now have, I believe, about 154 members who are English-speaking, predominantly small Caribbean island countries, the largest being Jamaica. The original Organization of American States or Panamanian Union had 21 members. It now has 35, including Cuba. But, most of the new members are members from the Caribbean, and English-speaking. Now, what this did to the organization, in a political sense, was to create a third grouping. Heretofore we had

the Latins versus the United States. Now, a third grouping is in the picture and they have interests that are not United States interests nor are they comparable to Latin American interests. Furthermore, they have an English common law tradition which brings them closer to us. There is also a racial issue which cannot be overlooked because the Latin countries are predominantly Hispanic and, except for Brazil, with few blacks in their populations.

Q: Whereas the Caribbean countries are largely black.

LEE: Yes. They also are Anglo-Saxon in outlook, very well educated, very effective as representatives, and skillful in parliamentary ways. They are much more effective in many cases than larger Latin American countries, mainly because they have good backgrounds and, in many cases, they are less dependent on their capitals and have a larger say. We find they are very good people to work with, although many times they don't agree with us. They in effect form a third group. It has complicated in some ways U.S. diplomatic activity in the OAS, although I think on balance it has been a very positive development.

Now, the other major development in the OAS was the entry of Canada in 1990. Canada at that time was under the leadership of Prime Minister Mulroney who felt that Canada was more and more a part of the Western Hemisphere, which was true, and thought that they should be members of this organization. Canada had already joined other inter-American organizations such as the PanAmerican Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). I think the Canadians came in with some illusions that they might have more in common with Latin America and the Caribbean than with the United States, but they soon found out that they were in many cases lumped with the United States as a net donor member in terms of funds.

Q: By the Latins.

LEE: By the Latins and the Caribbeans, for one good reason. That is, Canada was rich and the others expected Canada to join the United States in being a net contributor of special funds for development. This immediately cast the Canadians in a role which they had not anticipated. I remember discussing their entry with the Canadians early on and alerting them, but they were quite shocked when they faced the reality of what the others expected from them in extra money.

Q: Did the effectiveness of the U.S. in the OAS depend on the quality of our permanent representatives?

LEE: Our representation did depend on the quality of our leadership. I think we have had leaders who took an interest in the organization and I would say that in the end the best representatives we had were those who took a genuine interest in the function. I have no hesitation in saying that the best ambassador I served with was Luigi Einaudi (1989-92). Ambassador Einaudi spent full time working on OAS matters and managed not only to work skillfully with the OAS but, almost more importantly, to mobilize the Department, particularly the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (ARA). This was a handicap for most of his predecessors who never were able to get ARA to work closely with the mission on issues at the OAS or, and this is equally important, to envision a role for the OAS overall in inter-American policy. This is what changed under Ambassador

Einaudi. He was able to educate the Bureau on the usefulness of the multilateral approach and integrate the OAS into general policy concerns of ARA.

Now, what was the outcome of this? The outcome of this type of collaboration between the Bureau and the mission was the most important resolution, I think, ever adopted in the OAS. This was what we call the Santiago Resolution, Resolution 1081, adopted in 1991 in Santiago, Chile. This is the resolution that gives real genuine muscle to protecting democracy in this hemisphere. What it says is important: Any time that a democratically, duly-elected government has been overturned by violence, or undemocratic means, the OAS will meet immediately and discuss the issue to take steps to restore democracy in the affected country. What you have there are several concerns in one resolution. One, a concern to preserve democracy in the hemisphere. Two, a complete departure from the idea of respecting non-intervention in the affairs of other people. In effect the resolution says we will intervene. And three, effective measures. The resolution talks about breaking of diplomatic relations, etc. That was a resolution that originated in the Department of State, and I believe in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. The mission joined in getting this adopted and it was a tremendous effort, helped notably by the fact that the General Assembly was held in Chile, in 1991, shortly after the restoration of democracy there, and only a few years after the restoration of democracy in Argentina. So, we had countries with whom we could work. The most reticent at the time was Mexico, but even Mexico was brought along. This was a genuine turning point in inter-American affairs. The effectiveness of this has been shown since then because, when the Haiti situation erupted a year later, the OAS got involved immediately, as it did shortly thereafter when President Fujimori dismissed the Peruvian Congress.

Q: The Santiago Resolution.

LEE: Yes, the Santiago Resolution was the basis and we had meetings here to call for the OAS to take action. That one, of course, led eventually to the United States having to take military action, because the OAS didn't have the muscle needed, but at that point, following executive negotiations, we were always working, the United States, in concert with a multilateral organization, thanks to this resolution.

In the case involving Peru, President Fujimori despatched the congress in 1992 and sent the representatives home, ostensibly to rule much like a dictator. The OAS was meeting in the annual General Assembly in the Bahamas and adopted a General Assembly Resolution calling for restoration of democracy in Peru. This pressure forced Fujimori to make an unplanned appearance at the General Assembly, promising to turn things around, which he did, eventually holding parliamentary elections in Peru.

A third case, involving Guatemala, was the most successful of the three. President Serrano of Guatemala tried to do the same in 1992, bringing in the military and ousting the freely elected Congress. The OAS adopted a resolution immediately, here in Washington, and that situation was turned around. Only last year, 1996, the same thing happened in Paraguay where the OAS Secretary General, backed by the United States and Brazil, the other OAS countries, and the prompt joint action pursuant to the Santiago Resolution, gave the necessary backing to the president of Paraguay that he needed to face down a threat from his military leaders.

Q: That was written up as a great triumph for the OAS system.

LEE: It was indeed. It all goes back to the Santiago Resolution, which put in place a mechanism providing for prompt joint action to protect freely elected governments and creating a genuine hope that the free democracies in the Western Hemisphere can be preserved. The UN doesn't have anything like it.

Q: You mentioned the fact that among those who were probably the least enthusiastic about it were the Mexicans. Of course, our relations with Mexico are probably as important as any in the hemisphere. How does that play in the OAS, or does it arise there?

LEE: Well, our dealings with the Mexicans have always been a little bit ambivalent. There were times when we could work very closely with them, and I might say in my particular area on money matters, they were very dependable. The Mexicans were more dependable I would say than any other country except, perhaps, the Brazilians, in terms of seriousness in dealing with money matters and giving support. Mexico, like us, was what we call a major contributor and therefore had a concern to hold expenses down and they were serious about it. When it came to political matters, that was different. The Mexicans were traditionally difficult. They didn't commit themselves easily and they always stood back, a little bit like the Brazilians, to see how things were moving before committing themselves. As I mentioned earlier in the Santiago Resolution, Mexico finally joined in.

But, there was a turn around which took place about 1992 when we suddenly began to see that the Mexicans wanted to cooperate with us very closely. I don't remember if this was the change of a president or not, but, they had orders to work more closely with us, and we did work more closely with Mexico. I can't say how it is now, but clearly I think in recent years our relations with Mexico are much better overall in many areas. We sensed it immediately in the OAS. We had one Mexican ambassador, I remember, who was very disagreeable and always trying to pick a fight with the United States at various meetings. He was followed by one of the most effective ambassadors I have seen at the OAS, a man who became a minister later. He was very friendly, very cooperative. I think since then we have had a Mexican leadership that has always been cooperative.

Q: I gather from your comments that you believe the OAS can be effective and can be effective in regard to U.S. interests. Would that be a fair statement?

LEE: Yes, indeed. My point here, however, is that we think of diplomacy as being limited to embassies but I think in the present day world it is no longer possible or wise, I would say, for a single country to try to pursue its policies independently. It is unwise because even the United States, as wealthy as we are, as powerful as we are, will get into more trouble and have more trouble accomplishing our goals if we try to do things independently. I think the proof of the pudding, as I mentioned earlier, was the Gulf War in 1991.

I think what I have just discussed in terms of Latin America is the same. We have managed to create the only area in the whole world that is characterized by freely elected governments, with

the exception of Cuba. We have the OAS resolution which can help bring multilateral pressure on governments to maintain the democratic system. We have various economic activities that we are doing. The North American Free Trade Association that has three countries and will eventually be expanded to others. The Latin Americans, themselves, are working on regional groupings, which eventually will be closer to the United States. There is a commitment by the President to have a free market by the year 2005. And, our economic relations are such that I think we will only be strengthened in this hemisphere.

As a matter of fact I might mention here that the greatest trading interest of the United States is in the Western Hemisphere. When you include Canada and Latin America, this is our major trading block. Much more than Japan, or Europe. The trend is to have further increases. I think between these economic ties, the ties we have set up politically--and other small ways as well as larger ways, are knitting together the Western Hemisphere.

We have the tools in our hands and, from a diplomatic standpoint, we have to, I think, bear in mind that this is a multilateral way of helping our overall diplomacy, traditionally conducted along bilateral ways, to achieve our goals. And our goals themselves are no longer based on one country, but are also regional and global. So, I think we have an interest in working through these organizations.

Q: Well, Owen, we are coming to the conclusion of our interview and I wanted to ask whether you had any final comments looking back on your career? Things you might want to add.

LEE: I would like to say something about what was really my job at the OAS, which had to do with money. This is a little bit of a criticism of the Foreign Service. I am going to have to give a "bad example" or what I consider a "good example", but a bad example in terms of the Foreign Service. At my second post, Romania, I had to assume, for all practical purposes, the job of DCM because we had no minister for 14 months, we had a chargé at a very difficult time. Since I was in charge of administration, etc., I ended up in 1961 sending back to the Department \$100,000 of savings. Now, it happened that this was the first year that President Kennedy had sent notices to all the embassies to save money. So, I felt I had complied. How mistaken I was, because I learned you never send back money. When the new minister, who later became ambassador, was appointed, and reached Bucharest and found out what I had done, I was a goner from then on, because he could not accept the fact that I hadn't spent the money on refrigerators, etc., not realizing how could I defend spending the money when there was no ambassador or minister.

I mention this because I don't think in the Foreign Service there is enough sensibility to finance or economic issues. I think this was also reinforced by my experience at the OAS. There was a tremendous battle even within the mission (USOAS) and in the State Department at times, over this whole issue of what the United States was paying to the OAS. Now, for a politician on the Hill there is no way of explaining to him that the United States should pay two-thirds of the costs of any organization, although this was less than what we would be paying under the UN system. If we had the UN system based on capacity to pay, we would have been paying 85 percent. So, we had already gotten a political deal, but there was no way of convincing a congressman. I think it was very difficult for some of my colleagues to understand that we had gotten a very

good deal in 1949. The United States was so powerful in the hemisphere, our wealth was so great, that to only pay two thirds rather than 85 percent was a tremendous benefit. But, our colleagues sometimes had difficulty understanding that we still had to get it down further. Congress was looking for ways to save money and still is today. I think it was a difficult battle always to have people understand because there was a generation in the Foreign Service that was brought up in the earlier times when we had money and could buy this and that and didn't have to worry. It always worries me that people will make commitments for money and not realize the long-term obligations you assume sometimes. And, of course, the Latins in the OAS held us to our obligations and didn't want to see any change.

I might mention an interesting tidbit here in the same vein because it still holds today. Today, the United States is paying part of the quota for Cuba in the OAS. Now, people ask, "What do you mean we are paying part of the quota for Cuba?" When the United States sought and obtained from the OAS by one vote the suspension of Cuba's membership in 1962, we got what we wanted. But, something happened that I don't know how to explain. I don't know the facts at that time. All I know is that subsequent to that time the general secretariat of the OAS succeeded in keeping Cuba within the overall quota as a suspended member so that all the members have to chip in and pay the quota of Cuba (1.27%). Now, at the time our people probably thought we were going to get what we want so didn't worry about the money. The only thing is that the people who did this were not the other countries, nor the United States; it was the general secretariat that didn't want to lose the benefit of the extra money that would come in from Cuba, to pay salaries, etc. That is the real explanation because I don't think at the time anyone working on the politics of the resolution to suspend Cuba was interested in the money angle. It was the general secretariat that manipulated things so that in the future they would always get the money of the Cuban quota. So in effect when we talk about the United States paying 66 percent of the budget since 1949, that was not true. We were paying 66.7 percent of the budget. All of these things are interesting, but in the end it ends up by costing us some money, about half a million dollars a year.

My point is that there are so many instances where, in dealing with the OAS, our people were not concerned enough about the cost, particularly for example in dealing with salaries. There was a problem always of continuing pressure from the OAS to increase salaries. I felt, and was successful most of the time, that they should be kept growing approximately at the level of U.S. government salaries. But, it was a constant battle because the sums involved when you see them presented to you as a proposal didn't look like much. You have to look behind and see what the long-term consequences are, because what you may approve this year becomes accumulated in subsequent years and therefore amounts to large sums of money. This is the one point that I wanted to mention from my experience working with the Department here in Washington. I found that people were much more concerned, because they have to live with the Congress much more closely, and are much more concerned and aware of the responsibility not to be financially irresponsible. We can't just use money to get certain things done.

While I was with USOAS, we had a long-running battle with the OAS about its salary system. Essentially, the organization, supported by many delegations, mostly the ones with the smallest quotas, wanted a system based on the UN system in New York, one which would impose automatic adjustments on OAS salaries anytime the UN decided on them. The U.S., generally

with support from Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico and several others, favored the traditional OAS system of its own based on market conditions in Washington, D.C. with any adjustments decided by the responsible political bodies of the OAS (General Assembly, Permanent Council). Beginning in 1976, OAS personnel pressed for adoption of "parity with the UN" and took their case to the OAS Administrative Tribunal, which the U.S. helped set up in 1971 without any appeal procedure. The interests of the member countries in the case were defended by the staff of the OAS Subsecretariat for Legal Affairs, all members of the organization's Staff Association. As I was told later by the Assistant Secretary for Management, the case "was thrown" by the organization. The tribunal decided that the organization had an obligation to pay salaries pursuant to the UN system and, consequently, the member governments had to comply with additional contributions.

This case, a class-action suit, and the tribunal's decision, together with other individual cases decided by the body, were presented within the annual report of the tribunal to the General Assembly in La Paz, Bolivia, in 1979. Like other annual reports presented for approval, it was normally treated as a routine matter without debate, frequently without having been read by most delegates. This was the hope of the organization's leaders. As soon as I read the decision of the tribunal, I realized that routine approval of the report containing the decision would amount to formal General Assembly approval of the shift to the system of UN parity in salaries. After consulting with several delegations, notably the Ambassadors of Mexico and Ecuador, I decided to raise the issue in the General Committee where the secretariat had skillfully scheduled it rather than in the Program and Budget Committee. It was very late in the day; I made arrangements for my intervention with the Ambassador of Ecuador at midnight; the item didn't come up until 3:00 a.m., another conveniently arranged night discussion by the secretariat. Somehow the word got out that the U.S. delegation would raise the issue so that, by the time we met, there were many ambassadors. Fortunately, I had a few hours to prepare what I had to say, reviewing the history of the parity issue, previous assembly decisions, and even some relevant law, e.g. the doctrine of ultra vires or the act of exceeding one's authority. As an American with some background in the issue of the Supreme Court's authority, I was well prepared to argue the issue of how far the tribunal's authority extended in "legislating" salary policy vis-a-vis the OAS General Assembly's authority to adopt policy through resolutions.

I must have spoken some twenty minutes to a hushed assembly. My remarks upset completely the secretariat's plans to have a routine vote of approval of the tribunal's report. As promised, the Mexican Ambassador, Rafael de la Colina (then in his eighties but astute and considered the unchallenged doyen of Ambassadors), calmly intervened with his expert legal training and background in support of my remarks. He was followed by the Ecuadorian Ambassador. But then the counterattack got underway. It began with the nemesis of any possible accommodation between the organization and other delegations, the Ambassador of Venezuela, a former champion of labor rights in his own country. He spoke at length taking sides with the "abused staff" which was "underpaid" and was seeking "justice". While his remarks could be disregarded as polemic and, on balance, unconvincing, it was not so with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Uruguay, a highly skilled jurist. He picked my arguments to pieces, making me feel as if I were being carved up as a roast. Skillful as he was, he could not reverse the impression generated by my remarks that the secretariat had tried to "pull a fast one" on the delegations. In the end, we

approved the tribunal's report without the specific case which was to be settled later in the Permanent Council for submission to the following General Assembly.

The following year was a disaster. President Carter, who had just been defeated in his reelection bid, opened the General Assembly in Washington. His arrival at the OAS building was inauspicious: he was greeted by OAS staffers with placards demanding justice in their salaries, denouncing the U.S. for opposing parity with the UN, etc. At one point, the staff threatened to walk off the job of providing services for the assembly. All these theatrics were accompanied, however, by relentless lobbying by the Venezuelan Ambassador and the leader of the Staff Association to recognize the monetary payments implicit in the tribunal's decision, if not the policy of parity with the UN itself. They were successful, notwithstanding our own lobbying with other delegations. The bill came to \$9,000,000 under the tribunal's decision.

The secretariat had the illusion that the organization would approve a special increment to the already approved budget for the following year. While most delegations were unwilling to oppose the staff and prepared to approve payment of the tribunal's decision, they clearly were unwilling to come up with additional funds. The last day of the meeting, the secretariat came prepared to ask for the supplemental appropriation and presented a number of documents. I barely had time to review them as the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary for Management made their presentation. I noted that, within the myriad financial figures, there was some indication that the secretariat had "unobligated funds", i.e. reserves, totaling about \$10,000,000. I intervened to ask about them. The Assistant Secretary for Management could not hide the fact that these funds were on hand, nor could he hide his embarrassment in having to reveal their existence. I quickly checked with a number of delegations, suggesting that we propose that these funds be used to pay for the cost of the tribunal's decision. All quickly agreed. I made a formal proposal which was adopted by consensus (with the notable exception of the Venezuelan Ambassador). The secretariat was furious. The Assistant Secretary for Management came to me and said that the organization could not manage its cash-flow in the coming year without these reserves. I told him that I would see that the U.S., as the largest contributor, would pay its contribution on a strict quarterly basis which he could use to maintain the organization's cash-flow.

This payment, which wiped out the reserves of the organization, set the stage for the trimming of personnel of the OAS beginning with decisions reached at the General Assembly in 1981 in St. Lucia. By the end of the decade personnel had been cut by nearly 60%.

The point of all this is to say in effect that you oftentimes can do more with less. I think the proof of the pudding is the OAS itself. If I can recall accurately, I will give you the figures. With an assessed budget of some \$40 million the OAS had a staff of about 1700 people in 1976. In 1992 with a budget of about \$41 million, and a staff of around 700 the OAS, in effect, was doing, I would say, at least three or four times as much, certainly in a political sense. It was making points and gaining credit to the OAS in its operations in Nicaragua, in Haiti and its election observation in Guatemala, Peru, Paraguay, etc. All of these things were additional to the activities they had been doing ten or fifteen years earlier but now with half the number of people. So, I think this shows that even when you are dealing with a political organization and with

political objectives, that sometimes you can make headway when economizing and still achieve efficiency and undertake new tasks.

Q: Would you say that the OAS today is a more efficient organization than when you joined it in the late 1970s?

LEE: Definitely. It is. I think the same can be done in the United Nations. Now, I hope that the United States in dealing with the United Nations goes about this in a rational way. I think we are starting out with a new secretary general in the right way. I hope, however, the Congress doesn't go overboard with Senator Helms' office dictating the conditions. I don't think that is right. I think it has to be done with the people who are dealing with the issues in the State Department and the U.S. mission in New York to try to work out what can be done in tightening up the administration and doing some jobs with fewer people using other techniques. There certainly can be progress made. Part of the problem is a political problem that Congress will not be able to deal with and I will give you an example. It is impossible for the Congress to understand that the United Nations has 185 countries and the executive, the State Department, has to deal with each one of these. If we want their votes, we are going to have to work with them. You don't get votes by just smiling at people. You have to work with them and they have to have some interest in the organization and we have to be sure that their interests are protected if we want their vote. Now, the Congress is going to be less concerned by that. The Congress has to seek votes in Washington, not New York.

Q: That is right. And there will be times when we want those votes.

Well, thank you very much Owen, I think you have had an interesting and at times an exciting career. You served in a number of key posts. I thank you very much for the time you spent in this interview.

[Break in interview]

Owen, I understand there is an addendum you want clipped onto this. Please go ahead.

LEE: There is one major issue that I worked on and resolved during my experience in the OAS. It has some interesting managerial aspects to it. This has to do with what is called a Tax Reimbursement Agreement (TRA). What had happened is another illustration of how some things fall between the cracks or are neglected in the Department of State at times in dealing with multilateral organizations, involving significant sums of money.

In 1981 the State Department sent around to all international organizations an instruction saying that beginning in 1982 we would no longer pay tax reimbursement for U.S. citizens and permanent residents in the United States for their salaries in international organizations. Tax reimbursement is a device whereby the U.S. government pays the income taxes, state taxes and partial social security taxes, of U.S. citizens, and in this case, permanent residents in the United States, working in international organizations. In other words, all people subject to U.S. taxes will have their taxes reimbursed if they work for an international organization. We do so in order to equalize the salaries of these employees, because if they paid the taxes without reimbursement they would have smaller salaries than other employees. The reason being that most countries, the

overwhelming majority of countries in the world, exempt their citizens from paying taxes on salaries earned in international organizations. It is a complex issue and one which I believe we should be doing for our employees in international organizations. But, there were serious abuses. I knew of these abuses when I first came to the OAS mission. I looked into them and was very concerned because I found that we were automatically paying the tax reimbursement to the OAS on the basis of a simple billing. Since I was responsible for turning over the money, I was doubly concerned because I had no records, no information whatsoever. I changed that unilaterally on my own. I just told the OAS treasurer, an American, that I wasn't going to send the money over any longer until I got the records of payment. Since it concerned U.S. taxpayers, I said that I didn't care to know the names, but give me the number of each employee and a separate list with the name and the number. He sent them over and I set that system up so at least we had a record in case I was ever asked where the money went.

The aforementioned State Department order which went out failed to mention the inter-American organizations. It was one of those slips that often happens in the State Department. The inter-American organizations did not even get the message. I only learned of the State Department message because the treasurer of the OAS called me to ask about it. So, I asked him what it was all about and he said that there had been a State Department instruction to the UN. After his call I went to the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs (IO) and found out what it was all about, realizing immediately that this is what I had been hoping for all along because we had no agreement with the OAS on tax reimbursement when I arrived in 1978. We were paying the money on the basis of some understanding, but there was no agreement. The only thing I could find was a proposed agreement sent by the OAS to the State Department years earlier but the State Department had never acted on it. So, we started paying and had neither records nor an agreement. So, I wanted to close the gap.

