

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

**AMBASSADOR ALAN H. FLANIGAN**

*Interviewed by: Raymond Ewing*  
*Initial interview date: June 16, 1997*  
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: This interview is with Alan H. Flanigan and is being conducted at the offices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. Alan, good morning. It is nice to be doing this interview with you.*

FLANIGAN: Good morning Ray, I'm delighted to be here.

*Q: I see that you joined the Foreign Service in 1966; you graduated from Tufts University in 1960. You were a naval officer for about six years. Were you aiming at the Foreign Service right along, or is that something that happened while you were on a ship at sea?*

FLANIGAN: It began while I was still in undergraduate school. I took the Foreign Service exam while I was a senior, but I had the obligation to go into the Navy. As luck would have it, I passed the written exam but I didn't take the oral exam since I was going directly into the navy. As a result of my ROTC scholarship I was obligated to remain on active duty for three years. I had intended to get out after those three years and perhaps go into the Foreign Service or go to law school. As it turned out, I married a Canadian. At that time as you know, it was not possible to enter the Foreign Service with a foreign born spouse. Actually, it would have been possible to enter as a reserve officer and convert once my spouse became a citizen. But I was on a ship at sea in the Western Pacific and not as aware of bureaucratic intricacies as I might have been later in life. In any event I stayed in the Navy for three more years. I was sent to the Defense Intelligence School here in Washington for a year of what the navy called post-graduate school. I was then assigned to the Pentagon as intelligence briefer for the Chief of Naval Operations. Two years later my wife became a citizen; I took the Foreign Service exam again, and entered the Foreign Service.

*Q: You needed to take it a second time because presumably a period had lapsed.*

FLANIGAN: At that time, if you didn't pursue the oral exam, it lapsed in very short order.

*Q: So you only passed the written when you were a senior in college.*

FLANIGAN: Yes.

*Q: So you came in, in 1966, and you had your initial training period here in Washington. Did you do any special training during that time?*

FLANIGAN: No, just had the A-100 course and I think 15 weeks of Spanish before I sent to my first assignment.

*Q: When you entered the Foreign Service, did you have a foreign language?*

FLANIGAN: No, I did not. I had studied some French in college, but didn't speak it and don't speak it.

*Q: So you had 15 weeks of Spanish and went to where?*

FLANIGAN: Lima, Peru.

*Q: As a consular officer?*

FLANIGAN: In those days junior officers rotated through various sections, but my first six months was spent in the consulate working on the visa line, primarily non-immigrant visas. During my two years in Lima I rotated through most sections of the embassy. I was very fortunate.

*Q: This was the period in the late 60's; what was Peru like in those days?*

FLANIGAN: Well, it was a very interesting time for Peru. In fact, the relationship with the United States entered into a crisis in 1968-69. But in 1967 the relationship was very close. The government was under the control of Fernando Belaunde Terry, a moderate conservative who was friendly toward the United States. We were very supportive of him and wanted to see him be successful. Unfortunately, he seemed to have a greater capacity for being attractive to people including the United States than for governing. And he suffered the sad fate of being ejected from power twice, the first time in 1968 when the military threw him out and took over. Juan Velasco Alvarado, who was a general in the army, assumed power and instituted what he called a revolutionary government. It purported to be populist and somewhat left of center and was antagonistic toward the United States. One of its first orders of business was the nationalization of a major U.S. owned oil refinery that was owned by the International Petroleum Company, a subsidiary

of Standard Oil of New Jersey. This quickly developed into a crisis in the bilateral relationship. In fact, I think this is the only case where we invoked the Hickenlooper Amendment against a country for having seized property without adequately compensating the U.S. owner.

*Q: That involved a cutoff of U.S. assistance I believe.*

FLANIGAN: It involved a cutoff of U.S. assistance. The result of the *coup d'état* and the actions of the new government was a precipitous deterioration in the relationship.

*Q: Who was the Ambassador?*

FLANIGAN: John Wesley Jones was the ambassador all the time I was there.

*Q: You rotated through not only the consular section but also the political, economic...*

FLANIGAN: I served in the political section. Unfortunately I missed the economic section. But I spent an extraordinary amount of time as the Ambassador's staff assistant. I believe I served about nine months in the front office.

*Q: So you had a good opportunity to at least observe the state of relations and also the problems in dealing with the new government.*

FLANIGAN: I did. I worked for about six weeks - or maybe eight weeks - as the personnel officer, so I had a chance to do administrative work too.

*Q: After Lima, what did you do then?*

FLANIGAN: Well, I came back to be the officer in charge of Peruvian affairs at the State Department. I had decided earlier that I wanted to branch out and do something else, and I actually applied for and received orders to Japanese language training. However, I was offered the job as desk officer for Peru by Bill Stedman who had been the counselor for economic affairs in Lima and was by this time the director of Ecuadorian and Peruvian affairs in the Department. This was a great opportunity for a second tour officer, so I asked for a change of orders and it worked out. I came to Washington as the officer in charge of Peruvian affairs.

*Q: It is unusual to be the desk officer for a major country on the second tour after only one two year tour at a post.*

FLANIGAN: It was. It was a good opportunity, and a lot of fun. In those days, the Inter-American Bureau was fully integrated with AID. The Director of the office, Bill Stedman, was a State officer, the Deputy was an AID officer. I was the officer in charge of Peruvian affairs, and there were two AID officers who were also working on Peruvian affairs with me.

*Q: And you were dealing with pretty much the same issues you have just described that arose when you were in Lima.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. The IPC case became the dominant issue. You probably don't recall but in the spring of 1969, John Irwin, who later became Under Secretary of State, was appointed as the President's special envoy to Peru to try to negotiate some kind of settlement of the IPC case. He flew down to Lima and conducted a series of negotiations. Then there was a series of negotiations in Washington. I flew up from Lima at that time to be the reporting officer for those talks. That meant I was the notetaker, and for a young officer it was very interesting. In the end, of course, the negotiations didn't resolve anything. They probably attracted John Irwin to government service, however..

*Q: Did he have a staff, or were you to some extent his staff?*

FLANIGAN: To the best I can recall he used the office of Ecuadorian and Peruvian Affairs, and I was just brought up to be part of the staff temporarily.

*Q: That effort to attempt to negotiate a settlement occurred while you were still in Lima.*

FLANIGAN: Yes, it continued after I came back too.

*Q: But ultimately no resolution, no settlement was reached and we took unilateral action to implement the Hickenlooper Amendment.*

FLANIGAN: Although we effectively applied the Hickenlooper Amendment, I believe we did not formally apply it. The hope was that by applying "non-overt" economic pressure and threatening to apply the Hickenlooper Amendment we could persuade the Peruvian Government to compensate New Jersey Standard for the IPC refinery which the Peruvians had taken over.

*Q: What were some of the other issues that engaged you while you were the officer in charge of Peruvian affairs? Fisheries matters?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, there were always fisheries matters. The seizure of tuna boats was a chronic conflict between us and Peru and Ecuador, so this office dealt with this on a rather regular basis. Because of the crisis in the Peruvian-US relationship, in fact, I dropped the tuna boat portfolio which had traditionally been one of the responsibilities of the Peru desk officer.

*Q: For both Ecuador and Peru.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. My colleague on the Ecuador desk, Rozanne Ridgway, got involved for the first time in the tuna struggles because she took on that portfolio.

*Q: She continued with fisheries negotiations for quite awhile.*

FLANIGAN: Yes she did and very successfully. I think it was a take-off point in her

career.

*Q: I bet she would say so herself. What were some of the other issues? Were there an arms sales relationship with Peru in those days before this difficult period?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, for years we had been the principal supplier of arms to Peru. That was a normal relationship with the country; however, at the same time we tried to restrain the growth of sophisticated weapons into countries of the region. The Peruvian Air Force was always seeking a better airplane, and we were trying to avoid creating a situation that would lead to an arms race in the area. I recall that one of the things I did while working as the ambassador's staff assistant was to review the files to compile a history of our efforts to convince the Peruvian Air Force that it did not need jet aircraft, even the relatively unsophisticated F-5 aircraft. In the end we failed. After the military coup the Peruvians bought Soviet jet aircraft, the first Soviet aircraft to be purchased by any country in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba.

*Q: Were the Soviets quite active in those days or was it really an opportunity that presented itself to them?*

FLANIGAN: They were hardly there. In fact, they did not open an embassy in Lima until after the November, 1968 military coup.

*Q: How were relations between Peru and its neighbors? Were there major problems, and were we involved in any of that at that time?*

FLANIGAN: Peru and Ecuador have had a difficult relationship for a long time. It goes back to almost colonial times, but the most immediate problem, the most recent problem was in the '40s when Peru established control over land in the north which the Ecuadorians considered and still consider to be theirs. I believe the two countries agreed to the new border in 1946, and the United States is one of the guarantor powers of that agreement. As you know a couple of years ago there was an outbreak of violence on the border, we became engaged again. Luigi Einaudi recently went down as a special envoy to try to help restore peace between the two countries.

*Q: The other thing we think a lot about Peru in recent times is terrorist activity, insurrectionist groups, all of that has come much more recent since your period.*

FLANIGAN: After I left. When we lived there it was a relatively peaceful country. The population was less than half of what it is now. The population of Lima itself was about two million. I believe it is close to 8-10 million now. The problems of urbanization were evident then, but they have become much more dramatic. Also, although there was coca was commonly grown in parts of the highlands, but it was not normally processed into cocaine. People in the highlands used it. It was a problem for them, but Peru was not considered at the time to be a major threat from the drug trafficking point of view.

*Q: Not a supplier internationally of any significance.*



FLANIGAN: Cocaine simply hadn't become the problem it became later.

*Q: How about particularly when you were the desk officer, was there a lot of interest in Peru by members of Congress, Senators?*

FLANIGAN: There was a lot of interest, an inordinate amount of interest because of the revolution. Juan Velasco Alvarado considered himself a revolutionary; at least he advertised himself as a revolutionary. In the late '60s having a revolutionary as the head of a government on the west coast of South America was a troublesome concept for a lot of people in the United States so it attracted a lot of attention.

*Q: Did he come to Washington at all during the period you were on the desk?*

FLANIGAN: He certainly didn't then, no. I don't think he was invited later either.

*Q: He might have gone to the United Nations in New York.*

FLANIGAN: Might well have. I don't recall that he did, but he probably did.

*Q: Did other agencies in the United States Government have a lot of interest or was the State Department particularly the Latin American bureau conducting most of the aspects of relations?*

FLANIGAN: I think the State Department largely had the responsibility for relationship in those days. Things that Treasury or Commerce today might play a larger role in, they monitored but weren't directly involved. For example, when Irwin conducted his talks, there was no representation from other agencies.

*Q: Even though the bilateral talks were dealing with an economic issue?*

FLANIGAN: Dealing with the issue of compensation for seized American property.

*Q: So you were officer in charge for what about two years?*

FLANIGAN: Not quite two years, and then I moved to become one of the special assistants to Richard Pederson who was the Counselor of the Department.

*Q: That was in about 1971?*

FLANIGAN: That was early 1971.

*Q: The Counselor of the Department of State always has different functions or different portfolios depending on the Secretary and the Counselor. What sorts of issues were you involved with in his office? Was it primarily Latin American issues?*

FLANIGAN: At least in theory I was his Latin American assistant if you will, although my base of knowledge was relatively limited. His background was largely as an officer in

our mission in New York. He wasn't a career Foreign Service Officer. I believe he had been in the Civil Service. In any event he had a lot of experience in our Mission to the United Nations in New York. So, he really spent a lot of time, probably more than any other Counselor before or since, dealing with United Nations issues.

*Q: He had been the Counselor for a couple of years before you joined him.*

FLANIGAN: He became counselor shortly after the Nixon Administration came to power. He came with Secretary of State William Rogers. That was the reason he was there. I believe Rogers had served at the UN during one of the General Assembly sessions and had gotten to know Pederson. Therefore when he put together his senior staff, he named Pederson. It wasn't my impression that they had a close relationship; but Rogers had apparently been impressed by Pederson's work at the UN.

*Q: Pederson's main focus was on the United Nations and the international organization area.*

FLANIGAN: That, and he also had one project that he tried to get off the ground with some success, very temporary success. He got the secretary's support to put out an annual publication not unlike the human rights report we do now. It was not on human rights but on United States foreign policy with respect to each country in the world. It was a compendium of foreign policy briefs if you will. I think it was only published for a couple of years or so.

*Q: Was that done primarily out of the Department of State or was the National Security Council and Henry Kissinger involved in that as well?*

FLANIGAN: Since Henry Kissinger was at the National Security Council, he was involved. I recall that relations the NSC were always difficult.

*Q: This compendium of U.S. experience or U.S. relations with different countries, was that significant, an important document. Was it an effort to break new ground or was it really kind of a stock taking?*

FLANIGAN: In the end it didn't break new ground. In the end it was stocktaking. I think the idea was that it would for the first time assemble for academic use or for the use of anybody that might be interested a summary of U.S. foreign policy interests, and it was country specific.

*Q: Oriented by country rather than...*

FLANIGAN: By issues.

*Q: Was there a multilateral section probably?*

FLANIGAN: Not that I recall.

*Q: Were you the coordinator of that?*

FLANIGAN: No. I was one of about five or six officers in the office; we all put that together. Don McHenry, Warren Zimmerman.

*Q: Another thing that counselors have done on occasion is speech writing. Was that one of your areas of responsibility for Secretary Rogers?*

FLANIGAN: The counselor's office did, but I didn't. This changed while I was there, when I was leaving. The speech writing function was divided into various areas as I recall, but it came in to the counselor's office just as I was leaving. Warren Zimmerman became the principal speech writer at that time. He had arrived in the office maybe six months before I left, something like that.

*Q: On the seventh floor at the State Department between the different under secretaries and the counselor from one administration to the other, there is always a bit of juggling and shifting of responsibilities also involving the policy planning staff. It sounds to me, I wasn't in Washington at that time, but it sounds like Pederson and the counselor's office had a large staff and a lot of responsibilities, is that fair to say?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, I think that's fair to say. In the end, it's my own impression and it's diluted by the years, but I don't think the office was terribly influential in either policy formulation or anything else along those lines. Part of it had to do with the change that was going on in the relationship between the State Department and the NSC. Henry Kissinger was the NSC; Bill Rogers was the secretary of state, so the power was shifting away from the State Department. The Policy Planning Council still existed. I think it probably played a coequal role with the counselor's office. Bill Cargo, as I recall, was the head of that office. It was right next to ours.

*Q: Did you do much in that period with the counselor on Latin America in that period? You said you were the Latin Americanist but he didn't really take much interest in such matters.*

FLANIGAN: No, we really didn't get engaged that I recall. When an issue came up, he would turn to me if it had something to do with Latin America, but...

*Q: He didn't go out of his way to try to take interest.*

FLANIGAN: No.

*Q: How about the relationship between the Counselor's Office and the International Organization Bureau. That must have been a little tricky.*

FLANIGAN: It was a little tricky. I recall there were some personal rivalries because of people who had worked together before, but because Pederson did have access to the

Secretary he did play a role.

*Q: Pederson's background. He was not a lawyer was he? He had been in government at the U.S. mission to the United Nations.*

FLANIGAN: Just the mission to the United Nations. I do not believe he was a lawyer. I believe he was an academician. In any event after serving as ambassador to Czechoslovakia he became president of the American University in Cairo.

*Q: Anything more we should talk about in that period with the counselor?*

FLANIGAN: No, I can't think of anything.

*Q: What happened to you after that?*

FLANIGAN: I finally got around to changing my area of interest or expanding it a little bit, so I went off to learn the Turkish language.

*Q: Had you wanted to particularly learn the Turkish language and serve in Turkey or was that an opportunity that presented itself. How did that happen to come about?*

FLANIGAN: I wanted to go to either Turkey or Greece. Greece was much more popular, so it was easier to get into Turkish training; so I happily did that.

*Q: That was what a full year language training program?*

FLANIGAN: Ten months. It was a long time.

*Q: Where were you assigned after that? After learning Turkish?*

FLANIGAN: In 1973 I went to Izmir for the first two years of what turned out to be a five year assignment in Turkey. We had a consulate general in Izmir at that time. We'd had consular and commercial relations with that part of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire for a long time, and it became a particular point of interest from a strategic point of view. There were two NATO military headquarters in Izmir, so it was a fairly active consulate general. I was the political officer and the deputy principal officer.

*Q: How many besides the consul general and yourself, were there two or three more officers?*

FLANIGAN: We had an administrative officer, a junior officer who did economic work. We had an American secretary, and we had a USIS branch officer. We also had two officers from DEA.

*Q: The consular district for Izmir was what, western Anatolia?*

FLANIGAN: Aegean Turkey basically, and the Mediterranean coast, halfway down the Mediterranean coast and halfway up the Aegean coast until we met the Adana and Istanbul consular districts.

*Q: And you went inland until you met the Ankara.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. Inland as far as Afyonkarahisar. Afyon is the Turkish word for opium.

*Q: Now did we have a political advisor connected with either of the NATO headquarters?*

FLANIGAN: No, we didn't. To a certain extent the consul general played that role. It was a limited extent, but he did. Limited because the American commanders were very senior. We had a four star Army general at Land Forces Southeast headquarters. We had a three star Air Force general at Sixth Allied Tactical Air Forces headquarters, and there were at least two other two star military officers at the two command headquarters. As you can see, it was a very high powered American military presence.

*Q: And you as deputy principal officer and political officer you were primarily involved in contacts and reporting on Turkish political developments or were you more involved with the NATO, U.S. military?*

FLANIGAN: No, I largely was dedicated to domestic political reporting. It was an fascinating time to be in Turkey. The government in power had been elected democratically, but its power had been greatly diminished by what was called "a coup by memorandum." The military had restricted its power, and the military effectively controlled a lot of policy, but it was in the process of giving up that control and elections were held in late '73 or early '74. It must have been late '73. As a result of those elections Bulent Ecevit became prime minister.

*Q: Well, the other major development in that period involved Cyprus and relations with Greece. How much of that affected you in the consulate in Izmir, and what role if any did you play in that period?*

FLANIGAN: We were observers, but we were close observers. Some of the Turkish forces that participated in what they called the intervention of Cyprus left from the Aegean coast and some from Izmir itself. It was a frightening time in many ways. Looking back on it, of course, there was probably no reason to be frightened; although, there had been reports at the time, and I think have been validated since that in fact the Greek Air Force was ordered to bomb Izmir but did not. I can recall quite vividly that summer. Consul General Glenn Smith was on home leave, so I was in charge. I was concerned about the safety of my family, and I felt responsible for the safety of the staff of the consulate general. We had a Turkish Cypriot who was one of our local employees, a very competent, very reasonable, interesting person, and I had learned quite a bit about Cyprus just because he was there. When the coup occurred against Makarios, he came to me and talked to me about it. I was , I guess, dumbfounded by his reaction. Like most Americans I had assumed that Turkish Cypriots would be happy with the overthrow of

Makarios. But, I was wrong. The reaction of the Turkish Cypriots who still had family in Cyprus was that it was a terrible thing. Makarios was someone they knew and understood even if they did not like or trust him. They knew that Makarios had been overthrown by Greek – not Greek Cypriot – military forces, and they feared that Cyprus would be united with Greece by force endangering the lives and livelihood of the Turkish Cypriots on the island. So from the Turkish Cypriot point of view, you could begin to see the problem. I wasn't terribly surprised when Turkish forces invaded a few days later. It all happened very quickly.

*Q: I think it was about five days. I think the coup was about July 15, and the intervention on the 20<sup>th</sup>.*

FLANIGAN: It was very fast, and of course the city of Izmir was blacked out. I recall going down to the consulate and doing as all offices had to do, taping paper over the windows. One of the curious things, and I'll never understand it, was that you could drive cars and you could have your lights on, but you had to have blue paper or blue paint over the head lamps.

*Q: To shield the lamps?*

FLANIGAN: I guess. I wouldn't have thought it would be very effective. There was a major Greek element at Lands Forces Southeast when the invasion occurred. The next day they all returned to Greece. Something in the range of 65 officers and men on the staff, and they all left immediately. There were daily Turkish airline flights between Izmir and Athens in those days. They were suspended. I think they are still suspended.

*Q: You mentioned that it was a frightening period for you and your family and the staff at the consulate because of the fear that there would be an attack by the Greek Air Force. What was the feeling generally of the Turks in Izmir toward the United States? We, of course, had dissuaded Turkey from taking action in Cyprus on a previous occasion or two. Did they think we would try to do it again or of course there were other problems that occurred later because of the action that Congress took. At that time was there support or interest or appreciation for the United States or was it a difficult time in that aspect?*

FLANIGAN: The attitude toward the United States was in general very positive. I am sure there was some distrust of us because of our efforts to be friends with both Turkey and Greece, but I always felt welcome. It was always acceptable to be an American either in Izmir or in rural Turkey. When I would go around the consular district, I nearly always received a friendly reception. At the extremes of the political spectrum, on the right and on the left, there were always a few elements that were somewhat antagonistic because they considered it to be in their own immediate political interest to be that way, but generally it was a very positive relationship.

*Q: Were there other consulates in Izmir at that time of any significance?*

FLANIGAN: There were as a matter of fact. None large, but the British, the French, the

Greeks, the Germans, the Italians and the Maltese were there. There were also a few active honorary consuls.

*Q: Was there a Soviet consulate?*

FLANIGAN: No, there wasn't.

*Q: Did the Greek consulate close down right away?*

FLANIGAN: Yes the Greek consulate closed immediately.

*Q: You mentioned narcotics not being an issue in Peru when you were there, how about in Turkey in the Izmir consular area?*

FLANIGAN: Narcotics was a major issue in Turkey when Richard Nixon first became president. By the time I arrived, it was still a major issue, but it was a major issue under control. The Turks had, somewhat reluctantly I think, responded to our efforts to get them to control opium production. By the time I arrived in 1973, opium production was controlled. Nobody grew opium poppies without a license; all of the fields were carefully controlled. All of the product was also controlled. Farmers weren't allowed to collect opium gum in the traditional fashion. Instead all of the poppies were grown to full maturity before being harvested and turned into poppy straw. The poppy straw was then processed at a government-owned facility and turned into opium products. As far as we could tell, there was no leakage in Turkey at the time. As you know, it is a very organized society with an authoritarian history; therefore, when they said they were in control, generally speaking they were in control. They knew what they were doing.

*Q: How about the general subject of protection of American citizens? Were there a large number of American citizens either resident in the consular district or who visited as tourists or otherwise?*

FLANIGAN: Well, not really, tourism hadn't taken off yet. There were the occasional tourist. The drug culture of the sixties had attracted some young people who unfortunately believed they could experiment without consequences. There were a few American citizens still serving prison sentence for drug offenses. The consulate had a responsibility to visit and monitor the welfare of these people. Other Americans included the occasional tourist, archeologists and a few people that were there with tobacco companies. At that time Aegean tobacco time made up about 10% of the tobacco that went into American cigarettes, so all of the major American tobacco companies had resident Americans or other expatriates there. Otherwise, there wasn't a large population, a few pioneers if you will.

*Q: You mentioned there were two American generals commanding the two NATO headquarters, and I assume there were other American officers, was there a large U.S. military presence in terms of numbers?*

FLANIGAN: Several hundred, all connected with the two headquarters. There was the Air Force headquarters which was a NATO facility and the Army headquarters which was a NATO facility and then there was a U.S. Air Force support mission which provided administrative and logistical support but in fact was not part of the NATO mission. Effectively there was an American base there as well. It was not a base in the classic sense since it was right in the middle of town.

*Q: It was American as opposed to NATO.*

FLANIGAN: That's right, among other things there was a Department of Defense school, which my children went to.