I immediately checked with the people in IO and they agreed we should have an agreement and, now that they had been alerted by me of this lapse, they wanted to close the gap too. So, I had their support. I went to our ambassador, Ambassador Middendorf, and he did something that I will always acknowledge as a very helpful thing. He said, "Owen, you are in charge. You take care of all of this." That was a very useful and all important decision.

I went ahead with negotiations which were difficult and lasted a year and a half but in January, 1984, we did sign a Tax Reimbursement Agreement, the first agreement concluded on the basis of the earlier instruction by the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs.

Q: Of which they hadn't told you.

LEE: Yes. Ours was the first agreement and set the model for other agreements.

The problem was, and this is why I mention this, that our people (Foreign Service, Civil Service, etc.) who served in our mission years earlier did not pay attention to what was going on with the money that we contributed to the OAS. We just paid the money. No one cared whether we had the agreement. No one cared what the terms of our payment were and what the OAS did was unilaterally on their own. Instead of requesting reimbursement taxes for the salaries earned at the OAS, they requested reimbursement taxes on a family basis which meant that, if an employee

had a wife working for IBM or the World Bank in Washington, the U.S. government paid the taxes on both their salaries. Furthermore we also paid the property taxes that these people had. I was scandalized by this and scandalized by the fact that some of the sums that we paid were higher than the salaries the people were earning. This was a terrible situation.

The principle that we worked on, and even this principle was hard to get across in the negotiations and in the end I had to threaten to cut off all payments to get a final agreement, was that reimbursement would be based only on the salary of the employee and no other reimbursements would be made. Now, there are other details about this such as what would be considered the basic salary, etc., but in the end we got an agreement that satisfied us that we had some control in the future of what monies would be expended. I mention this particular case because it involved at the time between \$5-6 million a year.

I say this is another illustration of what I call, I hate to use the term, the negligence of my predecessors and other people who worked in the mission who didn't care. But, you have to be careful dealing with international organizations and we, the U.S. representatives, have to get into the detail of how they do things because it is our money. We can not leave it to them entirely.

The second conclusion I drew was that I only reached this agreement thanks to the support of the ambassador and putting me in full charge of this particular problem. A few years later, just before I left and retired, there was an opportunity to negotiate with the OAS for what we call a Headquarters Agreement. The OAS in Washington actually had been here for over a hundred years but there was no Headquarters Agreement such as the U.S. government negotiated for the UN in New York in 1947. In other words, providing for control of property, the status of the people who work in the OAS, the secretary general's position, etc. None of this had ever been regulated.

There had been going back and forth between the OAS and the State Department for many years a number of proposals but we reached a point in the early 90s where it became possible under Ambassador Einaudi to do this. He took an interest in this and there was an officer in our mission who had a law degree. I went to him and said, "Look, I think you can make it but make sure you get from the ambassador a commitment that you are in charge. If you are in charge, you can do it." Ambassador Einaudi did put him in charge and he did it. We did get the agreement.

My point here is that from a leadership, a managerial standpoint, if you have a major task for someone you have to put them in full charge so that they can do it. This young man did a splendid job and at one crucial point it was necessary for the ambassador to intervene with Under Secretary Eagleburger, and he did settle one problem that we had. But, it was all in the hands of one person to know when to bring in the ambassador and the Under Secretary.

Q: That is good advice. Thank you, Owen.

LEE: One of the most rewarding tasks I performed while with USOAS was a collateral one with tremendous responsibilities at the OAS. I served for sixteen years as the Vice Chairman elected by the Permanent Council on the OAS Retirement and Pension Committee. The Chairman was an elected Ambassador but there were periods in which there was no chairman and I acted in his

place. That is where I think I was serving the interests of the U.S. Government, i.e. ensuring that the OAS pension scheme not become insolvent which, if it happened, would inevitably involve the U.S. in a bail-out. It was a trustee position. When I joined the committee, it was overseeing some \$40 million in funds, investing them at the whim of members of the committee, and reluctant to have an actuarial study done to ascertain whether or not the fund could pay for its long-term obligations. When I left this position upon my retirement in 1994, the fund administered by the committee totaled some \$250 million, it had paid out over \$75 million to separating or retiring employees who took lump-sum payments, it had a decade-old investment policy with contracted managers who were periodically evaluated by an independent consulting firm, and an actuarial studies were carried out biennially, the most recent showing an actuarial surplus (this in contrast to the UN pension fund which is in deficit).

I had been part of the team to put together a highly sophisticated investment policy in 1979-80 thanks to the collaboration of a professor from the Carnegie Institute who taught us something about the latest investment theory. As acting chairman, I overcame staff objections, notably from one American, to have an actuarial study carried out in 1982, and a decade later as acting chairman to discipline the Wells Fargo Bank. This was quite an incident.

When we decided in the early nineties to modify the investment policy slightly to include up to ten percent in foreign equity investments, we thought it would be more prudent, in tracking the EAFE (Europe, America, and Far East) Index, to reduce the percentage of Japanese stocks from around 60% in the index to no more than 40%. We could not have been more prescient! Four months later the bottom fell from the Japanese stock market. A short time later, the Treasurer of the pension fund called me to say that Wells Fargo Nikki had informed them of their error in overlooking the committee's instruction to limit the fund's exposure to no more than 40% in Japanese equities. The bank's officials affirmed that they would correct the error and all would be well. Not with me, I told the Treasurer, instructing him to call back Wells Fargo Nikki and tell them that the committee would hold a special meeting to hear their representatives about what happened and how the bank planned to avoid a recurrence in the future. Wells Fargo Nikki sent two officials from San Francisco. Before the meeting, I talked with each of the committee members asking that they assist me in "putting the bank on the carpet" to ensure that nothing like that ever occurs again.

The Wells Fargo Nikki representatives came well prepared to provide the assurances we were seeking including the assignment of a second full-time person to keep track of the fund's investment. The meeting was friendly although the committee members played their roles well in underscoring the seriousness of our concerns. Wells Fargo Nikki did what they were supposed to do too: provide assurances to the committee so that the bank could keep the account.

Let me add a footnote to this story: At the time, I was within two years of retirement and all my personal funds invested in the government Thrift Savings Plan were being administered by ... Wells Fargo Nikki. I can't truthfully say that this fact was lost on me in my approach to the incident with Wells Fargo Nikki at the OAS.

HERBERT THOMPSON
Deputy Permanent Representative, OAS
Washington, DC (1980)

Herbert Thompson was born in California in 1923. After serving in the US Army from 1943-1946, Mr. Thompson finished his bachelor's degree at the University of California. His career included positions in Spain, Bolivia, Argentina, Panama, Chile, and Mexico. Mr. Thompson was interviewed by Thomas J. Dunnigan in 1996.

Q: Then in 1980 you were released from that to join Ambassador Dale McGee at the U.S. mission to the Organization of American States. You, in effect, became his DCM as Deputy Permanent Representative.

THOMPSON: I also became the U.S. representative to the two specialized councils of the OAS apart from the council which is the political organ of the OAS.

Q: From whom does OAS get its instructions?

THOMPSON: You are assuming that OAS is instructed by someone. I'll tell you there is a whole saga that has gone on for years about this relationship between the USREP and ARA and indeed other areas of the departments as far as that goes, but I mean we had a lot to do with IO all the time, they had the budget, and they had things to say about things like human rights and so on, but it is just so chaotic it is pitiful. The trouble is that the ARA front office persists on looking on our mission to the OAS as some kind of painful boil that they wished could be lanced and sent away, because they think we are representing the unpleasant views of people who themselves have no role in hemispheric affairs, rather than realizing they are simply another mouthpiece for exactly the same stuff that is coming out of the capitals. But Washington refuses to acknowledge it when it comes through the OAS channel.

Q: I had the same experience.

THOMAS J. DUNNIGAN
Deputy Chief of Mission, OAS
Washington, DC (1981)

Thomas Dunnigan was born and raised in Ohio. He attended John Carroll University, and after graduation served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He joined the Foreign Service in 1946. Mr. Dunnigan served in London, Manila, the Executive Secretariat, the National War College, Bonn, the Hague, Copenhagen, Tel Aviv, and with the Organization of American States. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: Well, you were doing various jobs and then you were brought back to be the DCM in the OAS.

DUNNIGAN: U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, yes.

Q: That sounds sort of odd, to be deputy chief of mission to something sitting right in Washington, actually.

DUNNIGAN: It is, it's unique. There is no other position like it. The ambassador was Ambassador Middendorf, who had been my chief of mission on my first tour in the Netherlands, '69 to '72. I'd found working with him always interesting, and so when he asked me to come with him, I did.

It was an interesting period there, less than two years, but it was the time when we were deeply, and getting more deeply, involved in El Salvador. Our relations with Nicaragua had soured, and this was reflected in the weekly meetings of the permanent representatives of the OAS, who meet in that beautiful Pan American Building here. We saw the beginning of the process for compromise in El Salvador, which still has not come to fruition, in which the presidents of the Central American countries meet together. We also saw the beginning of the Contra movement and other interesting relations. It was also the time of the change of government in Argentina, which was very important, when the Alfonsine government took over and introduced democracy again in that country. But there were still dictatorships in, and they were also represented--Chile and Paraguay preeminent among them. Both of them have changed now, but in those days they had not. So relations were somewhat strained with certain members, but very good with others.

Q: I speak as an absolute non-Latin American expert, but I had the feeling that, for some reason, with our Latin American policy under Reagan and all, we got into this thing, particularly in Central America, in a way, way over our heads. We didn't know what we were doing. We felt we could manipulate things there very easily. It seemed to be an inept way of handling it. As a professional Foreign Service officer but also not a Latin American expert, what was your impression of our political masters at that time?

DUNNIGAN: My impression was almost that that you have, Stu. I felt we went too much for the military effort, in fact.

It has always been my view that the only peace that is going to last, in, say, the Central American region, is one that's crafted by the countries involved themselves. If they don't build it and if they don't agree on it, it won't last. Yes, you can set up a structure for a few years under a strong man, but, in the final analysis, if he's seen to be supported only by the United States, you're building on sand.

So I welcomed the efforts of the presidents of the Central American countries to get together, because I think, in the final analysis, that has to be it.

Now, their problems are different. I'm not sure they're ever going to have Jeffersonian democracies in any of those countries. They'll have their own form of democracy, which may be a little more authoritarian than we are used to or would accept. But they come out of a different

culture, a different background, and different traditions. It's not for us, really, to try to force our way of government on them.

Q: How did Middendorf feel about this? There seem to be some people who came out of what I'd almost call the rabid ranks of the right of the Republican Party into Latin America. But Middendorf comes out of what, you know, was sort of the old Republican international establishment.

DUNNIGAN: Well, that is partly true, but he also had strong ties to the Republican right, very close ties with many of them, understood them. But he was also shrewd enough to understand that some of the things they stood for probably couldn't happen, that we would eventually have to compromise. But he stood in very closely with the more conservative members around Mr. Reagan, no question about that. Whereas he and I disagreed on certain points, because I just thought some of the things were going a bit too far for...

Q: Well, being right in Washington, this being the apple of the eye in our policy, particularly in Central America, of the Republican right, and all the players being right there, did you find an awful lot of sort of meddling by people on what we were doing in the OAS by political players?

DUNNIGAN: Yes, that happened. I'm thinking of cases of congressional staffers who would come and sit in on OAS meetings, and almost, almost try to direct what the US was going to say and do. They didn't always succeed, but they wanted it known that their president, that their senator or congressman was following this very closely.

Q: Well, the staffers, with this particular movement within Congress and all, were very important, weren't they? I mean, some of them really at least gave the appearance of being in charge.

DUNNIGAN: And they had many axes to grind, believe me. And they were not afraid to grind them. At that time, you see, our policy was dominated by the right wing in that regard. The other voices were few and far between.

Q: Well, what did you do there as DCM? I mean, was this one of these cases of smile and watch this go on?

DUNNIGAN: One survived. But we had a good staff there. And, remember, the OAS is involved in many other things such as health and social problems, agricultural problems. A lot of things that are rather like the underlying part of the iceberg that form the great mass, with meetings going on every day on these various subjects, and members of our staff participating, coming back, you know, and discussing it with me, or I would go with them to the meetings, and writing reports, and trying to get policy written.

You see, we didn't have to send telegrams, in a sense, to get our policy, because we were right there next to ARA where most of the policy was made. Sometimes IO and others, or the E area, economic area, but generally with ARA. So we could get our policy much quicker. In fact, the ambassador and I would attend ARA staff meetings so that we would keep hand-in-glove with

them on various things. And this seemed to work pretty well under both Tom Enders and Mr. Motley.

Q: What was the feeling from ARA towards the OAS and our mission there?

DUNNIGAN: I think, if you want to take the bark off, they would be just as happy if OAS disappeared. But it's there, and it's not really under ARA control, you see. The ambassador can have a direct line to the secretary if needed; one doesn't take that very often. But we want to coordinate policy with them, and, since there are men of goodwill in both organizations, it's generally worked. Occasionally, there have been problems when the ARA people want to go one way and the OAS people have to tell them it just isn't going to wash.

Q: Did you have any specific problems that you can think of at that time?

DUNNIGAN: Well, I can't put my finger on a specific problem, but I can say that on some of these Central American issues they would urge us to get the OAS to take a certain stance in support. And we'd say, "We can't do it, the votes are lined up in such a way against us. We can always try, but don't pin your hopes on it, it's not going to work." Things like that would happen.

Q: Was this a time when we weren't paying all our dues?

DUNNIGAN: That is true; that started in my time. Congress began to withhold money from international organizations because it didn't like some of the things they were doing. And, in fact, it was withholding it from the OAS because they weren't backing us firmly enough in Central America. Those of us who worked in the field thought this was reprehensible, that it only bred more ill will, it did no good and weakened the organization in the long run, and it looked chintzy from a US point of view. But Congress did, and has only grudgingly now released some of the funds, I understand.

Q: There has been very slow response to this.

DUNNIGAN: Yes, well, it forced, of course, a large cutdown in the OAS central staff, not all of which was a bad idea, but it should have been brought about others ways than that. We reaped a lot of ill will by it. You see, up till then, we had been beating on the heads of other countries who hadn't paid their dues. There are always certain Latin countries that have been behind, and we have taken a holier-than-thou attitude. Suddenly, the biggest debtor turns out to be the United States.

Q: Well, Tom, and then you retired from that, is that right?

J. WILLIAM MIDDENDORF, II
Ambassador, OAS
Washington, DC (1981-1985)

Ambassador J. William Middendorf, II was appointed ambassador to The Netherlands during the Nixon administration in 1969. He also served as Secretary of the Navy from 1974-1977, ambassador to the Organization of American States from 1981-1985, and as Representative to the European Economic Community from 1985-1987. Ambassador Middendorf was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1994.

MIDDENDORF: I was chairman of Mr. Reagan's International Economic Advisory Committee, which during the campaign was sort of a blueprint for him on economic trends around the world, and discussing the various major exports and imports that were involved in creating jobs for the United States. So that was the role that I played in his campaign, plus I was also chairman of his Naval Advisory Committee, for whatever that was worth. And when it came time to go into the administration, he very kindly asked me if I would become Ambassador to the OAS.

Q: *Where did that come from?*

MIDDENDORF: When I started business I shared in setting up a mutual fund in Wall Street to invest in Latin America starting in 1955. Not a brilliant performance on our part because we were immediately expropriated by Mr. Castro in '58. Peter Grace had sold us the Peruvian technology on making bagasse to hardboard. So we set the plant in Cuba and we were operating very well, we employed several hundred people and it was a substantial investment. I think we had several million dollars involved, and at that time it was real money. We were supplying most of the Caribbean with hardboard which previous to that they had to import, and at great expense had to burn the bagasse before that too. So it was a sort of synergistic thing that was good for Cuba. It was a mistake on my part to go into Cuba when we had the opportunity to go to Puerto Rico. I argued, well let's go to Cuba because Cuba had since 1898 had the strongest currency, little realizing that it was going to have an abortive end. So Mr. Castro came, expropriated the property, some Czech engineers got in there and I think it was finally torn down under communism, but that was the end of that project. But we did invest in a number of other countries and had some successes and some failures. We also saw hyperinflation on several occasions, and we saw expropriations on a number of occasions. It was chaotic and it was a good learning curve. At least I learned enough about Latin America to know...and working with a number of Latins, to get to be good friends with many businessmen.

Q: *You came at an interesting time to the OAS, from '81 to '85 period. I mean just both domestically-politically Latin America was almost the equivalent, in some ways, to where our China policy was back in the Eisenhower period, being a very active policy there. I mean an administration came in with very strong feelings about Latin America as opposed to the Carter administration whereas in most of the rest of the world there really wasn't tremendous change. But in Latin America there was. I wonder if you could talk a little about how you saw the Reagan administration when you came in, and how you were pointed at that time?*

MIDDENDORF: Well, there were two facets to that, one was the pro-active role that Reagan and the administration...Tom Enders was our Assistant Secretary, but the pro-active role that the Reagan administration wanted to change, and clean out all the...let's accommodate the communists because we can reason with them--philosophy; and the philosophy of Ronald

Reagan and his team which was, you can't negotiate with these guys, let's push them out wherever they are if you can. And the other job that I had, my job was to moderate with the 31 nations--I guess there were 32 nations in the OAS but Cuba being the 32nd had been inoperative since the '60s when they had an abortive landing apparently in Venezuela. It was alleged they had attacked, or were about to--boats were found. So by common consensus the OAS didn't want them around, even though they were still members theoretically, their flag was still up in the Carnegie building. The role of the OAS at that time went through a metamorphosis during my four years there from one of very substantial hostility towards the United States' position on the part of Mexico, occasionally Venezuela, and certainly Nicaragua, although less so than Mexico, and several others. Whereas the Caribbeans, outside of Grenada, were always with us, Eric Williams and Maurice Bishop, the communists had taken over down there and they obviously were not their best friends. And then I saw a shift in that period until the time when we actually rescued, or invaded, Grenada, or however you want to describe it. There was no consensus to condemn the United States in the OAS. In other words, they were very much for us, much more for us than they had been before. And indeed, at the critical moment I had attended some special National Security Council meetings prior, a couple days before the Grenada activity, and at that time I had, I won't say pledged, but I had said when asked how will the Latins go? I said I can't speak for the UN, but I can tell you that in the OAS a feel, based on the homework I've been doing, my expectation that there will not be a condemnation of United States Saturday morning in Grenada. Then they said, how do you know? And I said, "I've been doing a lot of work on this, and hopefully we confirmed in that, and if not you can have my resignation." That was a factor in deciding whether to move or not, I feel certain because I don't think anybody cared so much about the typical kneejerk reaction that you might get out of the United Nations, but they certainly cared a lot about the OAS because the OAS was a collegial body representing some very substantial friends of ours in Latin America and Caribbean and we wanted to make certain that they were with us in spirit. We had been condemned at the time of the Falklands attack because the feeling that Cap Weinberger and Al Haig, unlike Jeane Kirkpatrick and myself, the feeling that they had been at least talking with Margaret Thatcher and associating with her.

Q: We're talking about, for the historian, the Argentineans took over the Falkland Islands which had been a British colony, and the British came back and we tried to act a moderating role but eventually basically came down rather heavily on the side of the British.

MIDDENDORF: And in the moderating role, it just fell upon Jeane Kirkpatrick and me to do the best we could to hold the hands of the Latins during that period. They had no love for the Argentineans to speak of at that point. Mr. Galtieri was perhaps not the most loveable leader.

Q: It was as junta that took over we were pretty inept for one thing and not very nice.

MIDDENDORF: Well they had a very bad economic situation down there caused by themselves, in my opinion, after the runaway inflation in the early '80s where they miscalculated by pegging their currency to the dollar. So it comes now, with this tremendous economic problem that Mr. Galtieri is facing...I had a private view that he used the Falkland thing as an external smoke screen, a distraction, thinking that Mrs. Thatcher wouldn't be so resolute. So Al Haig and Cap Weinberger, who was the Secretary of state and Secretary of Defense, were very active communicating back and forth with Mrs. Thatcher on this situation because they were fellow

members of NATO, and we have a very big responsibility there with our European allies. But the role fell to me to continue to keep the dialogue open with the Argentines and through their ambassador, and I met many, many times at night with him all the way through March and April. There was an occasion when we hoped to use the visit of Pope to perhaps work out a compromise so that we could have the Argentines evacuated the island and put the three flags up, the British, Argentinean and the Pope flag, some sort of a compromising we were discussing, some sort of face saving for the Argentines because it was obvious that the British had gotten down to the Asuncion Island and they were ready to come on down further south. So in a sense I had pretty direct access to the Argentines through this wonderful ambassador who was very sympathetic to this idea of some sort of a compromise in my opinion, although he never said outright...I don't want to get in trouble now, but he never said outright, "I share your view," but he was obviously very, very anxious to see that something with quiet diplomacy could work. And I was always in touch with Al Haig working back and forth, and comes now the British were in Asuncion Island moving south, hadn't made the final decision whether to go in or not, to attack and to take on their ships. It was obvious to most of us, especially me with a Navy background, that it would be no contest if the British decided to move in. In fact, it could be quite a substantial loss of life on the part of the Argentines. And I tried to make that point, and Mr. Galtieri didn't seem to comprehend this too well, and until the end he was quite aggressive in his views although I never talked directly with him, it was always through the ambassador. There were several of us had this idea of this compromise, a face saving deal. It seemed to be working, there seemed to be a lot of support for it. And then at the last minute Mr. Galtieri apparently told the ambassador to cancel it, that negotiation. So I called very upset from the ambassador's residence when I was informed of this, I called Al Haig and Al said, "Bill, come right back to the Department." This was very late in the evening. But he didn't say, "They're going in tomorrow," but he just said, "get back, it's over." So I knew at that point it was over, and thanked the ambassador very much, and I said, "We'll talk tomorrow," and left. There was just no way Mr. Galtieri for some reason was willing to risk substantial defeat, rather than save face.

Q: Looking at it, even at the time, and I was retired by that time and not dealing with it, there was no way in hell that the United States could have supported the Argentines in this. And they might have looked for a nice out and all that and realpolitik may have said something, but it just wasn't going to happen. Maybe I'm overstating it, but how did the Argentines look, I mean the ambassador you're talking to. He's sitting here in the United States, could they feel the temper of the United States on this?

MIDDENDORF: Well I think because of the close working relationship that Jeane Kirkpatrick and I, and a number of other ambassadors, I mean our ambassadors were fanned out all over the hemisphere, we were trying to hold the line. We had one meeting at the OAS where Secretary Haig and I and we sat there and took the heat from all these ambassadors, and that was a pro-forma thing in my opinion. That was something they had to do because they had to show solidarity.

Q: These are the Latin American ambassadors all getting up...

MIDDENDORF: Absolutely, one right after another took turns on the United States, and we took it with good spirit, and made I think a fairly brief reply, and that was it. So we wanted to keep the

relationships going, we obviously didn't want to have any bad relationships with the Latins, and it was not our war. We didn't start it, Galtieri started it for whatever reason, but we wanted to maintain our position of relationship. So obviously in our job, the ambassador to the OAS job, is to maintain the solid relationships, not to give the appearance of taking sides, and I don't think we ever did. It's possible that the Latins could conclude that the close relationship Margaret Thatcher had with the President, and with Al Haig and Cap Weinberger, and we're all Anglophiled to a certain degree, but there was no sort of face losing evidence that this was happening.

Q: Even beyond the close relationship, just the very fact that these were the British, a junta of generals who were pretty nasty to their own people, had seized this island, it just wasn't in the cards no matter who is President, who is the Prime Minister, that we would come down and support the junta.

MIDDENDORF: And I think that's the reason they belabored us. I think Argentina tried to get a big thing going against the United States, and they didn't succeed. But all was smoothed over later within months after that, the junta gone, the relationships were extremely good.

Q: One other thing. Could you talk just a bit about why does Mexico always seem, particularly in the field of foreign affairs, commercial affairs...we've been pretty very close, but in foreign affairs the Mexicans seem to, at least the Foreign Ministry, all seem to take quite an anti-American course.

MIDDENDORF: I think you have to put that in an historical sense, not the present sense because it's clear that as result of NAFTA...

Q: But really for a long time.

MIDDENDORF: Yes, you're right. Dick Walters had that famous meeting down in Mexico with Castro, or his representative early in the administration where the Mexicans were sort of the middle men, as I recall, didn't come to any of them. Castro kind of belabored us afterwards to the other Latins as this is a sign of weakness that we were meeting with them. Every time you do that you got that kind of result from Castro. So there wasn't any profit in meeting with him because he was just going to blast you as the result, a sign of weakness. Well you have to recognize that the Mexicans and the Venezuelans have this special oil facility where they supply low cost oil, heavily subsidized oil, to Cuba and to Grenada during that period of time. And why the Mexicans took that position, I guess maybe because there was an historical...you can go back to the war with Mexico in 1840 when the problem started. There was never a lot of love lost. In the voting, either they stayed neutral or were against the United States for several years there. In the end though Don Rafael de la Colina, who was the dean of the Mexican diplomacy corps...I think he went all the way back to Woodrow Wilson's time and had been back and forth to the United States, but he was certainly one of the most respected ambassadors and he became a very close friend of mine, and at the critical moment...for example on Grenada when we went in to the vote. We gave the Latins about an hour's notice that we were going to go in, including Cuba, so very predictably the Grenada ambassador from the United Nations came on down from New York, asked to have the floor, Williams, their ambassador to the OAS for some reason was out of

town at that time. She had been supportive of Maurice Bishop who had been murdered in October, as you know.

Maurice Bishop had been murdered in that abortive sort of counter coup in Grenada in '83. During that summer Williams, their ambassador, had suggested to me that we meet with Bishop in Washington at a hotel. So I arranged for Bill Clark, National Security advisor, and myself to meet with Maurice Bishop. We met with him and I got the impression, a very strong impression meeting with Maurice Bishop there a month or two before he was killed, of course, and he had led the coup to take over Grenada initially with Cuban support back in the early days. But I got the impression in talking to him that he was a spent man. That he was really looking for a way out. He was still mouthing a few of the typical communist rhetoric terms, but he was almost pleading with his eyes in conversations with us. We had lengthy conversations, and he certainly was not acting like your hard line Bolshevik. And he went back to Grenada to his death. He tried this cute little coup, and also they were suspicious of him, probably for coming to the United States. So at any rate, he was arrested, then he got out and he marched up the hills with some enthusiastic supporters, and then he was shot there. So in that resulting chaos with his death, Korte taking over, the possible threat to the students there at St. George's University--American medical students. There was a good deal of discussion there. Constantine Mangus at the National Security Council had written a brilliant paper, he'd only been a month on the job, maybe even less, suggesting the rescue--shall I use that term--of Grenada, to stop the potential for Cuba-Soviet expansion in the hemisphere. And as a result of that paper, and the momentum it created--of course, I became an enthusiast for it immediately, but so did others. So there was a meeting of the National Security Council a couple of days before we went in, and at that time I had made what I hoped sibyllic prophesy that I felt comfortable, when asked, there would not be any resolution passed condemning the United States at the OAS. And that must have been a factor among many that the powers that be had to deliberate. Bud McFarlane, as I recall, was in the chair. Then George Shultz came into the meeting, Tony Motley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and a representative, not Bill Casey, but a representative from CIA. So the decision was made to make this momentous step, that which began, I believe, on a Saturday and with considerable success. I consider that a significant success in this sense that it was the high watermark of Soviet-Cuban expansion in this hemisphere, and the ebttide really. They started to recede after that, and they knew that we were going to stand up and not be a pushover. There was no criticism at the OAS. The Bolivian ambassador was the chairman of the OAS at that time, they rotate every six months, and he for some reason was quite hostile to the United States and for U.S. action. He was close to Nicaragua, and very close to Ambassador Williams, the Grenadian. And this was a curious thing, the Nicaraguan ambassador who of course represented the Sandinistas did not second the resolution that he proposed condemning the United States. And this followed, of course, a long lengthy diatribe against the United States from the Grenada ambassador to the United Nations. He happened to be sitting next to me. And on my right was Don Rafael de la Colina, my friend the Mexican who normally would be the one to second such a condemnation. I had the privilege of visiting with him the night before, and asking him how he was going to go, and presenting views. As I recall, Tom Dunnigan our DCM, who had been my political counselor in the Hague working with Charlie, I had asked to come back as DCM at the U.S. mission at the OAS. And we had made a visit to Don Rafael de la Colina, as I recall, it was some years ago, this was 1983, eleven years ago but I think its right, and told him in hypothetical case that if this does happen how would he vote. And he very kindly suggested that he would

reflect on it, but he certainly created a very strong impression to me that he could remain neutral. And that was a very great encouragement to me because I knew that if he didn't second the resolution condemning the United States, no one else would, including the Nicaraguans, they didn't think they would either because it was a curious development in the four years I was ambassador to the OAS the Nicaraguans, although we were running Contras and supporting them, against them all the time, the Nicaraguan ambassador was always extremely cordial to me, and never once voted against the United States. He never participated in an attack on the United States.

Q: You're saying something I find very interesting from the way you talked about it. You talked about these as being individuals, these ambassadors, rather than we think in terms of in the United Nations our ambassadors don't just get up there and vote the way they feel. They vote because this is how the government wants it, but I take it in the OAS there's much more...I mean if the Bolivian ambassador doesn't like the United States he will do things that maybe do not necessarily reflect the considered policy of their own government.

MIDDENDORF: In fact, that's quite true because under the Bolivian leadership at that time they were much more friendly to us down there when I would visit. It was a peculiar thing. I think he at one point had had some difficulty in the United States, some snubbing or something. Or I think there was a situation where a Bolivian didn't get hired at some point, and he was angry.

Q: But people weren't waiting to say, I've got to consult my government.

MIDDENDORF: I think basically they always consulted their government, but for some reason we had a very collegial atmosphere in the last two years, not the first because there was a love of the Sandinista and Falkland stuff in the beginning. But it seemed to moderate very rapidly, and I think they respected the United States more and more. And I think Grenada helped a lot.

Q: Well, it showed we can act on something that really nobody wanted. It was a sort of renegade government which looked like it was running wild.

MIDDENDORF: And I agree with what you said too, I think that they are people, and I think you really...of course, as ambassador, you really have to work making these as your friends, your best friends, and you have to work at it all the time, in the evenings, or in the daytime, and what have you, but in the evenings especially, and their wives. I mean you really have to work at it. But also you have to work at getting around to those countries. I personally viewed this very seriously and I went to every one of these 31 countries four times at least, and worked with their Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers on all these issues. I think it paid off in the end. As ambassador to the OAS, or ambassador to the European Union, you have a kind of free opportunity to go to all countries, and that's your job. And you get out there and you make your case whether they agree with it or not, you're in a position in a sense to make your case and make friends, and eventually when the great nightfall comes they are more likely to be with you. I think that's what happened in both the European Union and my personal experience in the OAS.

Q: What about the last thing on this OAS business, how did El Salvador, Nicaragua conflict play out in the OAS during your time.

MIDDENDORF: It was an extremely active deal at all times. The El Salvador and Nicaragua deal, I mean the United States was very, very aggressive on this whole question of the Contras. You know it's a real in-battle, so to speak going on all the time. I would say a substantial portion of Tom Enders or Tony Motley's time as Assistant Secretaries for Latin American Affairs was spent just on those issues. And my experience--I was down the hall from them--and I could see they were embroiled in it all the time. And even in our staff meetings every morning when we'd go around the table to Ecuador desk officer, Argentina, or what have you, it was always a good deal of the discussion was on the Contras, and the Sandinistas and what they were up to.

Q: Up to '85, what was your role on the OAS on that?

MIDDENDORF: Well, obviously you could make the role anything you wanted. You could lay back, or you could become quite active in making your case. I mean they all knew I was totally supportive of U.S. policy in those days with all those issues. They all knew where I stood. In the beginning there would be criticism, but at the end I don't think they had any criticism. I don't recall any, and I remember many times when I needed a critical vote, the Nicaraguan ambassador would vote with me at my request, I'd ask him.

Q: Then you left there really on quite a high note. I mean it was an instrument that was not...

BRUCE MALKIN
Economic/Commercial Officer, OAS
Washington, DC (1983-1986)

Bruce Malkin was born in Philadelphia in February 1946. He received his bachelor's degree from University of Pennsylvania University. His career includes positions in Jamaica, Mexico, Singapore, and Washington D.C. Mr. Malkin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 2005.

Q: How long did you stay in this job?

MALKIN: Until 1983, when my marriage went down the tubes with my first wife. We were divorced in '86. From mid-1983, I was with the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (USOAS), which is located on the 6th floor of the old part of the Department. We have a small but interesting diplomatic mission, with an ambassador and DCM. I was the Economic/Commercial Officer for three years, which I found fascinating, and I enjoyed it a lot. I was able to use my Spanish again, and regained my fluency in it. When I arrived, the ambassador was William Middendorf, an experienced professional and a good man to work for. Our delegation to the OAS annual meeting in Brasilia in late 1983 won a Meritorious Group Award. Unfortunately, he was succeeded by Richard McCormick, a political appointment, who seemed to have little interest in the main issues before us.

Q: What were the main things that you were concerned with?

MALKIN: Trade restrictions. All the countries were complaining to USTR about trade restrictions. Jon Rosenbaum of USTR was a very hard-nosed negotiator who would join me for annual meetings with the OAS countries. That was one exciting area. The OAS country diplomats were always looking for either bigger quotas or lower tariffs or some special preference from the U.S., often on agricultural and mining exports. I helped them with their questions on GSP in order to get them to look at that as a program their countries could use.

We were almost always isolated in opposition to the other Latin American OAS members on the bigger, more important issues. Peru led the opposition, with support from Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Colombia. Sometimes we were supported by the Caribbean Island states. The Canadians were off on the side observing all of this to try to figure out why they should become members, which they eventually did.

Q: In OAS, did you see that the United States was seen as a big giver and everybody else was trying to get something?

MALKIN: We were perceived more as a big withholder, for not opening our markets more widely to their exportable products. They wanted us to lower our tariff and non-tariff restrictions, such as USDA inspections. They were fighting about copper and sugar and other issues that they had.

Q: What kind of a role did the Mexicans play at this point?

They were pretty quiet, but supported the lead countries in their votes.

Q: Brazil had its own barriers, didn't it?

MALKIN: That did not matter to them. They justified their protectionism based on their being a developing country.

Q: But we weren't supposed to have any?

MALKIN: As a rich developed country, we were seen as being unwilling to share our wealth. They felt that we were holding them back.

Q: How did you find the OAS mission fit within the State Department?

MALKIN: It was like being in a little embassy that just happened to be housed in the Department of State building. It could have been housed at an off-site place, too. I may have had some contact with my GSP friends, and coordinated often on ARA issues with country desk officers on OAS work.

Q: Why didn't you want to go into the Commercial Service?

MALKIN: I thought at the time, after looking at the two choices, that Commerce's FCS career future was more limited than State's. There would not be much job variety, and I would have some assignments in Washington in the Commerce Department. I decided that my chances for advancement and career improvement were better at State, which was really where I wanted to be with opportunities to do things other than commercial promotion. There were no special incentives; nobody offered me a promotion for staying with State. I just made that choice and I finished out my assignment in Singapore working for the Foreign Commercial Service, and then I came back to State and became a GSP expert.

ROBERT W. DREXLER
Director of Mission Operations, OAS
Washington, DC (1983-1984)

Robert Drexler was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He received his Bachelor's degree from Harvard University before entering the Foreign Service in 1957. In 1975 he served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Bogota, Colombia. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Geneva. Mr. Drexler was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: *Today is the 25th of March, 1996.*

So, you went to the Organization of American States from the Board of Examiners.

DREXLER: Actually, better said, it was the US Mission to the OAS, which is rather odd, because it's the only embassy that is located within the State Department Building. Specifically, it was in the old part of the building, I guess we were up on the 5th floor, and it has all the outside trappings of an embassy, a seal, flags, and so on. We were not too far from the actual Organization of American States, which is down near the White House, and we were right next door to the State Department's Latin American Bureau, which provided us with all the administrative support. Our personnel officers, our General Services Officers, that sort of staff that you would find at an embassy was all there in the Bureau. Also, the Mission to the OAS, unlike our Mission to the UN, did not send out its own cable traffic. The US Representative when I was there was J. William Middendorf, and he was always unhappy that he couldn't put out cables that were signed Middendorf, they had to be signed Shultz, because we used the State Department's communications facilities.

When I went to the job, I had looked forward to it. As I said, Middendorf was the Ambassador, and we had a second Ambassador, Herb Thompson, who was a Foreign Service officer and Middendorf's deputy, and then a staff of about nine or ten people, who reported to me. I was called a Director of Mission Operations, a sort of chief of staff. The career staff handled OAS operations having to do with cultural affairs, economic affairs, political affairs, and very important, money for the OAS budget. Because the large American government contribution to the OAS, amounting to about 25%, was handled through our office, through a very able and experienced civil service employee, Owen Lee, who I think knew more about the OAS's finances,

fortunately, than the OAS bureaucrats themselves did. We were under pressure from Congress to reduce our share of the budget, and we put pressure on the OAS to economize, and to cut down their very bloated organization.

Q: After your experience in Bogota, was there a problem going back to an ARA assignment? Apparently, as you say, you never quite belonged to the ARA club.

DREXLER: There was no problem that I could sense, as far as ARA was concerned, because the problem was not personal, but more broadly operational, in that the Bureau did not really very much welcome or pay attention to the OAS mission as a whole. We were all outsiders, poor relations in that sense. I should say that I took the job because of the difficulty of finding senior officer positions at that time. Because of a family health problem, I couldn't serve overseas then, and there was a surplus of officers looking for senior officer slots, so I was happy to get this one. Also, I had a kind of a good impression of the OAS as an organization, and I lost that right away. I like to make the analogy that ideally the Organization of American States should be like a dust buster, this little gadget that you keep with the batteries charged at home and you use it occasionally for touch-up operations, clean-up operations; in the case of the OAS for, say, peacekeeping operations, to hold a conference, for other ad hoc tasks, I think the OAS would be very good, and as a small unit, deserves to be sustained. But instead what you got was, to continue the analogy, an enormous vacuum cleaner with 18 attachments, very expensive spare parts, high maintenance costs, and so on. All this sort of clanking around. The OAS bureaucracy was over staffed, bloated, overpaid, unemployed, and often the place where diplomats, officials, generals, and so on, from Latin American countries were exiled, to keep them out of the politics of their country. And a lot of our ex-diplomats -- I wouldn't say they were exiled, but it was customary for persons who retired from the ARA Bureau, it frequently happened that they went over and took jobs in the OAS bureaucracy. They were very attractive and high paid, and not taxable jobs. So the organization did not impress me, but still the job of being the Ambassador to the OAS could be an important one, I still think, because if you take the job seriously, you can really be an important advisor to the Secretary of State, because you couldn't suffer from the traditional clientitis, since your "clients" are all these member countries. You could, at least according to my theory, take a more objective view of our priorities in the region as a whole, of what they should be, so you could play an important role in policy making toward the region if you wanted to, and so could the Secretary General of the United Nations at any given time. At that time it was Alejandro Orfila, who was a rather prominent man-about-town, an Argentine diplomat, who I think wanted to run for President. He was very active in Washington society, as was his wife. So the potential was there in individual terms, even if not in organization terms, for making an impact.

Now, Mr. Middendorf had formally been Secretary of the Navy and Ambassador to the Netherlands, under the Nixon-Ford Administration. He was a very wealthy New Englander, and a very serious art collector, very knowledgeable on Netherlands painting, Rembrandt, and so on, active in the Republican Party's right wing. At the OAS, even though he didn't speak Spanish, and knew nothing about Latin America, he had a certain status, a prestige, in the eyes of the other ambassadors, because he was known to be socially prominent, politically prominent, and rich. This was a winning combination in the eyes of many people, particularly in the eyes of Latin American diplomats. But unfortunately, Mr. Middendorf was not much interested in the

OAS, and I often thought that one of the two signs over our entrance could come down. In those days it was the style in the Department if you were an Ambassador or of Assistant Secretary rank, that your name was in large letters over the door. And so there was his, and then we had the plaque, the US Permanent Mission to the OAS; I always thought you could take the plaque down and just leave his name and you would get a more accurate picture of what we were doing. He had many interests. I think the primary one was fine art. He was knowledgeable, and as I said, wealthy collector of paintings. At any given time we would have hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pictures in the office, on approval from this or that gallery, while he decided whether he would buy them. He had such a large collection that I suppose he was doing this for investment, because we often had to send these things out to warehouses, rather than to his dining room, say. He regarded this as sort of his personal preserve. I'm afraid that I don't have very much respect for him, though he was a very bright, intelligent person. I just have a memory of him just being interested mostly in promoting himself. He also had an added staff, of over-complement people that he had brought on to simply support him in his various outside interests. Because he had been Secretary of the Navy, he got the Pentagon to assign a Navy Lieutenant Commander as his aide. He knew Charlie Wick, at USIS, and had him assign him an officer as his speech writer. Then we had another over-complement officer, Alberto Piedra, a protégé of Senator Helms, in the office. And all of these people, and to some extent all the rest of the staff, gravitated around Middendorf. And it was my job to see to it that the business of government was done in such time as he allowed us. I should explain that the other Ambassador, Herb Thompson, was a first class professional Foreign Service officer, spent most of his time at the OAS, attending and representing the US at these endless meetings and conclaves and caucuses, and so on, and doing it very well. But he sort of stayed away from the office. I think he didn't mind being away from Middendorf. I think I could sum up the way we operated by describing the results of an inspection that we had when I was there. When the inspectors came, I was a little apprehensive, and I think Middendorf all the more so, because it was clear that the Mission was not functioning in an ideal way, but rather as an adjunct to his interests, and I wondered how much of this the inspection team would perceive, and how much they would be interested in changing. I think they saw the problems, but they certainly were not interested in making any recommendations. And I think they were rather in awe of Mr. Middendorf, and his political authority and power. And I remember the Ambassador heading the team saying to me, after sort of shaking his head about this, "Well Bob, can you assure me that despite all this the business of the Republic is being done?" And I said, "Yes sir, we are trying to do this," and I suppose it was being done. But there wasn't all that much business, because the OAS and also our mission was held in low esteem by the Bureau.

Q: Was that endemic, or was it because of Middendorf? Did you have the feeling this waxed and waned depending on the person?

DREXLER: I think it waxed and waned, very much dependent upon the incumbent. I think when John Jova was the representative...Middendorf's predecessor was a former Senator, whose name escapes me...

Q: McGee?

DREXLER: Yes, that's right. Gale McGee. He used to drop back, and he was very popular at the OAS. He knew Latin America, he was interested, and he had a personal authority, that prevailed over an inclination by others to denigrate the organization. And of course, much also depended upon who was the Assistant Secretary for ARA. This was Tom Enders. Enders and Middendorf were really not compatible. I had great respect and admiration for Enders, and I liked him. I had heard that he was arrogant and overbearing, and so on, and perhaps he was, but certainly not with us on his staff. He had a daily staff meeting that I attended, and I admired him. But I could also see how he was not on the same wavelength as Middendorf, and vice versa. Also, Middendorf treated the ordinary person, his staff, in particular, very shabbily. He was demanding and inconsiderate and also treated persons who came to call on him from outside this way. They were made to wait a half hour, sometimes an hour, cooling their heels in the lobby, while he dithered away at one thing or another. On the other hand, he was constantly toadying to people in the White House and his other political friends in order to advance his standing. But Enders, of course, was someone he could not afford to disregard or treat badly, and Enders had a confidence and a social position that did not oblige him to toady to Middendorf, which would have been the way to win him over. Middendorf had an insatiable appetite for flattery.