*Q: If I am not mistaken, the American consulate in Izmir is no more today. I don't know exactly when it was closed.*

FLANIGAN: It closed about two years ago I think.

*Q: Do you have any feeling based on your two years there whether, how valuable it was? Obviously lots of things have changed. There are no longer American officers commanding those NATO headquarters.*

FLANIGAN: Yes there is a limited number of American military personnel there now. They are not in command, so the American official presence is much reduced. There is an historic American presence there. There was the American girls school which was the best women's secondary school in Izmir. It had a history; it had been founded by a Protestant religious group. As far as I know, it is still there and is still a good school, so there are those kinds of presence. Also, I think Aegean Turkey is a unique part of Turkey. I suppose not having a consulate there would be the rough equivalent of a major foreign government not having representation in Los Angeles or perhaps Miami. It may not be essential, but it is useful. We probably miss something now not having any representation in Izmir.

*Q: The other historical convention particular to the Izmir area is the many Greek Americans who originated there or their families did, and I assume perhaps during the period you were there some wanted to go back to visit cemeteries or places where they lived, or was that, were you aware of any of that?*

FLANIGAN: I wasn't aware of any of that. I suspect it was fairly common when I first arrived, but when I had been there nine months, of course, the invasion of Cyprus occurred. The relationship between Turkey and anything Greek became so tense for the next several years that I doubt that many Greek Americans would have tried to go back. Let me just add that American tourism in that part of Turkey has increased geometrically since I was there. Of course not having the consulate in Izmir is a problem – or at least an inconvenience - for them.

*Q: I suppose that area is covered from the consulate in Istanbul now, or the embassy in Ankara.*



FLANIGAN: I suppose. I'm not sure how it was divided up. I would guess Ankara.

*Q: Well if you think about places like Ephesus and Smyrna, names like that.*

FLANIGAN: And of course Troy is up by Canakkale in the Istanbul consular district. There were several civilizations that existed in Aegean Turkey. The Lydians, the Phrygians, the Lycians, the Greeks. It was just fascinating. It was a great place to be with young children. My wife and I look back on those two years as some of the most interesting and pleasant of our foreign service life.

*Q: The other question that always comes up when you talk about reporting from constituent posts or consulates is how free were you as the consulate in setting its priorities and reporting schedule, and to what extent did you have to coordinate or clear through the embassy? To what extent could you report more or less directly to the State Department?*

FLANIGAN: We reported in parallel fashion; that was the arrangement. As I recall our telegrams were sent "action" to Ankara and "info" to Washington. The effect was simultaneous transmission to both places, but we maintained the niceties of our subordinate relationship. There was no restriction on our reporting. We were free to report, and I think the reporting we did was sometimes very useful. In the run-up to the elections of 1973 we were able to detect in Aegean Turkey the beginning of the surge of Bulent Ecevit and his Republican People's Party which resulted in their surprise victory. Ecevit's strength first emerged in the Aegean area, and we were able to presage his emergence as prime minister. It gave Washington a fair warning that we might not have had otherwise.

*Q: Did you travel quite a bit outside of Izmir or did you primarily confine yourself to the city?*

FLANIGAN: No, in contrast to what happens in embassies I think, in consulates it seems that you do travel. I regularly would take tours of all of the provinces which we had responsibility for, visit local officials and local party leaders. I really had the best opportunity of my whole career for understanding and reporting on a domestic political situation. It was never duplicated.

*Q: You were talking to both the administrative governors and the political party personages.*

FLANIGAN: Right, the governors were representatives of the central government, but I always called on the major political party leaders too.

*Q: You were the political officer. Was there an economic officer or commercial officer in the consulate?*

FLANIGAN: We had a junior officer who acted as the economic and commercial officer.

*Q: He would do the Izmir international trade fair and whatever commercial things we were trying to do at that time. Anything else about your time in Izmir? It sounds like it was an enjoyable assignment.*

FLANIGAN: It was an enjoyable assignment. I suppose there were two disruptive elements. The first was the invasion of Cyprus. Obviously that was disturbing. Then there was an earthquake. Both Peru and Turkey happened to be earthquake-prone places and it is a fact of daily life for citizens of those countries. I recall we lived on the waterfront in Izmir in a nice apartment building with a view out over Izmir Bay. Unfortunately it was built on landfill. We experienced a small earthquake, but the epicenter must have been right beneath us because it was really a violent experience. People 10 miles away didn't even know it had happened, but we knew. The Izmir clock tower – the symbol of the city - stopped and didn't run again for years. A couple of people were killed and a lot of buildings along the waterfront were damaged.

*Q: Was your building damaged?*

FLANIGAN: It was damaged but not so that we couldn't live in it. Walls were cracked and windows were broken, things like that.

*Q: Where did you grow up before you went to Tufts?*

FLANIGAN: I grew up in Indiana.

*Q: So you didn't have a lot of earthquake experience.*

FLANIGAN: None!

*Q: Did you have a major earthquake in Lima while you were there?*

FLANIGAN: They had one just before we arrived so when we moved into the hotel the cracks were apparent on the walls. We had basically two years of rather constant aftershocks from that one, and shortly after I came back to Washington, they had another very major one, very destructive. I recall, Mrs. Nixon went down to Peru in an effort to show our concern.

*Q: Let me come back to the effects of Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in the summer of 1974 and the impact that had on you particularly while you were still at the consulate general in Izmir. In what other ways did that affect you? Did you do some other reporting about how people were interpreting what was going on? Did you ever visit Cyprus from Izmir?*

FLANIGAN: No, not from Izmir, no I didn't. We really didn't report on attitudes about Cyprus except as they affected domestic politics.

*Q: The U.S. Congress began to react to what Turkey had done in Cyprus; did that happen while you were still in Izmir or later?*

FLANIGAN: It began while I was there, but most of it happened while I was in Ankara immediately afterward.

*Q: Because you went from Izmir to Ankara. What was your job?*

FLANIGAN: I was the second officer in the political section, so I continued to follow domestic politics. I also handled a lot of the bilateral issues at the Foreign Ministry. U.S.-Turkish relations.

*Q: Who was the political counselor at the time?*

FLANIGAN: George McFarland had taken over just before I arrived.

*Q: So you knew him.*

FLANIGAN : I knew he had been the deputy to the political counselor. Maury Draper had been political counselor when I arrived in Izmir. He had been replaced briefly by Myles Green, and by the time I arrived in Ankara, George McFarland had moved up to be the counselor.

*Q: Did you, when you were in Izmir, regularly visit the Embassy in Ankara?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, several times.

*Q: And the ambassador was?*

FLANIGAN: William Macomber.

*Q: The whole time you were there?*

FLANIGAN: The whole time I was in Izmir and the first two years I was in Ankara. He was replaced by Ronald Spiers.

*Q: What were some of the major issues while you were in Ankara in the political section that you were reporting on? You said it was primarily domestic political and bilateral.*

FLANIGAN: Well, the Cyprus situation had become the major preoccupation by the time I arrived. It tended to dominate the relationship. There was another national election while I was in Ankara, and we followed that very closely. But the overriding concern was the Cyprus problem and the effect on the bilateral relationship – which was corrosive. Even though we had a political-military section as well as a political section, there was to a certain extent an overlap in our dealings on the subjects. The political-military section attended to the bilateral military relationship and to the negotiation and implementation

of the military base agreements.

*Q: The nuts and bolts of the military presence in Turkey.*

FLANIGAN: Exactly, because we had a major presence in Turkey.

*Q: Why don't you remind us about what had happened? On the overall bilateral level you mentioned a deterioration that had taken place. That had run its course when you got to Ankara in 1975 or was it still happening?*

FLANIGAN: This is impressionistic because I can't remember the precise times, but what had happened was that Congress in reaction to the invasion of Cyprus had imposed an embargo on the sale of arms to Turkey. At the same time it had frozen assistance programs. The regular AID program had already been phased out. It was closing down by the time I arrived in Ankara. Turkey graduated in this case. It had nothing to do with Cyprus. But, the military relationship was still very important; there was military assistance both in terms of funding and all sorts of interactive relationships, and those had been frozen. In reaction to that, the Turks suspended the activities we had been conducting at the bases we had in Turkey. Those included intelligence collection obviously, which is one of the major things that we did there. Since they were directed against the Soviet Union, it was of some consequence to us. Trying to sort out this, overcome this problem and get Turkey to agree to the resumption of our activities or to get the Congress to lift the embargo or some median resolution was what we...

*Q: The embargo was essentially on sales of military items, not normal trade.*

FLANIGAN: Correct, it was on the sale of military items.

*Q: One of the objections of the Congress, of course, was not necessarily that Turkey had felt threatened or felt compelled to act by the coup against Makarios, but rather that they invaded Cyprus and taken control of a very large portion of the island and was not willing to leave. Some of the Turks didn't agree with that. You had mentioned your relationship in Izmir with the Foreign Service national Turkish Cypriot background and how he immediately knew there was a problem when Makarios was overthrown. How do you recall your Turkish contacts looking at all of this and justifying what they had done particularly the second action they took?*

FLANIGAN: Just to supply a little background on why we were upset. Turkish forces used military equipment which we had given or sold them. We considered such use to be contrary to the conditions of grant or sale. Turkey had agreed not to use this equipment for anything except their defense. We did not interpret this as being the defense of Turkey. The Turkish justification for the second operation was simply that they had a toehold which they couldn't defend. I don't think that would withstand careful scrutiny. What happens in a situation like that is a military commander says I can't put myself or my troops in a position of having to defend this little piece of territory here; I've got to expand the perimeter, and that puts political authorities in a difficult position unless they say yes. Especially if subsequently something happens. So, I think that under those

circumstances the Turkish government was a pushover for the local military commander who decided to move forward.

*Q: How do you recall generally the relationship between the elected government and the military? You said the government had been elected following a period where the military was very much looking over the shoulders of the previous government? Did Ecevit government have very much leeway vis a vis the military during this time you were in Ankara?*

FLANIGAN: Well, yes and no. Ecevit had become a very popular leader, in part because he had authorized the Cyprus invasion. On the other hand he represented a party that some the military considered dangerous. Although it was just mildly left of center, it was left of center, and therefore he was constrained in what he could do without antagonizing the military which was very conservative. He was very effective internationally because he spoke very good English. He was urbane and intellectual. I think most foreign observers were surprised that he became a strong partisan of the invasion. In retrospect it is not surprising. Turks, to the extent that you can generalize, are nationalistic, and when the government takes an action that purports to be in the defense of other Turks, then the population supports it.

*Q: In terms of the relationship with the United States as you said, it was the Congress that enacted embargo legislation. How did Turkey look upon the Congress but also on the executive branch in the period you were there? Obviously there were executive branch members who came, but there were also members of Congress who came to Turkey. What sort of recollection do you have of that?*

FLANIGAN: The Turks were totally convinced that Congress was under the control of the Greek lobby, so they took it upon themselves to try and establish a counter force in the United States. They were very proud and consequently uncomfortable with the idea of explaining themselves to others. It somehow seemed demeaning, and they claimed not to be very adept at it. But in fact, they put together a fairly good public relations effort over the next several years. It took them several years to make it effective. That is one of the results of all of this is that Turkey became much more adept at presenting its positions on the world stage and particularly in the United States.

*Q: They weren't able to appeal to much in the way of an ethnic group in the United States. There are Turkish Americans but certainly not very many compared to the Greek Americans. Who were they appealing to and what was their theme, the argument they used?*

FLANIGAN: The appeal was security-based. They pointed out that Turkey occupies a strategic piece of real estate especially in the context of the cold war. They also spent a lot of time as they now do talking about being a bridge between Europe and the Middle East. So, they tried to enhance the strategic importance of Turkey and were fairly effective in doing that. In fact, I do recall some Congressional visits to Ankara while I was there. Most of the Congressmen who came turned out to be fairly sympathetic in the

end. Some of them were not when they arrived. I remember Steve Solarz made his first trip to Ankara while I was there. He came largely as a skeptic, but left fairly strongly convinced that Turkey was important to the United States. Not that Turkey was right, but that it was a country that had to be dealt with, and we needed to find a way of getting it back in the fold if you will. Subsequently he was quite effective as a young Congressman in the effort to get the embargo lifted.

*Q: As I recall he was elected for the first time in 1974 just after the Turkish intervention in Cyprus, and I believe during his campaign he made certain promises or statements and got a lot of votes from Greek voters, constituents in his district in New York.*

FLANIGAN: I think this was his first trip overseas. In fact, he came, he was brought by another New York Congressman, Ben Rosenthal, who was a strong supporter of Greece and a critic of Turkey.

*Q: Not talking specifically about Solarz, who was the most effective with people like that who visited in that period? Was it Ambassador Macomber who I am sure spent long periods of time with them or Prime Minister Ecevit or was it sort of a combination of the two of them and others as well?*

FLANIGAN: It was a combination. Macomber did spend a lot of time working with Congress. He had been Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations and had an appreciation of the importance of the Congress in the conduct of foreign policy. So, when Congressmen or Senators came, he went all out to see that they got a good appreciation of his views, that is the administration's views, and so I think he was quite effective. He was considered to be difficult to work for, but that is a different issue. The Turks themselves were sometimes not as effective as they could and should be. Ecevit was an exception because he had gone to school in England. He spoke excellent English. He had a better feel for dealing with the United States and Western Europe than most other Turkish leaders did. Most Turks were somewhat introspective at that time. Xenophobia is an overstatement, but they had an appreciation of the importance of Turkey that if not exaggerated, at least it was exaggerated relative to its importance in other worlds.

*Q: It was hard to convey or communicate, and they didn't always do it effectively. Let's talk a little bit more about Ecevit. He also went to Robert College in Istanbul. He also at some point was in a seminar that Henry Kissinger conducted at Harvard University. Let me ask you a little bit about him in terms of your experience, but also more generally another dimension of the Cyprus crisis for Turkey in the United States was as we've said it was Congress, the legislative branch that took action because to a certain extent the executive branch, the president had not done anything or very little in reaction to what had been done. How do you sort of remember the Turks looking upon that? Did they see President Nixon and then President Ford as kind of their ally and friend and particularly Henry Kissinger who was National Security Advisor and then Secretary of State? How do you remember that part of it?*

FLANIGAN: No, I think in fact they had a perception that we were playing a double game with them. They didn't really have a good appreciation of how our system worked, and they began to get one because they had to deal with it. I think they felt that any President if he wanted to could have his way, and they were just not convinced that Congress by itself could do what it had done. I think you are right. I think the record will show that the administration did try to restrain the Turks, especially after the first invasion. They tried to restrain them from the beginning, weren't successful, but not being successful were not prepared to expend as much leverage as the Congress was prepared to use to get them back off of Cyprus.

*Q: Let's talk a little bit more about some of the other dimensions of your job in the political section. You said you did primarily domestic political affairs. You had a lot of contact with the Parliament primarily or the Foreign Ministry?*

FLANIGAN: The Foreign Ministry more. I dealt with the parties, and I went to the Parliament from time to time, but it wasn't that common. I spent a lot of time at the Foreign Ministry because of the crisis in the relationship trying to convey this message or that message. Because I was a Turkish language officer I often accompanied the Ambassador, both Macomber and Spiers, when they went to see the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry or the Foreign Minister.

*Q: Not to act as an interpreter but to be aware of what was said in Turkish.*

FLANIGAN: To be a note taker and to be aware. My Turkish was adequate, but I wasn't up to interpreting. In fact, some of these conversations, depending on the Foreign Minister or who was involved, were conducted in English, but generally they were conducted in Turkish and English with a Turkish foreign service officer acting as interpreter.

*Q: Maybe we could just step ahead a little bit. While you were there of course, there was an election in the United States, and Jimmy Carter was elected President. What do you remember about Turkish analysis of that election and expectations when the Democrats came into the White House?*

FLANIGAN: First of all, I think they were astounded. They just couldn't believe it. I recall having a group of Turkish politicians over during the campaign and showing a small movie about Jimmy Carter.

*Q: Campaigning or debating or something.*

FLANIGAN: Exactly. I can't remember what it was. It was one that his supporters had made, and it presented him in a sympathetic light. But it also highlighted his religious beliefs. The Turks were dogmatically secular and they just couldn't believe that this man was a serious candidate. He was so different from anything they had dealt with in the United States, so I think they were astounded and probably somewhat concerned about what it might mean. They had become convinced that the Republicans were as close as they were going to get to friends in the United States, and were concerned that Carter

would be much more responsive to their bugaboo, the Greek lobby.

*Q: It is said that church bells were rung in Greek Cyprus when Carter was elected.*

FLANIGAN: That did not happen in Turkey, but once again there is a difference between the way the Turks respond to things and the way Greeks respond to things. Generalizations are always dangerous, but I think it is fairly safe to say that Greeks are much more inclined to show their emotions than are Turks.

*Q: One of the first things President Carter did as far as relations with Turkey were concerned was to dispatch Clark Clifford as a special emissary. Were you involved in his visit?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, I was involved in his visit. It was a fascinating experience in bilateral diplomacy to watch and see these things happen. Ambassador Macomber had a penchant for gathering groups around him to deal with issues. So any officer who was interested and willing to spend the time, could be involved. Since I lived about 100 yards from the residence, whenever he would invite people to come up and talk about so and so, I would go. I was involved in a lot of these things. As you know the Clifford mission was then followed by the Christopher mission. It was a continuation of that same effort which ultimately was unsuccessful I suppose, but it did improve the relationship and it did lead to a better understanding on the part of Turkey of what our concerns were and how we operated which was essential. They needed to know how to deal with us; they didn't really know at that point.

*Q: I guess you were still in Ankara when President Carter decided to go to the Congress and ask for basically a lifting of the embargo restrictions or at least to put the relationship on a different basis than it had been since '74.*

FLANIGAN: Yes I was. Once again, the Turks in response to that were pleased, but they were so displeased that it had ever been imposed that the extent of expression of pleasure was quite limited.

*Q: They probably anticipated there would be some kind of conditions or understanding or something that would not be quite the same as before this episode began.*

FLANIGAN: And they already knew that we were going to close some installations permanently, that we had decided after they had been closed for some time that bringing them back up to speed was not worth the effort.

*Q: We could get along without some of them. Was Ecevit, he was not prime minister throughout the entire period you were there?*

FLANIGAN: No, in fact when elections were held, I think it must have been '77, the government that emerged was a coalition government between the parties of two conservative parties, the Justice Party of Suleyman Demirel and the National Salvation



Party of Necmaddin Erbakan. No it was earlier than that. I'm not sure; I'd have to go back and look at the record but I recall that shortly after I arrived in Ankara in 1975, I went to a political rally and to listen to a speech given by Demirel, which meant that they were campaigning already, so elections must have been held in the fall of '75 only two years after the previous elections. In any event, these elections marked the emergence of an openly Muslim party, the National Salvation Party.

*Q: Demirel is now in 1997 President and Erbakan is at least until last week, prime minister. Maybe there has even been a change today. There was a lot of terrorism some aimed at Americans in Turkey in the late 70's. Did that go on when you were in Ankara?*

FLANIGAN: It had and it hadn't. We were concerned. There was a lot of terrorism that was sort of Turk against Turk. It was predominately right against left and left against right. We were sometimes accidental victims. There were occasions shortly after I left, a couple of incidents where the United States military were targeted specifically and people were killed. I recall I was back in Washington serving as desk officer for Turkey. While we were in Ankara we were concerned. I recall hardly a night would go by when we wouldn't hear an explosion someplace.

*Q: An explosion rather than a shot.*

FLANIGAN: An explosion. That was very typical, car bombs or some kind of bombing. Normally not doing a lot of damage, but sometimes yes.

*Q: What about the Kurdish dimension? Was that a subject while you were in Turkey?*

FLANIGAN: No, it wasn't. The Kurds were still restrained in the expression of their Kurdishness. Everybody knew that there was a Kurdish community, and they knew there were Kurdish villages. I remember there was one just outside of Ankara that we would visit from time to time because it was distinctly different, the way the people dressed and I gather the way they spoke. I can't attest to that because they all spoke Turkish around me. There were Kurdish members of Parliament, quite active, but I suppose they were by all Kurdish national standards co-opted because they were acting as Turks. Kurdish nationalism per se was just beginning to develop and mainly in Germany among the workers, many of whom were Kurds. Subsequently it developed as a major issue in Turkey.

*Q: How about there was certainly a period where Turkish diplomats were under threat from Armenian groups, one group in particular whose name I don't remember right now. Had that occurred while you were there?*

FLANIGAN: It was at that time while I was in Izmir and while I was in Ankara. I can recall, in fact, one of the first things I can recall having arrived in Ankara was attending, going with the chargé to a funeral for the Turkish ambassador to the Vatican who had been assassinated. Of course, there had been incidents in Los Angeles where the one of the Turkish consuls or maybe two had been killed. I can't remember. The Turkish Foreign

Service really felt under siege. Over the course of about five years they lost a substantial number of people. It colored their view of the world more than the relationship with Greece I think. My own experience is the Greeks were much more obsessed if that's the right word, with Turkey than the Turks were with Greece. It was an issue that many Turks were not even aware of and certainly if they were, it was not something they dealt with on a daily basis, whereas most Greeks did deal with what they called the Turkish threat on a daily basis. It was a constant issue. I think most Turks were amazed by the emergence of Armenian terrorism. They were largely ignorant of the massacres of Armenians that had occurred in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. And to the extent they knew about them they had no sense that they as Turks were responsible for what had happened. They were astounded to find they had these mortal enemies.

*Q: The Turkish Republic was very secular and kind of dated back to the 1920's.*

FLANIGAN: Not into the early 20's. The large forced movement of Armenians occurred earlier still, maybe 1907 to 1912. I can't remember precisely, but it was before the founding of the Turkish Republic.

*Q: Whereas a lot of Greeks living in Anatolia left in the early 20's. What about Turkish relations in that period with other countries in the Middle East, Syria, Israel, Iraq, Iran?*

FLANIGAN: When I was in Ankara, CENTO still existed. It died while I was there, but Turkey still had a fairly good relationship with Iran. It had a fairly good relationship with Israel. It is interesting how short our perspective is because I keep hearing on NPR and other places speak of this "new" phenomenon of Turkish-Israeli cooperation on the international stage, but in fact, in those days the Turkish, Iranian, and Israeli intelligence services exchanged information on a routine basis.

*Q: The relationship with Syria and Iraq?*

FLANIGAN: The relationship with Syria was always a difficult one because in the late '30s, Turkey had seized Alexandretta, a part of Syria. The relationship with Iraq was traditionally a good one. That still is by and large the feeling. Even though the relationship with Saddam Hussein is not good, I think that most Turks would think that the relationship with Iraq is not bad.

*Q: How about with the Soviet Union in this period?*

FLANIGAN: It was a difficult relationship. Turkey was of course, a member of NATO and an ally of the United States, and yet Turkey felt very vulnerable since it had a long common border with the Soviet Union. They tried to maintain a decent relationship. It was not easy balancing those roles.

*Q: You mentioned that you visited Cyprus but not while you were in Izmir. Did you visit Cyprus from Ankara?*

FLANIGAN: Yes I did. I went once. Of course, by then you had to go either through, as I did, Tel Aviv or through Athens. And since getting to Athens was more complicated than getting to Tel Aviv, I chose to go to Tel Aviv and spend the night there and fly on to Cyprus.

*Q: And you had a chance to go to the Turkish side of Cyprus as well as the Greek side.*

FLANIGAN: I was there only a couple of days, but I called on both communities and went to the north side as well.

*Q: What else should we talk about in regard to this period? Again in Ankara it was '75-'78. I think we have pretty well covered the Turkish bilateral relationship and Turkish internal politics. When you left in '78, U.S. military activities in Turkey were still essentially suspended.*

FLANIGAN: Yes, but we were on the verge of resuming activities. That did occur later; it was after I was back in Washington.

*Q: When you left in '78 you came back to the State Department to be the Turkish desk officer.*

FLANIGAN: And to work for Ray Ewing.

*Q: You arrived in Washington at a time when things were very busy. The Congress was just on the verge of taking the action that President Carter had recommended.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. In fact, I think it even happened before I got to the desk because I don't remember being engaged in the effort and the constant communication with Congress. I think it was afterward that I came to the desk.

*Q: It was, I don't remember the exact date. It was during the summer of 1978.*

FLANIGAN: Yes and I probably didn't get to the desk until August or September.

*Q: In any event it was very close to it. You were on the desk trying primarily to build on and overcome a very difficult period. You went back to Turkey sometimes?*

FLANIGAN: I went back to Turkey a couple or three times. I can't remember exactly. The Turks themselves I think, became determined to do better in getting the United States to understand their own perspectives. As I say, they began to develop some expertise in public relations. They sent a new ambassador over who was more modern, I suppose one would say, in his outlook and approach, Elekdag.

*Q: Had been the secretary general before in the Foreign Ministry and so had been accustomed to dealing at a very high level with the United States and other countries.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. I think by and large he was quite successful here. Obviously it did not overcome all of the problems Turkey has had over the years in making people understand what they are all about, but it began the process. From my perspective, what we were trying to do was to reestablish a relationship to the extent that we could that had been damaged by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, by our suspension of military sales, by their closure of the bases. So there was re-negotiation of the military basing agreement. There was constant effort to get some movement on the Cyprus issue. We thought we made incremental progress. History suggests we fooled ourselves.

*Q: There was certainly a big issue about the level of assistance of military sales that should be permitted. The Turks wanted to recover lost ground as quickly as possible.*

FLANIGAN: And in fact, we did expand rather substantially the assistance we gave to Turkey in the immediate aftermath of the lifting of the embargo. But, because of the pressures of the Congress, we also expanded the assistance that we gave to Greece in a 7-10 ratio as it were. It always took some of the edge off the satisfaction that Turkey received in whatever assistance we provided because they knew that Greece would be getting seventy percent of that amount. They didn't see themselves as a threat to Greece, whereas Greece saw Turkey as a constant threat. They saw Greece as an irritant, something that complicated relations with the United States and acted as a barrier to closer cooperation with Europe, not a military threat.

*Q: And a much smaller country with much smaller armed forces.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. The ability to do some damage perhaps but certainly not the ability to threaten Turkish sovereignty or Turkish nationality. In contrast, Greece was a small nation and knew that Turkey probably had the power to do exactly what the Ottoman Empire had once done.

*Q: Alan, let me pose a question slightly differently than I started to before. Who were some of the main actors in U.S. foreign policy toward Turkey in the period you were the desk officer for Turkish affairs?*

FLANIGAN: Well, it was in the State Department. The counselor of the Department at that time was Matthew Nimetz, and he had been given principal responsibility for dealing with that part of the world. Even though Greece, Turkey and Cyprus were the responsibility of the European Bureau, Nimetz took the lead on this issue. George Vest, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, was kept informed but concentrated on other parts of the Bureau. There was also the active oversight and more than occasional participation by Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher.

*Q: And I guess the secretary was involved to some extent.*

FLANIGAN: The secretary was involved to some extent. He was interested in the issue and from time to time did get involved personally.

*Q: But as you say it was maybe one of the first major foreign policy issues that was given to Christopher and Nimetz to take primary responsibility for. How about members of Congress and their staffs? Was there a lot of interest in Turkey while you were the desk officer?*

FLANIGAN: I think it was a down period in a sense. After all of the effort of the previous couple of years, the Congress took a breather. Of course assistance – how much and what kind – was a constant issue. There were people who were very interested. Senator Sarbanes, of course, a formidable member of the so-called Greek lobby was very supportive of the Greek community and was very effective in making sure that whatever we did to support Turkey did not jeopardize Greece or didn't appear to jeopardize Greece. He was very interested and very effective.

*Q: Were there particular members who were special friends of Turkey? You had mentioned some before from a security point of view.*

FLANIGAN: Yes, Steve Solarz had become identified as being a strong supporter of Turkey. Senator Tower and Senator Byrd became very strong and powerful supporters of the assistance program to Turkey over the years.

*Q: How about in terms of supporting the embassy and U.S. citizen interests in Turkey, were there particular issues? The terrorism question that we mentioned before continued.*

FLANIGAN: It continued and it grew because there were some American victims. Life for Americans in Turkey became more difficult in the two years after I left there. I think people began to be seriously concerned about their safety. When I was there, that generally was not the case even though occasionally there would be problems. My family and I traveled all over the country in our car, drove 55,000 miles in our car while we were there. The only great hazard was the traffic which was quite serious - and running out of gasoline which was sometimes serious out in rural Turkey too. Overall, it was a fairly safe place to be during the five years we were there. But it became increasingly unsafe while I was on the desk.

*Q: The military did take action to overthrow or take over the civilian government. I think that happened after you left the desk. That was kind of a political turmoil within Turkey as opposed to a safety level.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. As I said, most of the violence in Turkey was left against right and right against left. It was political violence and we were occasional, sometimes accidental targets. The violence grew enormously in '79 and '80, and it was ultimately destabilizing. Unfortunately the elected government could not control the violence. The military stepped in. As you say, I had already left the desk.

*Q: There were certainly warning signals.*

FLANIGAN: I wouldn't say I wasn't surprised because you are always surprised when a

democratic government is overthrown. In a sense you have been there at the beginning; you have observed the election; you have seen how it worked, and then suddenly it is all over. When you are an advocate for democracy, it is always disturbing to see it fail.

*Q: How about the economic dimension of Turkey and U.S. relations with Turkey on that score? Was that something of particular interest to you as desk officer? Was much going on there?*

FLANIGAN: There wasn't a lot going on yet. I mean Turkey was just beginning to seek and receive a lot of U.S. investment attention. I don't remember any particular issues or crises offhand.

*Q: I think there was sort of an effort to stabilize the economy in the old International Monetary Fund. I think that happened near the end of your time maybe.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. That was the second Demirel government.

*Q: Then the military kept him on. That was after you left. They continued to have programs.*

FLANIGAN: That is when they really did stabilize. That was the other element of course. Not only was security a problem, the economy was imploding in a sense. It had gotten out of hand.

*Q: You had been desk officer in charge of Peruvian affairs and now Turkish affairs, with ten years in between. How different were your roles? Turkey was perhaps a much more important ally and country with very difficult problems. Was that the main difference or were there other differences in that decade or so in between?*

FLANIGAN: It was the principal difference. It is hard to make judgments this far removed, but obviously there was a lot more interest in Turkey and what was going on. It was a much larger country as you say. It had some strategic importance for us that Peru did not have, and it was in the cold war context, so it was in that sense more important. As far as how we functioned, I think because of the interest in it and because of the fact that the counselor had been assigned specific responsibility and the deputy secretary had developed a personal interest and had responsibility, I had a lot more contact with the seventh floor and a lot more contact with policy makers. I can recall that Warren Christopher from time to time would call me to ask about developments in Turkey. That was very different. It didn't happen on Peru.

*Q: I suppose another difference was that other agencies, particularly the Defense Department but other agencies as well were very engaged and involved with Turkey in a way that I think you said before, you really didn't do much with other agencies with regard to Peru.*

FLANIGAN: That's right, with the exception of the Defense Department which was

interested. Once again I think the State Department was the primary protagonist in the relationship with Turkey, but that was already changing. There had been the beginning of a revolution in the way the U.S. Government deals with countries. I recall we were negotiating a prisoner exchange treaty. That was being done with the Justice Department. We dealt with Treasury from time to time on specific issues which hadn't happened in my earlier incarnation as a desk officer.

*Q: You were involved with Turkey for about eight straight years which is pretty long for a Foreign Service career. Was that too much for you?*

FLANIGAN: Well, it was too much at the time. I really felt that I needed to get away from it. By that time I had spent well over half of my career working on Turkey. It was a fascinating country. I always hoped that I would go back again, but I never got that opportunity.

*Q: And in 1980 you did move on. What did you do then?*

FLANIGAN: I moved over to the Office of Western European Affairs where I was the deputy director. Western European Affairs is smaller than it sounds: Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, the Vatican, and Malta.

*Q: You were deputy director for two years and then director for a year or so.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. I was deputy director for, about a year and a half each I'd say. Jack Maresca was the director when I went to the office. In '81 Van Galbraith was named ambassador to France, and he asked Jack to be his deputy chief of mission. I then served as director of the office until '83.

*Q: Those are all important countries. Spain and Portugal I guess were well established in the democratic period. Obviously U.S. relations with all of them were good. What were some of the main issues and problems that you had to deal with in that period you were the deputy and then the director?*

FLANIGAN: Our relationship with France always seemed to be prickly. There were always specific issues, not general issues but specific issues; we had to deal with to keep the French relationship on track. It was just a product of our looking at the world in different ways. The French having specific interests in Africa; our having specific interests in other places. The French having withdrawn from NATO and our desire to keep the French involved and engaged on security issues without according them a special status. That was always an issue. Italy - During my time in the office the Italians had a chronically unstable parliamentary situation, and since it was a parliamentary government, they had a chronically unstable government, changing governments it seemed almost monthly. From time to time there would be these various threats that the Communist Party might be brought in to one of the coalition governments. That was always a concern to us. We spent a lot of time trying to convince Italian politicians not to include the Communist Party, however tame it might be and however Italian it might be. The same thing, of course, was a concern to us in France. When Mitterand became Prime

Minister, the Socialists became the majority party, and we were concerned about his decision to bring two members of the Communist Party, I think it was two, into his government. It was a major conflict in the relationship at the time.

*Q: Even though as I recall they were in very technical functions.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. I can't recall the exact portfolios, but regardless it was an issue of principle as far as we were concerned, and certainly one we spent a lot of time dealing with. Of course the French and Italians also considered it an issue of principle and thought we were crazy. During those years we also continued to be concerned about the evolution of Portugal. Portugal, as you say, was on the track to democracy. The transition from the Salazar dictatorship to democracy was not smooth however. The extreme left almost seized power. By 1980 it was fairly stable, but it was still a relatively undeveloped country trying to resolve some of the economic and social consequences of the simultaneous change of government and end of empire. The Spaniards were still working on trying to stabilize democracy in the post-Franco period. Both Spain and Portugal were fairly tentative at that point in their approaches to democracy. Ultimately quite successful in both cases, but it took some time. We were an interested party. The involvement that we had in any of those countries was certainly less than the countries I had served in before - Peru, and Turkey. Although we were friends and we were engaged in these countries, it wasn't the same kind of relationship and therefore, it was what I would have to call much more of a normal bilateral relationship, whereas the others were abnormal in the sense that we were much more engaged than we normally would have been.

*Q: And involved in problems that essentially engaged us rather than observing development that was not really our problem.*

FLANIGAN: Also, by the way, it was during the time I was in Western European affairs that we established diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

*Q: And sent our first accredited ambassador.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. We had always had a president's special envoy, well not always had but for a few years before that we had a president's special envoy to the Vatican who functioned in a very similar role, but it wasn't an embassy and the staff was very limited. After Ronald Reagan was elected, one of his kitchen cabinet friends, William Wilson, became the special envoy and then managed through his efforts with the president and members of Congress to get it changed.

*Q: Because that did require legislation, and it was somewhat controversial.*

FLANIGAN: It was still controversial. I'm not sure why. Well, I grew up as a Protestant in the middle west; so I think I understand.

*Q: Separation of church and state - the role of the Holy See.*



FLANIGAN: But the fact of the matter is the Vatican is an institution that has a world view. Along with a handful of other countries in the world, the Vatican has a competent diplomatic corps. It is an active participant on the world stage and our interests often coincide. It is in my view very useful to have a relationship with the Vatican.

*Q: And we saw as our primary reason for that contact exchanging views about things all over the world which gave our ambassador to the Vatican there some justification for thinking themselves somewhat unique and special, a dimension to cover all U.S. foreign policy no matter how remote from the Vatican.*

FLANIGAN: The role of the president's special envoy to the Vatican had changed over the years. It varied from individual to individual. Some of the more recent incumbents had assumed a wider role I think, and certainly Bill Wilson himself did. In the end he managed to get himself into trouble because of unauthorized contacts with Libya.

*Q: Were you still involved at the desk there in the Office of European Affairs at that point?*

FLANIGAN: No, I wasn't. I had already left. I'm pretty sure I had already left. It was something we were totally unaware of.

*Q: How about Malta, the last of the Western European countries.*

FLANIGAN: It was an interesting time. Dom Mintoff was in power. He had come to power by defining Maltese nationalism in anti-western terms. So the relationship was somewhat strained. I visited Malta once. It is a curious little island – actually two islands - in the middle of the Mediterranean. Our major concern was the cozy relationship the Maltese had with the Libyans. It still is, I imagine.

*Q: I want to come back to France for a minute, but many of these countries except for the Vatican and Malta are members of NATO, members now of the European union, but this was a time when our bilateral relationship was still pretty important. We were not trying to conduct a common coordinated European foreign policy. The role of the commission of the EEU was not as important as it has become.*

FLANIGAN: No, it certainly was very different. Let's start with Italy. Italy, of course, considered itself as a potential major player and it was determined to be treated in an even-handed fashion. That meant that it wanted to be treated like France or Germany or Great Britain was from the U.S. perspective. To validate their equal role the Italians would always try to be the first to visit a new secretary of state. It was just one of the things they felt they had to do to establish their credentials as a major player. It was a very involved relationship in that sense. They always had people coming to visit. They were much more aggressive in trying to keep the relationship active than say France which felt comfortable being less than our closest friend. It knew that it had its own position in the world. It had a desire to maintain a good relationship with the United States and from a security point of view it wanted to do that, but it also was very proud of

having gone its own way with regard to NATO, so there was always a little tension in the relationship, but it was a fairly solid relationship. The tension was there because we disagreed from time to time. The French didn't feel the need for demonstration of our affection and esteem. The Italians did. The Spaniards were not yet in NATO. I recall, as a matter of fact, one of the more interesting moments in my tour in Western European Affairs was coming in to the Department on a Saturday afternoon, I think it was, for a brief ceremony where the Spanish Foreign Minister deposited the instrument of ratification of their accession to NATO.

*Q: Let's talk about Italy just a little bit more. Italy is not a permanent member of the Security Council. It's not one of the four powers that had a special responsibility with regards to let's say Germany or the development of Western Europe, France, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany. Italy from my recollection always wanted to be at the table of the core group of countries and resented when they weren't able to do that. Did they in the period you were involved blame us or their European partners for sort of trying to keep them out? If we tried to keep them out on occasion, why did we do that?*

FLANIGAN: I think they by and large blamed us because they saw us as the arbiter of who is in and who is out. That was largely true but not completely. The other members of the group, each for its own reason preferred to limit the participants to four. We were easily the most ready to include the Italians. Italy was a major player but it was not as important economically or politically as the others, the ones you mentioned, and it didn't have the tradition, the history, that brought it into that small group, so we did have a difficult time from time to time. We had a regularized series of meetings with France and Germany and England which sometimes excluded Italy. When the Italians found out about it, of course, they were always very upset. Why did we do it? Partly history, partly because it may have taken the Italians some time to establish themselves as a major player. They did have a chronically unstable government, and that didn't help them in this process. Also their economy was very slow to get to the point where it became as strong as it is now. I think from the point of view of the Italians, they've matured both politically and economically, and they probably feel more comfortable in their role now, and they are probably excluded less than they once were.

*Q: Was lack of trust that we didn't believe they could keep confidence or that the Communist party would come into one of these weak governments?*

FLANIGAN: I think some of that is simply because there were so many governments that came and went. There might have been a sense of you don't know who you are going to be dealing with tomorrow, so that was part of the issue. I don't think there was a lack of confidence in individual Italians or that; just the uncertainty about tomorrow. And as I said, we deferred to the other countries on this one.

*Q: Of course, there was a desire for whatever reason of keeping those participating to as small a group as possible for ease of interchange.*

FLANIGAN: Always. It's easier, and I think the Europeans themselves I know they would have been very reluctant to expand because once you start; where do you end. Italy obviously was the next stage. Not long after that you could see that Spain was going to become a major player.

*Q: You mentioned that France at that time had a somewhat delicate relationship with the United States primarily because of a different perception of the world and experience with other parts of the world, history and so on. Were there bilateral problems during this period that we had with France or was it largely the external area where we sometimes had differences and maybe always didn't communicate fully or effectively?*

FLANIGAN: I think the bilateral problems were normally quite manageable. They were largely commercial relations and the desire of France to sell things to countries that we would rather that they not sell to, sophisticated equipment, those kinds of problems, but they often had to do with third countries and they weren't bilateral in the larger sense.

*Q: We really didn't talk about this either in terms of Peru or Turkey. Maybe you'd want to comment on how effective these Western European embassies or other embassies were from your experience basically on the desk. I assume they were all professional and knew their way around Washington, or did some of them need a lot of help and assistance from you?*

FLANIGAN: The French, the Italians were really very good. The Spaniards were good; The Portuguese were somewhat weaker, but they weren't bad. They knew their way around town; they were doing their job. If you put them on a scale, I would have to rank them in that order.

*Q: Malta was small.*

FLANIGAN: Malta was small. They had a couple of people. An ambassador was accredited here and in New York.

*Q: The Vatican, you mentioned you were involved when diplomatic relations were formally established. The Vatican really had an office here before that; it didn't change much.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. The Nuncio really didn't change much. The Department had already been dealing with the office of the Nuncio.

*Q: But for us in Rome or in The Vatican, things did change once we established an Embassy there compared with essentially having a part time visiting special envoy and then maybe one officer in our embassy in Rome.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. We obviously had a lot more access to the Vatican hierarchy, the bureaucracy. We were able to exchange views more freely, and I think it was useful from time to time in dealing with some issues where we had mutual interest. It did change. The

Vatican was not willing to deal with us in an extra-legal basis if you will. It wanted that relationship.

*Q: You mentioned that Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher, on occasion, called you to ask questions about Turkey and you had a lot to do with him and the Counselor Matthew Nimetz. Was there a seventh floor senior State Department interest in Western European countries, or was it more a willingness to see people as they visited or to visit their capitals but there wasn't quite the policy or problem orientation in those cases?*

FLANIGAN: Less involvement I would say except for NATO or through the Group of Seven, those kinds of things obviously you get seventh floor involvement, but on a day to day basis generally speaking there were not issues that got the seventh floor principals involved. Now, the threat of a Communist joining the government in France, yes, the under secretary would be interested or perhaps the secretary, but not generally speaking.

*Q: This was perhaps your first significant supervisory experience in the Foreign Service, or had you had some before?*

FLANIGAN: It was my first supervisory experience of any significance. I was deputy principal officer in Izmir and answered to the principal officer; I had that. Otherwise, no, this was really the first.

*Q: You had desk officers for France and Italy and Spain and Portugal?*

FLANIGAN: We had two for Spain, two for Portugal, two for France, and two for Italy.

*Q: And a half for Malta?*

FLANIGAN: Actually France and Malta were together.

*Q: Did you have somebody for the Vatican too?*

FLANIGAN: No, one of the Italian desk officers did that.

*Q: Anything else we should cover about this period in Western European affairs?*

FLANIGAN: I might mention that one of our continuing functions was to monitor and maintain the military basing relationships we had with both Spain and Portugal. During those years we were - I wouldn't say in constant negotiations - but rather frequent negotiations. We concluded a new basing agreement with Spain while I was in the office. I was involved in that and spent a lot of time traveling back and forth to Spain. When we were engaged in negotiations with Portugal, I left that job and went to Portugal.

*Q: We can pick that up when we talk about your assignment to Lisbon. How was the negotiation with Spain primarily? Was it by the Department or the embassy - ambassador - in Madrid or did we have a special envoy conduct it?*

FLANIGAN: Well, it started out with a special envoy and then changed with a change in administration. When we began the negotiation which must have been about 1980, Jack Kubisch, who was a retired Foreign Service Officer and former ambassador to Greece, agreed to assume the role as a special negotiator. After the 1980 elections the new administration decided to dispense with a special negotiator and to have the resident ambassador do it. Ambassador Terrence Todman took over as the senior negotiator. It was a long and difficult negotiation. My own view as a result of that experience is that we are probably better served by having special negotiators simply because of the difficult dual role a negotiation imposes on the resident ambassador. Kubisch, because he was not responsible for the rest of the relationship was perceived by his interlocutors in the Pentagon as being more responsive to them. Todman, because he was the resident ambassador was perceived as being more likely to sacrifice the interests of the Pentagon for broader bilateral interests. The perception was unfounded, but base negotiations involve military assets. If the Pentagon does not have confidence in the negotiator, the most difficult part of the negotiation becomes the internal negotiation rather than the negotiation between the two countries.

*Q: With a special negotiator, the ambassador can be kept fully informed and certainly play a role. That particular juncture is where the ability to work throughout a government or go to a higher level is required.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. Now it can work both ways, and in fact, when we talk about Lisbon, the resident ambassador did the negotiation and it was quite successful. It depends on the country, on the bilateral relationship and on the relationship between that country and the military of both countries. It can be very cooperative or sometimes it can be a very difficult relationship. I think in the case of Spain, the Spaniards were always rather stiff, the Spanish military, and the relationship between the United States military and the Spanish military although good was rarely cordial. I think it is simply because the United States military had operated more or less independently for so many years in Spain in the Franco years, and the new government felt it had the need of reestablish some of its authority. Nobody likes to lose flexibility, so it was a difficult transition and some of our negotiations got caught up in that as well.

*Q: Alan, why don't we stop here and pick up another time with your assignment in 1983 as deputy chief of mission in Lisbon?*

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*Today is July 10<sup>th</sup>. I think we were just about ready to get you assigned as deputy chief of mission in Lisbon, Portugal in 1983. Who was the ambassador and what were the main issues you dealt with in Portugal?*

FLANIGAN: Well, the ambassador was H. Allen Holmes who had been there one year at that time and for whom I had worked previously when he was deputy assistant secretary of State for European Affairs. The principal issues between the two countries at the time focused on various things ranging from trade to the defense relationship. We were re-

negotiating the agreement for our base in the Azores at that time. I think negotiations had been going on for several months, perhaps a year, and they continued for several months after I arrived. These negotiations are always difficult because in any basing arrangement, a country basically gives away some of its sovereignty, and it likes to be able to justify that with some material benefit. We, of course, resist material benefits to the extent that we can. Those were still the days, however when we did have substantial security assistance to use in the negotiations. I don't recall the specific amounts, but I do remember that we came up with a fairly generous arrangement for the Portuguese. In part because the base was important, but also in part because the Portuguese had successfully come through a very difficult period in their history after the death of Salazar and the uncertainties that accompanied the transition from dictatorship to democracy. It was a very uncertain period. They had gotten rid of all of their colonial empire as well, and we wanted to do what we could to make sure that they stayed on the democratic track which they were on quite admirably. It was an interesting period in the relationship, a very positive period. It was a good relationship between the United States and Portugal. Portugal for historic reasons always looked toward the Atlantic, and its back was up against Spain. It felt a small country against a large country. Traditionally it had a very good relationship with the United Kingdom. We hadn't really supplanted that in an absolute sense, but in a relative sense we had. We were a very important ally to them. Conversely we saw Portugal as an important country in that part of the world.