So the situation was an uneasy one, and posed some problems for me, since I had to keep the operations going and work with both of them. So I went to see Tony Gillespie shortly after I got there. Tony was a kind of special executive assistant to Enders. He ran the front office, he was very close to Enders, very influential, very capable, hardworking, and so on, and was really the Bureau manager. So I went to him, and I said that I realized that Middendorf was not regarded as part of the Enders team and there was friction there, and that there were two ways of handling this. One was to keep Middendorf at a distance, not send us the cables, not include us, keep us as far away as possible so we didn't ruin things for Enders and his policy. I said that such an approach made it tough for me and the rest of us. The other way was to try to bring Middendorf in the tent and to win him over, win his confidence, maybe make use of his White House connections, involve him in what the Bureau is doing to be sure that he was on board. Well, Tony listened to this, and they went back to keeping Middendorf at arm's length. Now, this contributed to Enders being forced to resign. It was at this time that Jeane Kirkpatrick made her notorious trip through Central America, and raised alarms that it was falling into the hands of the communists, who were then going to march on Texas, and then Missouri, Chicago, and Milwaukee next--or some such nonsense. She disagreed with Enders's approach to the area, which was often characterized as a two-track approach, using some military pressure against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and also in Salvador. But favoring negotiations when possible. I think that Jeane Kirkpatrick was instrumental in forcing him out of that position, and although I haven't any definite information, I know that Middendorf welcomed this, and he was always trying to get in and stay in Jeane Kirkpatrick's good graces. So I would imagine that the Administration naturally looked to him when it wanted to make a big Latin American personnel change, and no doubt he went along with this. I think it was most unfortunate, and got us into lots of trouble. Jeane Kirkpatrick is someone for whom I have very little respect, and I remember when I went back to the East Asian Bureau, our daily prayer was that she would never become interested in Asia the way she had been in Latin America when she started making trips.

Q: She was Ambassador to the United Nations.

DREXLER: Yes, and thus started making difficulties in another sector. Now, another Middendorf claim to authority was his supposed relationship with Jesse Helms. He was thought to be the only man in the State Department building who could get Jesse Helms on the phone. I never heard or saw him do this...

Q: You might explain who Jesse Helms is.

DREXLER: Jesse Helms is a Senator from North Carolina, who is a critic of the Foreign Service. He is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and extremely conservative in his views, staunchly anti-communist, and highly suspicious of the career Foreign Service. Politically, he and Middendorf were on the same wavelength. But personally, I never had the impression that he had any particular respect for or personal ties with Middendorf. But a member of Helms's staff, Debbie DeMoss, undoubtedly did. DeMoss was one of Helms's specialists on Central America, and was very close to Middendorf, although I don't know the origin of their relationship. I was told she was almost like an adopted daughter to him, and she frequently visited our office. She was, if possible, even more extreme than Senator Helms in her views. I can remember her being a strong champion of Roberto D'Aubuisson, the Salvadoran leader who had much blood on his hands, and whom American Ambassador Bob White labeled a butcher and a killer, the very worst type of right-wing villain, whom she championed, as did the Senator. The Senator also foisted on us a staff member, Alberto Piedra, a former professor of economics at Catholic University, and a refugee from Castro's Cuba. He was a sort of special advisor on political affairs to Middendorf, but was really out of his depth, and didn't have much to do. But we had to keep him on, and I was told that I had to get him the title of Ambassador. This was possible, because there were a number of OAS bodies, like those at the UN, such as an economic and social council, where the American representative had the personal rank of Ambassador. So there was repeated pressure from Helms, through Enders's office, down to me, to arrange this for Piedra. And finally I went ahead with it, but without much enthusiasm. I didn't really try to torpedo the paperwork or sabotage it, but I just let things take its course. And fortunately I think, for the Republic, Dr. Piedra's background investigation encountered some problems because of income tax, or whatever. Nothing serious at all, certainly nothing illegal, but it took time. So that he never got this ambassadorial title while I was there, though he was later named Ambassador to Guatemala through the normal channels.

It was during this time that we invaded Grenada, and our mission had an unusual role in this connection. Grenada, the Bishop regime that we overthrew, had designated a lady named Dessima Williams, to be their ambassador to Washington. But we refused to give her the agreement, because she was under indictment, I think in a court in Chicago, for arms trafficking. She had tried, through some illegal ways, to get weapons for her country's radical government, and had been caught, or failed. Anyway, we couldn't countenance accrediting an ambassador who was under indictment for arms trafficking, so we wouldn't take her. So there was nobody representing Grenada. But she then was named Grenada's ambassador to the OAS, over which of course we had no say. And she sat next to us at the Council chamber, because the seating was according to the Spanish alphabet. She was a very vivacious person, very bright, and interested in cultivating her next door neighbor at the table there, Ambassador Middendorf, who was sort of captivated by her, as we all were. So there at the OAS we had the only link really, with the radical Grenada government, and there was no US mission in their capital at this time either. She

tried, as relations worsened, to make use of our mission to try to negotiate bilateral problems, to try to ease tensions, and try to reduce pressures on her government. And at this time, we became, or the Reagan Administration professed to be, very concerned about two things: one, the safety of American students who were attending a medical school there, and also the military potential of a large airfield that was being built. This airfield was being built with Cuban assistance and it was the Cubans who were the only ones who shot at us when our invasion force landed. But the Reagan Administration, which of course had this ridiculously exaggerated idea of the communist threat in the Caribbean and Central America, believed that this airfield was going to be used by Soviet bombers who could carry nuclear weapons. So we could have a missile crisis again, with a threat to our soft underbelly which I think was a preposterous idea. But nevertheless, that was concern, and the airfield was being built, and it was a large one. The Grenadians said it was for tourism, which I guess is now what it's used for. Now, I had a background in arms control and also in Latin America, so I said to Ambassador Middendorf, knowing how he liked to shine and give his name to agreements and treaties, and trophies and awards and so on, here's an opportunity where we might be able to do something. We could try to negotiate an agreement with the Grenadian government that this airfield is only going to be used for civilian purposes. I'm familiar with this from my work at the military committee at the CSCE, Conference on Security Cooperation in Europe, where we negotiated so-called confidence-building measures. And this was a way in the European context where potential adversaries could monitor what the other side was doing as far as moving aircraft, or building bases, or moving troops, or holding maneuvers was concerned. You gave notice, you had inspectors. It did work in the European context, which was certainly harder to achieve than say, in the Caribbean. So I said we could have such an agreement, and it could be monitored. It wouldn't be hard at all. And at the first sign that it wasn't being respected, well that would be curtains for Grenada. I was really enthused about this, and there we had Dessima Williams, whom I'm sure would have been willing to talk about it. But Mr. Middendorf was not. Unknown to me, he was already participating in secret White House meetings, planning the invasion. And I learned later he was turned to for advice as to how the OAS would react to such an invasion, which was to me a preposterous idea, since he was completely uninformed about such matters. For example, he would go to the White House and come back and call me in and say, "Bob, at lunch today so and so urged and Ed Meese said 'Bill, get Nicaragua thrown out of the OAS.' Bob, can't we do that?" I said, "Mr. Ambassador, maybe that would be nice, but it can't be done. We don't have the votes to get Nicaragua expelled from the OAS, and if we introduce a resolution, it's going to be amended, we won't have control of it, and the best thing that you could hope for, and that's not very good, is one that criticizes the Nicaraguans, and also condemns the US for arming the Contras to overthrow them. Just tell the people in the White House that this can't be done." Well, here was the man advising the White House on the Grenada operation. And so, of course, it was pulled off, and we invaded. As I mentioned earlier, one of the other motives was to save the medical students from being turned into hostages, a la Tehran, when our people were held there by the Ayatollah.

Q: You might explain just a little bit about the situation on the ground in Grenada at this particular time.

DREXLER: It was governed by a radical regime, that was probably pro-communist, although one which had wanted to be friendly to the United States. And it was highly personalized under the leadership of Bishop. Because of the war going on in Nicaragua, and the insurgency in El

Salvador, it was thought of by the White House as a staging base, and one more front in this struggle. The Reagan Administration was determined to overthrow the Bishop government, and to put in another one that was more reliable. But it could not do this directly, it needed to justify it in terms of American public opinion, and in terms of regional, Latin American opinion. So there was in the first instance, the "danger" of the airstrip, as I mentioned. That was sort of for world opinion. For American opinion, there was the reported need of protecting American students at the medical school. And then there was the need for a fig leaf, someone to invite the United States in, and we found this in an obscure organization of Caribbean island states, former British colonies, who were undoubtedly worried about the Bishop regime, and the revolution that was going on in Grenada, and who were persuaded to request intervention, and to give the American force a multinational, or regional complexion. One of the island leaders, a lady whose name I forget, who was from Dominica, was very prominent in this role, and I remember her because she used our offices and my own secretary to type up the pronouncements that she was obliged to come up with to provide the fig leaf for our operation. As you can tell from what I was saying, I discount the airstrip and the request from the regional organization in Dominica. And as far as the students are concerned, we had no reports that they were in any danger. And after the invasion was pulled off, I happened to meet...

Q: We're talking about the invasion when?

DREXLER: Let's see, this would be about 1983, because Enders had already left. I later happened to be at the FBI Academy, and got to know a high ranking Army officer, who had an important role in Delta Force, this very secret Army Special Forces unit. He told me that prior to the invasion, one of his jobs in the preparations for it was to monitor the students' whereabouts, mapping the precise location of the school, which was outside the capital, and so on. He told me that when the invasion actually took place, no one came to him for the information, nor showed any interest at that time in getting them out, and this was one of the purported reasons for going in. And news reports indeed indicated that our forces, after they had landed, had trouble finding out where the students were to be rescued. I think this just shows how artificial that objective was. But nonetheless, it was brought off. That, I think, covers my exposure to the OAS.

Q: You were there from when to when?

DREXLER: This was 1983-1984.

Q: We had a long-standing problem with the United Nations. Did we owe dues to the OAS, and was this a problem?

DREXLER: In furtherance of a congressional resolution, we withheld each year a certain proportion of our dues. It was a small, 2-3% that Owen Lee worked on. But to my knowledge, apart from that, amounts due were paid. We did not have a massive arrearage, as at the UN. And of course the total amount of money involved was much smaller than the UN budget. We're talking millions instead of billions. And I think also with regard to the UN arrearages, as far as I know, the people in the Bureau of International Organizations, and at the USUN, are appalled by the fix we've got ourselves in at the United Nations. But this was not the case with OAS, where there was a strong sentiment throughout our government that it was a wasteful, bloated

organization and that we were paying far too much, and that the money was not serving a useful purpose. So we were not troubled by this policy of holding some money back. We thought that this was well advised and sharply focused. In other words it represented an Administration view as well as a Congressional one, unlike the case with the UN.

DOUGLAS G. HARTLEY
Mission Coordinator, OAS
Washington, DC (1984-1986)

Douglas G. Hartley was born in England to American parents and was educated at Eton and Harvard University. After entering the Foreign Service in 1956, his assignments abroad have included Copenhagen, Salzburg, Belgrade, Milan, Athens, Rome, London and Brazil. Mr. Hartley was interviewed in 1998 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You were in the OAS from '84 to...?

HARTLEY: '84 to '86. This is a peculiar beast, the OAS Mission, because it is an international mission. It is a mission to an international organization, which happens to be based in Washington, therefore the mission happens to exist within the State Department. It was sort of, I felt, neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. You were in the State Department, but not actually of it. My job was not particularly interesting. I was what you call Mission Coordinator, which was, as its sound implies, meant to coordinate the various elements of the mission. But over the years, the elements of the mission had shrunk of their own accord. It really wasn't a very well defined job.

I had never worked with or been involved in an international organization. I used to occasionally go to the meetings of the OAS, though I didn't directly have anything to do with it. But I would get involved in the preparation of stuff. But I still feel that you need to be a certain type of person to be involved in international organizations. For me, there's a tremendous amount of verbiage, a tremendous amount of wheel spinning, there are endless compromises over very arcane points. There's an immense amount of pique and personal pride involved, especially with the Latin American states in their relationship with Uncle Sam. It just seemed to me that there was an awful lot of petty posturing and resolutions that basically people paid no attention to.

Q: How did you find the OAS after all of the stripping of its posturing and all. Was there much you can accomplish or do in your view?

HARTLEY: You know, if you look at the real problems of Latin America, which are problems of mal-distribution of income, of development in general. At that time, there was a tendency to a greater degree of democracy. That became evident later, and eventually--either because of us or not at all because of us, because of other things that happened--you got virtually every country with the exception of Cuba and Paraguay, which to some degree were democratic. But a lot of this happened probably without any connection with OAS at all because the fall of the Soviet Empire basically scuttled Marxism and revolutionized Latin American thought about economics.

We used the OAS to get our point of view across and to make absolutely sure that Castro was kept bottled up.

Q: During the time you were there, '84 to '86, the Soviets were still going. I mean, they didn't go until '89, or a little after--in the 90's.

HARTLEY: The overthrow of the Allende government in the early '70s had, of course, greeted with horror. But Allende was an extreme left wing socialist who was bent on nationalizing just about everything. Pinochet was a blunt instrument - a murderer and a thug; but he did point the way to a general movement toward capitalism and a free market, which was, I guess, evolving when I was in OAS. In the OAS, there was nothing really that directly bore on this that I can think of. It was mostly political posturing. We had our national interest, our Cuban policy. We spent a lot of time trying to shoot down any initiative that was aimed at including Cuba in anything. I remember the preparations for the 500th year of Columbus landing in America was one such when we were spending more time trying to keep the Cubans out of it than almost anything else. I felt this kind of thing was basically meaningless - I guess it was important, but I didn't think it was very important.

Q: What about Central America? We had the Nicaragua and El Salvador business going on. From your perspective, did you see much effort from the OAS, or was that a side show?

HARTLEY: There were certainly activities in the OAS. And there were initiatives - but within the OAS structure - to help with agricultural reform, along lines that we wanted. I believe that much of this was positive and it certainly ended by taking away lots of support from the Sandinistas and their ilk. There was good work done under all the posturing. Bill Middendorf was our ambassador to the OAS. He was a very right wing sort of guy. We used to sort of use him, would have him attend things where we needed a sort of heavyweight come and fire a few salvos for us. I liked him personally and he was a faithful friend. He was quite effective only because of his bulk, if nothing else. He was taller and bigger than most of the people there. So when he got up, he could thunder away in a way that was quite impressive to the Latinos who were there at the meetings. But as I said, I was really more involved in the administration of OAS.

I was also, I think, ready to leave the Foreign Service. I felt I had two years more and I was looking at the future. I think I was basically bored with the whole thing. Bill Middendorf left. I enjoyed working with him. He was replaced by a guy who was even more right-wing than he was and not nearly as capable, Richard McCormick--one of Jesse Helms' connections who was put in as the assistant secretary for economic affairs, then became the OAS guy. He was a very pleasant fellow, but he was not at all, I thought, the forceful presence--for better or worse. Middendorf by the way, also spent a fair amount of time kind of peripherally involved in this.

Do you remember this kind of loose organization of right wing ambassadors who got together and kind of became kind of very hawkish representatives---a sort of more hawkish point of view than we were peddling at the time with regard to South America. One of them was the ambassador to Costa Rica, Curt Winsor, who was one of that group. Then there was the ambassador in Venezuela for a time, who was also a Republican businessman. Middendorf

himself also spent a lot of time with his own business, which was art. He was an avid art collector, and his office was very often full of quite priceless art. I think he was interested in what he was doing, but he had a lot of other interests, too.

Anyway, I did have one interesting assignment that got me out of Washington. I went to Cartagena, Colombia as advance person for a meeting of OAS ministers there. I had never been to that part of the world. The airport near Cartagena was blocked by an air crash, so I and a colleague took a local bus by night from Barranquilla, in and around narcoguerrilla country. There were numerous unofficial road blocks and I have to say that I fingered my diplomatic passport quite nervously! But shortly afterwards, I engineered a transfer, partly on the strength of the fact that my job as Mission Coordinator was put on the short list. If you recall, there was a reclassification of jobs about that time. This would have been in 1985-86. The mission coordinator, rightly I think, was taken off the books. So I then occupied another job within the mission temporarily. So then I was able to get into the Board of Examiners, which is a traditional breaking-off point.

Q: It's a good place. It's interesting.

HARTLEY: I found it actually in some ways one of the more interesting assignments I have had. Very interesting to see the process of how people get.

Q: Before we leave the OAS, though, did you get any feel about pressure on the OAS? Did you get a feel for the political tides that were going say from Congress, particularly from Jesse Helms, a right wing senator from North Carolina, or from the White House, which was the Reagan period. And any feeling about how these personalities were directing our Central American policy?

HARTLEY: Well, I think there were certainly pressures, but I think they tended to be indirect. For example, one of Helms' senior staffers - he was on the Foreign Relations Committee, but he was not of course the chairman at that time. He had a staff member, a woman - Debra Moss. She was originally Greek and her name had been changed. She would go around surreptitiously talking to very right wing people wherever she was, without telling the embassy about it. I remember getting a call during...this would have been the OAS meeting in Brazil. I got a call from Alec Watson, who was the DCM there at the time, who said this woman was sneaking around, talking to people on the extreme right, and, were we aware of this and, could we please make sure that this was stopped. I think Bob Sayre was with us temporarily at the time. So between us I guess we called up someone on the Foreign Relations staff and mentioned this and she stopped. Middendorf actually had a lot of very good friends on the Hill, not just right wing Republicans. He was in touch with other people. I think his bark was worse than his bite when it came to really sort of proselytizing right wing ideas. I think he looked upon himself as a kind of buffer between us and Helms. But it's hard for me to say what role he played. He was pretty remote.

JOHN J. CROWLEY, JR.

**Deputy Chief of Mission, OAS
Washington, DC (1984-1986)**

Ambassador John J. Crowley, Jr. was born in New Mexico on February 10, 1928. Mr. Crowley received his BA from the University of West Virginia in 1949 and his MA from Columbia University in 1950. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1948. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Venezuela, Peru, Belgium, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Suriname. Ambassador Crowley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 27, 1989.

Q: Moving to your last assignment, you were a deputy US representative to the OAS in 1984 to '86. What were you doing?

CROWLEY: Well, I suppose, Stuart, you could say that was my last DCM shot. I may have set some kind of record, because I was a DCM in four different jobs and I worked for eight different ambassadors. And, as somebody said to me, "You're lucky none of the eight ever kicked you out," because it's a fairly common occurrence. [Laughter] So I guess I must have been doing something right.

By the time I got to this job, the OAS had been in decline for some time, decline simply because the members had decided that there were better channels to use. The ones who didn't like certain things about the OAS would take their cases to the U.N., or people wouldn't take anything to it. I must say, frankly, some of my first meetings at the Permanent Council were rather discouraging. We would discuss what should be the pension of a retiring gardener. [Laughter] This is the council representing ministers, you know, at ambassadorial level.

Then the previous Secretary General, who had just left, Alejandro Orfila, had brought some, perhaps unfavorable publicity to the OAS because of his flamboyant lifestyle and the fact that when he left, he had already been working for Gray and Company, the public relations firm, had received several thousand dollars prior to his departure that he hadn't told anybody about and the fact that he fired his secretary, as it turned out later, so that she could receive the benefits of severance rather than having her quit, and then he immediately hired her over at Gray. So there were little, you know, minor scandals going on.

But it was rather disappointing in that nobody seemed to use it for, you know, substantive reasons--now, fortunately, there's been an opportunity in Central America for it to have a bit more of a role, and they were in, as you know, on the cease-fire between the Contras and the Sandinistas. And now there's this mission which--I wish them luck--they're trying to talk General Torrijos into stepping down. If they do that, I think--

Q: You mean Noriega?

CROWLEY: I'm sorry, Noriega. Excuse me. It'll be quite a feather in their cap, and it could help to raise their stock, and then maybe the countries, the members, will take another look at it and say, "We can do some effective things here after all."

Q: Well, Jack, it's been a long interview. There are sort of two questions that we usually ask. Looking back on your career, what gave you the greatest satisfaction, would you say?

CROWLEY: Well, I suppose it's not any great accomplishment in foreign affairs, but the fact that, as a young, fairly inexperienced officer in Ecuador, I was suddenly put in charge of one of the 20 largest missions in the world and managed to run it for 11 months without causing any disasters. [Laughter] I think probably I look back on that as one of the things to be proud of.

Q: The last one is if a young--and I imagine they do--a young person comes to you, man or woman, and says, "You know, I'm interested in the Foreign Service as a career," how do you advise them?

CROWLEY: The Foreign Service, of course, is a lot different now, Stuart, as you know. I came in at age 24. I know others, for example, Ted Briggs, Ellis Briggs' son, came in very young. He was only 22. I mean, we had never done anything else, almost fresh out of school, right into the Foreign Service.

If you look now at the average age and education of people who are coming in, they're well up into their '30s, and many have Ph.D.s. It's a different mind-set also. It's a group of people--I don't want to cast any aspersions on them--but I suspect they're not as amenable to, let's say, to the kind of discipline and the kind of spirit that we used to try to instill in the younger officers. They've been around more, they are more sophisticated, and they think more for themselves and so on. So I would have to ask this person if this is the kind of group they would feel comfortable with, dealing with a lot of people who are maybe former assistant professors of international relations or whatever and instead of the kind of younger, more generally educated, less specialized, less experienced kind of group.

Also, one would have to point out, although it would probably be unnecessary, that service abroad is a lot more dangerous now than it used to be. When I first came in, I never, never conceived that I would be the target of anybody--I mean, after all, I had "diplomatic immunity!" They weren't going to shoot at me. This is, of course, totally different now. That's something else to be considered.

And, of course, one has to think about the attitude of the spouse or the future spouse, and I think that people should sit down very carefully with their wives or husbands and say, "This is what the Foreign Service is going to entail, and these may be the limitations on your or my career." Even if you have a tandem couple, I don't think they've still solved the problem of what happens when one of them is eligible to be DCM, because the other one cannot work as a subordinate.

So there are these problems that didn't exist in my time. But, on the other hand, I would say that if you're interested in foreign affairs and you like languages and you want to be out in the thick of it, I would say, "Go for it."

RICHARD T. MCCORMACK
Ambassador, OAS
Washington, DC (1985-1989)

After attending Georgetown University, Mr. Richard T. McCormack assumed a multitude of administrative roles for the Nixon Administration in addition to serving under Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania and Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Mr. McCormack's career also included positions as the US Ambassador to the Organization of American States as well as Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. Ambassador McCormack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: Well I think this is probably a good place to stop. We have covered the assistant secretaryship essentially from '81 until '85. Then in '85 what happened?

MCCORMACK: Then, I became the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS).

Q: How did you happen to be made the OAS Ambassador?

MCCORMACK: Shortly before the 1984 elections, Joseph Kraft, a well-connected columnist for The Washington Post, ran with a column that stated that Secretary Shultz intended to dismiss all of the existing Assistant Secretaries: Chet Crocker in Africa, Rick Burt in Europe, and so on down the list, including me, and that we would be replaced mainly by senior foreign service officers. All of us Assistant Secretaries, of course, carried scar tissue from various internal battles during the past several years. However, the White House was distressed at the prospect of losing people they trusted in the middle of a worldwide confrontation with the Soviet Union.