*Q: The base negotiations you mentioned, particularly those in the Azores, were they being conducted for the United States by the embassy, or was there a special negotiator, or was it a combination of the two?*

FLANIGAN: In this case it was the ambassador who was the negotiator, Ambassador Holmes.

*Q: Did that work well? I know you had experience before and later with special negotiators.*

FLANIGAN: I had experience. I was a special negotiator later, and I had experience in Spain which involved both. My sense is generally speaking, that it is better to have a special negotiator, but in this particular case, it worked just fine.

*Q: You mentioned that Portugal had given up its colonial empire particularly in Africa. Were we consulting, talking quite a bit with the Portuguese particularly about Mozambique and Angola?*

FLANIGAN: We did some consultation with them. I am not an Africanist, so I can't be as profound as I would like to be on this, but my sense was that Portugal as the former colonial power didn't have as much influence or knowledge as Portugal itself assumed it should and would have. The Africa bureau in the State Department was wary of appearing to be too close to Portugal. Therefore, although we consulted with the Portuguese, it was a somewhat tenuous relationship. The Portuguese felt we should have consulted more, and we tended to feel that the Portuguese were narrowly focused. At the

risk of over generalizing let me say that the Portuguese still had very romantic feelings about their former colonies. The Portuguese generation that fought the colonial wars , and there were wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau. They were bloody wars, at least that was our American understanding of them. But, many of the Portuguese still had very positive feelings about their experiences, and in fact, on a percentage basis, not many Portuguese died in those wars. The wars were not very pleasant, but there was not a high casualty rate in the end. My impression was that they tended to look back on those years much more positively than we would think.

*Q: You mentioned the transition to a democratic system that had taken place in the 70's. That was really firmly established. There was no danger of rolling back as occurred in Spain, one small episode, but in Portugal everybody was fully committed to it.*

FLANIGAN: It seems so. There are always concerns, because the non-democratic period is not very far removed, but at the time I arrived I recall, the president and the prime minister were from different parties already. As often happens, they were working together with some difficulty. Both of the principal leaders were heroes of the revolution if you will. Remalho Eanes, the president, had been a general, and Mario Soares, the prime minister, had been a socialist activist. Their relationship was very tentative and not very cooperative at all, but they did manage to get along enough for the country to govern itself. While I was there, I was there for four years, there were parliamentary elections. The Socialists lost, and a new center right party led by a relatively unknown economist, Antonio Cavaco Silva, won the elections and came to power. He subsequently served as prime minister for the next decade. Mario Soares then ran for the Presidency and won. He became president for - I believe it was a seven year term - so Portugal enjoyed a period of political stability for several years.

*Q: DCM is very much involved in the management of a mission. That is true whether the ambassador is career or non career. Did you have any particular management issues or did things move very smoothly and effectively? There was a consulate in Porto still?*

FLANIGAN: There was a consulate in Porto and one in Ponta Delgada in the Azores. The one in Ponta Delgada you can understand the reasons for more readily I suppose because it is geographically difficult to get to very easily. We also have a consular agent in Madeira, in Funchal. The post in Porto was there in a traditional sense. It had been there a long time. There was a great attachment to it in Portugal and in the Department.. It was closed a few years after I left, and I regret that. I think it was an important part of our presence there. But whether it was essential or not, I suppose, was the question that had to be asked when the budget had to be cut. Portugal is a small country; Porto seemed like a reasonable cut, I suppose. During my time in Lisbon the most important management issue was relocating the chancery. We moved the day after I arrived. Fortunately, my predecessor had to deal with the construction, and so I got to live with the benefit - and finishing up as always occurs. The new chancery was not fully completed when we moved, and for the first time in many years all of the agencies of the U S government were housed in the same building. It is a much easier way to manage a large mission if you have everybody, including the military group, the AID mission and others under the

same roof. It was also an attractive facility.

*Q: This chancery was probably not built under the newest security guidelines.*

FLANIGAN: It wasn't, but serendipity gave the new building better security characteristics than might have been expected. The Department had spent several years selecting the right place for the new chancery. The site finally selected was somewhat controversial since it was not in central Lisbon. Fortunately this meant that site was relatively large which permitted the chancery to be set back a good distance from the surrounding streets. Nevertheless, one of the things that Portugal did have unfortunately was a residual terrorist movement. On two or three occasions while I was there, the chancery was the subject of more or less abortive attacks. A couple of mortar rounds were fired into the compound one night. They hit a few windows and left some shrapnel in the walls. There was another apparent effort to fire a rocket propelled grenade from a hill across the way. It did not fire. Fortunately neither of those incidents resulted in any injuries.

*Q: You mentioned that Allen Holmes was the ambassador when you arrived for a year or so, Who succeeded...*

FLANIGAN: He stayed three years and came back to be assistant secretary for of State for Political Military Affairs, and he was succeeded by Frank Shakespeare who had in earlier years - during the Nixon administration - been head of the USIA. He stayed for just over a year however because the post as ambassador to the Vatican opened up. He really, although he enjoyed being in Portugal and wanted that, he really desired to go to the Vatican, so he was reassigned to the Vatican. So he was the ambassador during my third year, and the fourth year I was in charge because Shakespeare's putative successor ran into difficulties in the confirmation process. In fact was never confirmed.

*Q: So you were Chargé for quite an extended period.*

FLANIGAN: About 11 months.

*Q: One of the reasons we are interested in having bases in the Azores is not only NATO and the role of Portugal in NATO but the Middle East and that region. Were there some significant developments during the period you were there that you got involved with?*

FLANIGAN: In fact, no. Most of the Middle Eastern crises that involved the Azores occurred either before or after I was there. There was one incident not involving the Azores which is of interest. I can only say a limited amount about it here. At one point in 1985, there was an effort by a group within the United States government to try to ship Hawk missiles from Israel to Iran. The goal was to gain the release of U S citizens being held hostage by pro-Iranian groups. The Portuguese got involved simply because the people who were putting this operation together wanted a place to change planes, to "launder" the missiles, if you will. One night in late November, 1985, there was an effort to do that through Portugal, but it failed.



*Q: Seems like there might have been a closer place to Israel and Iran to do that.*

FLANIGAN: You would think so. I'm not sure why they chose to consider Portugal except it was close to the United States. I suppose there was a feeling that it would do what we wanted it to do. In fact I think under normal circumstances, Portugal is inclined to be cooperative and does try to be helpful. There was also as you recall, a NATO command just outside of Lisbon. It was commanded by, an American two star admiral at that time. It was a naval command called IBERLANT. I believe the commander is now Portuguese. It is a small installation.

*Q: Were American ships based there?*

FLANIGAN: No, there was no basing there. In fact there is no port at the installation itself. It was a headquarters element.

*Q: Were you quite involved with NATO issues in Lisbon or not really?*

FLANIGAN: Not really. That was the only substantial NATO element, and it was not what you would call a major element of NATO obviously.

*Q: Were there significant economic or trade issues between Portugal and the United States or were they primarily with the European Community then?*

FLANIGAN: During the time that I was there, Portugal and Spain were both negotiating for entry into the European Community and entered the European Community. I remember attending the ceremony at which Portugal acceded to the European Community. So, increasingly during the period we were there, those issues became European issues as opposed to bilateral. At least the Portuguese made an effort to do that. We generally resisted it because we found it more convenient to deal on a bilateral basis. In any event I do not recall that there were major chronic issues economic or commercial issues that affected the bilateral relationship.

*Q: Anything else we should say about your term in Lisbon?*

FLANIGAN: Well, yes, I think there are a couple of interesting things. President Reagan visited Lisbon in 1984, I believe it was. It was the only experience I've had close up with a presidential visit. As deputy chief of mission, I was principally responsible for coordination. I learned up close what I had heard but never really understood about the amount of effort that goes into the preparations for one of these visits. It is amazing how we over-plan and over-organize for a visit by the president. The amount of energy and effort that goes into it is phenomenal. My experience then – which has been confirmed by talking to colleagues who have participated in similar visits – persuades me that although the country that receives a visit is nearly always pleased to receive the visit, the process of preparing for and conducting the visit can and often does result in a substantial amount of damage to the working relationships between the two countries. So you wonder about the balance. We impose demands and conditions that are difficult for any country to accept.

*Q: In fact did this visit went off well?*

FLANIGAN: This visit went very well. We were the beneficiary of a less fortunate visit that had just preceded it. That was the one to Germany during which the President went to Bitburg Cemetery. In retrospect the visit to Bitburg was one of those mistakes in planning that sometimes occurs. It is amazing that they occur since these things are planned and re-planned and rehearsed. I don't recall the dates involved, but we had people from the White House there several months in advance to plan preparations for this visit, and of course the scope of the visit, the places of the visit, the events of the visit changed totally several times in that several month period.

*Q: What was President Reagan in country about 24 hours?*

FLANIGAN: No, he was there for two nights and I believe about three days, so it was a substantial visit. It was the end of a trip through Europe. I think the idea was to conclude a relatively arduous visit to several countries by spending two or three days in Portugal, to rest and enjoy what is really a very pleasant country. We often received visits from Congressional delegations which were doing exactly that. In fact it was sometimes difficult to get some of the delegations to do the serious stuff too.

*Q: Was this the first presidential visit to Portugal after the end of the dictatorship?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, it was the first presidential visit to Portugal since, I am trying to think, it was the first presidential visit since the dictatorship, and I don't believe we had anybody there during the Salazar years, so it had been a long time.

*Q: Was there something else about Lisbon that you'd want to mention beside the visit of President Reagan?*

FLANIGAN: Simply that I had the good fortune both in Lisbon and in Ankara of serving in countries where the relationship between the two countries is very positive both on a official level and on a popular level. The Portuguese people had a very positive view of the United States and the American people, and there are several large Portuguese communities in the United States - on both coasts. The same thing goes for Turkey although the role of the Turkish immigrant population was not as pronounced. The image of the United States in Turkey was a very positive one. My family and I were fortunate to serve in these two countries. As representatives of the United States we felt welcome in both countries no matter where we went.

*Q: I don't recall whether you had Portuguese language training before you went.*

FLANIGAN: I briefly, actually I took 15 weeks of a conversion. No it wasn't even a conversion. I took 15 weeks of Portuguese which was almost adequate. Portuguese as spoken in Portugal is I think, a very difficult language. It is a much less melodious and open language than the Portuguese of Brazil for example; it is much more difficult both to understand and to speak. The Portuguese chronically believed that the Spaniards were

insulting them by pretending not to understand them when they spoke Portuguese; they clearly understood the Spaniards when the Spaniards spoke Spanish. But, in fact, Spanish is easier for the foreign ear to understand, and Castilian Spanish is certainly easier to understand than Cosmopolitan Portuguese if you speak both languages imperfectly as I did..

*Q: But you were able to manage to get around and do what you needed to do. Of course, English, I suppose, is fairly widely spoken.*

FLANIGAN: Sure. English is pretty widely spoken. Historically, French was the second language of the educated classes, but increasingly English has become the second language, especially in the business and diplomatic communities.

*Q: In 1987 you finished your tour, a very enjoyable tour in Lisbon, and then you came back to Washington.*

FLANIGAN: I came back to Washington. I had anticipated that I would be going out to a post. I had gotten fairly far down the road toward being named ambassador to Nicaragua, but that fell through right as I was leaving Lisbon, so I came back unassigned essentially. After a few weeks, I found myself a position negotiating a base agreement with Greece as a special negotiator. The negotiations began sometime around November I believe. As I have often said, this was a six month negotiation that took three years. It was unfortunate that it took so long. It was pleasant in many ways because I made 17 trips to Athens during those three years and a couple of more to Europe to talk to various American military commanders involved. It was all done at a very gentlemanly pace, but it also took a lot of time out of the prime time of my career. That was a problem, but there was little I could do about it without reneging on what I saw as my commitment to see the negotiation through. The problem with the negotiation, the reason it took so long was simply the Greek domestic political situation. When we began negotiations the Socialist government of Andreas Papandreou was in power. There was some doubt in Washington that Papandreou they would ever be willing to conclude a new base agreement. As a matter of fact, it seemed that most of the people in the United States Government involved in this issue felt that was the case. I was not among them. I felt quite confident in fact that if PASOK (the Socialist Party) and Papandreou ever reached the point where it had a solid majority in the Parliament, and that they could therefore defend what they had done, they would sign the agreement. I also felt that the opposite was true, that is if the opposition got to a point where it had a commanding position in Parliament, it too would come to an agreement. And the agreements wouldn't be very different. It was just that the politics in Greece made it difficult for either party to defend an agreement with the United States unless it had a strong majority in parliament. As it turned out we negotiated for a year and a half or nearly two years with the Papandreou government and got fairly far down the road to a new text, but the political opposition was such that we really couldn't conclude the agreement. Elections occurred; the Papandreou government lost its majority. Mitsotakis took power, and formed a more conservative government, one that everyone assumed would quickly sign the agreement or would be willing to sign the agreement if we negotiated one that they liked. But, it had a very slim majority too. I

think it had only a one vote margin in parliament. In any event, my counterpart in the negotiation was Christos Zakarakis who at the beginning of the negotiation was the Greek ambassador to NATO and then became the Greek ambassador to the United States. He managed to have the confidence of Papandreou and subsequently Mitsotakis. Obviously he was very adept at working in his own capital - and, I thought, a very good negotiator. As I say we made a lot of progress on the text during the first couple of years. We both had military representatives on our delegations. For the Greeks, that was the most difficult part. For us it is standard so it wasn't particularly difficult element. It is an important one of course since the negotiations are about military installations. After the Mitsotakis government took power, we resumed negotiations and within a few months concluded them successfully with an agreement which was based on essentially what we had worked on before. I can't recall any significant changes in the agreement that came about as a result of the change in government in Athens.

*Q: These negotiations have ancestors, previous negotiations, but essentially this was a negotiation that led to our bases in Greece and bilateral defense cooperation. What had been the recent history before you started? Had there been a, I know there were several agreements but I don't remember any...*

FLANIGAN: There had been a five year agreement concluded in I believe 1983. I think that was the timing for that. Reggie Bartholomew had been our negotiator. That agreement, of course, expired, and we were negotiating a new one. We and the Greeks agreed essentially to extend the terms of the old agreement while we were negotiating the new one. We had several bases in Greece. Probably the most controversial to the Greeks was Helenikon which was an Air Force Base right outside of Athens. It doubled as Athens' commercial airport. Over the years it had been the site of a lot of anti-American demonstrations, a lot of violence over the years.

*Q: Adjacent to the international airport.*

FLANIGAN: Exactly. The Greeks very much wanted to close that base. I'm not sure in the end if the United States Air Force would have preferred to keep it open or close it. Obviously it was ambivalent. It had been a useful facility, and there was a certain emotional attachment to it. At the same time there was a recognition that growing Greek nationalism focused on Helenikon made staying there problematical. In the end we agreed on a timetable to close it. As I said, it was useful, but it wasn't essential. We had alternatives. It had become a major irritant in the bilateral relationship, and it wasn't necessary for projection of power in that part of the world, so we agreed to closure. We also closed a couple of other installations, including a Navy communications installation north of Athens. We did maintain two installations on Crete.

*Q: Were the understandings, the arrangements relating to these base facilities the principal issue in the negotiations? What can you say about our security assistance commitment?*

FLANIGAN: Well, in contrast to what I had mentioned earlier about Portugal, by the

time we began negotiations with Greece, our capacity to offer substantial amounts of security assistance to anybody was very limited. In fact, even though Greece had strong support in the United States Congress and was always able to get 70% of what we were providing Turkey, we had in the negotiation, no flexibility with regard to assistance levels. In fact, we were under great pressure to decrease it in one way or another by making terms less favorable, and we did that. The Greeks understood that. They weren't happy particularly, but they understood the way the politics of assistance was evolving in the United States in the late 80's. They saw that no matter what they did, it wasn't going to change the political equation. It wasn't going to be possible for them to extort money if they chose to do so, and so they didn't. That negotiation really hinged on political will and whether or not the Greek government could claim that it had gotten a good deal and whether or not it looked like an operationally respectable agreement for us. In our case, it had the great benefit of being a long agreement, one of the longest agreements we've ever negotiated. It ran for I think eight and a half years. So, in fact, since we signed it in the spring of 1990, it is still in effect.

*Q: You mentioned the pressure to cut back on commitments of assistance. That pressure came from those who were seeking assistance for other countries in perhaps the State Department or the Defense Department. I assume that is where pressure came from as opposed to Congress.*

FLANIGAN: No, in this case, I think it was a general reduction on our willingness as a nation to provide assistance for basing arrangements. There was a real sea change between 1980 and 1987 when I began those negotiations, and we just didn't have the ability to get the money out of Congress. The administration would have been willing, at least in the abstract, to provide more, but it wasn't there.

*Q: Did we renew or reiterate our commitment to continue the 7-10 ratio of assistance to Greece to that given to Turkey?*

FLANIGAN: Not per se. Once again, there are certain things you can do in executive agreements, and one thing you can't do is commit funds. This was an executive agreement and not a treaty. It was always a delicate balancing process between saying things that sounded positive while not necessarily making a commitment that was legally binding and illegal to make. It required a lot of understanding on the part of the Greeks. The Greek negotiator had to explain to his own government what our limits were, and I think he was fairly adept at doing that. Although it was an executive agreement as I said, I tried to keep the Congress informed, those members who were interested. Most members weren't. The truth of the matter is that they are not interested in negotiations as they go along. They become interested perhaps at the end. There are a few members who are interested for one reason or another. Senator Paul Sarbanes, being of Greek descent, has always maintained a strong interest in whatever we do with Greece and Turkey. So, I made a habit of calling on him shortly before or after each negotiating session and just telling him where things stood. He was always very supportive. We were able to establish a strong relationship that helped in the end. On the House side, I kept Lee Hamilton similarly informed. He was the head of the European subcommittee of the House Foreign

Affairs Committee at that time. Generally, I would meet with him privately as I did with Senator Sarbanes. From time to time at the request of either one would meet congressional staffers or other members of Congress. From time to time I also met with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell. One of the perennial points of conflict between the State Department or the Administration and the Senate was that the Senate sometimes perceived the negotiation of an executive agreement as a way for the Executive Branch to avoid the advice and consent of the Senate required in the negotiation of a treaty. Senator Pell told me he disliked executive agreements for that reason. So, it was always a little awkward briefing him on what was going on, but nevertheless, I did and it worked out.

*Q: How did you handle as special negotiator things with the U.S. ambassador to Greece? Did that work smoothly and effectively? Were most of the negotiating sessions held in Athens or elsewhere?*

FLANIGAN: Most were held in Athens. I think there were 20-21 sessions and of those 17 were held in Athens and the others were held here. Generally we worked together very well. When I started Robert Keeley was the ambassador. He himself was a partisan of the idea that there should be a special negotiator. Because of the nature of the relationship we have with Greece, I think both Bob Keeley and I agreed that it would be particularly difficult for the resident ambassador to conduct the negotiations.

*Q: You were talking about the relationship between a special negotiator and the ambassador and the role the ambassador plays vis a vis the negotiations.*

FLANIGAN: Bob Keeley left Athens, of course, while the negotiations were completed. There was a change of administration and a new ambassador was named. That was Michael Sotiros. He had a different view of who should conduct the negotiations, at least initially. He was not happy with the idea of a special negotiator and felt that it undermined some of his authority. I suppose in a sense it does take away part of that role, but as I had with Keeley, I kept Sotiros informed, and in the end he was quite gracious about it. Once it became clear that he wasn't going to become negotiator and I was going to finish out the negotiations, it worked fine. In retrospect I think he would agree that it enabled him to begin his mission in Greece without a burden that would have been quite difficult and might well have colored his whole presence there. Generally speaking I think the relationship between the resident ambassador and the special negotiator is a very close one, but it can also be a difficult one. My strong view is that it is useful to have a special negotiator for potentially difficult negotiations like this. The resident ambassador can do it, but the negotiations may well vitiate his capacity to accomplish other things.

*Q: You as the negotiator can often call on the ambassador to go to the prime minister or to intervene at key points on particular issues.*

FLANIGAN: That is potentially the case. In this case the way these particular negotiations worked, it was in fact, the Greek negotiator who handled his own government if you will and did it quite successfully. We really didn't feel the need to

invoke a higher U.S. authority generally.

*Q: Anything else about these negotiations you would like to include in this?*

FLANIGAN: No. It was an interesting and fascinating experience. It just took too long. That is my only regret, but I certainly enjoyed doing it.

*Q: From a career point of view, your career, it was a great coup, a success, but you were also a bit of a hostage.*

FLANIGAN: You are very much a hostage.

*Q: You can't really leave until you finish either successfully or defeated. You were successful.*

FLANIGAN: There were two or three occasions during those three years where there were jobs that came up that I really wanted to do that I was not able to undertake simply because I was hostage to this, and I wanted to complete it. I could have quit, but that didn't seem like the thing to do either, and I'm glad I didn't because we did conclude it successfully.

*Q: You finally did conclude it as you say in 1990. What happened then, Alan?*

FLANIGAN: Then, in part because of the timing, I had not been well positioned for an ambassadorial assignment at that point, but I was offered the possibility of going to Havana as principal officer and that sounded interesting. Cuba after all has an almost mythical quality for many Americans. Although assignment as head of the U S Interests Section does not require the advice and consent of the Senate, it is considered to be a chief of mission position. I had started out in Latin America, and I had some residual Spanish which I had worked on during the down times in negotiation, sitting at my desk going over tapes. I got it back up to a 3-3 level; by the time I went it was adequate.

*Q: Let me just back up for a minute. On the special negotiator for the Greek defense cooperation agreement, you had a rank of ambassador?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, personal rank of ambassador.

*Q: So you were not confirmed by the Senate?*

FLANIGAN: No.

*Q: And did you have that as well in Havana?*

FLANIGAN: No.

*Q: Why don't you talk for a little bit about how you prepared for the assignment in*

*Havana and what some of the issues were at that particular time and how you consulted to take up that post.*

FLANIGAN: Well, I had never served in a communist country. I'd never served in a country which had an authoritarian government, so it was quite a change. I knew it would be, and I spent a lot of time, well as much as I could, talking to people on the desk, talking to people in the academic community here. There are a lot of people around Washington that maintain a high level of interest in Cuba. Most are academics, but many foundations are also interested. What to me is an amazing number of people retain an interest in Havana. Not just retain but have an active interest and follow events there rather closely. So, I tried to get in touch with as many of those people as I could with the help of the desk. The coordinator of Cuban Affairs in the State Department was very helpful in putting me in touch with all of these people, and I just tried to absorb whatever I could of the lore of Castro's Cuba. There is a lot out there. It is a fascinating place which has attracted enormous interest both antagonistic and romantic over the years both in the United States and elsewhere. Castro is one of the few mythical leaders, if you will, who still exists in this world today, and he attracts the attention – positive and negative - of a lot of people.

*Q: People are very divided of course. I'm sure that those you talked to had feelings to even further isolate and restrict dealings with the remaining communist power in this area and others feeling that we ought to engage in trying to work for change and opening up of the relationship.*

FLANIGAN: Precisely. There is a wide range of attitudes about Cuba among the people who deal with Cuban affairs and think about Cuban affairs. However, the truth of the matter is as many people have said, all politics is local, right. What it comes down to in the end is there is a very dynamic and well organized Cuban-American community that is determined to maintain a strong negative policy toward Castro. It has a lot of political clout and has been successful over the years in making sure that the policy stays as rigid as it is. That's not necessarily wrong, but that's the way it is. Critics assert that the Cuban-American National Foundation dictates U S policy. That is not true. But it does influence policy, and don't forget a tough policy *vis a vis* Cuba is a very popular policy in the United States. If you were to conduct a public referendum on Castro, I think you would find that he is soundly disliked in the United States and most people believe that the policy of isolation is exactly the right policy. It is not as if the government has pursued a policy that doesn't have popular support. In a democracy foreign policy must take into account popular attitudes. That does not mean that all policy questions must be decided by popular referendum. But a government that decides to carry out a policy contrary to popular wishes must be prepared to expend an extraordinary amount of energy – and political capital – in the pursuit of that policy. In the end I think that the inertia created by that reality better accounts for the rigidity in U S policy than the influence of the Cuban-American community.