I received a call that day from a senior White House official on an open line, who said that the President was extremely disturbed, and that serious consideration was being given to naming another person to be Secretary of State. He suggested that I take a little vacation to get out of the way while the elephants fought.

Earlier I had heard rumors that my telephone and many others in the Department were being monitored internally. The White House call, which was not made on a secure line may have, thus alerted the 7th floor to an impending potential debacle. Before I could leave that morning for vacation, I received an urgent call to see the Secretary. He suggested that the Kraft article was exaggerated, and that he had in mind a senior ambassadorship for me.

In the weeks that followed, Mrs. Reagan organized a dinner for Secretary Shultz, the President, Paul Laxalt, and several others to come to some understanding about future personnel policy at the State Department. In the end, Secretary Shultz was allowed to keep his position, but was forced to fire his Deputy Ken Dam and others, who were widely disliked and distrusted in the White House. John Whitehead, the distinguished and able former head of Goldman Sachs was brought in as Dam's replacement.

I became the OAS Ambassador. Efforts were also made to encourage Alan Wallace to take an embassy, but he refused to go, and remained in the Department for another four years. It turned out to be a good thing that this transition happened as it did. Shultz subsequently played an important role in the end game of the Cold War, allowing face saving moves by the Soviet leadership as it was crumbling. After several years, I was happy to get out of the line of fire in the Economics Bureau, the strain from which was beginning to cause me some health concerns. Other appointments were made which reassured the President that his interests and policy objectives would be safeguarded.

The covert telephone monitoring system, which apparently was a long-standing practice in the State Department, continued. Eventually, it triggered an invasion of privacy lawsuit by a number of former State Department employees at the beginning of the Clinton administration.

Q: And you were OAS Ambassador from when to when?

McCORMACK: From 1985 to 1989.

Q: Today is March 31, 2003. What at that time was the position of Ambassador to the Organization of American States?

McCORMACK: The OAS ambassadorship is a job that allows you to have direct contact with all the countries in the Western Hemisphere and to address multilateral issues that are of mutual concern to all members. Of course, the key bilateral policy position in the Latin American region is essentially the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. The OAS Ambassador is generally an implementer of policy rather than a maker of policy. It is a job, however, that allows you to be a troubleshooter when things go off the rails, which they did in some cases while I was there. It also gives you an opportunity to sit at the policy table and offer your own thoughts and suggestions on what might be done about the problems that exist in the region.

The multilateral problems that existed in the hemisphere had to do with the Latin American debt crisis, the drug issues, and the various trade issues. Of course we also had raging conflicts in Central America.

The OAS job has periods of intense activity and then months of low-level activity. Between the times of tremendous activity, you can find yourself frustrated and underemployed. So early on I had a discussion with the Secretary of State. I asked him for complete access to all of the intelligence information worldwide that was coming into INR (Intelligence and Research Bureau) every day, except for the very restricted material that went to him alone. This was granted. He said, "You will then be able to explain to the Latin Americans what is happening all over the world so they will understand our policies."

A second advantage of the arrangement was that it enabled me to spend time every day with the INR personnel and reports, watching what was happening all over the world, looking at material that most other senior people didn't have the time to review. So I spent an hour or more with

INR almost every day when I was in Washington for four years. The first young man from INR that I worked with wondered aloud why I was doing all this. I asked his boss for a replacement, and I got Jim Buchanan, one of the ablest people in the Bureau. Jim discovered that the dialogue that would flow from discussing the material was useful to him and the Department. Once every couple of weeks or so, I would send a classified memorandum up to the Secretary of State, commenting on what I was observing from the classified material. It went out of channels through Charlie Hill. Through these interactions, Secretary Shultz and I drew closer together.

Q: Secretary George Shultz.

McCORMACK: This went on for four years. It also had the tremendous advantage of educating me in the most extraordinarily valuable way about what was happening all over the world. My own intellectual capital increased enormously during those four years. I was the very first one inside the American government who drew the conclusions that there was going to be a huge crash in Japanese financial markets. That was just one of many valuable insights that came from assembling the little bits and pieces of the daily reports into a useful mosaic.

The most important thing that happens at the OAS every year centers around the OAS General Assembly where foreign ministers gather to consider the broad issues facing the region and make decisions. Before I attended my first General Assembly, I asked all the former U.S. OAS Ambassadors to get together with me regularly for lunch to draw on their experiences. This exercise was extremely valuable. I had particularly useful discussions with former OAS Ambassador John Jova. I also asked him to travel with me to Mexico and Central America, where he had also served as ambassador, to introduce me to his friends and to build relationships that would support my work in the OAS. He agreed to do this. So we flew to Mexico, and Ambassador Gavin, who was then Ambassador to Mexico, gave us a very large dinner. Ambassador Jova was loved in Latin America. He was a man of immense intelligence, absolute integrity, and incredible charm. His wife Polly was just like him. As a consequence of that visit and other things, the Mexican government decided that Mexico and the U.S. would try to work together in the OAS and not fight all the time.

Q: Well traditionally, it has been Mexico versus the U.S. almost.

McCORMACK: Yes, but I learned after the fact that the Mexican Ambassador had been instructed after these visits, never to vote against the United States without prior approval by the government of Mexico. His colleagues later told me that the frustration that this ambassador felt over these instructions was indescribable, although he was a very nice man. I did not know, of course, until much later that this restrictive instruction had been imposed upon him.

I learned in this OAS period that it is absolutely possible to make multilateral diplomacy work. Jova's advice to me was worth its weight in gold. He basically said, "Every country in the OAS has only one vote. The main currency that you have for influencing other countries is personal friendship. So try to take due consideration of the interests of others and be their friend." That is exactly what I did. Every time I had an opportunity to be helpful to one of my ambassadors or to his country, I took that occasion. Because I previously had the economic portfolio in the Department, I was aware of many issues and had wide contacts. So for example, when Haiti was

having difficulty with a pesticide registration problem threatening its mango exports to the United States, I arranged for a year's grace to be given to them so that those exports would not be disrupted while they developed substitute products to spray on their mangoes. Little things like that, which had significant importance for those governments. Also I tried to treat each of these people with the same kind of respect that I myself would have liked if I were representing a small country. I built many personal friendships, which have lasted for years in some cases.

Q: Well did you have problems let's say with the bureaucracy in the State Department, which sometimes tends to treat these governments as being minor impediments to the pursuit of our foreign policy. How did you find dealing with this?

McCORMACK: I did not have an easy working relationship with Elliot Abrams. I bore no ill will toward the man, but he was a very combative and ambitious person. He had many good qualities, and he meant well, but at that time he tended to alienate people with whom he had occasional disagreements. We did not have a warm relationship. That, I am told, is not unusual with regard to the Assistant Secretary and the OAS Ambassador who after all sit in the same corridor in the State Department. He also knew that I had friends and connections all through our decision-making system from my 25 years of past involvement. I had the ability to contact the National Security Advisor and the President's other top advisors, not to mention many senators. Nevertheless, when you got down to the next levels of the system, bureaucracy, per se, doesn't exist. What exists are individuals working in a system. You very quickly find out who you could share ideas with and who you really couldn't.

Secondly, when I was appointed to be the Ambassador to the Organization of American States, I had some Spanish language ability. During college, I had once served as a summer volunteer among Mexican migrant workers in the Southwest, and I had previously studied Spanish for four years. I also knew, however, I didn't have the kind of detailed knowledge of Latin America that I needed. I also knew that because I came from a political background, there were those in the Department who viewed me as an interloper. So I approached Bob Sayre, who had been the career Ambassador to four major Latin American countries and had just retired. He had just led the inspection of my Economics Bureau as his last assignment in the Department. This inspection was totally constructive, and I developed a high respect for the man. So I called him one day and asked if he was really ready to retire. He said, "No, by God, I am not." So I said, "Listen, Bob, why don't you become a consultant to me personally, sit in the office next to me, and you and I will work on this portfolio together." I said, "I am an analyst, and I know there will be times when I will come up with proposals that you will be able to market more successfully with your career colleagues than I will."

By the same token, I said, "I need the detailed knowledge on people and countries that you have as a former ambassador in the region. I think we can make a strong team. Come and serve with me for a year. And then I will do my utmost to have you placed in a senior position in the OAS structure." He agreed, and we spent valuable time together. We not only became colleagues, but also friends. We worked together on many issues. Then one year later I arranged for him to become the Assistant OAS Secretary General for Management. He remained for years in that position and did a wonderful job. I considered this relationship as an ideal partnership in terms of how a political appointee can identify a highly competent person from the career system, work

together, pool the strengths that they each have to advance U.S. interests. Our system operates at its best when this happens.

Q: How about your staff? Who was your DCM and others?

McCORMACK: Bill Price was the DCM, and he later became our Ambassador to Honduras. After retirement, he was named the Washington Director of the Council of the Americas. Initially, Bill felt constricted because Bob Sayre was also there. But he learned to live with this situation, and after Bob went to the OAS, Bill did a very good job for as DCM. There were, of course, career people on my staff who had been there for a long time. I also drew on people such as John Ford, a long-term former career OAS official. I developed a friendship with John Whitehead, the Deputy Secretary of State and the former head of Goldman Sachs, who was deeply into economics. John is a wonderful gentleman, a person of absolute integrity. He served as a kind of unofficial referee between Elliott Abrams and myself to keep the game straight. He made sure that we were constructively engaged.

Q: This is tape six, side one with Richard McCormack.

McCORMACK: It was important for me was to work well with the new Secretary General of the OAS, whose name was Baena Soares. He was a member of the Brazilian foreign service and was anxious to act as an independent figure, not under the influence of the U.S.

Q: What I would like to do is go around, and hit the major countries and the people they had there, and how they operated, and how you operated with them. Then we will come to the issues.

McCORMACK: All right. Bear in mind this was 15 years ago, so I will not have the name of every ambassador at the tip of my tongue.

Q: No, but sort of their approach and how you found them.

McCORMACK: The Organization broke up into blocks. The group of eight comprised the major countries of Latin America. They tended to have closed meetings before the General Assembly to coordinate their positions.

Q: These countries were...

McCORMACK: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, and Columbia. That was the group of eight. They were the big ones. After coordinating certain issues, they would present us with a unified position. Then there were the Central American countries, and they also tended to operate as a bloc as did the Caribbean countries. I tried to make it my business to visit every country in the OAS every year if I could to see their people and leaders. I spent a lot of time in the Caribbean. Each country, large or small, has one vote, as Jova noted.

Q: Was Canada a member at that time?

McCORMACK: No. I traveled around these countries, getting to know their problems, being their friend, and assisting them in Washington to the degree that I could. Because we had a very popular Caribbean Basin Initiative program underway, we had strong support with the English-speaking Caribbean countries. I also had personal ties in that region, going back many years, and I used those connections to build bridges to people I didn't know. In Central America, there was a war underway. We often had the support of the Central American countries. At the OAS General Assemblies, the group of eight would try to steamroller the thing and get resolutions passed that we didn't always agree with. I tried to build a competing process so this would not happen. That required considerable effort. John Jova's earlier powerful advice proved to be sound.

There was a case during the 1986 OAS General Assembly in Cartagena, Colombia, where a resolution attacking U.S. economic sanctions against Nicaragua was passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations 94 to 4, and three weeks later it was re-introduced in Cartagena. It was reintroduced by the beautiful and legendary Vice Minister Nora Astorga, who represented the Sandinista government. She was an extremely effective diplomat. That key resolution, however, was defeated 15 to 16. Some of the foreign ministers who voted against the United States in New York voted for us in Colombia. Of course, the results of this vote shocked my colleagues in New York who wondered how this could happen. But it was simply a classical exercise of diplomatic skills where you did some logrolling and a little maneuvering here and there. I was later given the superior honor award for outstanding sustained performance for my OAS service.

You can make multilateral diplomacy succeed if in fact you employ appropriate methodologies and if you avoid embarrassing people. I never held press conferences after successful votes like that. We just quietly pocketed the victory and went on to our other business. You want to make it easy for countries to go along with you. There are people who are involved briefly in high profile public service who want to make a national reputation for themselves and are not above a little demagoguery. This is not the way to get the job done in multilateral diplomacy.

Q: There is usually someone who has to clean up after them.

McCORMACK: Then they depart and sometimes cash in on the publicity they have generated for themselves. Because I had intended from the very beginning of my career to be a long-term player in our system, I never had the slightest interest in press attention. I basically wanted to make useful contributions to our foreign policy over a very long period of time. So when you don't give a damn about credit and newspaper publicity, this makes it much easier for you to quietly get important things done.

Q: While you were dealing on issues, did you have any coins to use? I am not talking about money, but logrolling sort of thing. Can you give some examples?

McCORMACK: Yes, I can. At that time, one of the most influential career diplomats in Barbados was a wonderful man, Peter Lorie. He had made a commitment that he would support the United Nations resolution against us on the Nicaraguan sanctions issue. He was of English extraction. His boss, the foreign minister, was also a very intelligent man, and of African

extraction. I noted to his boss that “if we make it impossible to use economic sanctions against the government in Nicaragua, we will never be able to use them against a country such as South Africa, should we want to press them at some point to abandon their apartheid system. Surely you would not want to be party to a process that would restrict the international community’s ability to put sanctions on places like that.” He promptly reversed the vote. Lorie was so mortified that he got on the next plane and returned to Barbados. When Barbados went for us, the whole rest of the Caribbean joined them, none of whom had much sympathy for communist revolutionaries anyway.

Bolivia and Chile had a territorial dispute, and I began to hint that maybe we would review our long standing neutrality on that issue. This brought the Chileans around. When the Bolivians realized that I was considering tilting on behalf of Chile, they also supported us. So we got two votes on that account. In the case of Haiti, I just mentioned to the foreign minister how pleased I was to help out with their mango exports to the United States, and that as a personal favor, I would be enormously grateful if he could support me on this. He said he would.

The people you sit next to at the General Assemblies are determined by the luck of the draw. At this three-day meeting, I was seated next to Nora Astorga, the Vice Foreign Minister of the Sandinista government. I had known Nora for years before I came into government. I had traveled to Nicaragua and had met her and her Sandinista colleagues. I had talked with her at some length. Frankly, I always liked Nora. However, she was supposedly involved in killing a Somoza general by luring him to her apartment. She was a typical upper middle class radical who was disaffected with the earlier authoritarian political system and went too far. So we sat there chatting amicably for two or three days. It was very clear to all that I was not some U.S. gringo bully, beating up on this little lady. In fact the picture of us in the newspaper in Colombia was subtitled “The friendly enemies.” That improved the atmosphere there.

Q: Very definitely rather than sitting there grim faced.

McCORMACK: Nora was shocked at the vote on the sanctions resolution when it came. I had done all of my work quietly, myself. I didn’t even talk to my staff about some of my bilateral chats. I just quietly circulated and persuaded first one colleague, then another. When the vote was announced, 16 to 15, she looked at me and said, “My God. This is a strange organization.”

When the Sandinistas first took power, I was working with Senator Helms. Some prominent people from his state called to say that the Sandinistas were not as bad as some press accounts suggested. They and their friends were having a meeting in Costa Rica with the Sandinistas, and invited the Senator to join them. The call was diverted to me. So I went to the Senator and said, “These are influential people in your state, Senator, and I believe they are being misled by the communists.” I said, “I don’t think you should go to Costa Rica and meet with the Sandinista foreign minister and others, but I think I probably should go, just to get a sense of what is going on.” Later, I flew to Nicaragua and met some of the other Sandinista leaders. Several other meetings followed. The message I eventually delivered to them was this: “We didn’t particularly like Mr. Tito, former head of Yugoslavia, but we got along reasonably well with him because, while we were not enthusiastic about his economic system, he wasn’t bothering his neighbors. If you don’t bother your neighbors, we probably won’t bother you. But if you start violating human

rights and exporting revolution to your neighbors, we will go after you. You need to understand that.” Well Borge, Ortega, and Astorga, and all those people assured me that they were not going to export their revolution, and would maintain an acceptable minimum of human rights, etc. Of course they subsequently violated these pledges.

By the most extraordinary coincidence, the day in 1985 when the announcement was made that I was going to be the OAS Ambassador, another friend, the daughter of a former Prime Minister of Honduras, Elizabeth Zuniga, was actually meeting with the Sandinistas when the news came in. She reported to me that the Sandinistas actually put their hands to their heads and said, “No, no, not McCormack. Now we can never use the OAS.”

We were also blessed in Washington by the fact the OAS Sandinista Ambassador, Father Perales, was not a very skillful diplomat. At one time, he decided he would remove the statue of a great historic Nicaraguan hero from the OAS and replace it with one of Sandino, a leader in a 1930’s conflict. Every country has its own statue of their hero in the Great Hall of the OAS building. He organized a huge ceremony to which he invited hundreds of press and diplomats to unveil a magnificent new statue of Sandino. I wrote him a letter saying I would not come to that event because I said, “Mr. Sandino was an authentic patriot. He was also an anti-communist. You basically have stolen the name and the reputation of a decent man and misused it for your communist revolution. I will not be a party to this sham.” To my astonishment during the subsequent ceremony, where I was not present, the Nicaraguan Ambassador made his speech, and then he whipped out my letter and said, “Now I want to tell you about the supreme insult that the people of Nicaragua have just received,” and he read my entire letter and passed out copies to the press. This letter, of course, was prominently featured in the press accounts throughout the hemisphere. He was promptly withdrawn as ambassador after he had become the laughing stock of the Washington diplomatic community. The Sandinistas replaced him with an abler man, Mr. Tunnerman, a former Sandinista foreign minister, and the diplomatic struggle continued.

Q: How did you find the staffing of the various embassies of the OAS? Did the people in the Western Hemisphere treat this position seriously or was this a place where you might put someone who might lead a coup against you or somebody’s nephew?

McCORMACK: The OAS is more important to the Latin Americans than it is to the U.S. in many ways. Through this organization, they can avoid being faced individually against the powerful U.S. It is their means of confronting the gringos if necessary with a united front. So as a general rule, they send capable people there. Secondly there was absolutely no correlation between the size of the country and the quality of the ambassador. Some of the ablest people in the OAS were from some of the smallest countries. Barbados, for example, always sent able people to the OAS. I had closer relationships with some than with others, but I liked all of those ambassadors and enjoyed their company. At one point, I arranged for USIA to sponsor a trip around the United States for the OAS ambassadors. So we went to Philadelphia, New Orleans, the Mennonite country in Indiana, the Chicago steel mills, the Boeing aircraft factory in Seattle, and finally to San Francisco. I did that to create a bond with my colleagues. It was a very great success and deepened the friendships between all of us.

Q: Did the ambassadors to the OAS have connections to our Congress? How did they work with the bilateral embassies in Washington?

McCORMACK: They were always a little cautious about treading on the turf of the bilateral embassies. There was no visible tension that I could see. Everybody understood the rules of the game. There is one set of multilateral functions at the OAS and another set of functions that are done by their embassies. I think it was considered a more prestigious appointment to be the bilateral ambassador than to be the OAS ambassador. Sometimes, though, the ambassador would have two hats. Ambassador Tunnerman, for example, was both the ambassador to the OAS and the bilateral ambassador to Washington from Nicaragua.

Q: On the other side of the coin, when you had an issue coming up, how did you work with our embassies to get them to support you?

McCORMACK: The Department sent demarches to other governments, of course, on our views of the issues in the forthcoming OAS General Assembly. The ambassadors would go in and talk to foreign ministers. Sometimes I did this myself. We had wonderful cooperation with the embassies abroad and worked as a team. That is also how our mission to the United Nations works at its best. All these ambassadors are instructed agents. Mostly, however, ambassadors are given a certain amount of flexibility to decide on tactical issues. On high profile issues, though, the foreign ministers decided policy in the capitals. That is why I made it my business to travel to see those foreign ministers regularly.

Dwight Ink, then head of the AID section for Latin America in the State Department also traveled with me from time to time. He would sign large checks for major AID projects, and I would sit beside him at the table while the checks were signed and the flash bulbs of the press recorded the events. Dwight was a personal friend, a man of immense experience and integrity, a former OMB senior official, and a very patriotic and team-oriented man. Dwight Ink's collaboration put the thought in the minds of some that maybe my goodwill or lack thereof might have something to do with aid packages. Sometime it did, in fact. Dwight was happy to support this effort.

Q: There is always a Western Hemisphere person in the National Security Council. This was a National Security Council with a certain amount of turmoil in this period, and we will come to that. But I mean the basic, how did you relate to that?

McCORMACK: I did not have as much regular contact with the National Security Council people when I was the OAS Ambassador as I did when I was the Assistant Secretary for Economics. There were reasons for this. I had a different role, a different mission. There was also a different cast of characters at the National Security Council. I went out of my way to keep a low profile. I realized that there was a certain amount of nervousness in the Department about the fact that I did have easy access to the upper levels of the White House decision-making system. It made some people nervous. So I decided in the interest of good relations with my colleagues and the Secretary of State to minimize that.

I did have a very close friend of 20 years, whom I mentioned in an earlier interview, Bromley K. Smith, the previous long-time Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, who had been kept on as an advisor. I consulted Bromley regularly, but he was not really in the line channel. Bromley was sort of a semi-retired statesman who provided support to any official who wanted to come and consult him. He had a nice office in the EOB. So I did visit him regularly, but that was as much in the nature of personal friendship as it was policy. I never failed to get good advice from Bromley whenever I needed it. Bromley was originally sent over from the State Department by Dean Acheson when the NSC was organized in 1948. A wise man indeed, and a patriot.

Q: Well, Senator Helms during this time was considered, if he had any specialty, it was Latin America. How did that play with you?

McCORMACK: I had a good personal relationship with the Senator from the time that I served on his staff. But he and his staff were aware of the tension that existed between the Senator and the Secretary of State, and between the Senator's staff and the Secretary of State's staff on some of these issues. We both went out of our way to avoid my getting in the middle of that. There were some young Hill staffers who threw their weight around a bit and felt very strongly about some issues. I did not engage with them. I had a good relationship with the Senator, which I valued. But as I mentioned previously, in all the years that I served in the Department, Senator Helms only called me twice for favors, twice. The Senator told his staff that I was an honest person who was trying to do what I thought was right for the country. He tried his best to avoid becoming a problem for me with the Department.