*Q: There are a lot of not only those in the Cuban-American community but people certainly remember the Cuban missile crisis and other actions that Cuba has taken in*



*Latin America and other parts of the world over the years.*

FLANIGAN: There is no question. When Castro took power in 1959 on New Year's Day, we as a people were already deeply divided over him. A lot of people were positively inclined because he had overthrown an obviously corrupt regime, the Batista regime. On the other hand there was uncertainty about what he wanted to do. And many people were nervous about his revolutionary rhetoric. It all became clear fairly quickly that Castro was determined to create a revolutionary state in the Caribbean just 90 miles from Key West, and that was not a very comfortable thought for most Americans and certainly not most Americans in Florida. As the numbers of Cuban-Americans increased over the next few years, and they increased dramatically as tens of thousands of Cubans fled or were forced to leave, it consolidated that view, that there was a need to isolate Castro and make sure that whatever he embarked on was not a successful effort to revolutionize the area, the region.

*Q: Did you find controversy when you were undertaking these consultations before going to Havana about whether the United States should be present in Havana or were people generally of a view that it made sense for us to have an office there?*

FLANIGAN: I think most people, nearly everybody felt it made sense for us to have an office there, even the most outspoken opponents of a better relationship. The Cuban-American National Foundation, for example, supported the presence of an interests section simply because there are a lot of Cuban Americans that go back to visit their families. Very little distance separates Cuba and the United States, and the flow back and forth between the two countries States even under the present circumstances is rather extensive. It is useful to have a presence there to maintain some kind of consular relationship if nothing else. I think many conservative elements feel that if you go beyond that, you are beginning to edge over into something that isn't acceptable. The official presence was useful and I think most people saw it as useful simply to maintain communications both in crisis and in normal times. There were incidents, there were issues to be dealt with and an interests section enabled us to deal with such things in a routine fashion.

*Q: Probably to show my ignorance of Cuba and Havana, could you talk a little bit about the U.S. Interests Section? How large is it? Are there restrictions on the part of the Swiss Embassy; how does that work before you start to talk about some of the substance of the issues?*

FLANIGAN: We broke relations with Cuba in 1961; we established a mission there in 1977. We negotiated a bilateral agreement with Cuba which allowed us to open an interests section and allowed them to open an interests section. Theirs is in Washington and ours is in Havana. In both cases we were allowed to reoccupy the old embassy buildings. We were under the protection of the Swiss Embassy; they were under the protection at that time of the Czechoslovakian Embassy. Subsequently that had to change. During the time I was in Havana that changed and they too came under the protection of the Swiss Embassy because they broke with the Czechs. Neither Slovakia nor the Czech

Republics wanted to continue as protecting power, so the Swiss took over the role. In any event the role that the Swiss played after we had reestablished a presence in the country was almost insignificant. During the years before we sent our own people back to Havana, the Swiss role was of more consequence. The Swiss had responsibility for the protection of our properties and facilities. They also made diplomatic representations to the Cuban government on our behalf. In the 16 or so years we were absent, for example, they at least in theory maintained a guard on the chancery building and had people living in the Ambassador's residence. In fact we never were sure how secure the protection of the Embassy building had been. Our assumption was that it wasn't very secure at all, that Cubans had access to it rather freely over those many years, so when we moved back in we had to operate under the assumption that the Cuban intelligence service had the capacity to listen to everything we did there. We moved back into the residence as well. Our relationship with the Swiss ambassador was a social relationship basically. By terms of the agreement that established our presence in Havana we had the right to have direct access to the Foreign Ministry and through them other elements of the government and the Communist Party. We were generally restricted with regard to the level of access. My most common interlocutor the deputy foreign minister with responsibility for American affairs. There was only one occasion, shortly before I left, that I was invited to call on the foreign minister. That was just as a courtesy. That was the only time they elevated my official access beyond the established level. In contrast, socially they treated me like any other chief of mission. In return they hoped that the chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington would be accorded the same treatment. They complained that I would get invited to receptions hosted by Castro at the Palace of the Revolution and that my counterpart in Washington never was invited to the White House, which was true. Whenever there was a state function in Cuba; when there was a visiting chief of state and Castro gave a reception of some sort, my wife and I were generally invited like ambassadors from other countries. My interaction with Castro was limited to that. The limited interaction was not unusual. In fact it was very rare for Castro to meet with foreign ambassadors at all. It is the only country I am aware of, there may be others, where the president does not receive credentials of ambassadors. The presentation is made to a vice president of which there are several. Castro would very rarely meet with the ambassadors at all. He made a practice of once a year or maybe it was once every six months while I was there, meeting with the European Community ambassadors, having a luncheon or something like, and he would meet with the Soviet or Chinese ambassador from time to time but not regularly. This was true even when I first went to Havana and the Soviet Union was still in existence and the Soviet ambassador was a political figure. The Soviets always had political ambassadors in Havana because they had a tremendous presence. I recall shortly after I arrived there talking to the Soviet Ambassador, Yuri Petrov. (My wife and I would have lunches with Petrov and his wife from time to time. Because of the nature of the situation, the Soviet ambassador and I did not spend a lot of time talking to each other at diplomatic events because people would gather around or speculate or whatever, but we would have private meetings fairly regularly.) I remember at one of these, which was a luncheon at his residence, we were talking about the sizes of our various communities. They said that they felt like grandparents to 10,000 Russians. They had 10,000 people in Cuba when I arrived in 1990.

*Q: That included all of their military.*

FLANIGAN: The military was a good portion of that but it was far from all because the had a lot of technicians and aid workers etc. The size of the American mission was quite small. We were restricted, originally when it opened in 1977, I think the number was 14. The limit had expanded, and by the time we arrived in Havana we had about 33 people including marines. We had about eight marines. During my time there it expanded a little more. Each expansion had to be negotiated; there had to be a reason for it, because we weren't expanding Cuban presence in the United States. We were only expanding U.S. presence in Havana. The reasons nearly always had to do with the need to deal with immigration issues. It was quite legitimate. We needed more people there than they needed here. They ultimately agreed, but they were always difficult to deal with, a very rigid bureaucracy. They would agree to establish a new position, and then we would have to go through the interminable process of finding a new residence. I mean a house for somebody to live in because there is no free market of course. Everything belongs to the government, everything. Everybody works for the government, and foreign missions who employ people have to employ people through the government. It is all contract labor. There is an office of the Cuban government – *Cubalse* - which has the responsibility for providing services to foreigners, foreign missions, foreign businesses. Every foreign entity – individual, government, business - has to go to *Cubalse* to get its services whether it is a house or a carpenter or whatever it is. It is not only cumbersome, it is often infuriating. We had about 120 Cuban employees at the Interests Section. They were all hired through *Cubalse*. We paid the Cuban government, but we also managed to negotiate an arrangement so that we could provide part of their salary directly in U S dollar equivalents and that they could use in the hard currency stores; so it was a great benefit to be working for us. Some of our employees had been working for us since we returned in 1977. There was even one person who had been working for the old embassy before it was closed in 1965. Of course , since we did not hire these people directly, we had to accept the reality that they were first and foremost employees of the Cuban government.

*Q: How did you get physically to Havana for the first time?*

FLANIGAN: When I went in the summer of 1990 there were thrice weekly flights from Miami to Havana which were flown by contract airlines. At that time the principal contract was with Eastern Airlines, so we flew down in an Eastern Airlines Lockheed 1100, I think. Anyway, it was a rather large aircraft. At that time we, the U S government, also required that these flights occur at night however. I'm not sure of the background of this, but I think it in part had to do with the desire to avoid creating a situation at the Miami Airport where there might be political or public problems with planes flying out to Cuba. Of course, most of the passengers on the planes were Cuban-Americans who had authorization from the United States and visas from Cuba to come back and visit their families. In any event that's how we arrived. We arrived, I recall, shortly after midnight. It is one of those experiences we will never forget. In 1990 Cuba was already beginning to enter in to an economic crisis. It wasn't in the full throes of it yet, but in 1990 it was hurting. The level of electricity available to light streets and

houses and things like that was really quite low, so flying in you really didn't see the bright city lights you would see in arriving at a European capital or a city in the United States. Driving in from the airport we had the feeling we were going through a war zone because of the dilapidated condition of most of the buildings. Castro had for years sacrificed Havana for the benefit of provincial cities. He had allowed Havana to deteriorate visibly, especially the old rich areas that he identified with the bourgeoisie. A lot of fine houses and fine office buildings were in terrible disrepair. They'd been allowed to just crumble. Some of them had been recovered and were being used by foreign businesses or Cuban businesses, state businesses or schools or this, that or the other thing, but even those that were, were not well maintained. Our overwhelming sense was of a country that had gone through a very difficult time.

*Q: The economic crisis was brought on or at least helped along by what was happening in Europe. How did Cuba react to those momentous changes that were taking place many of which started before you got there with the fall of the Berlin Wall and others after you got there?*

FLANIGAN: Well, with great fear. The Cubans were obviously concerned about the collapse of the Communist world. They were in a very real sense an outpost of the Communist world and dependent on it not only – or even primarily – because had we isolated them but because they had self isolated. The economy was totally dependent on trade with the Soviet Union and its allies. As the Soviet Union began to fall on hard times and eastern Europe began to break away from the Soviet Union, Cuba's support mechanism disappeared. There are lots of reasons for the economic crisis which then ensued, but the most significant one I think was that Cuba over the years had become dependent on Soviet assistance - Soviet assistance in various forms whether it was preferential prices for sugar or simply cash assistance or assistance in various industries or providing oil or whatever it was to the tune of perhaps \$4-5,000,000,000 a year. When that disappeared as it did almost overnight, they were left with an economy which was dependent on that kind of input and wasn't able to sustain itself. There was not sustainable development by any manner of speaking. Over the years I think Castro had done many wasteful things from the development point of view. I mean he had done them for other reasons, but economically they were very wasteful, and he had created a system and an economy that were not sustainable.

*Q: Politically and emotionally they also lost all it took to be connected with the Soviet Union.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. Castro had harsh words to say about Gorbachev whom he believes was a traitor to the whole socialist world. I believe he decided early on that he would never allow Cuba to suffer the same fate that the Eastern European countries had. He was not going to entertain the kinds of reforms which might then undermine his hold on power. From the beginning he clearly decided that the only way he could maintain his position and his power and keep the revolution in place was to be extremely rigid. As eastern Europe relaxed, Cuba became more rigid. Castro had tried a few economic reforms in the early '80s which permitted farmers markets, for example, and those were quite successful in some terms in a sense that they brought products to the market so that

people could buy them. But they also brought them at relatively high prices, and worst of all from Castro's perspective they allowed a lot of people to get rich. One of the things that drove and still drives Castro is a visceral dislike for capitalism. There is no question, he just doesn't like it. It offends him that people somehow get rich off of other people, so he closed the farmers markets in '87, somewhere around there. By the time we arrived in 1990, the markets around Havana and the suburbs, the open air markets, had very little in them. One of the things we did in the Interests Section was send somebody out monthly to conduct a market basket survey. We wanted to see what was available, what it cost. The costs were all very artificial, because when I arrived the Cuban peso was still pegged at, well actually by then it was valued at 1.1 to the dollar. The real value was probably somewhere between 20 and 40 to the dollar, but when we arrived it still had some value in the sense that a person could take a peso and go to a market and buy maybe a tomato or a cucumber or a chicken. Within two years there was nothing in those markets. Absolutely nothing. Nothing could be bought that wasn't on the ration card. Therefore, only people with ration cards, only Cubans could go to the markets. The prices were all controlled. The prices were nominal. But increasingly nothing was available. When we arrived Cubans could survive fairly well on what they could buy on the ration card and what they might be able to supplement with a few other things available in stores or markets. Black markets also began to become more common. There had always been a black market for luxury goods, but increasingly Cubans were forced to look to the black market for essentials. Fairly soon it reached the point where they could just barely survive. One phenomenon which was fairly interesting, not very pleasant, over the course of the three years I was there was to notice how few overweight Cubans there were in the country. Not that an overweight population is necessarily a positive phenomenon, but the total absence of overweight people strongly suggests that things are not going very well. That was certainly the case in Cuba.

*Q: How did the U.S. Interests Section get supplies? Did we have supply flights that came in? You didn't have to rely on the market or the official stores there?*

FLANIGAN: When we first arrived, it was possible to buy a few things in the local market. There was a supermarket for the diplomatic corps and other foreigners which we had access to. Most of the products in it came from Europe and Canada, some from the United States even. The prices were quite high and sometimes the products were quite old. The quality of the fresh fruits and vegetables and meats was not very good. I remember paying something like \$3.50 a pound for Canadian onions. Onions are a staple of the Cuban diet, but they were not available on the local market. It was amazing. The Interests Section was also permitted to bring in shipments of food for our use directly from Miami. We would charter a supply flight every three months or so. Historically the Cubans had restricted these flights from time to time just to make life difficult for the Interests Section. At least that seemed to be the best explanation. During the time we were in Cuba, the Cubans were so preoccupied with their own crisis, both political and economic, that they didn't spend a lot of time worrying about the U.S. mission or trying to harass or intimidate its staff. Some of my predecessors and the staff members in fact were harassed quite often and quite heavily. Such incidents in the three years I was there were rare. They did occur. We had people whose tires were deliberately punctured. Some

were threatened or muscled off the road by aggressive driving. Houses were entered surreptitiously by security forces who took nothing, but left telltale signs that they had been there. But generally speaking we didn't suffer many incidents relative to what had happened in the past - and I gather to what has occurred in the last three or four years when the relationship has gotten more tense. As bad as the relationship was during the years we were there, it was better than it was before and after. There were frequent flights to Miami. There were three or four a week when we arrived. I'm not sure exactly what the high point was, but at one point there were two or three flights a day bringing people in and taking people out. Mainly these were Cuban-Americans who were coming back to visit relatives. We would go to the airport regularly to meet official visitors as well as friends or family who came to visit. One of the most poignant things we saw was the return of Cubans that had been up to the United States visiting family members. On their return they were allowed to bring a very limited number of things back into the country. One thing the Cubans had started permitting them to do was to bring back a clear plastic bag with cosmetics and patent medicines in it, drugstore items ranging from aspirin to shampoo which simply weren't available anymore in Cuba. They just simply weren't available to most Cubans. Tourists could buy them, but Cubans could not. They could bring back, I think they were limited to a 20 pound bag. It had to be clear plastic so that what they were bringing could be seen by the police. Cubans were regularly subjected to the most ruthless kind of intimidation every day. It was most visible to us at the airport. I have often been asked how the Cubans feel about Americans. It is very difficult to know. They seemed fascinated, not in a negative sense generally, but very positively. We met Cubans when we would travel around the country, and we could travel freely; there was no restriction on our travel. We told people who we were and where we were from. There was a mixed reaction, but the most common reaction was quite positive and friendly on the one hand, but restrained on the other because every Cuban knew that if he or she showed any signs of friendliness or engaged in conversation of any substance or any length, they would have to explain to internal security the next hour or the next day, exactly what went on and why they did what they did. It was and still is the most controlled society I've ever been in. I think it is much more of a controlled society than the Eastern European societies that existed in the '80's. A lot of people think that if we sort of open up the embargo a little bit, relax more, send more people down, allow this presence of additional Americans and the trappings that go with that presence, this would cause the Cubans to demand more and more until finally the system would be forced to change. People that believe this do not understand the Cuban situation. It is just not identical to what existed in Poland or East Germany. There is virtually no civil society in Cuba. The civil society that exists is very restricted. The Catholic Church for years has been an object of oppression. It was not a strong church to begin with, and Castro and his government did everything they could to identify it with the old regime and they still accuse it of being attached to Miami. In the last few years the church has grown in strength. It is still a very small, inconsequential influence given the power the government has to control the people. The regime controls all of the means of communication whether it is a newspaper or a telephone line. People who do not toe the line, do not have access to those things. It's very depressing.

*Q: I assume it was not really possible then given what you just said for you to have good*

*conversations of substance with people either in the government or outside the government except on particular issues that came up.*

FLANIGAN: Only on particular issues. The Cubans that I dealt with on issues in government or in the Communist Party were professionals – rigid - but competent professionals nevertheless. If there was an issue that had to be dealt with, they could get things done. Sometimes a lot more slowly than you'd like and the results might not be what you'd like, but it was business and you could do that. Beyond that though, on a social level, conversations were restricted to very mundane issues. It would be very rare for any Cuban to be willing to discuss an issue like the future of Cuba after Castro. I've done it. I have done it with some of the Cuban Communist Party members, officials and Foreign Ministry officials, sort of provocative exchanges if you will, and they do it, they will do it, but it is sort of a predictable response. It is not a conversation. You push the cassette button and you get the accepted viewpoint.

*Q: What were some of the issues you needed to deal with in the period you were there? Were they mainly in the immigration area or were there some others?*

FLANIGAN: There were always immigration issues. We would from time to time have incidents such as shooting incident in Guantanamo Bay, someone trying to escape to the base or something like that. We would protest Cuban actions. They would protest our actions. There were also some incidents while I was there where people hijacked or “borrowed” Cuban aircraft to fly to the United States. We helped coordinate arrangements for return of the aircraft. There was an attempted hijacking of a boat by some Cubans associated with some Cuban American group which resulted in some deaths and the predictable exchange of public recriminations between us and the Cubans. There was an incident when a boat from a small radical group from Miami came down and fired some shots at one of the hotels on Varadero Beach. Of course, I got called over to the Foreign Ministry to receive a protest. From time to time I would get called over with complaints about U S aircraft violating Cuban airspace. The flight pattern into the airfield at the Naval Base in Guantanamo was very difficult and quite often there were allegations that our aircraft had strayed from where they were supposed to be. I would receive the complaints and send them off to Washington to be checked out. Then I would return and explain what happened, sometimes apologizing, but more often telling them that they were wrong. I recall we talked to them about more substantive things from time to time. Various times in 1990 and 1991 I was instructed to talk to them about the Central American negotiations. We asked for their support for the negotiations. We asked them to end their military support for the FMLN in El Salvador for example. They never admitted to providing military support, but they refused to promise not to in any event, explaining that they wanted to make sure the FMLN could negotiate from a position of strength. I remember we also asked for Cuban help in identifying the source of surface-to-air missiles that had been captured in Central America. We talked with the Cubans about that; they were not cooperative. Actually the Soviets were more cooperative. That was an interesting three way conversation, most of which didn't occur in Havana, but some of which did. Those were peripheral issues for us at the Interests Section, but every once and awhile they were serious enough that we were able to play a role. Also while I was in

Havana we had two or three sessions of bilateral negotiations with the Cubans on immigration issues. Ultimately – more than a year after my departure – these talks resulted in some agreements. What the Cubans wanted and what we wanted were quite different things, of course. We were always concerned about the potential for a flood of immigrants. The Cubans were concerned that we automatically granted asylum to any Cuban once he got to the United States, no matter what the circumstances of his departure from Cuba. And while we said we did not want our shores flooded by Cuban refugees, refugees arriving in Florida often received heroes’ welcomes. Understandably the Cubans didn't like that. This was not an easy dilemma to resolve. In the end we reached an agreement with the Cubans. They agreed to make a greater effort to restrict illegal immigration, and we agreed that we would not give immediate asylum to every Cuban who makes it to the U S. We now and send them back unless there is a reason, unless they can prove there are political refugees. That has changed the equation quite a bit.

*Q: There have certainly been occasions where there has been a great upsurge of illegal immigration. The Mariel boat lift.*

FLANIGAN: The Mariel boat lift was the big one.

*Q: But that didn't happen while you were there.*

FLANIGAN: No it didn't. That was in the early '80's. I can't remember precisely when. When I was there the number of refugees that made it across the Florida Straits ranged from a few dozen to a few hundred a month. It was not however, until the year after I left, 1994, that the number rose to a level where we became seriously concerned again. In 1994 there were thousands of people who fled in boat and makeshift rafts. The Cubans called them *balseros*. They made their way either across the straits to Florida or around to Guantanamo. It was after that surge of immigration in 1994 that we reached an agreement.

*Q: Let's talk a little bit more about Guantanamo. You mentioned the approach of aircraft and the people trying to go across the fence and I guess by raft into the navy base there. Did you ever visit Guantanamo? Were you involved in any formal way with that base or informally?*

FLANIGAN: I had no formal responsibility for Guantanamo because the Cubans did not permit access from the Cuban mainland and didn't recognize our right to continue to be there. Their term for our presence was “the illegal occupation” of Guantanamo. The one thing the Interests Section did do was to deliver to the Foreign Ministry the check for our annual rent payment for the base. It was around \$3,000 as I recall. It was a pittance.

*Q: Did they cash the check?*

FLANIGAN: No, apparently Castro keeps them in a desk drawer and shows them to visitors from time to time. I did visit Guantanamo two times while I was there. Once I flew to Washington and flew down from here, and another time I flew to Miami and flew



down. It had to be done from the United States. It was interesting; I had been in Guantanamo in 1957 while I was still an Naval ROTC student and later in 1960 and 1961 while I was a Naval officer, so I knew the place a little bit. It hadn't changed much except that there were very few Cubans around. When I was there the last time in 1993, it probably was the spring of '93, we had several thousand Haitian refugees living there in tents. By then there were only about 25 Cubans still employed at the base. We had gotten rid of all the others by attrition over the course of the last 34 years.

*Q: Who lived there or across the fence?*

FLANIGAN: They came across the fence every day. They were allowed to come through one gate. There was one gate the Cubans allowed them to come through, and they returned every evening. Now, they were paid in dollars, but the Cuban government limited their ability to use those dollars. I'm sure that they were better off than most Cubans however. At least while they were on the base they had access to food, etc. There was a problem paying retired employees. I do not believe that has ever been resolved.

*Q: My son-in-law, who is a Marine combat engineer officer and was in charge of the minefield a couple of years ago, had some interesting stories. It sounds like they try hard to keep it and maintain it.*

FLANIGAN: Yes. In fact, I was at a meeting very recently where I heard, I don't know the details, that we are cooperating with the Cubans now in trying to clean up a little bit of the minefields there on both sides. I'm sure we probably have done a better job of maintaining the minefield and knowing where the mines are. A lot of the terrain there is sand, and we do know that a lot of mines have shifted on their side. From time to time people will set them off as they try to walk across - or animals, deer or cows.