Q: I can't think of her name, but there was a woman on his staff. Could you talk about her, because she had very strong ties to Central America. What was her name? I can't remember.

McCORMACK: I think it was Debra DeMoss. She was hired on the Senator's staff at the time I was leaving. She was a charming and very wealthy young woman from a family that had been close to the Senator for a very long time. She was a likeable person from my point of view. But like all young people from privileged backgrounds with strong views and close to a powerful Senator, she was in a position to push hard for the things that she believed in. The world is a very complicated place. If you don't have the ability to put things in context, sometimes you can see a little slice of reality but not the whole picture.

My experience with the Helms' operation taught me the following: Sometimes they were absolutely right, and everybody else was wrong. That must be said. When they were wrong, however, they usually lost the cause. I have always liked Debra DeMoss. She is now married to a nice gentleman in Honduras. She did not get me engaged in the controversial issues that she was involved in, nor did any of the other staff members, at the direction of the Senator.

The staff member whom I had the closest relationship with was Clint Fuller, the Senator's top aide, an honest person with balanced views on most issues and no personal agenda but to serve his boss well. He was a former award-winning journalist from North Carolina. I liked him immensely. Admiral Nance was also a good and valued friend.

Q: Speaking of countries, how were things going in Chile when you were there? How did they reverberate within the OAS?

McCORMACK: Of course this was towards the end of the Pinochet era. Most Republicans I knew were happy that Salvador Allende had not been successful with his revolution. This was the time, you will recall, when there were Marxist revolutions going on in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. Most of the Republican foreign policy people that I knew preferred someone like Mr. Pinochet to Castro. I don't think they were wrong. However, toward the end of the period when I was in government, Pinochet lost an election and a new government came in. It took advantage of the sound economic philosophy that the Chilean government had adopted with the help of a number of people from the University of Chicago, with an open trading system and a sophisticated macro-economic policy. The only economic mistake they made at one point was pegging their currency to the dollar for much longer than they should have. This damaged their exports. But once they abandoned that mistake, Chile's economy soared. I tried to suggest to my other colleagues in Latin America to observe the economic results of what was happening in Chile. Chile proved that you can have economic growth and stability. It is shameful I said that it takes an authoritarian government to do these things. It is embarrassing to democracy that the rest cannot. More countries needed to learn the good lessons that these economic results demonstrate.

Later, when the Chilean government changed, I said to the new incoming President, "If you come into office and take an economy that was functioning well under Pinochet, and you mess it up, the lesson all over the hemisphere will be that democracy doesn't work. What works is authoritarianism. You have an enormous responsibility on your shoulders to make it a success. That doesn't mean to say that you need to keep every policy the same as it is now or that there can't be further efforts to deal with some of the poor in your country, but you have to make sure that your macroeconomic policy stays sound and your economy remains open. Otherwise, you will be discrediting not only yourself, but democracy itself."

He absolutely agreed with me. He went ahead and carried out an orderly succession. To this day, Chile is one of the great performers in Latin America.

I basically tried to be protective of Chile during the time when they were under assault from various other places. I was happy to see them moving gradually toward a more democratic system. At a time when we were fighting communism in Central America, I was glad that we didn't have another communist insurgency in the southern cone.

Q: Did Chile have much weight within the OAS?

McCORMACK: Yes, Chile had a very intelligent man in Ambassador Illanes. He was influential because he was able and because he was an exceptionally nice person. He was not at all ostracized. In fact, the OAS non-intervention clause in the charter at the time mandated non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. The charter is now changed to support democracy. In those days, we always spoke on behalf of democracy, but the OAS felt that countries themselves should be able to decide their own governments. You will recall at that time there were also authoritarian governments in Brazil and Argentina after a time of turmoil. This

was a time of tremendous transition in the region. By the time I left my job in the OAS, Chile and Nicaragua were the only countries that weren't democracies. Cuba was not active in the OAS.

Q: Jean Kirkpatrick had sort of gained her political reputation by singling out, as I recall, correct me, singling out Latin America and saying actually we can do business better with these right-wing dictators than we can with leftists.

McCORMACK: I think her view was much more subtle.

Q: Yes, but could you talk about Jean Kirkpatrick and Latin America during the time you were at the OAS.

McCORMACK: We didn't come together because she had resigned as the United Nations Ambassador in December of 1984, and I became the OAS Ambassador in 1985, so we had no overlap. She was there during the time of the Falklands War when I was working in the Economic and Business Bureau of the State Department. She was in favor of supporting Argentina as opposed to supporting England in that conflict. Of course, Secretary of State Haig was not in sympathy with that point of view since we were dealing with our most important NATO ally.

Q: She wasn't then a presence during the time you were there?

McCORMACK: I never had any direct interaction with her in the time that I was in the government. We both agreed, however, that if you had to choose between a communist totalitarian government and an authoritarian government, it was better to have an authoritarian government. She is, of course, a tremendous supporter of democracy. But anarchy and insurgencies sometimes happen. If you had to choose between an authoritarian system, which is likely ultimately to morph into a democratic system, or a totalitarian communist system like Castro's, which once imbedded stays forever, it was clear to her, and it was clear to me that a friendly authoritarian government was more in the interest of the United States than an unfriendly communist government. The latter government is also likely to be far more ruthless, far more unpleasant, far more likely to spread their toxic virus, and far less likely to create prosperity.

Q: What were the major issues you were dealing with during this 1985 to 1989 period?

McCORMACK: One objective was getting multilateral support for the conflict in Central America so that we were not isolated. A second objective was to secure economic reforms, and in that context I was elected as the Chairman of Economic Operations for the OAS, the only American Ambassador to ever be elected in that capacity. President Reagan sent me a very heartening letter of commendation after that election. We subsequently did a lot of work on economics. In fact we pulled together some thinking for a free trade zone for the region. I was, however, ordered by the Treasury Department to cease and desist. They felt this was not a mandate for the OAS. Two years later after I became Under Secretary of State for Economic

Affairs, the Treasury Department, after consulting with President Bush, went ahead and announced the very concept under the title “Enterprise for the Americas.”

As I traveled around to different countries, I tried to meet with the finance ministers, economic ministers, as well as foreign ministry types to talk about economic growth and what could be done to improve economic conditions. Earlier I traveled with people like Beryl Sprinkel, who was the Under Secretary of the Treasury and later became Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. One time Shultz invited me to join him in a trip all around Latin America meeting with leaders and talking about economic issues. In early 1986, I wrote a presentation on obstacles to investment and economic growth in Latin America. It contained all the elements of what was later called “The Washington Consensus.” I wrote it myself. It also touched upon some neuralgic policy issues that were still controversial in the Department. Alan Wallace received a copy of it and gave it to Secretary Shultz. The Secretary loved it and wrote me a letter saying what an effective speech it was. He asked that it get a wide distribution. It was published. Every single element of what later became known as “The Washington Consensus,” virtually without exception, was covered in that presentation (p. 175).

Q: While we are at it, what did you see at the time were the major obstacles to encouraging investment?

McCORMACK: The major obstacles were high macroeconomic risks and a poor investment climate. Sound macroeconomic and tax policies plus privatizations were advised. Otherwise investors will invest in other countries where they can make profits. It is a very competitive business. I listed what would be required to make Latin America economically competitive.

Q: It is still pertinent?

McCORMACK: It is still very pertinent. It was a generic approach to getting economic growth going again. I have subsequently given it to the Russians after Yeltsin took over. It was translated into Russian by our Embassy in Moscow and distributed. It has been distributed in French in parts of Francophone Africa. I gave it to President Kufuor of Ghana as he was thinking about running for the presidency of Ghana some years back. He took it and incorporated it into his campaign. Now inflation is way down in Ghana.

Q: Well let's talk about 1985 when you came in. What was the status of Central America and talk about how you viewed it and what you were doing.

McCORMACK: Problems in Central America began when Nicaraguan Sandinistas abused human rights and began killing and jailing people. Ortega and Borge also began looting the country with their colleagues. A disgruntled former Yugoslavian comrade of Tito, Milovan Djilas, wrote a wonderful book called *The New Class*, which described what happens when communist rulers come to power. The big houses of the rich men have new occupants. Mercedes cars are driven by other people: a new class. The Sandinistas became the new class. They started getting kickbacks on every imaginable business angle. That was not the worst part. The worst part was they began serving as a conduit of weapons to the communists, who were fighting in

Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. This is what brought the United States down on them hard.

Q: What was driving them do you think? I mean was this ideology?

McCORMACK: It was ideology. Remember the Brezhnev Doctrine about communism marching in only one direction? Remember the KGB? Remember Che Guevara in Bolivia? This ideology of spreading communism backed by a forceful KGB was a real and a grave threat. The world was different in those days. Our friends had lost in Southeast Asia and in Afghanistan. We had serious problems in Angola and elsewhere. Things were going badly for us in Ethiopia. At this time, you had this group of Central American communists who thought they were the wave of the future. They were given weapons, money, and assistance by the Soviets, from the KGB, and from Cubans who were the conduits. That was a strategy that went back to the 1920s. So we were anxious not to let that unfold without challenge in our hemisphere.

Of course the CIA was involved in this struggle, and there was some tension in the administration on overall strategy with regard to dealing with communist insurgencies. Central America was part of a larger effort that was being made to confront the Soviets anywhere they were supporting insurgencies, so there would be no more cheap victories for them.

Q: How was this battle fought during your time at the OAS?

McCORMACK: We would have periodic meetings of the OAS General Assembly where specific issues such as the economic sanctions issues against Nicaragua would be raised. Efforts to condemn our economic sanctions on Nicaragua were raised in resolutions every year. I always defeated them. The main battle in Central America was not fought by us in the OAS. The main battle was fought by other parts of the U.S. government. I was not on the Central American Strategy Committee, thank God. Some of the things planned there with Iran/Contra got them in serious legal trouble. I would have been happy to have been on the Committee, but Abrams kept me off.

Q: Well, as we began to build up the contras and sort of building up a backfire within Nicaragua, how was that playing within the OAS? What were you getting?

McCORMACK: Well bear in mind that the heavy lifting on that issue was done before I became OAS Ambassador. These were ongoing, up-and-running programs by the time I was there. There was a war going on. The question was, was it going to be successful or not? There were major propaganda operations underway. The OAS was one of the theaters for various propaganda efforts that were being made to either support or condemn the war. But the real work on the Central American issues was being done by the CIA and NSC. The only time I got involved was when I thought the State Department was about to make a mistake. Then, I would write a memo and send it to the Secretary of State. There were a few times when I did that and in fact prevailed.

Q: What sorts of things were these?

McCORMACK: One of the more contentious solutions to the Nicaragua conflict had to do with commitments of United States and others under the Rio Pact. Bob Sayre and I saw a few people privately and killed efforts to undermine it. I was also an old friend of Bill Casey, the CIA Director. From time to time, when I wanted to know what was happening, I would go over by myself and see him alone. There was never anyone else present except him and me. If I had something that I felt that I wanted the President to take note of, Bill would do that at his regular morning briefings. I didn't do it very often, only if I felt that something really needed to be brought to the attention of the President for action. When all else failed, this channel never failed.

Q: Did Oliver North ever cross your track?

McCORMACK: Briefly, but only very distantly. I earlier mentioned Bromley Smith. Bromley was the longest serving employee of the National Security Council. He served as Executive Secretary for Johnson and Kennedy and Deputy Executive Secretary for Eisenhower and Truman. Later he was brought back and became sort of a permanent advisor at the National Security Council.

One day I went over to see Bromley Smith during the Tower commission investigation, which was reviewing Iran Contra. Bromley looked strangely pale. I said, "What's wrong, Bromley?" He took the copy of the Tower Commission report, and he threw it across the desk. He said: "Have you seen this?" I said, "No." He said, "This is an advance copy of a report that is going to be issued tomorrow. These people have prostituted an institution to which I have given my entire life." He was referring to the Iran-Contra people he thought had abused the National Security Council process. "Now this Commission has compromised the whole concept of executive privilege, which I successfully defended for 40 years. "I am resigning today." He went home and died three days later. Mac Bundy and I were pallbearers at his funeral at the National Cathedral. Bromley had undergone a medical examination one week before this event, and he had been given a clean bill of health.

Q: What were they trying to do?

McCORMACK: Basically they broached the principal of executive privilege. That was the smaller issue. The main issue was his complete disgust at how people had misused the National Security Council structures. It literally killed him. Anyway he was a great and wonderful patriot. Subsequently, a magnificent tribute appeared in The Washington Post by Joe Layton. The headline read: "Bromley Smith, Confidant of Presidents."

I did not have anything to do with any of these Iran Contra events. Later when Bush Sr. became President, I was helped to rise higher in the system.

Q: What about Cuba? Was that much of an issue while you were there?

McCORMACK: No, it was not. We all knew Castro was a gross violator of human rights, and that he was serving as a conduit for guns and terrorism in the region. In fact there were some assassination attempts made against me when I was the OAS Ambassador.

Q: How would that be?

McCORMACK: Well, we had the General Assembly meeting in 1986 in Cartagena, Columbia. It was an extremely high threat environment. Drugs were a very hot issue on the agenda. The Secretary of State came down, spent a few dangerous hours, and then flew back to the United States along with 50 Secret Service men who were there to protect him. They left me with five or six U.S. security personnel. But the killers stayed, and they spent the next five days while I was there, trying to kill me. Fortunately, the Colombian secret service foiled two or three attempts. The failed hit team eventually went back and according to reports machine-gunned a busload of ordinary citizens outside of Bogotá. A year or so later a powerful bomb was hidden in a street lamp near the airport in La Paz, Bolivia. When our motorcade went by, they detonated it. It hit the car in front of me and blew it halfway across the road. Fortunately, the car in front was an armored limousine. Mrs. Shultz was in the armored limousine. Elliott Abrams, myself, and a couple of other people were in the next car, and it was not armored. Anyone in that car would have been turned into hamburger. We later suspected that they were after us and thought we were riding in the second car, which was where Mrs. Shultz was actually riding. They let the first car go by with Secretary Shultz and went after the second car.

Q: Did George Bush, I am speaking of George Bush senior, the vice president, did he get involved?

McCORMACK: Yes, he did. He was involved in a number of things behind the scenes. We would go occasionally to funerals and inaugurations together, so I got to know him in that process. He had a lot of interest in Latin American policy, and watched it closely. Don Gregg was his foreign policy advisor. Don and I were good friends, so I had a good friend and ally there. From time to time that was important. For example, at one time our relationship with Peru completely fell to pieces. President Alan Garcia, who was from Peru's populist APRA Party, was a very emotional man. Shortly after Garcia's election, he repudiated Peru's debt. He and George Shultz got into a private yelling match at the United Nations on this issue. Of course that was very unusual for Shultz, but it did happen. Naturally when the top dogs snarled at each other, this encouraged the little dogs in the system on both sides to bark too. The whole relationship imploded. It got to the point where our Ambassador in Lima, David Jordan, was not received except at the lower levels in the foreign ministry. The concern of Shultz was that the repudiation of debt would spread and the whole regional debt management process would become unstable.

To make a long story short, Peru's Ambassador in the OAS, Jorge Regada, was a former journalist. His friends had been tortured before his eyes by an earlier military regime in Peru, but he never allowed himself to become bitter by the dreadful things that he had seen and had been done to him. There was an element of nobility in this man's character that made him unusually influential. And of course he was a long-standing member of the APRA Party and a personal friend of Haya de la Torre, the party's legendary founder. Regada became troubled about the deterioration of the bilateral relationship, and asked, "Would you be willing to go with me to Peru to see if we can put this relationship back together?" So I sent a message to Shultz saying I had been invited to do this, and I recommended that I accept. This idea was opposed by Elliott Abrams, but the Secretary overruled him. I contacted the Secretary's office, and I asked for the Secretary's personal interpreter, Ms. Stephanie van Reigersberg, to be allowed to come with me.

Not only was she knowledgeable about Peru, but she was also extremely intelligent and a person of great integrity. I wanted a credible witness. I didn't have a very good relationship with my colleague Mr. Abrams, and I was concerned that he would be looking for opportunities to sabotage the mission or me. We traveled to Peru, and met with Alan Garcia. After spending hours listening to this man talk, I realized that he was a bit unstable at that time.

Q: Personally unstable?

McCORMACK: He was perhaps a little unstable, but I saw that he had some better qualities also. I told him that I wanted to get to know Peru a little better. So he had his friends from the APRA Party take me around. I made little speeches with my messages, which I knew would be carefully noted in Lima. At the end of the tour, we came back to Lima. Later, Alberto Sanchez, the Vice President of the country, gave a dinner for me as the final event of my visit. All the leadership of the APRA party was at the dinner --- 35 or 40 people. Sanchez was a very intelligent, 90-year old man, a blind poet. Halfway through the dinner, he suddenly stood up and said: "We have now spent five days with our friend Ambassador McCormack. There are some things that I think are now clear. The United States is not the same United States it was in the 1920s when our party was founded. It is now possible to disagree with the United States on a specific issue without becoming an enemy of the United States. Therefore, we are going to treat the United States as a friend with whom we have a disagreement rather than as an enemy. We are now going to improve our relationship with the United States." All of his colleagues applauded.

I reported this to our ambassador, David Jordan, who was delighted. The next day the Ambassador received a call from the foreign minister inviting him to visit. When I came back to Washington, I found a letter from Jordan. It was just one sentence. "Words cannot describe my gratitude. David Jordan." Peru then began negotiations again with the IMF. They were not easy negotiations, but at least we were talking. In the end, we didn't come to a complete agreement on all of our issues. We did, however, have a cooperative relationship with the Peruvians on most other issues. Vice President Bush sent a note to the Secretary of State saying how pleased he was that we were beginning to make progress in our difficult relationship with Peru. Of course, they sent a copy to me.

Now as it turned out, not everybody was happy about this, but they were basically told to shut up. Later, Shultz ordered that I be awarded the superior honor award for outstanding sustained performance as a consequence of this and other things. John Whitehead, the Deputy Secretary of State, told his staff: "Say what you will about McCormack, he gets the job done."

Q: You fasten on Elliott Abrams as being on a different tack than you. Often subordinates pick this up and start pecking away at what you are trying to do. Were you finding that sort of thing happening?

McCORMACK: One of his deputies was not very helpful, but most of the other people in the Latin American bureau were supportive. The mere fact that Bob Sayre was part of my operation told his former colleagues, who respected him, that we were running a highly professional operation. From time to time, John Whitehead and the Secretary would take a personal interest in our situation. That kept the pressure down.

Q: Well, the truth of the matter was that Elliott Abrams was not the most beloved person within the State Department. He himself didn't have strong depth of support.

McCORMACK: He was his own worst enemy at that time.

Q: Were there any other issues or incidents that you would like to talk about?

McCORMACK: No. We just went on with our agenda. I recruited former Senator Paula Hawkins to serve as my coordinator for the anti-drug program. She did a fine job within the inherent limits for dealing with the drug issue. This is a problem much like a chronic illness, which you can't cure but only manage. It is a problem of demand in the United States and supply in Latin America and elsewhere. There are many complex issues: interdiction, how much pressure you want to put on other governments, the cost, the dubious success of crop substitution programs, the corrupting poison the drug trade inflicts upon governments, the suffering, crime, and violence. We concluded that we were not going to solve the drug problem. We could, however, limit it. The first line of defense was American schools where we had to encourage anti-drug programs. But our approach was inherently unsatisfying because there was no real complete solution as far as I could see. It was just a question of limiting a huge, evil multinational enterprise, preying on children, destroying both lives and societies.

Q: Within the OAS, was there a view about drug trafficking?

McCORMACK: Everybody was opposed to it. I remember Ambassador Lemos from Colombia, who later became the Attorney General. One day he just broke down and wept in front of the other ambassadors at a closed meeting of our council over what was happening in his country. He was a very distinguished man who felt the total frustration of being unable to deal with the problem. I felt tremendous sympathy for this man and the many Columbian people like him. But as you know in Colombia, the drug people offered silver or lead. That was the choice, silver or lead. If you cooperated, you could get money; otherwise you could be given a bullet.

I talked to one Columbian who couldn't be corrupted. Then one day he was sent a picture in the mail of his daughter walking to grade school taken through a telescoped rifle with the cross hairs on her head. He resigned his job and left the country. That was the dilemma of the good people. There were thousands of good people like this. Drug criminals would exterminate whole families. They would even take the goldfish out of the bowl and squash the goldfish after they killed all the members of the family --- an odious business.

There is no easy solution. It is one that requires constant effort. Shultz at the end concluded that the only way was to legalize drugs to take the profits out of the business. I never went that far, but I realized there was no easy solution, only a long-term management problem. The menace had to be fought family by family by family.

The human rights issue was another complex challenge. I was able to persuade the former top State Department lawyer, Jack Stevenson, to become the head of the Human Rights Commission

in the OAS. He did a wonderful job in lifting up human rights all over the region. It was a pleasure dealing with this able and dedicated gentleman.

During the time that I was serving there, I could see that conditions were improving economically in Latin America, and we were making progress on policy reform.

Q: Also politically too. I mean this is really an extremely impressive period. These countries started basically with military governments, and one by one they were moving towards democratically elected governments.

McCORMACK: Yes, absolutely. It was very gratifying to watch that process move forward and to know that you had some small role as part of a much larger effort.

Q: The Caribbean islands, which were mainly English or a bit French and Dutch but not Latin American. How did they get along with the different Latin culture?

McCORMACK: Different culture and the historical antagonisms between the English-speaking Caribbean and the Spanish-speaking countries went back to the days of the buccaneers. They inherited some of this tension. One culture was Catholic, the other Protestant. I spent a lot of time visiting leaders in every island in the Caribbean, including Eugenia Charles of Dominica. When these good people needed something from the U.S. Government, they would often come to me. I would then act on their behalf.

I want to emphasize one key point. Shortly after I became OAS Ambassador, I said to my staff, "If we are to be successful in this mission, we need to imagine every day as we walk out of our offices that there is an invisible sign above our door: 'If we care about them, they will care about us. If we do this and heed our own advice, we will be successful.'" That remains the heart of any multilateral diplomacy that is going to be effective for the U.S. . We were largely successful in our mission because we did care about our colleagues and their countries. If the time comes when we forget this, we will be isolated in this world.

The first thing is to listen carefully to what others have to say to us. You would think this practice would be obvious to everyone, but it isn't. This is a very complicated world. You have to act within the limits of what is possible. If you listen first, others will listen to you. You might also learn something very important.