*Q: How about Radio and Television Marti? Did the TV Marti begin after your arrival?*

FLANIGAN: No, it went on the air actually before I arrived. Radio Marti had gone on earlier, several years before. By 1989, Radio Marti had become the standard news source for most Cubans. The Cubans had initially jammed it, but over the years they had slacked off. Until TV Marti began transmitting, most Cubans found it easy to listen to Radio Marti. People would carry around radios tuned to Radio Marti. One of the many unfortunate aspects of TV Marti was that when we decided to broadcast TV Marti, the Cubans jammed not only the TV signal but also the radio signal. To listen to Radio Marti now is a more difficult proposition. A lot of Cubans still do it, but the signal is always jammed on medium wave and they have to search around on short wave; the frequencies vary constantly. That means that it is no longer easily accessible. And the television signal is totally jammed too. That was one of the issues that I spent a lot of time over at the Foreign Ministry talking about because from time to time we would shift the broadcast time or do something else to try to make it possible for Cubans to receive the broadcast. They would accuse us of violating international communications regulations, and we would complain about their jamming and go back and forth. Unfortunately, TV Marti in the abstract was probably a good idea, but in reality it is a failure. People who

are proponents of it do not agree. They believe that even if it is not watched, the very fact that Cubans have to spend time and energy jamming it makes it worthwhile. The amount of time and energy they spend jamming a television signal is not a lot compared to the cost of generating one. Moreover it has had the secondary unintended consequence of undermining Radio Marti. The only people in Cuba who ever see TV Marti are the people who watch it in the Interests Section. We installed a TV monitor in the consular section waiting room, and we showed tapes of the broadcasts. Otherwise, I have traveled all around the island. I have gone out with a portable television set in a car to try to pick up the signal. I suppose it is theoretically possible that in some little valley where the signal bounces the right way, someone with a television set might possibly pick it up, but the number of television sets in those little valleys is fairly limited. The only Cubans outside of those in the consular waiting room who ever TV Marti regularly are government and Communist Party officials. They do it so they can monitor and protest.

*Q: Can other commercial radio and television stations in Florida be picked up in Cuba?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, they can be.

*Q: They are not jammed.*

FLANIGAN: Sometimes they are but not normally. There are several radio stations in Florida which broadcast to Havana which can be quite provocative from the Cuban standpoint. They manage to get through most of the time. Television is another thing. Depending on atmospheric conditions broadcasts from southern Florida are irregularly visible, but this only happens when conditions are just right. Most of the time these broadcasts do not get through.

*Q: Let's go back to Castro for a minute. Your only encounters with him were in receiving lines? You never really had a conversation with him?*

FLANIGAN: That's correct. I never had a substantive conversation with him. Most of the time he was relatively cordial. Not all of the time. I recall one reception for, I think it was when the President Mugabe of Zimbabwe visited. The visit coincided with our bombing campaign against Baghdad. I had the sense that he was upset from the way he didn't look at me - as we went through the receiving line he looked right over my shoulder - and shook hands in a very perfunctory fashion. He seemed to me to be emotionally distressed by having to deal with an American at that point. Otherwise, sometimes he smiled, other times he would make a joking comment, but generally he was a fairly distant figure. That was the way he dealt with most foreigners, of course. It wasn't just the Americans. All of his appearances were staged very carefully. He very rarely appeared spontaneously. Even his apparently spontaneous appearances were planned as well, and very effectively. The man has quite a bit of personal charisma and is able still to generate a lot of apparent support from Cubans. In the world community he still has some supporters as well. Don't forget, he earned a lot of admiration for his ability to tweak the U S tiger's tail.

*Q: Would you be invited to big events occasionally where you would see Castro in action?*

FLANIGAN: It was very rare that he went to events. When there was a Communist Party Congress, he would attend some of it, but normally we were not invited, foreigners were not invited. We were invited to some of the sessions but excluded from most. I remember a couple of events I went to where he was performing. One was the installation of the National Assembly, or maybe it was the opening of the Fourth Party Congress, but it was just a show. He also attended in 1992 a fascinating series of meetings about the “Cuban Missile Crisis” that had occurred thirty years earlier. The meetings were the last in a series organized by two American scholars, James Blight and David Welch. The goal was to assemble Americans, Soviets and Cubans who had actually played a role in the crisis and talk about it from their individual perspectives. The series of meetings began in 1988, the final one was held in Havana in 1992. In the end they were successful in getting quite a few people who were centrally involved including Robert McNamara and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Castro attended most of the Havana session. There were also some Russian generals there as well. The Soviet ambassador at the time, I guess by now it was the Russian ambassador, had been the minister counselor at the Soviet Embassy in 1962 so he was, or maybe he was the counselor and subsequently became minister. Anyway, he spent much of his career in Cuba, so he was involved. It was a very interesting group of people. There were very few journalists in attendance but some, and a few academicians. The sessions were restricted but not restricted to the extent that people could not report on them. I think the reporting was constrained. I'm not sure what the constraints were, but all of the significant information that was revealed got out and was published subsequently in books. It was very interesting because the comments of the retired Soviet general and Fidel Castro made it clear that the concerns that much of the world had in October 1962 were well founded. I think it is fair to say that if the generals and Castro were telling the truth, we came closer to a nuclear exchange than most of us had previously thought.

*Q: Even though it seemed pretty threatening at the time.*

FLANIGAN: It seemed pretty threatening at the time, but one thing I'm pretty sure nobody knew in the United States until this meeting in 1992, was that the Soviet general who was tactical commander in Cuba said he had been authorized to use tactical nuclear weapons if he so decided. We were particularly shocked because a U S military commander in a like circumstance never would have been given such authorization. Of course the Soviet general did not exercise his alleged authorization, and even if he had, the result would not necessarily have been a major nuclear exchange. The nuclear missiles he had were very limited in range. They could not have threatened targets in the U S. They could have blown up a ship for example. In the end they didn't use them. Castro said he wanted them to, and wished they had.

*Q: The commander should have used his authority.*

FLANIGAN: That's right.

*Q: Did you have many other visitors? You mentioned this meeting.*

FLANIGAN: From time to time we would have visiting academic groups from the United States which were down there for one reason or another. We also had religious groups from time to time. Journalists were allowed in on a very limited basis, but they were there from time to time. It was always difficult for a journalist. There were some who became experts on Cuba and when they would come, they would have regular contacts and they would go and see these people and get information. They would write stories that would get printed and then they would not be allowed to come back. Quite often they had to be very circumspect in the way they wrote things which journalists don't like to do. They had to balance their need for information with their responsibility to write what they learned. An interesting example of this was Andres Oppenheimer who wrote the book *Castro's Final Hour*. Oppenheimer was given fairly wide access. He was allowed to spend a few months in Cuba. The book he published in 1992 was not very flattering, however. It is a little sensational, but overall a very good book. The title overstates the thesis of the book. Nevertheless he is unlikely to be allowed to reenter Cuba during the Castro years.

*Q: The restrictions, of course, on the part of the Cuban government who don't allow people they don't want to, to come for too long or to have access or contacts. The United States government also has restrictions on travel to Cuba.*

FLANIGAN: There are restrictions on travel to Cuba; however, journalists, academicians can get licenses to travel without any difficulty. Those are two categories where there is no problem at all. One thing I should mention is the Pan American Games. These were held in Havana in 1991 and they brought a lot of foreigners including Americans into the country. Even though they were in the throes of an economic crisis, the Cubans put on a big show. Cuba emulated its communist mentors by creating a very strong development program for athletes. Its athletes were competitive in nearly every sport and they were commanding in some like boxing and weightlifting. By the end of the games the Cubans had won more medals than any other team including the U S. Although their athletic program is very impressive, it is one of the skewed elements of the society. Promising athletes are chosen at an early age and sent to special schools where they receive special training and special foods and special access, all those things. Cuba has developed some world class athletes with these programs. They played host to the 1991 Pan American Games which is a major hemispheric event in sports. It occurs every four years. They built a large stadium right outside of Havana and had events occurring throughout the island. There was great doubt among many people that they would ever get themselves ready in time. Of course I think that is typical of almost all preparations for games like these everywhere in the world. The Cubans did a pretty good job. The criticism that I think is legitimate is that Castro spent an awful lot of money that at that point in Cuban history he should have spent to alleviate the suffering of the Cuban people. Estimates of the cost of the games vary, but Cuban outlays included something in the range of one hundred million dollars in foreign exchange expenditures. Local expenditures were also significant but impossible to estimate given the way the Cuban economy works. But, for us it was an interesting time. We had a large American delegation. Of course the Americans were the largest delegation except for the Cubans, and they were quite

talented as well. They were the second largest number of medal winners. A lot of the members of the United States Olympic Committee came down, including George Steinbrenner, Ted Turner, and the now President of the USOC, William Hybl. I recall my wife and I along with the USOC Olympic Committee hosted a reception at the residence for the various national Olympic committees. A vice president of Cuban government attended, probably the first such high level Cuban to be in the American residence since before the revolution. The President of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch was also there. It was quite an event. ABC Sports broadcast those games, so Cuba got a lot of world attention at the time. I think in the end the games were a major athletic and public relations success for Castro. Castro has a flair for public relations. He attended the right events, and he congratulated the right people. Only once or twice did he get himself entrapped where he had to give a medal to an American. Most of the time he was shown presenting medals to Cubans.

*Q: He also didn't have to worry about baseball players or other athletes defecting from Cuba.*

FLANIGAN: That's right, he did not. Periodically obviously, that is a problem. Just before that a couple of months before, I can't remember precisely when, two members of the Cuban National Baseball Team who had been to the United States defected. Annually there is a series played between the Cuban National Baseball Team and the American National Team which is an amateur team that is preparing for the Olympics or whatever. Those series are played in a suburb of Memphis and Havana. One year during my tour two members of that team had managed to defect while changing planes in Miami. That was a constant concern of the Cuban government.

*Q: You mentioned earlier talking with the Cubans some about Central America in this period. Were we talking much with the Cuban government about Africa or other parts of the world in the time that you were there?*

FLANIGAN: We had engaged the Cubans in the late '80s on the Angola issue. In fact the Cubans had played a central role in Angola. They had as many as 25,000 soldiers there at one point. I think that is the number. Now, you can get differing views about Cuba's motivation in helping arrange the cease-fire in Angola. Some believe they were just looking for a way out. Others give them a little more credit. In any event they did cooperate with the us, the Soviets and the South Africans to get a negotiated solution. I recall that the final session of meetings among the countries involved in that process occurred in Havana, in 1992 I believe.

*Q: That I think was the year that elections were held which led to more fighting, but at least they were going in the right direction.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. And the Cubans had withdrawn their troops. They all came back; we watched them to the extent that we could. It is always difficult to monitor any event in Cuba because they try to avoid monitoring. Similarly, we tried to monitor the departure of Russian soldiers, troops and personnel after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Cuban government considered the departure of Russian troops as something akin to treason, and they tried to make sure it happened without public notice.

*Q: Is there anything more you want to say about either your time generally in Havana or particularly the end of the Soviet Union and the changeover as that affected Cuba.*

FLANIGAN: I think in the mid '80s Cuba as a country, as an institution, as a revolution was still a potential success, and I think a lot of people thought it would be able to maintain what you might call a permanent revolution in Cuba. By the time I arrived in 1990, no one believed that was possible. There were no longer any optimistic Cubans. Even senior members of the Communist Party, people in the Foreign Ministry, were no longer convinced that it would succeed. They were outspoken and determined, ostensibly optimistic, but clearly more defensive than optimistic about what the future held for Castro's Cuba. They all assumed it would last as long as he did, but then there would be some change they couldn't explain or anticipate. I think that is fairly accurate. It became clear in the early '90s that what had been built in Cuba was not sustainable. Without the Soviet Union, without its moral, physical, and material support, Cuba couldn't continue to play the role that it had by any stretch of the imagination. So, it was destined to play out its life along with Castro. I think he recognized that, and I think it made him more and more determined not to change anything. I think at this point his view of the world is similar to that of Louis XV – *apres moi le deluge!* He still believes the revolution as he constructed it was the right thing, that it did good things to and for Cuba, and the failures he blames on other people, on the Russians or on us. The truth of the matter is he bears most of the responsibility. Many of his programs were ill-considered, overly ambitious, and unproductive in the end. He does not take criticism or instruction very well.

*Q: One other international dimension Cuba has had and that is one of the leaders Castro being one of the founders I guess in the early days, the 60's, the non-aligned movement still exists, but without the cold war it is hard to see what its relevance is.*

FLANIGAN: The high point for the Cubans was when they hosted the summit of the non-aligned world in 1978. For that summit they refurbished a lot of the houses, middle class houses, bourgeois houses in the area around the American ambassador's residence in Havana, many of which had been allowed to deteriorate after the revolution. Most are in pretty bad shape again. They put on a big show in 1978. Since then Cuba has been going downhill economically, politically, and from the point of view of influence. When I arrived there were something like 78 foreign missions there. By the time I left the number was no more than 65 and I'm sure it has dropped since then. There is less interest, and ultimately Cuba will have to evolve into a nation state that has something to do with its surroundings. That includes us and the Central American and Caribbean states. I see that happening in the 10 years after Castro goes, but it won't happen until he goes. He won't let it happen.

Let me just mention one other thing. We could talk about Cuba for hours and hours. The American people are fascinated by it. One of the things I did every year was attend Castro's major speeches. You asked whether I saw him. Well there were times, yes. He

normally would give two major speeches a year. One was on the 26th of July, the day they celebrated as the day of the revolution, and the other was on May 1. The speech on May Day was not of much consequence during the years I was in Cuba. His speech was short and the principal address was given by someone else. But he was there and the parade was a major event. His July 26 speech was generally of more consequence. The last year I was there, Castro actually canceled the July 26 celebration because of lack of funds, at least ostensibly. That was part of it, but another part of it was security I think. By 1993, the year I left, and I left just before the 26th. of July, they didn't have a celebration. I believe they were uncertain they could maintain control if they gathered together the 10s of thousands of people they normally did for one of those events. There was so much unhappiness. They managed to survive that crisis however.

I recall the last May Day celebration I went to. I was forced to walk out. By the way, I think these are gestures that are lost on everybody except the person who does them. I was seated among the diplomatic corps, seated among hundreds of other people sort of behind the speakers at the feet of the statue of Jose Marti at Revolutionary Square. I remember the speaker wasn't Castro. The speaker said some insulting things about the president of the United States. I got up and walked out which of course my colleagues noticed, but almost nobody else noticed. The Cubans - at least the Ministry of Interior representatives who had responsibility for monitoring my activities - noticed of course. My early exit kept me from getting a sunburn that day.

One last vignette. When we arrived in Havana in 1990 - July or August whenever it was - there were maybe 30,000 bicycles in the country, not many at all. By the time we left three years later, there were over a million bicycles, nearly all Chinese, nearly all of them weighing 65 pounds each. By that time they were a principal means of transportation because gasoline simply wasn't available. Busses, bus transportation was probably at 15 or 20% of the level it had been when we arrived. Automobiles were hard to find. Cuba had a fairly advanced highway system, which it had developed and built during the 1980's. There were multi-lane highways leading out of Havana. In 1993, if you drove 20 miles out of Havana, you would see more bicycles and horse carts than cars and trucks.

*Q: Very few were in the hands of individual families.*

FLANIGAN: Very few. Automobiles, yes. There were still the old American automobiles which were privately owned. The newer ones were an imperfect ownership if you will, because you had to have permission to buy and permission to sell a car. Sometimes it was hard to get either. Strange situation.

*Q: In the summer of 1993 you left your position as chief of mission, principal officer in Havana, what happened then?*

FLANIGAN: Well, I came back. I had been asked to go to El Salvador as ambassador and I said I would. It sounded like an interesting time. Peace accords had been signed a year and a half before. In fact, when the prospect came up it was March of 1993 I recall, and it was a time when the Truth Commission, which was a product of the peace accords,

had just issued its report. It led to a commission within the State Department to study the conduct of our embassy during those years. The Vest Commission - I believe it was called. Its report was generally positive, but also had some negative elements to it. It seemed like an interesting time to go, a challenging time, so I said I would. El Salvador was still an issue of some debate in the United States. I never realized how much because I had never been involved in the Central American arena. I was either in Portugal during those years or then in Cuba. In Cuba even though we were sort of involved on the margins we were by and large isolated from events in Central America. I did get the *New York Times*, always two or three days late. But reading it did not fully sensitize me to the intensity of feelings about Central America in Washington. I was aware that it was still an issue of some consequence in Washington, some debate. The person who had been nominated to go to El Salvador in 1991, Michael Kozak, had been the principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Inter American Affairs. Because of that he had become identified in the minds of some people on Capitol Hill with a policy with which they disagreed. He was never given a hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It was unfortunate and unfair. Finally in the late spring of 1993 the administration gave up and withdrew Kozak's nomination. My predecessor, Ambassador William Walker left in February of 1992; the peace accords having been signed just a month before. We were without an ambassador until I went in October of 1993.

*Q: A year and a half or so.*

FLANIGAN: I was very fortunate. I left Havana in early July, and the day I arrived in Washington, I got a call from the State Department saying that a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing had been scheduled for the following week. Of course I knew very little about El Salvador. I did what I could to bone up very quickly. On the other hand, since I had just returned from Havana, there was no great expectation that I would be an expert either. The hearing took place as scheduled.. It was a joint hearing. John Maisto, who was going to Nicaragua, and I were heard at the same time by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Fairly unusual; they had I think six Senators there. Senator Helms was there, of course, who is interested in Central America. Senator Pell came briefly; Senators Dodd, Sarbanes, Lugar and Coverdell were also there.

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*Q: This is May 17. Alan, when we stopped the other day, I think we were just getting ready for your hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee preparatory for your going as Ambassador to the Republic of El Salvador.*

FLANIGAN: That's correct. I think I was saying that John Maisto who was going to Nicaragua and I appeared together at the hearing. It was a well attended hearing. There were six or seven Senators there. I think I named them before, and there was quite a bit of interest. It had been more than two years in the case of Nicaragua and a year and a half in the case of El Salvador since our predecessors had left. Central American policy had been a contentious issue and as a result both positions had remained vacant. By this point, however without putting too fine an edge on it, I think people were sick and tired of



pursuing old grudges and old wars and wanted to get ambassadors in place because the countries were important to us. We had spent a lot of money, time, and effort over the course of the last decade trying to help both of them. There was a dramatic change taking place in Nicaragua and in El Salvador as well, so the hearing was a very friendly hearing. Most of the questions, in fact about two thirds of the questions were directed at John Maisto who was going to Nicaragua. Some of the questions were directed to me, but they were largely pro forma. People were generally quite happy with the way things had been going in El Salvador, and I think in fact, surprised that they were going so well.

*Q: Let me just make sure we have the timing clear. This was the first year of the Clinton administration, and the Democrats still had a majority in the Senate.*

FLANIGAN: That's correct. It was four years ago today almost, give or take a couple of days.

*Q: July, summer of 1993.*

FLANIGAN: That's correct. There wasn't any political quarrel about whether we should have an ambassador. In fact, Senator Helms was at the hearing. I think he had some skepticism about whether it was useful to send an ambassador to Nicaragua at that point. There was some disenchantment on the part of some Republicans with the way things were going in Managua. Nevertheless, concerning El Salvador which was the case at hand, there was no question. The peace accords had been signed at the end of 1991, and went in to effect there early 1992. They had been in effect for a year and a half. Things had progressed much better than most people had anticipated. And, in fact, I think virtually no one would have predicted they would have gone as well as they had. During that time, there had been no violations of the cease fire. All of the demilitarization efforts had gone according to plan. Schedules, of course, sometimes slipped as they always did, but basically things had gone quite well, and so people wanted to get a new ambassador in place quickly. The hearing was friendly. I was reported out by the committee within a couple of days after the hearing and confirmed the following week.

*Q: When did you go to post?*

FLANIGAN: I went in October.

*Q: I don't know if there is anything else we need to say about preparations for going, but why don't you describe further the situation you found when you got there both in the country and in the Embassy. You had a new DCM, or did somebody continue who had been there for awhile?*

FLANIGAN: Let me back up a little bit on preparations. U.S. policy towards El Salvador and what we were doing in El Salvador was still somewhat controversial. There were still a lot of skeptics in parts of the United States domestic political community who were not yet persuaded.

*Q: On both sides of the political spectrum?*

FLANIGAN: On the most part the left side of the political spectrum. They were very skeptical that a right wing government in El Salvador would actually honor the commitments made in the peace accords and would do the things necessary to bring about democratization - the real process of making El Salvador into a democracy. There were good reasons for skepticism. History would not encourage one to be optimistic; nevertheless, as I say, things were going well. But, it was necessary for me to meet all these groups and people who had stakes in what was going to happen in El Salvador. There was still a tremendous amount of interest, and there was a lot of participation by various groups in the United States. Their representatives would travel down and observe and in one way or another try and assist with the process or to assist the people.

*Q: These are NGO's, church based, members of Congress?*

FLANIGAN: All of the above. Exactly, ranging from staff members to Congressmen to church groups across the religious spectrum really, and all sorts of NGO's involved with the development of democracy, fighting hunger or improving child care. Really wide ranging. I doubt that on a per capita basis there was any other country that received quite the same attention from a wide spectrum of organizations and people in the United States.

*Q: What is the population of El Salvador?*

FLANIGAN: The population is a little over 5,000,000 resident in El Salvador. There are almost a million resident in the United States, that is recent immigrants, recent being the last 15-20 years.

*Q: So you tried to meet with all these parties, in the executive branch also or was it more in this wider community?*

FLANIGAN: No, there were no problems within the executive branch. There was general agreement that things were going well, that the policy we embarked on, support of the peace process, was really the way to go. There was, I think, a certain reluctance or perhaps a slowness to recognize by the new administration that for what was occurring in El Salvador was really positive. There had been so much conflict that had spilled over into the domestic political debate in the 1980's that it is difficult for a lot of people especially in the left wing of the Democratic Party, to accept that the outcome of all of this is really quite positive.

*Q: Particularly as you say, with a right wing conservative government in power.*

FLANIGAN: That's it. I'll mention later when we get to the elections we had some members of Congress come down and observe the elections. Some were very skeptical that things would go well, and they were surprised and pleased, but not delighted when they did go well. In part because, as one said, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco, the wrong people won.

*Q: Yes, and with a lot of history probably assuming that other things were going on that they couldn't see or suspected must be there.*

FLANIGAN: Absolutely. There was a belief bordering on a conviction that this couldn't be happening this way. This couldn't be real. I understood it. It was sometimes difficult to understand that there had been such a change in the country. But, since I hadn't had any part in that debate, I hadn't been involved at all. I mean you can argue that either I came ignorant or I came with a clean slate. In any event I think I was able to approach it on a fairly balanced basis.

*Q: You didn't have to in a sense defend what had happened previously. Obviously you needed to be aware of it and informed.*

FLANIGAN: Absolutely, and you can still generate a great debate in the United States about what did happen and why it happened. What happened is less debatable, but why it happened is still quite debatable in the United States, and that is, why the peace process actually worked in El Salvador. What forced the various factions to the bargaining table, and why did we get involved, what pressures did we bring to bear? Those kinds of things.

*Q: Who perhaps is to blame or is responsible. Was it the executive; was it the embassy perhaps; was it the U.S. military; did we have nothing to do with it?*

FLANIGAN: I think everybody can claim victory here or take credit. It is interesting. Most do want to take credit. The Clinton administration because of the history is just a little shy about saying: "hey, this is a success, and we need to recognize it and work with it." We did it, but it took some time.

*Q: That did happen after a time?*

FLANIGAN: Oh sure.

*Q: Well, anything else sort of a scene setting, or should we get you to arrive in October '93?*

FLANIGAN: No I think that's it. You did ask about a DCM. The person who had been in charge for the last 18 months was there when I arrived, but I had selected another DCM, and the Chargé was in any event, en route to another assignment. That was Peter Romero, and he became ambassador to Ecuador immediately thereafter. We had about two weeks overlap, effectively no overlap. My new DCM didn't arrive to post until six weeks to two months after I did. That was Gwen Clair, someone I selected. Someone I didn't know, but someone who had a good reputation and had qualities and talents that balanced mine.

*Q: I think it would have been a little awkward to continue too long with someone who had been chargé d' affairs for 18 months. That is a long time.*

FLANIGAN: I think in this particular situation it would have been. Not because of the personalities involved so much as the situation. The situation was evolving so quickly that I think it was often difficult for people involved say at the beginning of 1992 to recognize the changes that were taking place and how rapidly the whole situation was developing. I liken it to my own experience in Turkey. I spent a year in Turkish language training, five years in Turkey, and a year and a half as Turkish desk officer. By that point, I probably knew as much or more about Turkey than anybody else in the Foreign Service. That is, what was going on in Turkey that day. But, I also had some resistance to recognizing changes that were taking place. In a sense, I sometimes found myself being part of the problem rather than part of the solution. At least I imagined that, and I think that sometimes happens to people.

*Q: It is amazing how quickly things can change, sometimes faster than the recognition of trends. In terms of institutions besides the Salvadorian parties and I think we talked a little bit about the United States, who were the main actors when you got there in October of '93? Was the United Nations still...*

FLANIGAN: The United Nations was still a major force. ONUSAL it was called, the Spanish acronym for Office of the United Nations in El Salvador, was the largest single major presence. They were beginning to shrink at that point, but they had facilitated the demilitarization, they helped separate the forces, they helped collect the weapons. They were helping get ready for dismantling the old police force, for elections that were going to occur in the next year. Our policy was to cooperate fully with ONUSAL and support their efforts. In the process that led up to the peace accords we had played a role obviously; the United Nations had been the major player. It had facilitated and coordinated all the negotiations. Five countries had actively supported the peace process, the four friends plus one. We were the "plus one". The four friends were Spain, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela. Their representatives in New York and their representatives in El Salvador met regularly to help facilitate the process. Most of the negotiations were carried out either in Mexico or in New York, and of course, not in El Salvador. Nevertheless, a lot of the support activity especially after the peace process was concluded did take place in El Salvador. So, at least when I got there in late 1993, the four-plus-one was still an active institution that was playing a strong supportive role.

*Q: Colombia, Venezuela, Spain and what was the fourth one?*

FLANIGAN: Mexico, which was very unusual. Mexico usually did not play a role that could somehow be interpreted as interfering in the internal affairs of another nation, in part because of their resistance to that on the part of anybody else., especially the United States. In this case, they played a very strong role and very positive one.

*Q: Did the ambassadors of these four countries plus yourself periodically meet with the UN? Was there a senior UN representative?*

FLANIGAN: Yes there was, the secretary general's special envoy, who at that time was Augusto Ramirez Ocampo, who was the second one. The first one had been Pakistani,

but Ramirez Ocampo, who was Colombian, replaced him about six months before I arrived, as I recall. Ramirez Ocampo had been foreign minister of Colombia and had been mayor of Bogota. He was I think a fairly highly regarded political figure in Colombia - conservative. He would host weekly meetings. He either hosted them, or we rotated them. The system had broken down a little bit, but we got it back on track so we were in fact having rotating weekly meetings of the four-plus-one plus the UN representative. Normally it was just that; there were maybe one or two other people. If someone such as a senior official from New York or from another capital were visiting, he or she might participate as well. Normally the meetings were held to review what was going on and see what, if anything, we as a group or as individual nations might do to push the process forward.

*Q: Did the UN actually have some troop that did all these different things, disarming and separating forces and so on?*

FLANIGAN: They did in fact have some troops and police forces that they brought in for this. They were from Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Norway, Sweden, Canada.

*Q: The UN apparently did a good job, as did other countries in support of the accords, in support of their implementation, but it must have been the most important factor was the Salvadorian people wanted these agreements to work and to be implemented on time and fairly and so on. Is that correct?*

FLANIGAN: I think so. During the time I was there, it was often said the Salvadorian experience was one of two major UN successes, Cambodia being the other. I guess Salvador qualifies as the single major success at this point because it is still intact. The fact of the matter is that the Salvadorans on both sides of the political spectrum had come to the conclusion that their problems could not be resolved by violence. There had been a last gasp effort by the FMLN in the fall of 1989 and its associated groups to take San Salvador. They had gone into the city, and they expected and hoped that somehow the city would rise up and support them. They were able to establish a beachhead in the city, which of course, frightened the establishment, if you will. But, they weren't able to do more than that, so it became clear that there was effectively a military and a political standoff and they had to find a way to negotiate a solution. On the government side, the person who deserves the most credit for this was Alfredo Cristiani who was President at the time. It is harder to identify a single person on the FLMN side, because there were four or five major actors. In the end it was a very difficult negotiation. As I indicated earlier, when I was in Havana, we would from time to time go to the Cubans and see if they would weigh in. The fact of the matter is the Cubans had a very consistent position. They said they were supportive of the peace process, and they certainly wanted this to be a negotiated solution; however, they would do nothing to undermine the position of the FLMN in the negotiations. Therefore, they wouldn't do what we wanted them to do which was stop arming them.

*Q: Was the FLMN quite present in San Salvador when you go there?*

FLANIGAN: Oh yes. By the time I got there the FLMN was practically a political party. It was a political party. I'm sure there were former adherents and participants who were reluctant to identify themselves with it, but not many. All the former *comandantes* had unmasked themselves. Their *noms de guerre* were still being used or not being used or being used in tandem with their real name. It was sometimes confusing because you would sometimes know people by two different names. Some people would call him this and some people would call him that. I think that is still the case. There are two or three that still go by the names they acquired during the war years.

*Q: You would have contact with some of the FMLN?*

FLANIGAN: Oh, yes. They regularly met with us. I mean not only did the United Nations play this major facilitator role, the American embassy did as well. It was one of those places that was sort of neutral territory. I could host social events, for example, and people from all sides would attend, the foreign minister, the defense minister, the *comandantes* of the various factions. They would all be there. They were not friendly. I would say that, but they would talk. It was almost bizarre sometimes especially for people who had been there during the war years and would come back. They would come to one of these things and see a person like Schafik Handal talking to the minister of defense who was a general. They would find it hard to believe.

*Q: They would be willing to do that at your embassy, at the residence, and perhaps at the United Nations, but probably not very many other places.*

FLANIGAN: It just wasn't easy for them to do other places. I mean they wouldn't take the initiative to meet with the other side normally, but if put into a position where they had to talk to each other or had the opportunity to talk to each other, they quite often did. I think the Spanish embassy did some of that, and to a certain extent, at least while I was there, the Venezuelan and Colombian and perhaps the Mexican embassy.

*Q: Were we seen as providing these good offices or neutral ground partly because at the time we had a Democratic administration?*

FLANIGAN: I don't think so. I think it would have worked either way. I think the sense was that we had a tremendous interest in the country. We were providing a lot of assistance. It was clear by our support for the peace process that we were not taking sides so to speak; although, my position there was ambassador to the government. It was clear that I had a similar responsibility and obligation to maintain contact with the opposition, in this case that is what it had become, and that was accepted across the board.

*Q: What sort of assistance or assets or other programs did we have besides what you could do and other embassy officers?*

FLANIGAN: Well, we had major assistance programs. The precise numbers elude me, but the year I went, for example, our economic assistance program was nearly \$200,000,000. It was the largest program in Latin America. Even when I left in 1996, we still had over \$200,000,000 in the pipeline. The program had been reduced dramatically

to \$30,000,000 a year. Still the program was second to in size in the hemisphere, second to that of Haiti. We were involved in basic education, basic health care, reform of government institutions especially the justice system. Maybe it is an overstatement, but there never had been an effective justice system in the country. For example, when I arrived it was still the case that the supreme court was a totally political institution. It had already been agreed in the peace accords that the supreme court that existed would be disbanded and that a new one would be elected by the new legislature which would be elected. All these things would occur, and I saw my responsibility as trying to make sure that all these things did happen and that they happened in a peaceful, open, and participatory fashion. In March and April of 1994, there were municipal, legislative, and presidential elections. Everybody throughout the country in all of the executive elements of government changed, and all of the legislative elements of government changed, and then once the new national legislature was installed, they elected a new supreme court. Within the first year I was there, there was a total change in the governance of the country.

*Q: Before we talk more about the elections and their ramifications, let me ask you a bit more about the U.S. presence on the assistance side. Were we giving at this time, military assistance in some form too?*

FLANIGAN: We still had a residual military assistance program. We didn't have any new military assistance going in to the country. I remember during my hearing, I made a specific appeal, having been prompted to do so and having thought it was the right thing to do, for the Foreign Relations Committee to release I think it was something in the range of \$2,000,000 they had that they were holding back. It had been appropriated for that fiscal year for military assistance. My argument simply was as the military was downsized, and it was reduced to a quarter of its wartime strength. All of the senior officers were sacked. It was still going to be an important institution in the country. It historically had been, and we needed to maintain contact with and influence with. I did not prevail; the military assistance was not provided. Nevertheless, there was still a substantial amount in the pipeline, so we did have an ongoing program. Also, when I arrived we still had something like 30 military advisor - this is in addition to our Military Aid and Assistance Group. This was the legacy of the war. During the war we had been limited by legislation to having no more than 55 military advisors in the country. By the time I arrived, even though it was a year and a half after, there were still 33 of those. I didn't think it made a lot of sense to have that, so we tried to phase it out as quickly as possible. As I recall it still took nearly a year to get everybody phased out.

*Q: Did the United States have elements, units, people as part of the United Nations operation?*

FLANIGAN: No, we didn't. The only thing we had in that regard, I mean there were United States citizens on the UN staff, but they were there as United Nations employees. One of the things the peace accords provided for that was a major change in the way El Salvador did business was to disband the old national police force and create a new national police force. The old one had historically been subordinate to the army. It had

become totally corrupt. It had been associated during the war years with some of the worst abuses. The judgment was, and I think it was an accurate one, that it couldn't be saved. It had to be destroyed. It was a very delicate process because you can't leave a country without any public security force. And, although the United Nations could provide some support, it couldn't really provide the number of people required to maintain security in the country. During the course of the three years I was there, the old national police was phased out, and the new national civilian police was trained and phased in. I'm trying to think, sometime during the last year I was there, the last of the national police retired or was fired, and the new national civilian police took over totally.

*Q: Did we have police advisors involved in that training and transition?*

FLANIGAN: Yes. In fact, I think it was one of the great successes we can take credit for. First of all we had in the embassy, within the mission, an ICITAP program. ICITAP is a Justice Department acronym which stands for International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program. We had done it in a few countries. It basically provides training in criminal investigation. This program was a little broader than most and a little deeper. We, I think, played a key role in the creation of the national civilian police. We did everything from helping to design the uniforms - baseball caps instead of military caps - to developing a curriculum and providing instructors. We were not alone in providing instructors nor in developing a curriculum, but I think we were predominant there. The French, the Spaniards, the Mexicans, the Brazilians, the Chileans, the Canadians, the Swedes, and the Norwegians all played a role in helping recreate the new police force. Again it was one of these things that people thought would never really work. I suppose you would have to say the jury is still out because it is still a very new institution. It will take time for it to mature. But, the process has gone better than even the most optimistic might have hoped. Just taking 18-19-20 year olds and giving them five months of training and turning them into policemen which would have the confidence and support of the public is almost beyond expectation, almost beyond hope, but generally it worked. Obviously the selection process was not perfect; sometimes there were people that were duds. It had to be carefully balanced politically. Thirty percent had to be from the FMLN; thirty percent could be from the army or even the old police force under certain circumstances, and then forty percent had to be people with no such associations. The selection process was very hard in part because of some of the restrictions the United Nations had placed on the process and the peace accords themselves had placed on the process. Because records were suspect, it was not permitted, at least for a long time, that police records be searched to see if applicants might have criminal histories. Sometimes this caused some problems. Generally speaking, however, it worked well; the training went well. I recall that when I had visitors come to El Salvador, one of the things I always tried to do was to get them to visit the police training center, which happened to be the largest police academy in the western hemisphere at the time with the number of students involved, and let them see what was happening. It was an eye opener for them all because it was very impressive. A group of young dedicated people taking shape into a police force. I remember taking Senator Leahy there, taking Secretary of State Christopher there. Whenever congressmen would come, I would take them. Very few came any more. Even though there was some residual



interest, members of Congress by and large, had stopped coming.

*Q: Because they didn't want to travel anywhere or they didn't want to be there, or they had just lost interest?*

FLANIGAN: Right. The crisis seemed to be over. Peace had broken out and things seemed to be working all right. Every once in a while, there was something a little messy that caught their attention. I'd get an urgent phone call from a staff member asking what was going on. It was in fact a very fragile situation. Things were very uncertain. When I arrived in October, the election campaign was really just beginning for the March elections. It was not clear yet who the FMLN candidate was going to be although it did seem very likely that we knew. It was certain who was going to be the candidate from the conservative party, ARENA, The Republican National Alliance. Just after I arrived there was a series of incidents that raised, certainly in the United States, but in other places as well, the specter of the resurgence of political violence. They thought "here we go again"! There were, I can't remember precisely, but it was about in late October or early November, there was an assassination of an FMLN political figure who had been a fairly senior official, not one of the top ten or hundred even but at least someone of consequence in their structure. He was assassinated in San Salvador. There was a belief which was a conviction on the part of the FMLN and all of their supporters in the United States that the right wing, the nefarious right wing, the death squads were active again. There was a fear that the peace process was collapsing, that it couldn't work, it wouldn't work. I recall there was great concern in the State Department in the Inter American Bureau. There was no good answer obviously because it certainly was possible that something like that could happen. Then, about two weeks later there was another incident where somebody was killed, another FMLN militant. Then there was a third incident which appeared to be another attempted killing. All of these within the course of about six weeks which raised a lot of alarm and a lot of concern. The first murder was not immediately resolved. It took a couple of years before substantial witnesses came forward and proceeded to identify someone with the killing. It turned out that the suspected gunman was in the United States. We managed to arrest him and send him back. Either he was being tried or they were getting ready to try him, I'm not sure exactly what happened. My guess is he is still in jail awaiting trial. Unfortunately that is the nature of the Salvadoran justice system. When I was there, 80% of the people were in jail awaiting trial as opposed to having been tried. The second incident played out more quickly. It became clear that it was an all too common kind of thing that happens in El Salvador today. Too many people with too many automatic weapons deciding to resolve traffic conflicts instantly by shooting somebody. That incident turned out to be fairly benign from a political perspective. There was another murder, as I say, the third one. It was never fully explained. It wasn't clear if the killing might have had political motivations or not. But these incidents caught everybody's attention from the United Nations to the U.S. Congress to the U.S. State Department. Of course I was thrust right into the forefront of all of this. I remember attending the funeral of the first person murdered. It was a political act, the funeral in a driving rain. One thing I haven't mentioned and I should. I had never been in a country before where the role of the United States was so consequential. I'd had the good fortune of serving in friendly countries.

Certainly in Turkey and in Portugal the relationships were important and perhaps the most important relationships those countries had with another country. Cuba was entirely different; although, they were obsessed with us. In El Salvador, because its proximity, the role of the United States is dramatically central, and the role of the United States ambassador at least in the eyes of the Salvadorans is also very central. When I arrived in the country there were packs of journalists waiting for me to make a statement at the airport, so I had drafted one in advance which I read and I didn't take any questions. It was an eye opener to me. When I began to venture out in the next few days, the press was all over me. Television cameras, radio and print journalists shouting questions at me. Any kind of question. Basically what they seemed to want me to do was to grade the progress of the peace process and describe whether or not I felt the government was doing a good job, whether the FLMN was playing fair and all of those things. Historically we had actually done that quite a bit.

*Q: Why don't you keep talking about the central consequential role of the United States ambassador in El Salvador?*

FLANIGAN: But one of the things I decided fairly quickly after I got there, was that if this peace process was to succeed, it would succeed because the Salvadorans wanted it to succeed. It couldn't be the Americans doing it. I did not believe the American ambassador could be a high profile public figure passing out grades on performance, especially not on a daily basis. It was very difficult in that regard because it was anticipated that I would play that kind of role, so what I sometimes did with the press was difficult. Not that they were unfriendly. They were very friendly, very cordial, and in fact, sometimes when I know my Spanish was not as good as it should have been and maybe said things poorly, they covered for me. Sometimes on evening television they would "voice over" what I had said, paraphrasing it knowing what I wanted to say. Which was very nice I thought. But, I had not prepared myself; I had not been prepared by my experience in other places to be the public figure that an American ambassador is in a Central American country. I don't think it is an exaggeration to say the American ambassador is one of a handful of the most identifiable and influential public figures in a country like that.

*Q: Did people watch whether it is the government or the opposition or whatever watch what the ambassador does and doesn't do. So, your attending this funeral which as you say was a political act on the part of the FMLN. It was also a political act for you to go to show, I'm not sure what you were trying to show, but it seems to me that it was symbolic.*

FLANIGAN: I was there to show that first of all we had a certain relationship with these groups. We were concerned about the possible outbreak of violence again, and I was there to show that we were not going to let something like that happen without being visible. Not that we could do something about it necessarily, but there was always a mythology about American power and American presence. There was always the feeling among Salvadorans that we could do anything we wanted to in El Salvador. It is one of the problems that I've often said, when contrasting or comparing my experience in Cuba where I was worst enemy with my experience in El Salvador where I was best friend, that it is sometimes easier to be worst enemy because people don't expect much of you. In El

Salvador from all sides of the political spectrum it was expected that I would be able to bring the other side or the other party around. We did have influence with all of them. But we could not dictate.

*Q: But to continue to have that influence and to play that role, you really had to keep reaching out in all directions.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. I had to stay in touch with everybody, maintain open communications, make sure that I didn't become identified or the embassy didn't become identified with one group or another, that we were always accessible. It was a very difficult process because I had to receive people quite often that I didn't particularly want to receive, and I had to call on people I didn't particularly want to call on. I remember the first few weeks I was there, I called on the president of the Supreme Court. The man who was president of the Supreme Court is now active in politics again unfortunately, but he had been identified by the Truth Commission as someone who had deliberately inhibited various efforts to investigate various killings during the bad years of the war. As I indicated earlier, the Supreme Court was an institution that was going to disappear. Nevertheless, he was a head of a branch of government. I made a perfunctory courtesy call which he then used to his benefit to the extent that he could. His photographer, court photographer if you will, took a picture of us together smiling and shaking hands which was played for weeks in various newspapers and magazines and television.

*Q: You were giving your blessing.*

FLANIGAN: That was the implication that he certainly wanted to convey.

*Q: Were you concerned about your physical security or that of the embassy particularly during this early period when there still was residual violence?*

FLANIGAN: We were somewhat concerned about physical security, but there hadn't been any incidents. There was no indication that the embassy was being targeted by anybody. We had become transformed from a partisan in that effort to a facilitator. I think we were generally perceived as being helpful to all sides. There was always the possibility of a renegade, and we knew that, a renegade on the right or the left, but it would have been the extremes in either case, taking out after us. As ambassador, I was protected, probably over-protected. When I arrived we still had an American security officer riding as part of my security detail. Once again as I indicated earlier, it is sometimes difficult for someone in a place to recognize how quickly things are evolving. When you come in from the outside, you sometimes see a little more clearly. It seemed clear to me, and I think I was right in retrospect that we were much too concerned about that kind of security, so we cut back our security force dramatically over the next year and didn't suffer any consequences. Now, that is not to say that security is not a problem in El Salvador for Americans. It is, because of criminal activity, but not political activity or terrorism. It is a major difference. I don't know if it gives you a lot of comfort necessarily if you end up being shot, but it is different and you have to defend yourself in different ways.

*Q: There is a history of before you were in El Salvador of Americans being targeted, of being vulnerable in security. Did any of that old history continue to preoccupy you in any way.*

FLANIGAN: Yes it did. In fact, you may over the course of the last two or three years have read snippets in the *Washington Post* about the Zona Rosa massacre which was a terrible incident in the early '80s in which a group of the embassy's marine security guards were assassinated in downtown San Salvador. They were at a sidewalk cafe. I think four were killed. This happened during the war, of course. They were targeted, by our standards certainly improperly, and I think that is absolutely the case. They were after all, marine security guards. Everybody knew they played no role in advising Salvadoran military forces. Their sole function was to provide security to the embassy. They were targeted by one of the smaller and more violent elements of the FMLN. To this day there is a lot of concern about the fact that those people were never brought to justice, or not fully brought to justice. Some were; some weren't, and in fact there is in the United States at this time, a man who claimed to have been involved in the planning of that assassination who managed to come here on parole in the late '80s under disputed circumstances. There was a hearing in the Senate about six weeks ago in which my predecessor, Ambassador Walker, testified. There is a dispute about who actually authorized this individual to come into the United States. He had apparently supplied a lot of valuable information about this group. That being said, he was also apparently responsible for the murder of four marines. The Senate wants to know what the justification was for allowing him to enter the United States.

*Q: But while you were there as ambassador, this was not a major issue?*

FLANIGAN: It wasn't a major issue; it wasn't a bilateral issue. It was one of those issues that was sort of percolating in Washington. It became an issue while I was there when there was a *60 Minutes* program where an individual on *60 Minutes* claimed that he was involved in the planning of the murders.

*Q: The same person?*

FLANIGAN: Interestingly, no, not the same person. Another individual who probably was not, and in any event was a U.S. citizen of Salvadoran extraction who had been born in the United States, had gone back to El Salvador, had been involved in the guerrilla activity. It seems that this was braggadocio rather than anything else. Anyway it was the impetus for this investigation that uncovered this other information. There was also late in the war, I believe this occurred in 1988, very late, there was a shoot-down of a U.S. military helicopter in which several people were killed, but two people survived. One was a lieutenant colonel; one was a sergeant. One was I think the copilot, and one was a passenger. They were not based in El Salvador. They had been in San Salvador. They were based in Honduras at the air base there that the Hondurans let us use. They had been in San Salvador on routine military business; they weren't involved in the war activity there at all. Nevertheless, they were flying back, and they were shot down which was a terrible thing, but what really made it a major problem was the two men who survived

were taken prisoner and summarily executed by the guerrilla faction that seized them. This is an issue that once again has never been fully resolved. Initially the FMLN faction involved admitted that it happened and identified the people who had done it and said it was in violation of standing orders and agreed that they could be tried. Some of them were. Unfortunately in the end what also happened is that they benefitted from amnesty, a general amnesty. We tried for the first two and a half years I was there, we had a massive effort, a quiet but nevertheless determined effort to try to see that these individuals were not included in the general amnesty. We argued that the crime they committed was different from the ones provided for in the general amnesty and they should therefore be tried and imprisoned. Ultimately we failed when the new Supreme Court ruled in their favor.

I did want to mention, I talked about the role of the American ambassador in a Central American country. Because of the history of our relationship and because there hadn't been an ambassador there for 18 months, there was a great interest in getting me there and having me there if you will. Not me in person, you know, but the figure of the American ambassador. It was perhaps best illustrated by the way I was received. I arrived; it was about noon. I earlier said there was a large contingent of the press at the airport. I gave a statement. My wife and I and our little dog were driven to the residence. I quickly had lunch and changed clothes so I could make a courtesy call on the foreign minister and present him a copy of my credentials. That was about 2:00 P.M. At 4:00 P.M. I presented my credentials of the president at the palace, *Casa Presidencial*, as they call it.

*Q: In the rain.*

FLANIGAN: In the rain. It was the first time I had been in Central America. It was the first time I had been in El Salvador. It was the first time I had met President Cristiani whom I mentioned earlier, who has received and should receive great credit for having brought the establishment of El Salvador to the point where they were willing to negotiate, and then to negotiate a peace agreement which has been stable. He was a young businessman who had entered politics only about eight or ten years before, during the wartime. He was associated with the political party which was considered extremely conservative and had historically shown a tendency towards violence. His being able to do this is quite remarkable. He, himself is a remarkable person and still under 50, I believe. One of the virtues, one of his great strengths in dealing with us had been he had gone to school at Georgetown, and therefore understood Americans and spoke very good English. That is not always the case in Central America and was a distinct advantage at that time when our relations were so close.