ROBERT M. SAYRE
Advisor, OAS
Washington, DC (1985-1987)

Undersecretary for Management, OAS
Washington, DC (1987-1993)

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

Q: In 1985, after a lengthy career, over 35 years in foreign affairs, you took retirement from the Foreign Service, but that didn't of course mean that your involvement in foreign affairs had ended because you became an advisor to our representative to the OAS who was Ambassador McCormack at the time?

SAYRE: That's correct.

Q: What were some of the issues he wanted you to look after for him?

SAYRE: Well he wanted to get the United States policy on the Organization of American States back on track, and he also wanted to make the priorities of the Organization of American States clearer and more effective. Unfortunately the United States in the early 70's had decided that it shouldn't be paying any more in quotas than 50%. We were basing our quota at the UN on the comparative GDP, and our GDP in the world is 25%. So we paid 25% to the UN. But when I told the people in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs that the United States had 85% of the GDP of the OAS member countries, they didn't know that, and they were objecting to us paying 66% of the quota.

Anyway, Ambassador McCormack and I persuaded the Congress to agree to change the policy. The Secretary of State, at a meeting in Guatemala, also announced publicly we were changing our policy--the United States would pay its quota, and the Congress agreed. We had an unfortunate problem because we ran into difficulty on the exchange rate losses in Europe so the Bureau of International Organization Affairs took away one-third of the money that belonged to the OAS to pay the exchange rate losses. So we paid even less to the OAS. We finally paid our first full quota in 1990.

But those were the objectives we were after. We were really trying to do something about strengthening inter-American relations and so on. Luigi Einaudi followed with a very strong performance, and Ambassador Babbitt has done the same. She has been very, very active getting the OAS to do its job on things like Haiti and armament and other things. As I said the other day in a speech at Georgetown University, for the first time in 25 years, things are looking good.

Q: Did you have to work with any of the delegations from other countries, or were you mainly advising Ambassador McCormack at this time?

SAYRE: Well I was mainly advising Ambassador McCormack, but I did work with the other delegations. I knew a number of them, the Brazilians especially, but I also knew the Mexican representatives. I discovered the Costa Rican representative had been on a committee, he and I together, back in 1950, and so on and so forth. So that I did talk to the other delegations, but never without the permission of the U.S. Ambassador.

Q: Did you attend the council sessions?

SAYRE: Oh yes, and I wrote the speeches for George Shultz and the other speeches that were made by Ambassador McCormack for the next three years, yes.

Q: Well after that period you then moved over from the U.S. mission to the OAS itself where you became Under-Secretary for Management in 1987?

SAYRE: Yes, that's correct.

Q: What was the problem you faced in that assignment?

SAYRE: Well they weren't too different from the problems that Ambassador McCormack and I had worked on because when I got there the U.S. was still not paying its quota. Only about 11 of the countries in the organization were paying their quotas on a timely basis. Brazil for example wasn't up to date, Argentina wasn't up to date, so on and so forth. So we continued to have a problem on financial support. But the Secretary-General was very anxious to focus the OAS on objectives. Whenever I went to him each budget cycle and suggested how we should ask for money and what we should get, he would do it.

Q: I should add that you knew him in previous careers.

SAYRE: He was what we would call the Deputy-Secretary of Itamaraty when I was Ambassador to Brazil.

Q: Ah yes, well that makes for a better relationship.

SAYRE: And he knows Latin America very well. One of the things that's of interest is that when we were in Brazil there was an armed dispute between Peru and Ecuador in 1981. He was the chief negotiator for the Guarantor Powers--Brazil, Argentina, Chile and the United States. I sat on his committee and we lived in his office, and I mean literally for two days, and he got the problem settled all on the telephone. And I gave him a trophy with an old telephone on it, with a satellite-style plaque on it showing the calls he'd been making to settle this dispute. And the Department of State said it's the first time in the history of armed conflict that it's ever been settled by telephone.

So that I think given the circumstances in the OAS he did as well as he could. We finally got the quotas and everything back up to where they should be and we got more focus on priorities and so on. We got an awful lot of cooperation from the OAS staff, and we have some quite outstanding people on the OAS staff.

Q: Were you able to, should I say, slim down the OAS staff because personnel has always been a problem there?

SAYRE: Oh the OAS staff got severely slimmed. I wasn't responsible. I had to manage the problem of slimming it down but the reason we had to slim it was because the United States didn't pay its quota in 1989. We lost thirteen million dollars. We didn't have any money to pay the staff and we reduced the staff from 1400 down to 600.

Q: Cut it in half, more than in half. My...that must have led to hard feelings all over the hemisphere?

SAYRE: It caused a very serious problem of handling issues. But the United States started paying its full quota and the other countries began to pay their quota. Canada came into the OAS in 1990. The situation began to improve. It's not as good as I would like to see it. I would like to see the UN, for example, depend on the OAS for the western hemisphere. The UN likes to do it itself, but I think things are better.

Q: Well the OAS contributed mightily to such things as settlements in El Salvador as I recall.

SAYRE: No...the OAS played a key role in Nicaragua, not El Salvador.

Q: Nicaragua

SAYRE: The UN was the one that dealt with El Salvador. The OAS played the key role in Haiti. Despite what the media says, the OAS was the key player in Haiti. The OAS also solved the problem in Peru with the Fujimori coup and got that straightened out. The OAS Secretary General, Baena Soares, also went to Guatemala, and within two weeks there was a duly elected president of Guatemala. It was the quickest thing in that category that happened. So the OAS has made quite a remarkable record for itself on election observation and responsibility for getting democratic government in the hemisphere. Yes.

Q: Well I sometimes feel it doesn't get the credit it deserves indeed, but perhaps that's not a bad thing in some ways.

SAYRE: Well it's all right. Part of the problem is that the OAS does not have as good a public relations operation as the UN does.

Q: Amen. Did you leave the OAS when Baena Soares was still there or did you stay for the new Secretary-General?

SAYRE: I left the OAS before the new Secretary-General came in because the new Secretary-General removed all of the persons that had been specifically appointed by the previous Secretary-General and replaced them with his own appointees.

Q: Has the admission of Canada had much effect on the UN, on the OAS?

SAYRE: I really think that the admission of Canada has been a very positive thing. It has given more balance to the OAS. It's helped the United States because here's another developed country

that's coming in and expressing its own view. Canada and the United States have worked very well together in the OAS. It's positive. It would help if Canadian relations were handled by ARA, especially because Canada now gives first priority to relations in the western hemisphere.

Q: And how, finally on this question, how useful do you judge the OAS to be nowadays? Is it an organization that we want to see continue?

SAYRE: Yes. It should be continued, it should be strengthened. I think one of the problems of the U.K. is that it tries to deal with problems around the world without relying on existing organizations in the area of the world in which it's working.

For example, you see the problem in Bosnia. What finally happened? NATO came in and NATO and the UN have been working more or less together now and we're finally getting the problem in Bosnia straightened out.

Almost every issue that's come up in the western hemisphere, the organization that has finally dealt with it, except for Salvador which was handled entirely by the UN, has been the Organization of American States.

And I think that the UN needs to press the regional areas to really make their organizations more effective. The UN needs to work with these regional organizations so that it will be more effective. There are too many details and complications. I think that would be a great help, because it doesn't really solve problems for example to bring in somebody from Thailand to work in Nicaragua. They didn't really understand the issues in Nicaragua. The director of our program in Nicaragua was from Argentina and he was absolutely remarkable. And he worked well with the Nicaraguans, they understood him and he understood them and it all got done. But we had real problems trying to deal with people from other areas of the world who didn't really understand the culture that they were working in.

Q: Finally back to your days in U.S. OAS. How did that organization relate to ARA in your time? Were they close? Did ARA pay much attention to U.S. OAS? Or were they treated just as a poor cousin?

SAYRE: No. When I started out in 1950, there was a very close relationship because the Director for Regional Political Affairs was also responsible for the OAS. The problem arises because they completely separated the OAS operation from the rest of ARA and it no longer comes under Regional Political and Regional Economic Affairs. That's one part of the problem.

The other problem is the Department has put all of the international organizations under the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and when it comes to priorities, that Bureau gives first priority to the United Nations, and then it looks around to see what else it does. It gives next priority to European organizations, and the western hemisphere gets last priority.

Q: I don't know how one can correct that. There it is.

SAYRE: Well, as I say to people, 40% of U.S. exports go to Latin America. We just need to understand on which side our bread is buttered, and what our economy depends on, and pay more attention.

STEPHEN F. DACHI
Deputy Permanent Representative, OAS
Washington, DC (1989-1990)

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

DACHI: After 1988, I spent three years in Washington doing a lot of different things. First, after a few months of job hunting, I ended up as Deputy Permanent Representative in the U.S. mission to the OAS in the spring of 1989. That was certainly the briefest assignment of my career. It lasted about six weeks and then the whole thing went crashing down in flames around the Panama issue and General Noriega. That is a separate chapter.

Q: How did the job come about and what were the issues and your experiences?

DACHI: As far as issues were concerned, there was only one issue at the time that involved me and that was the Panama issue. How did the job come about? That was at the beginning of the Bush administration. Bernard Aronson had just come in as the new Assistant Secretary of State chosen by Secretary of State James Baker. Luigi Einaudi was the nominee to be the U.S. Permanent Representative, in other words the U.S. Ambassador to the OAS. I knew Luigi from our years together in different activities in Latin America. He wanted me to be his Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). Once I knew that that was the situation, I did a little bit of the customary lobbying to try to help my cause. One of the people who recommended me was a good friend, General Vernon Walters, who was over the years intimately tied to Brazilian affairs where I got to know him. Later he had been deputy director of the CIA when George Bush was CIA director. That is how I came into the job, with recommendations from General Walters and Luigi Einaudi, partly on the grounds that I knew Noriega from my past encounters with him in Panama and Brazil. Then Bernie Aronson made the decision to approve it.

Q: What did the DCM do in our mission there?

DACHI: It is a very small mission, but basically the ambassador and the DCM are the permanent representative of the U.S. and the deputy permanent representative of the U.S. to the Organization of American States. So, although the DCM has to run the mission internally on behalf of the Ambassador and that would have been part of my job, that was a small part of it. Mostly, it was the outside work at the OAS.

Q: When you say the outside work, what do you mean?

DACHI: They not only have OAS General Assembly meetings once a year, but they have subcommissions of various kinds. There is a whole diplomatic corps of Latin American and Caribbean envoys accredited to the OAS just like we (the U.S. Mission) were accredited to the OAS. The U.S. Mission has offices in the State Department because it is only about four blocks away from the OAS headquarters, but it's an embassy like any other of our missions to international organizations. It just happens that this one is in Washington. So, we were dealing with the other members of the diplomatic corps, and with the issues that were before the OAS, at the time, first and foremost Panama.

The OAS is perhaps not the most highly regarded of international organizations, if indeed there are any highly regarded international organizations nowadays. It has been somewhat controversial over the years because Latin Americans have always regarded it as one place where they might be able to assert themselves collectively against the dominant role that the U.S. normally played when it acted bilaterally without consulting anybody. On occasion at the OAS, they thought they might be able to confront the U.S. collectively and win a few. But on the whole, it had been pretty unanimously thought to be ineffective. As far as the Latin Americans were concerned, that was because the U.S. always chose to pursue its interests bilaterally and not pay that much attention to collective action. Nevertheless, the U.S. was successful years earlier in persuading the OAS to expel Cuba, for example. So, whatever mischief Cuba might have caused in the eyes of the U.S. was certainly eliminated in the OAS. But more often than not, the OAS was not a player in anything of real substance.

Q: We're talking about 1989 now, but the Panama Canal Treaty had been pushed through in the late 1970s. The Nicaragua-El Salvador business was coming to an end at that point, wasn't it?

DACHI: No, the Nicaragua-El Salvador mess was still around at the time. The Panama affair came to a head before those two things did. Basically, the situation when I arrived there was this: after the Panama Canal treaties were ratified, the price that we thought we had exacted from General Torrijos was that there would be a transition to democracy. What in fact happened over the next few years after the ratification of the treaty in 1978 was that there was indeed a transition to a civilian rule of sorts, but the civilians were very much under the control of Torrijos and the Panamanian National Guard. So, it was not a true democracy. Then, General Torrijos was killed in an airplane accident. He was succeeded as Commander of the National Guard by Colonel Noriega, who became a general the moment Torrijos expired. There were a couple of elections held, as I recall, between 1978 and 1989, but none of them were free of decisive, behind the scenes control by the National Guard.

Early in 1989, there was another election held in Panama. This time, it was really supposed to be democratic, with international observers, etc. The issue that the National Guard always had to face was, were they going to allow a democratic election to take place and support whoever won, or were they going to contrive to continue having a civilian president that they could control, one who they would select and "arrange" to get elected. In this particular election the winner was a man called Guillermo Endara. Endara was of the same party as former president Arnulfo Arias, whom we have mentioned earlier and who had been elected five times and overthrown by the

National Guard each time. Endara had been the Arias party's General Secretary. He was Arnulfo's man. This was the worst possible outcome as far as Noriega was concerned.

Back in the 1970s, Arnulfo Arias was living in exile in Miami, after he had been overthrown by Torrijos in 1968. Eventually he found a soul mate in Ronald Reagan who was not yet president, and formed a political compact with him to oppose the Panama Canal Treaty on the grounds that we should insist that there be a transition to democracy before we "give" the Panamanians the treaty, thus forcing the military to proceed first with a return to democratic elections. In 1989, eleven years after the treaties were signed and ratified, Noriega finally allowed a democratic election to go ahead, but afterwards he just couldn't get himself to accept the results. He did not reckon with one big problem, however. This time there were a large number of international observers present, including Jimmy Carter. So manipulating the results would be trickier than usual. The election itself was held and run very cleanly, and Endara won by everyone's agreement. Noriega then got desperate and decided to fix the election after the fact in the most crude and vulgar manner. It wasn't a matter of changing 5 or 10 percent of the votes. He really had to carry out massive fraud ex post facto by stealing and destroying thousands of valid ballots and stuffing the ballot boxes. But he couldn't get away with it with all those observers present. This created a major crisis. Finally, an angered Noriega simply said, "The election is over. We win. You guys lose."

When these new "results" were announced, the real winners began to organize demonstrations with thousands of people in the streets. Noriega called out his thugs and brutally repressed them. There were countless flagrant human rights violations and attacks against the winning candidates themselves, as well as their supporters. It was really brutal, bloody, and ugly. Endara's Vice President was a man called Guillermo (Billy) Ford. Noriega's brutality burst onto the world stage when Ford was beaten to a pulp out in the street by a Noriega-inspired political mob and his blood-stained visage made the cover of *Time*. The whole world learned about it. It was one of the most disgraceful scenes possible. This, of course, upset the United States a great deal, as it should have. One of the people who was most upset by it, was our ambassador, Arthur Davis. He went after Noriega very hard. Eventually, Noriega complained about it so much to the State Department that Davis was recalled for consultations to Washington, essentially withdrawn. He was sitting in Washington in the Department of State at the time I came in as DCM. That was the scene.

Our goal at the particular moment when I got started there was to make one final attempt at finding a way to get Noriega, in spite of all the horrible things he had done in the previous months, to turn over power to the legitimately elected government. Virtually everyone agreed that the only way this could be done was that Noriega had to leave Panama. But the problem with Noriega leaving Panama was very complicated, because in 1987 or thereabouts he had been indicted on narcotics charges by a grand jury in Miami.

The story of that indictment, makes a very fascinating story. What it came down to was that Noriega said, "I can't leave Panama and go into exile because if I do, the U.S. government will snatch me from wherever I end up and take me to the U.S. to be tried. There are no assurances or guarantees that I will accept, because I know that as soon as I leave here I am going to be captured and taken to the U.S. for trial." For a good period of time, the question was, is there a

way to get this indictment dropped so that Noriega could be persuaded to leave Panama? Whether that indictment should be dropped or not was a White House decision that most people at the time believed was one of the very few times when President Reagan and his Vice President, George Bush, were on opposite sides of an issue. Everybody knew where Ronald Reagan stood. Yet in the end, he allowed himself to be persuaded that, in exchange for getting him out of Panama, (we are going back a few months in time in our story), maybe the indictment could be dropped after all. But George Bush wouldn't hear of it. This was perhaps the only time when the Vice President actually prevailed over the President.

The reason in the view of many analysts dated back to the time when George Bush was head of the CIA, and Noriega was the head of Panamanian intelligence. Noriega had come to Washington on one occasion when he met with the CIA director and Bush had invited him to lunch. It was a known fact that Noriega always was a double agent working with the Cubans just as much as he was working with us. He was also in cahoots with the Medellin mafia on narcotics trafficking, as much as he was working with our Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) on narcotics control. In essence, he had always maintained a working relationship with the CIA and the DEA, whatever other nefarious activities he was engaged in at the same time with the Cubans and the Colombians.

During the run-up to the 1988 U.S. presidential campaign, Michael Dukakis was making noises about George Bush and Noriega having been "chummy" in their intelligence days. Because of that, Bush felt that if the indictment was dropped, he effectively couldn't handle the issue in public debate and run for President successfully. He felt he would be too vulnerable. So, from his standpoint, there were very straightforward and understandable reasons why that indictment could not possibly be dropped. He persuaded Ronald Reagan on that point. In the final analysis, Noriega was not willing to leave Panama, because under the circumstances no assurances we might give were credible to him.

Back to the question of how did I come to this job? I have already mentioned two of the reasons, but there was a third which was equally important. That third reason was that I knew Noriega fairly well. I had a bit of a relationship with Noriega. It goes back to two important events in the past, maybe three. When I was public affairs officer in Panama, Colonel Noriega was still head of Panamanian intelligence. When Jimmy Carter came to Panama in 1978 on an official visit for the exchange of the Instruments of Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties, Noriega was in charge of all local arrangements for the Panamanian side. I was responsible for many of the local arrangements for our side, as the head of USIS always does given the huge press contingent that travels with the President. I also ended up being one of the liaisons and interpreters for the U.S. Secret Service in dealing with Noriega on security issues which were, as usual, legion. So, Noriega and I ended up working together on a daily basis. As far as he was concerned, he saw me as somehow tied to the U.S. Secret Service. We were talking about security, even though I was only acting as a liaison and interpreter.

We also met from time to time under another set of circumstances. Many of these dictators link up with some kind of a humanitarian or artistic activity to make it look as if they are cultured, polished individuals. In Noriega's case, he chose the Panamanian National Ballet Company. That was his pet charity. It happened that, as head of USIS, I was trying to be helpful to the

Panamanian National Ballet as well. I was able to arrange at one point to get an American guest choreographer to spend an entire year there at no expense to the Panamanians. Noriega thought this was wonderful and he thought that I was helping the ballet to soften my image as an intelligence type under USIS cover, just like he was using it to soften his own image as a security thug. The people at the Panamanian National Ballet loved me, so Noriega liked me too, thinking perhaps that I was "his kind of guy."

Now we jump ahead to 1987. I am Consul General in Sao Paulo. Out of all the million things that were going on there, one day it turned out there was going to be a hemisphere-wide DEA and Brazilian government sponsored conference on narcotics control. The two chief hosts would be Jack Long, who at the time was the head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, and Romeo Tuma, the head of the Brazilian Federal Police. (Romeo Tuma and I had worked together on the Mengele case.) Every Latin American country sent representatives who were upper middle level bureaucrats, but not Panama. Noriega showed up as the head of the Panamanian delegation. By this time Torrijos was dead and Noriega was his successor as the commander of the Panamanian National Guard, the country's only armed force. Panama did ostensibly have a civilian president, but Noriega was the de facto chief of state. None of the rest of the participants at the conference were political figures.

On the afternoon before the conference, I was sitting in the hotel lobby waiting for my ambassador, Harry Shlaudeman. Suddenly, the Panamanian consul in Sao Paulo comes running up to me saying, "We've got a terrible problem. Noriega has just shown up and he insists that he is entitled to the presidential suite, and they won't give it to him. They said they're saving it for the Americans. He is outraged and has threatened to leave. What can you do to help?" I knew the manager of the hotel. Since none of our visitors were interested in the presidential suite in any case, I talked to him and he gave Noriega the suite. Noriega thought, "Hey, I remember this guy, I always thought he was either one of their security or intelligence people, this just goes to show you. Look how quickly he got me a suite."

The next morning, there was a preparatory meeting. There we were, Jack Long, Harry Shlaudeman, Romeo Tuma and I, talking at breakfast. A Tuma aide comes over and tells him they've got a problem with Noriega, that Noriega insists on sitting at the head table at the opening session. Tuma says, "He's not sitting at the head table. All the heads of delegation are sitting down in the first two rows". The aide said, "Noriega is adamant that he is not just a head of delegation, but a head of state." Tuma turns to me and says, "Do you know anything about this guy?" I said, "I know a lot about this guy. He is the chief of the National Guard in Panama and the de facto head of state. He is the chief of the Panamanian Armed Forces." Tuma burst out laughing and said, "What does he have, 500 people?" He was not impressed. I explained to him about Noriega's vanity. He said, "All right, for you, I'll put him at the head table." So, Noriega once again got what he wanted.

Then, we had a dinner in the evening. Again, Noriega has to be at the head table. This time, Harry Shlaudeman said, "All right, we'll put him at the head table, but you keep him occupied and talk to him the whole evening because we sure as hell don't want to talk to him." We had the dinner. I talked to Noriega the entire evening. No one else at the head table would even say, "Boo" to him. After the conference was over, Noriega got everything he wanted by way of perks

and he thought I was the one who got them for him. He never evinced much interest in the substance of the meetings.

We jump back to 1989 in our story. General Vernon Walters was one of a number of people who were uncomfortable with the U.S. position of not dropping Noriega's indictment. As a former deputy director of the CIA, just like some people in the Pentagon who had been at SOUTHCOM, the U.S. Forces Southern Command, he was not eager to see Noriega brought to the U.S. and put on trial for anything. They all had dealings with him about our military presence in Panama, the defense of the Canal, narcotics and Cuban intelligence activities. They were all worried about what he may reveal in court about his relationship with other U.S. agencies. Walters knew me well from Brazil and I told him I was looking for an assignment at State, and was interested in the job at our OAS mission. He said he would be pleased to recommend me. So, he went and told Bernie Aronson, "Dachi knows Noriega and has dealt with him. You ought to put him in the OAS mission. It would be good to have a guy there who knows Noriega. Somehow we've got to get this guy to leave the country." What Walters was really hoping was that I would be more sympathetic to the views of the CIA and Defense Department on this whole matter than were most of the people at the State Department. So, that also had something to do with how I got the job.