*Q: Did you, after presenting your credentials, did you meet with him quite frequently, regularly, speak to him in English?*

FLANIGAN: I did speak to him in English because his English was so much better than my Spanish. There were times when he would start off in Spanish, so we would speak Spanish, but generally I spoke to him in English. I met with him fairly regularly. Whenever I felt I needed to see him, he would receive me, and it was a fairly cordial

relationship. It is impressionistic, but I might just add for the record, I think by this point in his five year term, he was tired of dealing with the United States. The United States, after all, was very important to him. On the other hand, the United States had put a lot of pressure on him during the negotiations and during the first part of the implementation of the peace process. During the several months before I arrived, about four months before I arrived, he had as a result of the Ad Hoc Peace Commission recommendations, finally agreed to the dismissal of all of the military high command. That had not been an easy process given the history of the military in El Salvador. It was a necessary step, but it could not have been easy. My sense was that he felt we had pushed him too hard on that. He was always friendly; I'm not suggesting he wasn't friendly. He certainly was responsive, and the relationship between him and me and his government was good. I just had the feeling he'd had it up to here with our constant advice.

*Q: He hoped the new American ambassador wouldn't come running around to the...*

FLANIGAN: That's right. Making demands all the time.

*Q: What about...*

FLANIGAN: I notice you have written down Truth Commission and Ad Hoc Commission.

*Q: Yes, I'd like to talk about those. Is this a good time to talk about that a little bit?*

FLANIGAN: Yes it probably is.

*Q: Those are two different commissions?*

FLANIGAN: Two different commissions. The effect of them was almost the same. They were commissions that were established as part of the peace accords. They had the responsibility for trying to establish if not blame at least responsibility for some of the things that had occurred during the war, some of the most egregiously bad things. This was considered to be part of the healing process. Also part of the deal was that those identified might be dismissed but otherwise not prosecuted for their activities. It was always a very difficult issue for a lot of people that somebody might be identified as having played an egregiously evil role and yet was not prosecuted. What normally happened, however, was they were excluded from the political process for the future. In the end that was probably as effective as anything else because prosecution itself my guess would not have been particularly successful unless it was done outside of the country, and there was no institution who had the standing to do that.

*Q: But reconciliation was certainly one of the goals. I'm thinking of the similar in some ways commission in South Africa which was called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.*

FLANIGAN: That's right, and it is the goal, but there is always a tension within it. I mean

there are people that talk about reconciliation but really want retribution, and there are people that are therefore afraid of being identified and are reluctant to come forward and talk about what happened during those years. This was evident in the Truth Commission Report, which I think was by and large successful. For example, some FMLN leaders, *commandante*, effectively refused to detail what they might have participated in during the war. Others were quite frank. The result being that those who were quite frank were penalized and the others weren't. They were penalized by being identified as not being eligible to participate in the political process for "X" years or this, that, or the other thing. In fact, that was one of the recommendations of the Truth Commission that was ignored by consensus by the Salvadorans even though we and others put pressure on them at the time. There were some individuals who by terms of the report should not have been allowed to return to politics as quickly as they did. My sense is that it is probably a good thing that they were allowed to participate despite the report.

*Q: Well, in the first six months you were there, much of your focus must have been on the elections in the spring of '94. Cristiani could not be a regular party candidate.*

FLANIGAN: He couldn't succeed himself, and the candidate was already known if not selected. It was Armando Calderon Sol who was the second term mayor of San Salvador. He was very different from Cristiani in that he was a political activist, not a businessman. He was from the "political" wing of the party if you will. He had a reputation of being a capable administrator and had been relatively successful as mayor of San Salvador. I say relatively because people say he was successful, and I suppose he was, but it was a very poor city so it didn't look like what we might think of as a well administered city.

*Q: And was obviously full of inefficiencies.*

FLANIGAN: That's right. Nevertheless, he was also, like Cristiani, quite young, in his 40's, and therefore I think capable of viewing a new El Salvador, a new Central America. One that wasn't like the traditional one. The opposition became Ruben Zamora who had never been a member of the FMLN per se, but had been active internationally during the war years soliciting support for the FMLN and generally as a spokesman for left of center elements in San Salvador. He kept himself separate from the military struggle and therefore was not fully identified as an FMLN partisan. This is a tricky business because to say he wasn't in the FMLN was totally accurate. On the other hand, he supported the FMLN and worked for it. Nevertheless, when it came to the presidential campaign, there were elements of the FMLN that considered him an outsider and there was always a question of whether they worked as hard for him as they might have. There was a third candidate I should add. The Christian Democratic Party had historically been... There were actually more than three. Three major candidates and about seven in all. The third one, the Christian Democratic Party had been a major force. In fact the Duarte governments in the '80s were Christian Democratic governments. The party had lost a lot of support and I think credibility during Duarte's second administration. Duarte had become ill with cancer and the administration developed a reputation for being terribly corrupt and venal. The party became largely discredited. That led to the political polarization of the country because the collapse of the Christian Democrats created a

vacuum in the center of the political spectrum. This left the ARENA on the right and the FMLN on the left. The Christian Democrats were in the middle, but this was not a period where the middle accrued power. You would think that power flows toward the middle. In this instance it flowed toward the ends. Fortunately the ARENA and the FMLN had begun to cut themselves off from the more extreme fringes of their respective parties.

*Q: Now in terms of the responsibility for the mechanics of the election, I suppose there was an electoral commission; the UN had a role. Did we play a particular role?*

FLANIGAN: We played a very active role. We tried to exercise our role largely through the United Nations. There was an electoral commission, yes. What we did was work through the United Nations ninety percent of the time with our political pressure and our money. We put several million dollars into that election trying to see that people got registered, that it was free, fair, and inclusive. Not easy, because although it is a small country, the way their electoral law was written and the way their elections took place, unfortunately there were a lot of opportunities not for fraud so much but for inefficiencies and difficulties for people to participate. For example in the city of San Salvador, the polls were organized in alphabetical fashion so individuals would have to go all the way across town to vote. So it was a very awkward. We did what we could to make sure that the registration system functioned. I recall right after I arrived, one of the first things I did was fly out to one of the northeastern provinces and actually participate in a registration drive, actually giving a voting registration card to a gentleman. A gentleman who had lived in the United States for 10 years, I believe, and worked a double shift at Blackies House of Beef for nearly all that time. He said he sent back a lot of money as Salvadorans do traditionally, but he had saved enough money to buy a bus and was in business for himself - happily transporting people to register to vote. It was always very heartening to see this kind of thing happen and sort of amazing, too.

*Q: You mentioned before that several elections were actually taking place at various levels from municipality on up. Did these all take place on the same day?*

FLANIGAN: Yes they did. They all took place on the same day, the third Sunday of March, and for the municipalities and the legislature, they were definitive. The presidential election required the winning candidate to get an absolute majority of votes cast. The leading candidate, Calderon Sol, got only 49% of the vote so there was a runoff election the following month. Let me just say a few things about the runoff. You asked about who was responsible for the electoral process. The electoral commission had immediate responsibility. The peace accords provided that the United Nations would have oversight responsibility. We sort of fit in only as friends. Nevertheless, I think it is fair to say that we played a key role in the process. Early in the year, I think it may have been as early as December when the campaign was just beginning, the political counselor at the embassy, Jim Carragher, proposed to me a very useful device, and that was that we regularly have luncheons with the three leading presidential candidates. So I invited them to the residence, the three together, and the political counselor and the deputy chief of mission would sit down on the terrace of the residence and have lunch and discuss how things were going. We had maybe four or five of these during the campaign and a couple



between the first round and the runoff.

*Q: Which was only a week right?*

FLANIGAN: It was a month. These lunches were fascinating because these men were political enemies, but also while they were not exactly friends, they were acquaintances, had been for years. They all knew each other, but they didn't have a venue where they could talk to each other or complain about one another or say what you are saying is just not fair or what you are doing in this particular instance is wrong. You know, they could say those things publicly or make the accusation or complain, but they couldn't in a neutral territory, confront the other. It was very useful. There were times, obviously the person in the catbird seat was the leader of the ARENA Party. He was the mayor of San Salvador; he had more money than anybody else; he was representing the government. He was generally identified as the one who was sort of running things, and was also the front runner. But, when confronted with complaints in the context of these luncheon meetings, he was always without exception, responsive. Yes, we can work that out, he would say. Whether these were things he had been involved in or not it was difficult to know, but generally speaking these were complaints about functionaries or systems that were in place that just simply made things difficult for the other parties. I recall for example, there were discussions about things that were said publicly about the other candidate, or themes that one party or the other was using in the campaign, or the location of ballot boxes, little things. But, little things that had the potential for discrediting the whole process. Everybody worked together. It was inspiring to see these three men working together make sure this process really worked even though only one could win.

*Q: It seems to me that forum, that encounter also had dividends after the election because of the dialogue that could take place and the fact that the leading candidate could respond to suggestions and criticism. I assume that your role besides providing the venue and facilitating the coming together on occasion was to raise issues or concerns, but also to be pretty careful that you were not picking on one or the other all the time?*

FLANIGAN: Yes, but that was rarely the case. As a matter of fact because of the make up of the electoral commission which was a totally politicized institution, and the electoral commission was often the scene of some of these struggles, it would be necessary to get either the Christian Democrat or the FMLN candidate to go to his party's representatives on the commission to resolve issues. It wasn't all one side; it wasn't always a matter of putting pressure on the front-running candidate. It was trying to get them all to work together. Yes, we did raise issues. For instance, before these luncheons I would always call up the head of the ONUSAL and say, look, I'm having lunch tomorrow with the three candidates and is there anything in particular you think would be useful for me to raise.

*Q: And would tell him afterward how it had gone. Did the UN representative feel that was something he should have been doing or probably he didn't go for it?*

FLANIGAN: He was fully engaged and fully involved. I don't think he felt I was

invading his turf. We were all very busy and working for the same goal – free and fair elections. I think he was appreciative and he was very supportive. We worked together very well, a good relationship. We would sometimes, I must admit, double up. I would hit here and he would hit there. It was a device that worked from time to time.

*Q: Were there any other chiefs of mission or ambassadors who could play anything like this sort of role the United States either from the friends, the other four or the Apostolic Nuncio? I don't know what his role was.*

FLANIGAN: On a much lesser scale, yes. I think the Spaniards perhaps. The Venezuelans from time to time would try. The trouble was..... I think my own impression was they became more closely identified with one side or the other than we were. We were able to maintain a certain level of neutrality or at least independence that they had not. On occasion the Nuncio played a role, but it was always circumscribed because there was a deep division within the church in El Salvador. It was highly divided along political lines. The Nuncio himself of course was the ultimate arbiter if you will, but he had to be very careful. It was a tricky business and he did not play much of a role in this process.

*Q: Did these encounters, luncheons of yours before the election help solidify your relationship with the new president then after the election?*

FLANIGAN: I think so. As a matter of fact I think one of the most effective things I did during the two years I was there after the election was continue to have private luncheons regularly with President Calderon Sol, generally at my residence. These luncheon were always one on one. We were able to speak to each other in great confidence and didn't have to worry about anybody misquoting us or taking umbrage at what we might have said, so it established a pattern which was very useful during the next two years.

*Q: Was he American trained as was his predecessor?*

FLANIGAN: No he wasn't. As a matter of fact, he had been to the United States a few times because he had been mayor obviously, but he spoke no English.

*Q: Did Cristiani go back to his business then?*

FLANIGAN: Yes he did.

*Q: He really removed himself from politics.*

FLANIGAN: Well, it is always difficult in a small country, and there is always the question of whether or not he is interested in coming back again. Certainly there are always people who think he should. It's a fascinating process to watch a new president take over and the old president sit there and try to avoid playing critic. But then their personalities were very different. They are still both active in politics and I really don't want to get into it in details. They are both honorable men. I was quite positively impressed with both of them. Cristiani had as a result of the negotiations established a

well-deserved international reputation. Calderon Sol came to power with a reputation for being very political first of all and also perhaps being the captive of the right wing of the party. There were a lot of people that were afraid that if he became President that he would be the means by which the country would begin to backslide, that the final elements of the peace accords would not be implemented. A lot of my instructions from Washington, a lot of my efforts both before and after the election were to make sure that we made it clear the consequences of non-compliance if you will. I was always able to do that with a very soft presentation because I was pushing an open door as it turned out. I don't know what his real preferences or predilections might have been. Who is to say that if left to his own devices he would have reverted to some kind of more conservative, autocratic, institutionally driven system, but he had to succeed as being president of the new El Salvador. He had to go ahead and do what he had committed to do, which he did.

*Q: In the time you were there, you mentioned about flying out to one of the provinces to register the bus. Did you spend a lot of time in the countryside? Salvador is not a very large country.*

FLANIGAN: No, it is not a very large country, and the answer is initially when I first arrived, I did. First of all, the AID mission still had access to a couple of helicopters, and it was easy to get around quickly. I was able to go out and visit two or three places and be back in the same day. In the first few months I was there, I did a lot of that, and so I got a sense of the country. It is a small country.

*Q: Did we have Peace Corps volunteers?*

FLANIGAN: We didn't then; we do now. We reintroduced the Peace Corps about a year after I arrived. We had volunteers there before the war but had withdrawn them in the late '70s I believe.

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*Q: This is July 17th. I just asked a question at the end of the last tape about how things were while you were there with the rest of Latin America. Did you take much interest in pressing El Salvador with regard to anything going on in Nicaragua or Honduras, or Guatemala, or did you have enough to do with the Salvadorans? Certainly in their own country leading up to elections or implementing the peace accords and so on.*

FLANIGAN: Not too much. There wasn't much spillover into the affairs of other nations. Things had really begun to transform themselves in other countries as well. Although the economy in Nicaragua was in bad shape, politically it was doing pretty well. Central America as an entity was cooperating in an unprecedented way. The effort by all the leaders of Central America to meet regularly, to maintain contact, to coordinate their policies was really quite heartening and continues to this day. They need to do it obviously to maintain themselves economically. I think an economically viable Central America needs to create a single market or a least an integrated market, and they are doing that. The political problems in other countries didn't spill over very much. The end

of the war in El Salvador enabled the country to begin the process of economic recovery. The progress was dramatic. Now, for seven years it has had an annual growth rate of at least five or six percent. It's managed to keep its inflation in single digits generally but sometimes the low double digits, 10-11-12%. The currency is stable with the dollar.

*Q: Was there a lot of American business interest reviving during the period you were there either in terms of trade but particularly investment?*

FLANIGAN: There were some assembly operations, but not a lot of investment. Trade, obviously, was of interest to American companies. It is a small market, but it's a U.S. market if you will, something like Port au Prince. The United States has more than forty percent of the import market. Let me back up very quickly to the elections again because it was central to the time I was there and central to the peace process I think. There were a lot of little problems that developed during the campaign. Ultimately nearly all of those were resolved. When the elections occurred there was a tremendous number of foreign observers that came to see the elections. We ourselves had a United States government presidential delegation plus AID-funded delegations from the National Democratic Institute and the Republican Institute. In total we must have had over 100 official observers at the election, and there were over 1000 Americans there observing under the auspices of various non-governmental organizations. There were hundreds of United Nations observers as well. The country was virtually blanketed. When the election came, in order to make sure the official U S observers had a good view of things, we arranged with the U S Southern Command in Panama to have five Black Hawk helicopters come over. They all parked on the parking lot of the 27 acre embassy compound. Early on the morning of the election, we divided up into groups and flew off to the various parts of the country to observe the opening of the polls. We especially went to places where we knew there might be problems. We also sent people out in cars from San Salvador. There were undoubtedly polling sites we didn't see that day with one group or another, but not many. I recall that the administrator of AID, Brian Atwood, was the chief of the U S official delegation. It also included Congressman George Brown of California, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi of California, former Ambassador Angier Biddle Duke and several other people that were simply interested in El Salvador. Anyway, it was one of those very moving experiences you don't expect to see in this day and age somehow. We went out and observed people voting, and there was not any violence. There were problems. Ballot boxes didn't get to the right place at the right time, and the polls were delayed in opening for an hour, and people had to stand in line for five, six, seven hours, but they did. They did stand in line; they did vote. In the end the level of participation was not as high as anybody would have liked. It was in the range of 55-60%. There was no question that anybody that wanted to vote had a pretty good chance to register and vote, that it was in fact what we had all been working for, free, fair, and inclusive. The results that evening were also rewarding because although ARENA had most of the money and organization and was the preponderate political power, FMLN had established itself as a major political element too. Now, in the National Assembly since then there have been some internal divisions in the FMLN which has diluted its power, but it became the major opposition party. For that to happen in the first election and for that to happen in a peaceful fashion was commendable on the part of the Salvadorans and important for us to

try to bring it about. I remember when the second round occurred. I remember that within a few days following the first round, there was a move, not initiated by Calderon Sol, to forego a second round. The argument was that it would cost a lot of money and effort. There was no question who was going to win. After all, Calderon Sol got 49% the first round. There were people in the FMLN that were saying the same thing. I quickly made it clear that I did not think that was the right thing to do. I pointed out that what was needed more than efficiency was a process that had credibility. Skipping the second round would undermine the credibility of the process. I wasn't alone in that view, but certainly once I had said it, we were able to kill that little boomlet. Then when the election actually occurred, the day of the election, participation was about the same level, and Calderon Sol won about 67%; Ruben Zamora won about 33%, which wasn't bad for either side. They both came up rather handsomely, and they were both pleased. There was, however, some unhappiness within the FMLN, some elements of it. There was some question about whether or not there would be full acceptance of the process now - the results. I recall some rather heated and emotional comments made on television in the evening by a couple of the FMLN leaders suggesting that they weren't going to accept the results. They asserted that the elections had all been a sham and the results were tainted. There were some people on our own side who were willing to accept that because as I mentioned earlier, I'm not sure it is on here, but Nancy Pelosi in the first round said that it had all been very fair but unfortunately the wrong side had won. So, a lot of people felt that it wasn't really a good election because the FMLN hadn't won. I had a reception that evening for the observers that had come down for the second round, a much smaller group, but still consequential. I remember distinctly that there was some tension building as a result of these televised statements. At about that time I received a telephone call from Ruben Zamora which was very helpful. He told me that he had just called Calderon Sol and conceded. He said he was not happy at losing, but it had been a fair process and he had lost fairly. His concession effectively completed the process and ended all consideration by his supporters of challenging the outcome. So, the next morning I remember Brian Atwood and I (Atwood observed the second round as well) called on both Ruben Zamora and Calderon Sol and congratulated them.

*Q: Was there talk of boycotting participating in the legislative body?*

FLANIGAN: Not serious talk. I think there was maybe some; it could have gotten out of hand that night had Ruben Zamora not taking the initiative to say look, "I would have preferred to have won but I didn't. This was a fair and free process under the circumstances and I concede and I wish Calderon Sol the very best."

*Q: And then to call you and you could convey this to some of the observers.*

FLANIGAN: Exactly. No, it was very useful, and I think once again it was part of the product of those luncheons being held that established relationships of trust and confidence which worked.

*Q: This was in the spring of '94. The peace accords were late '91 and started to be implemented in '92, so there was roughly a little over two years between the peace*

*agreements and the election. Was the date of the election established by some previous schedule?*

FLANIGAN: It was established by the peace agreements.

*Q: There have been other agreements around the world that the United Nations has been involved with. In some cases the elections have come much quicker and maybe some cases even later. Did you feel that two years was about right?*

FLANIGAN: Well, what they did was accept the political process that was already in place. I don't think anybody would have claimed the election of Alfredo Cristiani five years earlier was invalid. It was invalid to the FMLN because they boycotted the elections, but at the same time participation was fairly high. It had been a national election, and the FMLN never suggested that he step down. They had negotiated with him in good faith and he with them in good faith. They just sort of accepted the political calendar. The next major thing that happened, of course, was that the new National Assembly, which had participation with the FMLN, elected a new Supreme Court. It was a 15 person Supreme Court, and for the first time in the history of the country it had members that represented all strains of political thought from the rather far left to the rather far right. The unifying element, in my view, was that they were to a person truly dedicated to the creation of a new system of justice that worked in the country. Obviously they had political backgrounds, but they didn't have political axes to grind other than the one; that is they wanted this to work. They went about it very methodically. The new president of the Supreme Court was criticized sometimes for the slowness with which he went about the process of purging the judicial system. (In the Salvadoran system, the Supreme Court controlled all of the court system.) It was a slow process. We all would have liked for it to happen instantly, but we also wanted it to have credibility, and I think they did a fine job under difficult circumstances over the next couple of years. The creation of the Supreme Court, the reform of the criminal justice system, all of this was very complex and very necessary. It was a product of a lot of hard work and in many ways the product of an AID effort in funding and money, money that was well spent. It seems to be working. Obviously it is not over yet. This is a process that is going to take some time.

*Q: You mentioned that Secretary of State Warren Christopher had come to visit while you were there, I guess toward the end of your time. Was the purpose of his visit to endorse, bless, applaud all these things that had happened?*

FLANIGAN: Well, to a certain extent yes. In this case, El Salvador was selected because it was the Central American country which we wanted to show had done well. Not that others hadn't but it was time to recognize that the process in El Salvador had succeeded rather well.

*Q: What else would we talk about? It sounds like a great time that you had there. You got involved in a lot of things and have a lot to be satisfied about.*

FLANIGAN: Yes, it was. It was a very rewarding three years.. The Salvadorans got a lot done. We were able to help them do it. As I said, I hadn't really been prepared for the central role that we played. I tried over my three years there to play that role in a restrained fashion and as private a way as possible. I thought it was important that I not be a proconsul. A lot of people expected us to be a proconsul or even wanted us to be a proconsul. In the interest of allowing institutions to develop that would carry El Salvador forward, I thought it was important that the American ambassador withdraw from public participation in the political process. I tried to do that.

*Q: Another issue that involves the hemisphere recently these days is narcotics. Was that something you were quite involved with in El Salvador?*

FLANIGAN: El Salvador because of the accidents of geography is not a major conduit of the drug trade. As you can see, it only has a Pacific coast. If drug smugglers decide they want to get drugs through Central America to the United States, it doesn't make a lot of sense to go into El Salvador. It just creates another border they have to go across. That is not to say there wasn't a problem at all. Obviously there were efforts to bring drugs in through El Salvador and a couple of cases where major seizures were made by the Salvadoran police with the help of DEA. The Salvadoran police just went through this total reorganization, but one of the blessings of not having an Atlantic coast was El Salvador did not become a focal point for the drug trade during that very vulnerable period. It was much more of a problem in Guatemala, even Nicaragua and Honduras.

*Q: Anything else about three years in El Salvador?*

FLANIGAN: One of the legacies of the war was a massive official American presence. When I arrived, there were 33 military advisors still. That was true across the board in whatever part of the embassy you'd like to imagine. We had a massive presence. During the time I was there, we reduced the American direct hire presence by more than one third, nearly 40%. We reduced the local employees by about 20% as well. I think that reduction will have to continue. Now during the war we spent, depending on what figures you look at, between \$65 and \$85 million to build a new embassy complex. I mentioned it was 27 acres. The residence is on the compound. There is the embassy office building. There is an AID building of equal size. I'm not sure I fully approve of the concept of permanent AID mission facilities. The overall effect of the compound is an overwhelming American presence. I think is indicative of the role we played and kind of the role we need to get away from. It will take some time for us to get away from it. Tradition.

*Q: Tradition and a lot of history. Well, I think we are going to have to stop at this point. Maybe after you get a transcript you may want to write a little bit more about what happened to you after El Salvador before you retired. I've enjoyed this conversation. Thank you very much.*

FLANIGAN: Thanks. It was a great career.

*End of interview*