Q: So you were put in there to ease our nemesis out of the picture.

DACHI: Well, that was sort of the general idea. About the second day on the job, Aronson said to me, "I want you to make a secret trip to Panama and find out what the real story is. Davis is up here. As far as I'm concerned, he is not going back to Panama. We have cut off diplomatic contact. The well has been poisoned. I want you to go down there and talk to your friend Noriega. This guy is a pariah. We want him to leave the country, to turn over power. I want you to give me an assessment of what the hell is going on, see what we could do, how we might entice him to leave."

One evening during this same brief time span, I ran into the Panamanian ambassador to the OAS at a reception. At this point, bilateral diplomatic contacts through our respective embassies were suspended. I thought that it would not be improper to talk to this man, however, because the OAS is an international organization. It's not a bilateral forum. If they wanted to say something significant to us, an international forum may have been the only way they could do it. Such a channel is used frequently when two countries are at loggerheads and have cut off their bilateral embassy contacts. In hindsight it turned out to be a mistake, but at some point in our conversation I mentioned to him that I knew Noriega and I might be making a trip down to Panama soon.

Within a few days, this guy calls me up and says, "How about coffee? We need to talk." I went and told our ambassador-designate Luigi Einaudi, my direct boss. We asked ourselves, "Is this a legitimate thing? Can we do this?" We both concluded that given the international nature of the OAS it would be okay to go ahead. He said, "All right, go ahead and talk to him."

I met with the Panamanian "secretly" at the J.W. Marriott and we had coffee. He said, "I reported to Noriega that you're in this job. He was happy to know that. He thinks that's great. And, I have

a message for you. The message is, anytime you want to go and see him, he will see you immediately." At that point, Noriega wasn't talking to anybody on our side. Here he sent his OAS ambassador to tell me that he will see me immediately if I want to go down. So, I said, "Okay, thanks for telling me." He said, "We know you. We know your background. We know that, with you, we can work something out." I said, "Don't be so sure that we can work something out beyond what we have already stated publicly. This is a pretty important issue for President Bush. I'll tell you exactly why. There are lots of foreign policy issues that are not too important in the court of American public opinion, but when it comes to drugs, that is something of vital interest to every family in the United States. So, the President of the United States doesn't have quite the same flexibility when it comes to drugs that he does on other issues. You and the General have to understand that with something like this, it's not likely that anything can be worked out without him leaving the country. I really don't know." He said, "There was another thing he wanted me to ask you. Who is your boss? Who do you really work for?" I said, "I work for Bernie Aronson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs."

Q: Were they thinking that you might be the CIA outside man or something like that?

DACHI: Yes. I thought to myself, this man was fishing to see whether I would say that I was really "planted" in the State Department by either the CIA, DEA or Defense Department, as a way to "soften up" the hard line State was taking on this issue. I am sure that was Noriega's wishful thinking. Noriega wanted to believe that the CIA or the Defense Department, would be more conciliatory. But the bottom line as far as he was concerned was that there had to be some way that we could work this out so that he didn't have to leave Panama. I said, "I don't think that's going to be possible. There is nothing I would love to do more than have a role in making it possible for the U.S. and Panama to return to their traditional good relationship. I am very excited that that opportunity may come about someday. But I don't think when it comes to narcotics and the question of Noriega leaving Panama, there is a whole lot of play in that issue. It's too important for us domestically." So, that was the end of that.

I reported the conversation to Luigi. But there was nothing further to be done about it at that point by either of us. About a year later, a record of that conversation came to light in a most unusual way. After our armed intervention in Panama, we seized many of their documents and the Panamanian ambassador's report on that meeting was among them. We had the Panamanian version, which did not differ in any significant way from the text of my report. But in the event, Senator Jesse Helms, Ambassador Arthur Davis, Bernie Aronson and others, had a much more sinister version of what they imagined had transpired in that conversation, as I shall explain in a moment.

Far from turning out to be a forward step, that meeting soon began to unravel things for me. This thing got extremely complicated. First though, let me go back to the OAS. At this point our position at the OAS was that we wanted it to play a role in persuading Noriega to leave Panama and turn power over to the legally elected people. That is what we were spending a good bit of our time on at the OAS with the other delegations. Much to our chagrin, Latin governments were most reluctant to get involved. They said, "This is your problem, you created this monster. You take care of it."

I certainly said it to many of them, but plenty of others did, too, "Wait a minute, for years you have been accusing us of acting unilaterally in Latin American relations. Here we have a clear cut case of a democratic election attended by hemispheric observers in which everyone agrees that the election was stolen. We have unequivocal, undisputed evidence about violent and brutal human rights violations. We have powerful evidence on narcotics trafficking. If you can't get involved in this issue in which we're on the side of the angels, democracy and human rights, not to mention narcotics, then what good are you? When is the OAS ever going to do anything useful in cooperation with us? You've been telling us for 20 years not to act unilaterally. Okay, let's act multilaterally. Here is the perfect issue." They would say, "No, this is not the perfect issue. Noriega is a monster that you created. We can't get ourselves involved." I would retort, "You surely must know that this is so important to us and to the President that we're going to have to solve this problem one way or another, multilaterally, unilaterally, or whatever, but it will have to be solved. If you refuse to get involved and we have to act unilaterally, we had better not hear a peep out of you. Here is your chance to work with us on democracy and human rights about which there can be no debate."

Finally, they did agree to an important thing: to name the Foreign Minister of Ecuador, Diego Cordovez, who had been a successful negotiator for the UN in Africa, in Ethiopia and I think in Afghanistan, to spearhead an OAS effort to approach Noriega about turning power over to Endara and leaving Panama. In other words, the OAS was going to attempt an initiative of its own, independently of the U.S., and see if Cordovez could come up with an OAS solution, but without ever associating with the Americans in any way. The Ecuadorean Foreign Minister accepted this job, but he was very uncomfortable with it. He was convinced deep down in his bones that if he tried to work out a Latin American deal and it began to look as if he would succeed, the U.S. would find some back channel to work out its own deal and beat him to the punch, taking credit for it and making him look silly. So, although he agreed to try to do something, he had extreme reservations about it.

Noriega, whose goal was not to leave Panama under any circumstances, was delighted to have Cordovez in the picture because he knew that Cordovez could be manipulated and could never on his own get Noriega to leave Panama. So, as far as he was concerned, that was just fine. At the same time, he was happy to know of me. He thought that I was one guy he could pull a U.S. deal with. Obviously, "pulling a deal" with the U.S. meant dropping the indictment. Noriega had no illusions about Diego Cordovez ever being able to get the U.S. to drop the indictment.

At this point a new, seemingly innocuous development enters the picture. USIA's WorldNet proposed an interview to the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. They wanted to do a program for use in Brazil about the Panama crisis. I had been in Brazil and spoke Portuguese and Luigi talked to me about it. He said, "You do it." I went over there and did it. That was where disaster struck. Instead of things beginning to move forward, they started to unravel for me. In the interview, I was saying all the right things until I was asked the question, "What about Noriega?" Now I said the key phrase.

Q: This was the interview that was taking place in Portuguese for a program that USIA was going to play in Brazil.

DACHI: That's correct. Now come the fatal words. The interviewer said, "What about Noriega? Is he going to leave Panama?" I said, "I don't know, but I know Noriega and he is a friend of mine. I believe that he is going to do what's right for Panama in the end, which means that he'll leave." The next thing I know, they're taking this "sensational" statement made in Portuguese for a Brazilian audience, translating it into Spanish, and sending it down to Panama. The instant that happens, the Panamanian democratic opposition leadership, many of whom were sitting up here on K Street in Washington lobbying for a return to democracy, said, "What's going on here?" This could not have been a casual statement. The U.S. is about to make a deal with Noriega behind our backs. Who is this guy Dachi? Is the State Department going to sell us out again?" I am not sure how exactly my being a "friend" of Noriega, having him leave Panama or, for that matter, dropping the Miami indictment, even if true, could possibly have been bad for the interests of Panama's democratic politicians, but we will never know what their deep distrust of the State Department might have stirred up in their imagination.

The first guy to hear about it from them was Art Davis, sitting in the State Department angry and upset that they're not letting him go back to Panama to resume his ambassadorship. He said, "Who is this guy? This is some kind of a plot. I am the one who is supposed to be doing it, not him. What is this guy talking about he's going to make a trip to Panama? What kind of trip to Panama is he going to make? Who is he to be making a trip to Panama?" More significantly, at about this time intelligence reports are starting to pick up quotes by Noriega, who is saying to his people in Panama, "I know this guy, Dachi, and he is in the right place. That means something is going to be worked out. I don't know what it is yet, but something is going to be worked out."

Q: "Your friend."

DACHI: Right. And he is telling the Ecuadorean Foreign Minister, "Relax. There is some kind of a deal with the U.S. that is going to be worked out here." He didn't want Cordovez to come to Panama and muddy the waters. As far as Cordovez was concerned, going to Panama was the last thing he wanted to do anyway, so talking him out of it was the easiest thing in the world. The only thing wrong with all that was, Noriega didn't know that by that time both my trip and interest in a "deal" acceptable to the U.S. had been taken off the front burner in Washington, mainly so that Cordovez would have his chance of doing this the "OAS way." At this point, we were very anxious for the Ecuadorean to get involved, go to Panama and be the one to persuade Noriega to leave. Noriega, by neutralizing him, scaring him off and falsely implying that, yes, there is a back channel deal in the works with me, managed to "screw up the works" in a big way. Intelligence is picking this up, passing it on to the Panamanian opposition politicians who are passing it on to Art Davis. Art Davis begins to make his concerns known. The secret plan for me to go to Panama that Bernie Aronson had hatched is now coming unraveled.

But that is not the end of it. Art Davis had previously been ambassador to Paraguay, where his wife had perished in an Eastern Airlines crash when the plane flew into a snow-covered mountain. Afterwards, his wife's role as first lady was taken over by his daughter, Susan Davis. From then on, she played a powerful role in running Art Davis' life. Art Davis was a sweet guy, but the "tough lady" behind Art Davis was his daughter. Susan Davis happened to be an intimate friend of Debbie DeMoss, who was Jesse Helms' Foreign Affairs Committee senior staffer for Latin America and had a well-earned reputation as Helms' "hatchet woman."

Q: She is the one who later married a member of the junta down in Honduras.

DACHI: That's right. They were either college classmates or whatever. Susan Davis was worried that somebody was trying to do her father in by hatching a plot with Noriega, and that the guy behind this had to be Bernie Aronson. Obviously, he was the Assistant Secretary. He had just been sworn in 24 hours before. Initially, he was her prime suspect. Not surprisingly, Jesse Helms had been opposed to Secretary of State James Baker choosing Bernie, a Democrat with labor ties and suspected leftist inclinations for that post. Helms had been most reluctant to confirm the guy. Among other things, he learned that there was a chance encounter in Buenos Aires in which Bernie Aronson had talked to one of the Sandinista comandantes at a reception. That made him suspicious. And, now he hears that they're trying to send somebody other than Art Davis down there to cook up a deal with Noriega.

While he's getting all this stuff through his intelligence sources and from his staff's feverish mind, Susan Davis is looking out for her father. And her friend Debbie DeMoss takes all this as a gift from Heaven, seeing it as a way to get back at Bernie Aronson. As far as they were concerned, this looked like somebody at the State Department was once again pulling some kind of back channel deal to undermine the President's foreign policy. When they learned that I had talked to the Panamanian ambassador to the OAS, they had their "smoking gun." They looked into the man's background. It turns out that the man in question, prior to becoming Noriega's Ambassador to the OAS, had been a lobbyist in Washington for Uganda and Idi Amin. I am sure that nobody at the State Department had any idea. That was all they needed.

Q: He was a very brutal ruler, accused of eating his opponents and things like that.

DACHI: Yeah, and he had me for lunch from his exile 5,000 miles away. The next thing I know, Jesse Helms is making a speech on the floor of the Senate denouncing me by name and accusing me of working on a deal with Noriega through a former lobbyist for Idi Amin, to undermine George Bush's foreign policy, aided and abetted by Bernie Aronson. By this time, you can see that for me, things were coming apart at the seams. Bernie Aronson either had to get rid of me or he had to get rid of himself. That was not a hard choice. There was nothing anyone could do. Everybody had their own interests, legitimate or otherwise, but the bottom line was that Noriega was convinced that I was his guy and, as long as I was on the scene, it looked like the Ecuadorean Foreign Minister was not going to move. If he wasn't going to move, that was contrary to our interests so I had to be removed from the picture. Within three or four weeks of getting there, I was toast. I was there for a total of six weeks. After all this happened, I only lasted another two weeks.

Q: During all this, were you getting any reflections through anybody from the NSC?

DACHI: Funny you should ask. I don't know whether that's innocent.

Q: It's innocent! But the NSC is always in these things when it gets political.

DACHI: Here is the story on the NSC. At that juncture the top guy for Latin America at the NSC was Ted Briggs. He was a good friend of mine. Ted had been ambassador to Panama. As a matter of fact, he went there to be ambassador in 1983 or 1984. He and I had been the two finalists at that time to be ambassador to Panama. The Panamanian government had asked for me, but that doesn't usually work.

Q: No, it usually is counterproductive.

DACHI: It shouldn't work, frankly. When Ted became ambassador he took an unusual step that I certainly didn't expect, of coming over to my office to say, "Look, I'm sorry. I'm sure you'll get it the next time around." That was an extraordinary gesture on his part and I was deeply appreciative for it. Panama was Ted's second embassy. After he finished there, he came back to Washington to be the Latin American advisor at the NSC. (Now he is head of the Americas Society in New York.) He is a pretty top guy and very conservative.

Ted Briggs was very much in contact with the Panamanian democratic exiles here in Washington. I don't know all the things that Ted Briggs was up to, but he most assuredly could not be accused of being a "friend of Noriega." Nevertheless, he somehow got crosswise with Bernie Aronson, who had his own channel with the exiles through one of his deputies, Michael Kozak. To my utter amazement, Ted Briggs lost his job at the NSC. Bernie Aronson convinced Secretary Baker to get rid of him. I don't think Bernie was prepared to tolerate a rival power center at the NSC, even in the person of someone as well known, qualified and respected as Ted Briggs. Ted was exiled a lot more luxuriously than I was, however, he became ambassador to Portugal. But he got jostled out of the NSC by Bernie Aronson. Where he had come down on this stuff I don't really know, but I saw him a couple of times in that period. After it was all over, I told him what happened. He just looked at me and said, "Were you set up?" The answer was clearly yes, but things had become so complicated that it was hard to explain to him exactly how and why it happened. In any case, we all know that people at all levels become victims of "political homicide" in this town at a moment's notice (or without it) every day of the week.

In Washington, situations like this can turn ugly very quickly. In this case, it seemed like they were even uglier and more complicated than usual. They were just too many people and political factors involved. One thing is certain. If Bernie Aronson could get rid of Ted Briggs, he sure as hell could get rid of me. Luigi Einaudi, who under other circumstances might have tried to defend his DCM, was absolutely not in a position to do so because he himself had not been confirmed in the Senate yet and Bernie Aronson had tremendous doubts about him as well. He didn't trust him either. He had a great question in his mind as to whether he should be ambassador at all. Luigi was very concerned, and rightly so, about this entire thing, but there wasn't anything he could have done. He felt badly about it, but he couldn't really weigh in too vigorously under the circumstances.

So, basically, Bernie just acted. In order to try and move me out of there as smoothly as possible, they called in the Inspector General to look into the case. The inspectors interviewed a lot of people and went through a procedure designed to resemble due process, but all along it was perfectly clear that Bernie Aronson wanted me out of there, so in the end, the inspectors simply had no choice but to recommend that I be transferred.

To go back a few days in time, somebody from "CNN Spanish" also interviewed me in the same period I did the Brazilian thing. I said the same things in that interview. Unbeknownst to me, the person who talked to me was also a friend of Debbie DeMoss and Susan Davis, as well as being closely tied in with the Panamanian exiles in Washington. An extraordinary thing happened with the tape of that interview. CNN never used it, presumably because the editors did not consider it newsworthy, but in violation of all the ethics of journalistic practice the interviewer held a "private showing" for and in essence gave a "scoop" to the Washington-based Panamanians. She also gave the tape to Debbie and Susan who in turn took it to Jesse Helms. Debbie DeMoss, who speaks perfect Spanish, took over from there. She didn't quote me out of context, she did something more serious than that. Debbie and Susan Davis deliberately crafted an incorrect and distorted translation into English, to make it sound as if I was conspiring with this former lobbyist for Idi Amin and with Noriega. That was what really led Jesse to make that speech on the Senate floor. In fairness, I should add that Debbie did not demand my scalp, she even told the inspectors that this was "nothing personal" against me. She was after bigger fish, Bernie Aronson to be exact, but the head on the silver platter ended up being mine.

I had a friend, a congressman from North Carolina whom I had met in Brazil, who actually was the congressman from Jesse's district, that I could have gone to ask him to take me to Jesse and get this straightened out. I was thinking of going to Helms and saying, "Look, Senator, give me five minutes here to present you the facts and get this straightened out because I certainly wouldn't want you to think that I would undermine U.S. foreign policy. That is the last thing on earth that I would ever think of doing." But not even that could be done.

Why? For two reasons. First, Debbie DeMoss couldn't possibly back down from her assertion. Susan Davis was a close personal friend and she had to protect her as well as herself. She insisted to Jesse Helms to the end that the information she had given him was truthful and correct. Second, Bernie Aronson told me from the outset, "Don't you go up there and talk to Jesse Helms or anybody else. You can't do that." Why was that? Because his situation at that time, just days after being sworn in was too tenuous. He sure as hell wasn't going to fall on his sword on account of this, after all he had gone through to get confirmed.

In retrospect, it is perfectly obvious that this was a tempest in a teapot. Bernie may have thrown a small fry like me to the wolves without batting an eye, but surely even he must have known that my departure from the OAS would have no impact whatsoever. As subsequent events showed, Diego Cordovez still refused to get involved, Noriega stayed put, and before the end of the year we had to resort to intervening militarily in Panama and capturing Noriega in the process.

What happened to me was certainly very traumatic, but in the grand scheme of things it was of no great importance. The truth is that if you look at it historically, Bernie Aronson ended up being an outstanding Assistant Secretary of State. It was on his watch that the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean situations were finally resolved. You have to give him full credit for that. He did it for George Bush and Jim Baker and he did it successfully. Nicaragua now has a democratic government, as does El Salvador. So, you have to give him credit. But that was small consolation to me. My career in the foreign service was over for all intents and purposes.

Q: I think one of the things you're pointing out and I've seen reflected other times is that when an administration comes in, which the Bush one was (and I saw this with the Clinton administration), it is very fragile. People don't know each other. They don't really trust each other. Their ties to Congress haven't been built up. So, if they receive any sort of shock, their tendency is to get rid of whoever it is. They don't feel strong enough to fight things out or to reason things out. They don't have their own confidence and the confidence of those who work for them.

DACHI: That is a perfect analysis. That is precisely how and why it happened. At first when this flap over my statement arose, Bernie actually came out with a fairly strong statement backing me. Once Jesse Helms got into it, that changed the nature of the situation totally. I became a highly expendable commodity. I think I've told you this story in a relatively detached fashion. By now I understand what happened, but it devastated me at the time.

Q: The thing is that most of us are not like politicians who have this happen again and again and again and they develop a tough skin or they get out of the business. When all of a sudden we become the object of political pushing and shoving as government servants, it really does... What did you do?

DACHI: You mean before my assignment actually ended?

Q: How did it play out for you?

DACHI: Actually, Bernie came into my office. He said, "Stop everything. Don't go up there. Just stop everything. Let's take a look at what's going on. Let's take stock." I said, "Do you want me to resign?" He didn't say "Yes," but he had a facial expression that essentially said "Yes, I'm glad you suggested it." Then Mike Kozak, who was one of his deputies, who was a supporter and friend of mine, came up with the idea of the inspectors as a possible way out. Mike Kozak had been crucified himself a couple of times both before that and since for similar political problems, so he sympathized somewhat. He said, "Let's have an investigation by the Office of the Inspector General." That took about another two weeks.

The Inspector General's office responded very quickly and they agreed to assign two people to this. These two people came in and interviewed everybody. During that time everything was on hold. I myself was talking to all kinds of people, including my son, who was a congressional aide at the time, to see what I could possibly do. There was a Jesse Helms political appointee at the OAS mission who was sympathetic to me and who was trying to be helpful. We went through hours of conversation as to what we could do to deal with this. But I think that from this picture I've painted, you can see that there really was no way to untangle this. So, the inspection's conclusion was that it was unfortunate that this happened, but the only way out, given Bernie Aronson's position, was to recommend "curtailment." In their report, they said that it was unwise for me to have said what I did about Noriega being a friend of mine. As a gesture to me, they didn't say I used bad judgment, they said it was "unwise."

What tilted it for them was when they went up and talked to Debbie DeMoss and she gave them this tape. The tape might have been subject to varying interpretations, but by the time they

distorted it in translation, it was out and out prejudicial. The inspectors only listened to the English version. What was I going to say, that Debbie DeMoss distorted the translation? I couldn't do that. It was beside the point anyway. Bernie Aronson's position was, "Say what you like. Our bottom line problem is that the Ecuadorean Foreign Minister is convinced that there is something going on here with a back channel deal and he will not move. We have to get him to move. As long as Noriega thinks that Dachi is at the OAS, he is going to keep the Ecuadorean at bay. Something has to give. It's pretty obvious. So, forget about this other stuff." So, they all agreed that I had to leave.

The inspectors recommended that I be given another job at the Department. Mike Kozak told me that Bernie Aronson and Lawrence Eagleburger the Deputy Secretary of State, were saying that they would do everything possible to get me another job. Mike said, "You look on the radar screen and see what there is by way of openings that you think you would like to try to get and these people will help you get it. It's unfortunate that you have to leave. Of course, you had something to do with it. It wasn't all our fault. However you want to distribute the blame here, we'll do what we can to get you another job." But that didn't work out for a variety of reasons. There wasn't really anything else open at the moment. So, I withdrew to lick my wounds.

End of reader